Massachusetts Women Work Wool

By Sally Colby

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Before she had sheep, which she says she got started in by accident, Ellen Raja had milking goats; mostly Toggenburgs. “It was a very hot summer,” said Ellen, who had a newborn as well as other young children at the time. “My husband had started at Harvard Business School and was unable to do the evening milking. It was a little too much for me, and I sold the goats.”

Ellen says that just hours later, she regretted what she had done. “I missed the goats, and my older children missed them too.” Ellen shared her plight with a friend, who went to the auction and bought Ellen a sheep. “I told her I didn’t know the first thing about sheep,” said Ellen. “I only knew that you can’t have just one.” So her friend hurried back to the auction and bought another sheep.

The friend kept the two sheep at her own farm until the following spring. “Baa Baa and Susie were my first thing about sheep,” said Ellen. “I only knew about the sheep and working with the wool.”

But Ellen, who lives in Lincoln, MA, soon ran into a problem common among sheep owners – shearing. “We joined the local sheep breeders association,” she said. “Then when we went to sell the wool, we were offered 5 cents/pound. My husband brought it back and said he’d insulate the attic with it.” Ellen didn’t think that was a good idea, so he challenged her to think of what to do with it.

Once again, Ellen shared her plight with a neighbor, who suggested she learn how to spin. “She came over with a bushel basket full of spinning wheel parts,” said Ellen, adding that new spinning wheels weren’t yet available in the United States. “I told her I didn’t know how to spin, and she told me I’d better learn. I went to the library and got a book so that I could see what the wheel should look like.” Ellen says she was able to get most of the wheel put together by looking at pictures, then learned how to spin from a little paperback by Elsie Davenport.

As Ellen was learning how to spin on what she calls ‘an old rickety thing’, the Boston Area Spinners and Dyers formed. The group included Ellen and several others who were interested in wool crafting. “The neighbor who owned the wheel said I should take the spun wool to Harvard Square and sell it for a lot of money,” said Ellen. “I was a country mouse and I wasn’t interested in doing that. But very soon, I discovered I had something people would pay for.” Ellen learned more and more about sheep and keeping fleeces clean, and started to work with Betty Levin who had Border Leicester sheep. Ellen started selling her hand-knit items at an artists’ cooperative in Boston, first known as The Christmas Store and now known as Sign of the Dove.

To improve the fleece quality in her flock, Ellen purchased a Bluefaced Leicester ram and crossed him with her Border Leicester ewes. She kept one ram lamb from that cross to use in the future. “The wool is tippy; soft and light,” she said. “The lambs are small and delicate and

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Greetings Fellow Border Leicester Breeders!

Lambing season is now upon us and I wish you nothing but the best this Winter. I hope last falls’ matings exceed your greatest expectations as you receive your new crop and watch them grow.

The registry results from 2011 are official and I am real excited about our year end results. 752 Border Leicesters were registered and 241 transfers were recorded. Registration numbers were the third most ever and only down 33 head from 2011 and 2007 when 785 were registered both years. With the $2.00 per pound lamb market and $6.00 bushel corn much of last year, coupled with the challenging weather conditions throughout much of the country, I was fearful our registrations would drop considerably.

Breeders kept their good ewes and are helping grow the size of our breed. One interesting number is that of our transfers, where we recorded 241 in 2011. This was down from the 378 transferred in 2010 and closer to the 2009 transfers of 284 head. I am proud our registration base is as strong as it is and I know our breed will continue to grow in the years ahead.

2012 is gearing up to be an exciting year! Your board made the decision at its last meeting to begin to rotate the Annual Meeting between the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival and the Great Lakes Sale in Ohio. This year’s sale will move to Wooster, Ohio on Saturday evening, May 26th. More details may be found elsewhere about the meeting in this newsletter.

There will be an informal Border Leicester social at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival in our usual spot on May 5th. The directors in attendance will conduct a short update about the association and breeders may in turn share their ideas about Border Leicesters and the sheep industry in general...as well as have a good time!

The board did not lock in only these two venues to host an Annual Meeting. We welcome invitations from other areas and if it will benefit the breed we are receptive to taking the meeting there. The 2013 meeting will then go back to Maryland. Our desire is to give as many breeders as possible the opportunity to take part in their
Neck of the Woods

What's happening in YOUR neck of the woods?
Here's an update from your Directors...

Greetings from my neck of the woods,

We are actually having winter weather after a mild fall that extended into January. It’s always a bit sad to have a ‘brown Christmas’! All the family came to celebrate and despite warm temperatures we had a wonderful holiday filled with good food and conversation and thoroughly enjoying our children and grandchildren.

It was great fun seeing so many of you in Louisville. It was grand to have more sheep in both the junior and open show. If you have never had the opportunity to experience the NAILE I would encourage you to do so. It is totally amazing to see so many sheep under one roof! The different breeds are interesting and there is so much passion for the sheep industry. It’s amazing to ‘talk sheep’ for a full week and to find others willing to listen!

We put the Columbia bucks in with the ewes in early August attempting to have at least half of the Columbias lambed out before the Suffolks and Borders begin. The hot August weather played havoc with our best laid plans and the Columbias are off to a slow start. Of course, now they will really begin to drop lambs with snow flying and temperatures in the single digits. Regardless, each lamb born is an exciting event in my eyes—it is the culmination of all the work and effort that goes into raising a healthy flock.

We will be shearing Ron’s Suffolks and our Borders as soon as the weather breaks. We like to do this two weeks prior to lambing. At the same time we vaccinate and worm. Hopefully, the ewe will deliver a bit of immunity through her colostrum such making for a healthier baby lamb.

The guys worked very hard to create a different corral/feeding system near the lambing barn. They have the kinks about figured out and it does seem to be less work on the shepherds and easy on the ewes. I’m even more thrilled to see the manure piles leveled—the new manure spreader got a real work out and ‘fertilizer’ is spread everywhere!

Happy Lambing! May you have good twins, fewer singles and preferably no triplets!

Anne Key, Western States

Hello there from New England!

Well, the winter cold has finally set in around here - and finally some snow!! As we all start getting ready for lambing season, keep in mind the upcoming events of our organization: the Youth Futurity Contest, the National Sale and Annual Meeting. I hope you all will participate in these activities. I want to, again, thank all the breeders who nominated their ewes both at the National Sale last year and in private sales. It made for a great purse to be divided among the participating contests. And to those youth out there who have not participated in this contest - let’s join in this year!!!! (more information elsewhere in this newsletter). As our lambs grow and buyers come to us, I want to remind fellow breeders to nominate their ewe lambs and yearlings being sold to a youth and encourage them to show them at their local fair. I believe there is no better way to promote this breed than to get them out in the public eye! Who can resist those lovely personable faces and the body of curls!!!

At our recent Board meeting, plans were discussed for the National Sale weekend. The “Ohio crew” did a great job last year, and I can’t wait to go back again this year. I encourage you all to come join us - meet our Board and other fellow breeders, tour the local area, enter some Border Leicesters in the sale and, of course, buy a sheep or two to take home! There is a small fiber festival held at the same time, and it is always fun to walk around the buildings, look at the wool items and talk with the vendors.

Looking ahead, make plans to attend these later in the year:

The North East Youth Sheep Show, which includes a Border Leicester breed Show, is held in July at the Eastern States Exposition fairgrounds in Massachusetts. This weekend also includes a quiz bowl, skill-a-ton, and fitting & showmanship classes. One of the co-chairman is a fellow Border Leicester breeder from New York. In September, the ABLA National-Regional Border Leicester Show will be held at the “Big E” (Eastern States Exposition) - if you have never been, I invite you to come and join us. Experience tells us: once you come - you will be back again the next year! And, of course, the ABLA National Border Leicester Show will be held at NAILE in Louisville in November - which goes without saying - is a huge event as well. So, sit back relax, wait for lambs to come and plan your vacations around some Border Leicester events - seems we always do !!!!

-polly

(President’s Message continued from page 2)

Annual Meeting.

And on the subject of participation, I encourage you to consider running for the American Border Leicester Association Board of Directors. Information on how to run may be found in this newsletter. Participation is what helps grow breeds and if a directorship position is not a consideration, call any of us on the board and we would be very honored to have you help us make things happen at many events where there are Border Leicesters.

I look forward to seeing you at the events ahead!

March 15 National Border Leicester Sale Entry Deadline (held in conjunction with the Great Lakes Sale), Wooster, OH, 309/785-5058

March 15 ABLA Newsletter Deadline for the Spring Issue, newsletter@ablashed.org


May 5-6 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, West Friendship, MD, www.sheepandwool.org

May 12-13 New Hampshire Sheep & Wool Festival, Contoocook, NH, www.nhswga.org

May 12-13 Shepherd’s Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival, Lake Elmo, MN, www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org

May 21 3rd Annual Rhode Island Fiber Festival, Bristol, RI, www.coggeshallfarm.org

May 26-27 National Border Leicester Sale (held in conjunction with the Great Lakes Sale), Wooster, OH, 309/785-5058


May 26-27 35th Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair, Cummington, MA, www.masheepwool.org

June 7-10 19th Annual Estes Park Wool Market (includes sheep show), Estes Park, CO, www.estesnet.com/events/woolmarket.htm

June 22-24 The Black Sheep Gathering (includes sheep show), Eugene, OR, www.blacksheepgathering.org

SHARE YOUR EVENT!
Send information about your upcoming events to newsletter@ablashed.org

Winter 2012
American Border Leicester Association Newsletter
Fill out any ABLA application for registration you may already have or if you do not have a form, please visit the “Registering Sheep” page on the website at www.ablasheep.org and download an Application for Registration Form. Send all forms for registering your sheep to:

American Border Leicester Association
PO Box 51, 222 Main Street
Milo, IA 50166
Phone: 641/942-6402
Fax: 641/942-6502
Email: kclaghorn@earthlink.net

REGISTRATION FEES

Members..............................$5.00
Non-members......................$10.00

TRANSFER FEES

Members..............................$5.00
Non-members......................$5.00

Be sure to include all the necessary and correct information on the forms in order to register your sheep. Applications that are incomplete, incorrect, or lacking fees will be returned to the sender with an explanation of the problem. Applications will not be accepted unless an ABLA Application for Registration Form is filled out for all animals to be registered by the breeder/owner.

The Right Size - Revisited

In the last newsletter, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I asked for members’ opinions about the right size for Border Leicester ewes and rams.

Twelve flock owners replied.

Some of them have been raising our breed for just a few years, but as a group I reckon that group has over 150 years experience with Border Leicesters. Add in the experience of the directors and it would come to something over 200 years.

The word most often used in the replies was “moderate”.

The answers, one way or another, talked about flock goals, management style, gene pools, locale, climate, feed source, and wool, and the relationship of all these elements to size. One spoke of breed character and the balance between thickness, width, length, and height. Another, who raises other breeds as well, tells us that Border Leicesters are a little more than half the cost of maintaining the other breeds.

The Board considered all the replies and its own experiences and concluded that the standard for a mature ewe is 150 to 225 pounds, and for a mature ram is 175 to 300 pounds.

My thanks to those who replied for their time and trouble.

If you have questions or comments, let me hear from you.

Jerry Wigglesworth
anguswigg@gmail.com
ABLA Board of Directors Meeting
October 24, 2011

Present: Greg Deakin, Barb Hintzche, Polly Hopkins, Jerry Wigglesworth, Anne Key, Jennifer Bierhuizen

The meeting was called to order by Greg Deakin, President. The minutes of the previous meeting of September 12, 2011 were approved as sent to the Directors. The Treasurers report was approved as submitted. The current balance in the Treasury is $4696.20. Greg reported that this year to date there have been 732 Border Leicesters registered and 205 transferred. Polly read a letter from Eastern States Exposition thanking the ABLA for hosting their annual show at the Big E.

OLD BUSINESS
Website: No report
Events: Polly reported that the National Border Leicester Show went well with a strong contingent of sheep. Greg reported that the Border Leicesters sold well in the New York Bred Ewe Sale. Polly shared that Stephanie Larochelle will be putting together the Border Leicester display for the second annual New England Fiber Fest. Greg reminded all of the NAILE Border Leicester open and junior shows coming up in November.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Publicity: Jerry reported that he and Anne have met to discuss ideas for publicity. They have pondered the question of how to get more folks to use the web site for Border Leicester information. One creative idea put forth was to use You Tube type videos on the web page which also brought forward the question of how to execute such an endeavor. It was discussed that a real strength of this format would be the ability to show the great diversity among breeders in how they manage their Border Leicester flocks. (Jennifer Bierhuizen joined the call at this time)
Futurity: Polly is still receiving show information from participants. The Futurity pot contains $625.
Finance: No report

NEW BUSINESS
Newsletter: The newsletter is being copied and will be mailed this week.
Size of Animals: The smaller size sheep mentioned in a variety of our ABLA publications appears to be on target. The Board will review member comments, solicited through the newsletter, before making a decision.
Associated Registries: In light of the fact that Associated Registries is asking the ABLA to renew its contract through 2015, and the fact that most current sitting Directors are not familiar with the language of the contract, it was requested at the previous meeting that a committee look into our current contract. Jerry reported that the current contract gives the ABLA and/or AR the opportunity to sever the agreement with six months notice. It is understood that the ABLA would receive an updated electronic copy of our records should the two entities decide to go their separate ways. Data entry handled by AR is done at $15 per hour. It was agreed that rather than sign a contract extension through 2015 as requested by AR, that the ABLA take a one year contract extension while the ABLA Directors continue to study the various components of the contract. Greg will draft a letter to that effect for Board review.

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully Submitted,
Sally Barney – Recording Secretary
AMERICAN BORDER
LEICESTER ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

The American Border Leicester Association was founded in 1973 to promote and register Border Leicester sheep in the United States and Canada. Both white and natural colored Border Leicesters are eligible for registry with the ABLA. Our association is experiencing some exciting growth, both in membership and numbers of sheep registered. We invite you to join us!

We provide the opportunity for our members to promote themselves and their farm products through our Member Directory. Please provide the information that you’d like included with your listing. Our membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st.

For more information about Border Leicesters and the American Border Leicester Association, visit our website: www.ablasheep.org.

Name:___________________________________________ Farm/Ranch Name: ________________________________________

Mailing Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip:______________________________________________ Phone: _______________________________________

E-mail:______________________________________________ Web Address: _______________________________________

What farm products would you like listed in the Directory? ___________________________________________________________

To better serve you, your board would like you to answer these five questions on your renewal form. Thank you!

1) What are your primary interests in raising Border Leicesters?________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2) Would you consider yourself:   A) a business operation   B) a hobby farmer   C) Other (please specify) _______________________

3) Would you be interested in receiving your newsletter via the internet instead of in the mail?     Yes ______     No ______

4) Website or Newsletter suggestions:_____________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5) How would you like your membership fees spent? (1-most important, 5-least important)

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Helpful information, but not included in the directory:

Total flock size: _____________________________

Number of white Border Leicesters .......... Ewes: ________ Rams: ________

Number of colored Border Leicesters ...... Ewes: ________ Rams: ________

Please send this form, along with your check made out to “ABLA” to:

Polly Hopkins, Treasurer
494 Evans Road
Chepachet, RI 02814

Questions?
Contact Polly
401/949-4619
khop4811@aol.com

American Border Leicester Association Newsletter
Winter 2012
JUNIOR BORDER LEICESTER SHOW
Judge: David Clouser, Polk, OH

EARLY RAM LAMBS WHITE
1. Key 2372 - 16555F - 2/7/2011 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
2. Key 2353 - 16571F - 2/2/2011 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA

LATE EWE LAMBS WHITE

GRAND CHAMPION EWE WHITE
Key 2372 - 16555F - 2/7/2011 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA

RESERVE GRAND CHAMPION EWE WHITE
Deakin 11-1706 - 17002 - 3/16/2011 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL

INTERMEDIATE RAM LAMB WHITE
1. Key 2451QR - 17052 - 3/16/2011 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
2. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR

EARLY RAM LAMBS WHITE

EARLY EWE LAMBS WHITE
1. Key 2061 - 16566F - 9/3/2010 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
2. Key 2033 RR - 16565F - 9/2/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
3. Key 2032 - 16579F - 9/1/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

FALL EWE LAMBS WHITE
1. Deakin 10-1613 RR - 16448 - 10/27/2010 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Key 2033 QR - 16579F - 9/1/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

INTERMEDIATE EWE LAMBS WHITE
1. Deakin 11-1633 QR - 16501 - 1/25/2011 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Key 2372 - 16555F - 2/7/2011 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
3. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
7. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
8. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
9. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
10. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR

RESERVE INTERMEDIATE EWE LAMBS WHITE
1. Prairie Rose Farms 1114 - 16897F - 2/25/2011 - Prairie Rose Farms - Great Falls, MT
2. Prairie Rose Farms 1015 - 16174F - 2/20/2010 - Prairie Rose Farms - Great Falls, MT
3. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
4. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
5. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
6. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
7. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
8. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
9. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
10. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR

PAIR YEARLING EWES WHITE
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
3. Fogle, Carroll & Marilyn - Raymond, OH
4. Early, Jerry - West Liberty, OH

FALL EWES WHITE
1. Key 2451QR - 17052 - 3/16/2011 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
2. Early-ZNK 0044 QR - 102278NQ - 2/11/2010 - Early, Jerry - West Liberty, OH

YEARLING EWE (LATE) WHITE
1. Deakin 10-1557 - 16312 - 2/16/2010 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Prairie Rose Farms 1015 - 16747F - 2/20/2010 - Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
3. Key 1894QR - 15996F - 2/19/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

PAIR YEARLING EWES WHITE
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
3. Fogle, Carroll & Marilyn - Raymond, OH
4. Early, Jerry - West Liberty, OH

EARLY EWES WHITE
1. Key 2372 - 16555F - 2/7/2011 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
2. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
3. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
4. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
5. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
6. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
7. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
8. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
9. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
10. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR

FALL EWES WHITE
1. Key 2033 QR - 16579F - 9/1/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
2. Key 2033 QR - 16579F - 9/1/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

EARLY FWI EWES WHITE
1. Deakin 11-1633 QR - 16501 - 1/25/2011 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Key 2372 - 16555F - 2/7/2011 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
3. Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
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EARLY EWES WHITE
1. Deakin 10-1557 - 16312 - 2/16/2010 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Prairie Rose Farms 1015 - 16747F - 2/20/2010 - Prairie Rose Farms - Shedd, OR
3. Key 1894QR - 15996F - 2/19/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

FAW EWE LAMBS WHITE
1. Key 2451 QR - 17052 - 3/16/2011 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

EARLY EWES LAMBS WHITE
1. Key 2061 - 16566F - 9/3/2010 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
2. Key 2033 RR - 16565F - 9/2/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
3. Key 2032 - 16579F - 9/1/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

PRIME FITTED EWE LAMBS WHITE
1. Deakin 10-1557 - 16312 - 2/16/2010 - Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Key 2061 - 16566F - 9/3/2010 - Taylor, Callie - State College, PA
3. Key 2033 RR - 16565F - 9/2/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
4. Key 2032 - 16579F - 9/1/2010 - Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT

PRIME FITTED EWES WHITE
1. Deakin Family Farms - Cuba, IL
2. Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch - Great Falls, MT
3. Fogle, Carroll & Marilyn - Raymond, OH
4. Early, Jerry - West Liberty, OH

HORSE SHOWS
Winter 2012
American Border Leicester Association Newsletter
Western Washington Fair Results

September 9 - 25, 2011
Puyallup, Washington

BLACK BORDER LEICESTER –
YEARLING RAM – 1) Barb Fox, Springfield, OR
SOUTH RAM LAMB – 1) & 2) Barb Fox, Springfield, OR; 3) & 4) Barb Fox, Springfield, OR
PREMIER EXHIBITOR RAM – Barb Fox, Springfield, OR

YEARLING EWE – 1) & 4) Barb Fox, Springfield, OR; 2) Joann Scibek, Battleground, WA; 3) Dave & Cathy Fitzgerald, Lake Steven, WA

SOUTH EWE LAMB – 1) & 2) Dave & Cathy Fitzgerald, Lake Steven, WA; 3) Joann Scibek, Battleground, WA; 4) Dave & Cathy Fitzgerald, Lake Steven, WA

BORDER LEICESTER –
YEARLING RAM – 1) Fred Dickhouse, Shedd, OR; 2) Barb Fox, Springfield, OR
FALL RAM LAMB – 1) & 2) Dave & Cathy Fitzgerald, Lake Steven, WA
PREMIER EXHIBITOR – Barb Fox, Springfield, OR

BORDER LEICESTER –
YEARLING EWE – 1) Fred Dickhouse, Shedd, OR; 2) Barb Fox, Springfield, OR
FALL EWE LAMB – 1) & 2) Dave & Cathy Fitzgerald, Lake Steven, WA
PREMIER EXHIBITOR – Fred Dickhouse, Shedd, OR

N.A.I.E. WOOL SHOW
Judge: Susan McFarland, Columbus, WI

BORDER LEICESTER RAM (WHITE)
1. Deakin, Colin - Cuba, IL 2. Fogle, Carroll & Marilyn - Raymond, OH

BORDER LEICESTER EWE (WHITE)
North American International Border Leicester Show
November 16, 2011 • Louisville, Kentucky
OPEN SHOW PHOTOS

Grand Champion White Ram
Deakin Family Farms, IL

Grand Champion White Ewe
Deakin Family Farms, IL

Reserve Grand Champion White Ram
Connor Vincent, DE

Reserve Grand Champion White Ewe
Deakin Family Farms, IL

Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ram
Tiffany Deakin, IL

Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ewe
Tiffany Deakin, IL

Res. Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ram
Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT

Res. Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ewe
Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT

First Place Flock (White)
Deakin Family Farms

Second Place Flock (White)
Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT

Third Place Flock (White)
Prairie Rose Farms, OR
JUNIOR SHOW PHOTOS

Grand Champion White Ram
Callie Taylor, PA

Grand Champion White Ewe
Callie Taylor, PA

Reserve Grand Champion White Ram
Amber Millikan, IN

Reserve Grand Champion White Ewe
Connor Vincent, DE

Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ram
Deakin Family Farms, IL

Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ewe
Deakin Family Farms, IL

Res. Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ram
Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT

Res. Grand Champion Nat. Colored Ewe
Montana Aerie Sheep Ranch, MT

Best Fleece - White
Connor Vincent, DE

Best Fleece - Natural Colored
Deakin Family Farms, IL
AMERICAN BORDER LEICESTER ASSOCIATION

Standard of Excellence
Guide for Judging Border Leicester Sheep
(Applies to both White & Natural Colored animals)

HEAD & NECK (10 Points)
Head:
- High, erect ears
- Spots on ears permissible
- Roman nose
- Black nose and lips (dark mottled with grey acceptable)
- No motting on muzzle
- Both sexes polled

Neck:
- Moderate length, fitting into shoulders gracefully

FOREQUARTER (5 Points)
Shoulders:
- Well rounded

Legs:
- Straight, wide apart, no wool below knees

BODY (15 Points)
Chest:
- Deep and wide, but not fat

Ribs:
- Well-sprung, long, showing no signs of excess fat

Back:
- Broad, long and level
  - Somewhat narrower in front than rear
  - Hindquarters should be 1/3 or less in proportion

Wool Cover:
- Belly and armpits well-covered with wool (minimum of skin) and consistent with balance of fleece

HINDQUARTERS (10 Points)
Hips:
- Level, smooth and wide apart

Thighs:
- Deep and full

Legs:
- Straight, wide apart, free of wool below hocks
- No evidence of low pasterns
- Black hooves

Udder & Scrotum:
- Ewes - Udder should show evidence of two good teats
- Rams - Testicles well-developed and hanging down a distance from the body

CONDITION (10 Points)
Animals should be in working condition, well-muscled, and not overly fat or thin

GENERAL APPEARANCE (10 Points)
Stance:
- Overall appearance to be regal in structure

Quality:
- Should be strong boned
- Rams to appear masculine
- Ewes to appear feminine

WOOL (40 Points)
1. Locks with purled tips ending in a curl
2. High Luster
3. Minimum of kemp hair
4. Uniform fleece and belly wool
5. No black spots in white, no white spots in black wool

The fleece weight from mature females ranges from 8 to 12 pounds with a yield of 65 to 80 percent. The staple length of the fleece ranges from five to ten inches with a numeric count of 36 to 48 which is 38.5 to 30.0 microns.

Border Leicesters are typically shown with 3-5 months of wool growth, so that the judge can accurately evaluate the fleece, one of the most important characteristics of the breed. They are relatively easy fit for exhibition. They should appear clean and neat, but never shampooed, as this would remove the natural oil from the wool. A light spritzing with luke warm water can emphasize the natural curl of the fleece, but it needs to be done well before the show so that the dampened locks have time to dry thoroughly. Stray locks may be trimmed, but Border Leicesters should not be combed, carded, or blocked, which would disturb the natural lock formation and detract from the character of the fleece.

A ram at maturity should weigh 175-300 pounds and stand about 32 inches at the shoulder. He should have a wide, level back. Ewes usually weigh 150-225 pounds.
The American Border Leicester Association held their Third Futurity Contest this past year. There were twenty-five ewes nominated! Five youth participated showing a total of seven sheep. Although there are eight possible categories to enter, the ewes nominated only filled up five of those. The results are as follows:

**White Owned Yearling Ewes**
1st - $100.00 - Becky Kron of New York, with Bradish #1075 purchased at the National Sale in Ohio
2nd - $75.00 - Casey Faccio of Rhode Island, with Maybe Tomorrow Farm # 1037, purchased as a lamb last year and was also in the futurity contest last year.

**White Owned Ewe Lamb**
1st - $100.00 – Sammye Patti of Rhode Island, with Maybe Tomorrow Farm #1057, purchased at the farm in the spring.

**Natural Colored Raised Yearling Ewe**
1st - $100.00 - Tiffany Deakin of Illinois, with home raised Deakin #1518

**Natural Colored Raised Ewe Lamb**
1st - $100.00 – Tiffany Deakin of Illinois, with home raised Deakin #1615

**Natural Colored Owned Ewe Lamb**
1st $100.00 – Emily Gibson of New Hampshire, with Bear Hollow #31 purchased at the National Sale in Ohio.

A big thank you goes out to all those breeders who supported this contest by nominating their ewes in the National Sale, as well as those who nominated lambs sold privately to juniors off the farm. All those nomination fees really, really helped the funding for this event. The Board would like to encourage breeders to again nominate ewe lambs and yearling ewes consigned to the various sales this spring, as well as any ewes they sell privately to a junior. And please encourage that junior to show their sheep at local fairs – and send in their forms! The Board also invites and encourages the youth of our organization to nominate their own ewe lamb(s) or yearling ewe(s) for this contest. Everyone is guaranteed some prize money back. A futurity ewe may compete in an unlimited number of shows, but only the top five points cards will be used for placing in this contest. But be sure to send in all your cards, the Chair will figure which ones are eligible to be used. There are a lot of juniors in our organization, let’s see more involved! Junior members are youth 21 years and under as of December 31st of current year, with paid membership up to date. Nomination fee is only $25.00. So, as those ewe lambs are born this spring, watch them grow and choose one to be your ‘show lamb’ and nominate her. Complete set of rules and nomination form are available on the ABLA website www.ablasheep.org.
Youth News

Congratulations Becky Kron, NY, with her Champion Ewe at at the Erie County Fair, NY. She also won at Genesee Fair in New York and 1st Yearling Ewe at New York State Fair. She was purchased from Bear Hollow Farm, Ohio at the 2011 Great Lakes Sale and was used as Becky’s showmanship ewe at each show. Great job, Becky!

NEED TO CONTACT ASSOCIATED SHEEP REGISTRY?

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Fax: 641/942-6502
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Res. Grand Champion Ram & Best Head
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2010 NAILE

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937/246-0265
The Elusive Perfect Border Leicester

By Judy Lewman, Spring Creek Farm

Have you ever seen one? Better yet, have you ever been fortunate enough to own one...a Border Leicester that was absolutely flawless? I’m not sure that I have. But I keep chasing the dream with each lamb crop and the ewe in this photo illustrates much of what I’m looking for. An 8-month-old lamb owned by the late Sandy Russell, she was a 1995 NAILE Champion. Was she perfect? Only Sandy would have known for sure, but in my book she had to be close.

So what are we looking for? In light of the current discussion about ABLA’s breed standard (specifically, the recommended weights), those relatively new to our breed may be interested to know that the Board also reviewed the standard nearly 10 years ago. And in that process they consulted with several longtime breeders and judges via an anonymous questionnaire.

The end conclusion was that the standard, as then stated, would continue to serve the breed well into the future. No changes were made, but the issues pondered then provide a good review and may elicit further discussion today. While reading through the questions, and my response to each, please realize that this is only one breeder’s perspective! I encourage others to share their thoughts. Also remember that these questions only cover appearance. There are many other parts to the puzzle, not the least of which are temperament and production/performance history.

Explain what Border Leicester breed type means to you.

A proud head, stately carriage, and unique fleece immediately set our breed apart from all others. Aside from those breed-specific traits, I like to see a well balanced, moderately large, sound, muscular animal with adequate bone, good body capacity (also referred to as “depth,” translates into more milk), a long loin and straight back (no dip behind the shoulders), and not carrying excess weight (too often seen in Border Leicesters). Set of the hind legs is especially important (not cow hocked or post-legged).

Your ideal Border Leicester head. Where should the ears be set on the head? Should the head be short and blocky, or longer and more aquiline with prominent eye sockets? Are we looking for short or long necks?

Early ABLA literature states that, “Ears are erect like the Cheviot, except those of New Zealand breeding tend to have a broader face and ears not as erect in appearance. Both are permissible.” Acknowledging that, my personal preference is for long erect ears (visualizing a clock, ideal ears would be set at 11:00 and 1:00), a clean head (no black spots) of moderate length with a definite Roman nose, pink skin, large eyes, and dark nose, lips, and eye rims. Entire head—especially noting the poll and ears—well covered with fine white hair. Absence of scurs, the muzzle broad without being coarse, neck moderately long but not extreme.

What about spots? They are now permitted in our flock.

An interesting aside: In preparing animals for the show ring, Border Leicester breeders in the U.K. routinely, and openly, conceal black spots under a thick coating of zinc oxide ointment! Do you suppose that’s why the exhibitors also wear those long white coats?

What do you have in your flock?

We select against spots, especially in rams, but we would not cull a good ewe solely due to black spots. Since our stock is primarily of Ontario origin, where black animals have traditionally been discriminated against, perhaps we have fewer problems with spots than some others.

It’s important to remember that the original stock from which ABLA evolved was brought down from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. And, though all of the original ABLA imports were white, some of those Canadian breeders had already begun to produce black Border Leicesters.

Some breeders have argued that as a sheep ages, they can develop spots.

Rust spots occur occasionally on Border Leicesters. Currently this disqualifies them.

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By Judy Lewman, Spring Creek Farm

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Rust spots occur occasionally on Border Leicesters. Currently this disqualifies them.
From the Romney: The Border Leicester fleece is more lustrous and locks more defined (i.e. separate freely from one another). Border Leicester wool is of longer staple than the Romney, and often curly.

From the Lincoln: The Border Leicester fleece is of shorter staple, finer than the Lincoln, and—from what I’ve seen—usually carries much less grease.

**If you have Australian, New Zealand, or British influence in your sheep, how has this changed the American Border Leicester?**

Most Border Leicesters on this continent, if not all, trace back to at least one New Zealand ancestor. Several now also carry Australian and/or British blood (Sandy Russell, breeder of the ewe lamb pictured, used a British ram in the late ’80s). As mentioned earlier, our breed booklet mentions the different ear sets and notes that both are permissible.

Ideally, genetics from abroad would be used only to enhance those desirable characteristics already inherent in North American Border Leicesters—not to effect major change—since we are the ones who have maintained the breed in its true form. If you look at photos of British Border Leicesters from the early 1900s (pre-1940), you will see a sheep very similar to what is found today in North America. The newsletter article, “Wool Away? . . . not so fast!” speaks to this in greater detail: available at http://www.ablasheep.org/wp-content/uploads/wool-away.pdf

That said, I don’t mean to imply that our animals cannot or should not be improved! In doing so, we just need to keep reminding ourselves of those characteristics that set our breed apart from all others. Careful selection of each lamb crop can bring us one step closer to the perfect Border Leicester: a moderately-sized “Supermom” with terrific wool.

**Should the Border Leicester be required to show with belly wool on?**

Absolutely! Several years ago the NAILE catalog stated that Border Leicesters with shorn bellies would not be allowed to show. Belly wool is one trait that sets our breed apart from the Hexham (Bluefaced Leicester). In my opinion, we should do everything possible to distance ourselves as the Blues gain in popularity.

**How long should the Border Leicester fleece be for the show ring?** Bear in mind that most show animals are tipped to get rid of frizzes and the dirt that accumulates at the end of the locks.

I’d rather see fleece longer than short. Minimum would be 2-1/2” unstretched staple, with 4-5” ideal to show (even longer if the fleece remains in good condition) and belly wool of the same length. While trimming the occasional
WE NEED YOU!

Are you interested in running for a Director seat? Your biography needs to be received by the Secretary by March 1, 2012. Bios and ballots will be mailed to members, and voting will be done by return mail. The results will be announced at the 2012 Annual Meeting at the National Border Leicester Show & Sale in Wooster, Ohio.

Send your biography to:
Sally Barney
52 Cartland Road
Lee, NH 03861
or email to sally.barney@comcast.net

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Stray lock is OK, I’d rather not see overall tipping.

Since the show ring often drives the market for breeding stock, please consider the following: Border Leicester are a medium-sized breed, and our judging standard calls for 60% conformation and 40% fleece. However, the trend at shows appears to place the biggest at the top, regardless of the fleece.

The sheep at the top should be well balanced, exhibiting not only good conformation, adequate size and muscling but also an excellent fleece that’s true to breed type. Our leaders need to be vigilant in seeing that judges are aware of our 40% emphasis on fleece; further, we could provide basic fleece evaluation information for any who may be unfamiliar with our breed. Judges also need to know that we do not wish to encourage taller and taller sheep. We cannot allow yardstick mentality to drive the breed into oblivion—a 200 ewe is big enough!

Should we consider establishing a minimum and maximum on height?

Height standards are worth considering, but the devil is in the details. Aside from tossing an animal out of the show ring, how do you police a height standard? Is an over/under standard animal banned from registry as well? At what age do you measure, and who does the measuring? Rather than specify a given height I’d like us to recommend that body length (base of neck to base of tail) exceed height, preferably by at least 10%. Single trait selection for taller and taller too often results in “square” sheep with short bodies, i.e. height and length nearly equal.

We in the U.S. are not alone in wrestling with the bigger-is-better syndrome. Renowned British breeder and judge, Archie Smith-Maxwell, addressed colleagues in 1996 with concerns about extreme head carriage, weak toplines, and overly large sheep. He wrote, ”...I wonder... have we lost that bit of length in our headlong rush for a more cocky front end that a long back cannot support?... Fashion is a fickle friend... I wonder whether we will want such a big ewe in the next century. Listen to the debate... and act in time. The key to the coffers comes from the commercial attributes. Unfortunately we are allowing the showing to elude our judgement... we must stay a working breed.”

Summing it all up, my perfect Border Leicester would have a good head, strong topline, long body and a knockout fleece. But she (or her sons, based on their mother’s good traits since ours is a maternal breed) would also have been selected for those qualities one cannot see in the show ring, such as production history and temperament/ease of handling. In other words, a truly balanced animal. Or said another way: All things in moderation.
A Year To Remember... A Future To Anticipate!

Thanks to all our buyers in 2011 - we wish you great success with your purchases!

Plan a visit to our ranch!

TOM & ANNE KEY
140 Russell Ranch Lane  Great Falls, MT  59405
Ron Dreher, Flock Manager  Brian Hart, Shepherd
Great Lakes Show & Sale Plans

4th Annual ABLA Fleece Show

Hello and Happy 2012 from the Buckeye State. Again, it is time to start thinking about our 4th Annual ABLA Fleece Show to be held in conjunction with the National Border Leicester Sale at the Great Lakes Show and Sale in Wooster, May 26th and 27th.

This year we will have our ABLA show with the festival people handling things. Mary Scott from Virginia will serve as judge of the four classes (White Ram, White Ewe, Natural Color Ram and Natural Color Ewe). ABLA will provide ribbons and four premiums per class (1st - $25, 2nd - $15, 3rd - $10 and 4th - $5). The entry fee will be $2 per fleece. The entry deadline is May 1st, with a late fee of $5 per fleece. The fleeces will be for sale to the public, judged and sold in the festival area with a 10% commission charge going to the festival people. The fleeces do not have to sell and should be marked as such when entered. Fleeces are an important part of our breed and it is hoped that handling the show and sale in this manner will allow more people to discover, enjoy and purchase our product.

We will not be asking for sponsorship for the event. However, if anyone would like to contribute it would be great. Another possibility would be to donate a well skirted and clean fleece to be entered and sold with the proceeds going to ABLA.

If you wish to enter fleeces but are unable to come to Wooster, they may be shipped to: Marilyn Fogle, 22321 Raymond Road, Raymond, Ohio 43067, 937-246-0265.

Send the entry fee and information and the fleeces will be delivered to the grounds for you. In talking with the festival people, they would like some extra help with entries at judging time and in sales. If interested, please let us know.

Casual Gathering on Friday Evening, May 25th

Friday evening we will have a casual gathering of ABLA members and friends at the Best Western Motel in Wooster.

Last year we visited, renewed old friendships and made new ones. We had snacks and lamb sandwiches and will try to do the same this year. Everyone seemed to enjoy the casual get together.

This year we’d like to try something new. Since we’re scattered all over the country and in this age of technology, we would like members to use their digital camera or some other device and create a three to five minute narrated video either on a CD, DVD or thumb drive. These can be made by your local Wal-Mart and mailed to: Dana Evans, 5611 Merry Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43229.

Dana will constructing this file to be presented on Friday evening. Ideas would be to show your farm sign or sign used at the shows, introduce your family, give your background, sheep, favorite spot on the farm, how lambing is going, etc. etc. Be creative! We would like to have this mailed to Dana by May 1st to allow time to put things together. Weather permitting, we would like everyone to open their scene on April 1st so we can see what is going on all around the country on the same day. If there is interest, we can possibly make copies available for anyone wanting one. If there are questions, feel free to call Marilyn or Carroll Fogle, 937-246-0265.

Join us for Dinner Saturday, May 26th

Arrangements are being made to again meet at The Olde Jaol House Restaurant (really an old jail house built in 1865) in Wooster, May 26th. We are planning for a social hour to start at 6:00 pm with a cash bar, and dinner at 7:00 pm. After dinner we will have the annual business meeting of ABLA.

During the evening we will have a silent auction and are asking for donations of items. Everyone was very creative last year and we’re looking forward to some great items again.

For those who didn’t attend in 2011, you missed a very good time and we’re looking forward to seeing you in 2012. More information will be available in the next newsletter and online when final details are made.

A Note From The Treasurer

When you are registering or transferring your animals, please mail the check and forms to Associated Registries, P.O. Box 51, Milo, Iowa 50166. I do not handle that paperwork but I do handle the memberships. I will forward your registrations/transfers via regular mailing to Associated Registries as soon as I get them, but this will cause a slight delay in the processing time. When you are paying your dues, kindly forward your membership form and check made payable to “ABLA”, to me (Polly Hopkins) at 494 Evans Road, Chepachet, RI 02814. You can pay your dues with your registration paperwork at Associated Registries, but be reminded that we try to put together the Directory early in the year, so the sooner you pay your dues to me the faster the Directory will get done! Associated Registries will accept your dues, that is not a problem, but again, it may cause a slight delay in updating the Treasurer’s books. Thank you!

Seldom Seen Farm

Barbara Thompson
Border Leicesters

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mtthompson5@cox.net

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MAY 26
Judge: Judy Moore, Eagle, MI

SHEEP SALE: 11:00 A.M. SUNDAY
MAY 27
Auctioneers: Gary Saylor & Danny Westlake, OH

Sale Headquarters: Wooster Best Western, 330/264-7750 or 866/264-2057; Rodeway Inn, 330/262-5008 Block Name: Sheep Sale. Call now for discount rate!

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Wool Takes Cashmere’s Crown

The results are in, according to the Australia based Cooperative Research Center for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC), and wool is the winner. Objective testing has shown ultrafine wool garments can outperform 100 percent cashmere and high quality cotton for comfort and softness.

Sheep CRC commissioned the manufacture of select ultrafine wool fabrics to provide a set of benchmarks for the measurement of next to skin comfort and handle.

“It is the first time that ultrafine wool knitwear has been shown, using objective testing, to be superior to other natural fibers in terms of functional qualities valued by consumers,” Sheep CRC chief executive officer professor James Rowe said. “Wools in the ultrafine micron category, used for the manufacture of these test garments, represent about two percent of the Australian wool clip and, therefore, constitute a very rare and valuable fiber resource.”

To establish a performance benchmark for wool garments, the Sheep CRC provided wool buyers with fleece specifications for the purchase of four bales of ultrafine wool (14-15.7 micron) through normal market channels.

After purchase, the bales were identified as CRC 1 to 4 and sent to Italy for processing through to fabric. CRC 1 and CRC 3 were high-crimp wools and CRC 2 and CRC 4 were bold low-crimp wools, and each bale was processed separately and their fabric subsequently converted into garments.

Using the measurement systems, the four garments emerged as being in a class of their own - a combination of being more comfortable and with better handle characteristics than any other fabrics used in the trials.

Comparisons in the wearer trials included high quality cashmere and top-of-the-range cotton fabrics.

Notably for the wool and textile industries, the results also showed that there was no significant effect that could be attributed to wool crimp at these fine diameters.

Reprinted in part from Stock and Land, Australia

For Best Value, Separate Like Wool

The severe drought in Texas in 2011 caused a shift in sheep production. Many producers throughout the country stepped up to help the Texas sheep producers by working out pasture leases, flock leases and even purchase agreements to keep Texas genetics in production.

Traditionally, Texas sheep are known to have a finer micron wool than sheep from some other regions and that fine wool is in demand. Therefore, with this year's record wool prices, it could increase the value of the wool clip for producers who bought or are managing these flocks if they handle this wool differently than their traditional clip. It should be noted that the micron of a specific animal may vary due to changes in nutrition and management. Wools, which are marketed for best value, will benefit from being objectively measured. The companies that traditionally buy the Texas-type wools from specific customers will want to continue to gather these wools even though they are no longer calling the Lone Star State home.

If possible, the sheep should be kept separate from those with a courser micron count, as well as from those sheep with black fiber or hair.

However, even if they are run with different quality wool sheep, it is important that the finer wooled sheep be separated and sheared first, before all others, to avoid contamination from subsequent rounds of shearing. Since there is a significant price difference between 19.5 wool and 20.5 or 21.5 wools, producers can maximize their profits by separating these wools.

Overall, with proper preparation and a few extra precautions, producers should be able to see the potential of the Texas fine wools, if they came from quality sheep with strong wool genetics. The strong wool market should give all producers incentive to plan ahead to produce the highest quality wool clip possible.

Reprinted from NZ City

New Zealand Down to 31 Million Sheep

New Zealand is down to just 31 million sheep. From a peak of more than twice that in the early 1980s, the number has fallen another 1.4 million on last year.

The number of dairy cattle was up, however, to 6.2 million, 4-percent higher than 2010. The dairy herd is now double the number it was 30 years ago.

The statistics department also said the amount of land planted in grapes has increased, up 3 percent between 2009 and this year and another 7,000 hectares of forest was planted.

Reprinted from NZ City
We wish to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to all of our friends, neighbors and organizations that donated time, labor and equipment to help us cope with the tragic loss of animals and equipment as a result of a recent barn fire. Special mention needs to be made of fellow Border Leicester breeders Kelley Mansfield and Joe Knighten of Kearneysville, WV who arrived in our yard early Saturday morning with a truck full of feeders, creep gates, halters, lamb milk replacer and a lamb bar, shovels, and rakes saying “Help is here”. They stayed until dark and came back early Sunday morning, helping to clean up all of the burned equipment and remodel an old barn so lambing could continue with the surviving ewes to help get them out of the freezing rain and snow. A big thank you to Bill and Linda Koeppel for sending lamb milk replacer; we ended up with 12 orphan bottle lambs in the house since there was no other place to put them, Florence Clower for a personal donation and Kathy & Dave Shiff for the loan of much needed equipment.

Local sheep and livestock producers Tom & Trish Russell and Family, Tom & Nicki Neil, Henry Fletcher, Chip & Jacque Queen, Mahlon & Jeff Bender, Johnny Jenkins, Bill & Sue Bundy and Steve Bridges of VA Agribility all of whom sent hay, grain, and straw as well as buckets, feeders, lambing pens, etc in addition to days of labor. Recognition for their quick service goes to Glen Covington of the Marshall Cooperative and Augusta County Fair Board for providing holding pens and for the tremendous response of Little Fork Fire Dept for sending pumpers, rescue squad, and an animal ambulance, also Amissville Fire Dept as well as Culpeper County Animal Control Officers all of whom helped to move animals into fields and separate out orphans. Two out of a set of triplets were found totally away from the area curled up together in a field all by themselves. As it’s turned out they are both top quality and will be kept in the flock. The ram is now known as the Phoenix. Two of the barn cats perished in the fire. Of the remaining two, one was found in the ice house but goes insane when he sees anyone and the other was found in the hay barn of the old beef barn. She had been a long haired Persian. Her entire coat was burned to a half inch, her ears, face and all four feet were badly burned. She now lives in the house as she can no longer retract her front claws. Although we lost a lot of animals, we saved far more mainly due to the quick thinking of my daughter Lili and our Border Collies. My sincerest appreciation to them and to the Border Leicester breeders at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival for their donation. We found out the hard way that our insurance did not cover replacement value of the barn or the handling equipment nor the hay, straw and two tons of grain stored in the barn. This barn was the center of everything on the farm. All of our horse equipment and show supplies as well as $1100 in vet meds and supplies in the refrigerator were reduced to ash.

Our old barn had a 16 foot aisle with sliding doors as well as two horse stall doors halfway down the length of the barn. This was the only reason we saved as many as we did. The major losses occurred involving the new mommas and their babies locked safely away in their lambing pens with no escape and pretty much all of our early lamb crop who kept running back and forth in the aisle. Incidentally, we had two fire alarms in the barn. As for after effects of the fire, the entire flock came down with bottle jaw the very next day. Needless to say we lost all of the dewormer and syringes in the fire. Thanks to the local farmers co-op bringing in holding corrals and donations of dewormer from local sheep-
Fast Facts About American Wool

**Wool can be Worn Year Round** - Wool is comfortable to wear year round because it is an absorbent fiber that helps regulate body temperature. When the air is cool and damp, wool absorbs moisture and keeps a layer of dry, natural cooling system to work better. Fine-wool garments are very comfortable worn next to the skin when on fire, wool usually only smolders or chars. Although it will burn under intense fire, it normally self-extinguishes when the flame source is removed.

**Wool is Sustainable** - Wool is a natural, renewable fiber that offers a ‘green’ fabric choice. Wool is also biodegradable making it an eco-friendly product.

**Wool Garments are a Great Investment** - Since wool fibers resist pilling, snagging and breaking, wool garments typically outlast synthetic sweaters. Wool is color fast, resulting in garments that retain their deep, rich color without fading. Furthermore, since wool fibers are naturally elastic, wool garments don’t wrinkle, bag or sag out of shape.

**American Wool is Versatile** - American wool have many uses and is known for its ‘loftiness.’ In addition to its well-known uses in woven apparel, sweaters, hosiery and upholstery, American wool is also used to make insulation, hand-made rugs, tennis balls, bedding products and clean-up pads for oil and chemical spills.

**Wool Fabrics Protect** - Wool is the only fiber that naturally resists flaming. Unlike most artificial fibers, which often melt and stick to the skin when on fire, wool usually only smolders or chars. Although it will burn under intense fire, it normally self-extinguishes when the flame source is removed.

**Wool is Easy Care** - Wool also meets the “Total Easy Care” standards for consumers.

**Wool is Washable** - The process that allows wool products to be machine washed and dried without shrinking is available in the United States and offers great versatility for garments made of wool. This wool also meets the “Total Easy Care” standards for consumers.

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**SPOT REMOVAL TIPS FOR WOOL FABRICS**
- Alcohol or food: Place towel under area. Gently rub carbonated water toward center of spot.
- Blood: Pat with a damp sponge to remove excess. Then dab very gently with undiluted vinegar followed by cold water.
- Coffee or tea: Sponge with glycerin. If not available, use cold water.
- Red Wine or ink: Immerse in cold water.
- Lipstick: Gently rub with white bread.

U.S. sheep producers traditionally harvest wool during the spring months. In fact, more than half of American-produced wool is grown and sold during April, May and June. In 2010, the United States produced 30.6 million pounds of greasy wool.

The average weight of a fleece in the United States is 7.3 pounds. However, there is a variance from state to state; for example, an average fleece produced in North Carolina weighs 5.0 pounds while an average fleece produced in Nevada weighs 9.8 pounds.

In the past, U.S. textile mills consumed nearly all of the domestic wool production. However, over the last several years, many of the mills have either closed or moved their production facilities to other countries. Because of this shift, export markets, along with the U.S. mili-
Predators Take Staggering Toll on U.S. Sheep Numbers

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), a total of 247,200 head of sheep and lambs were killed by predators in 2009. However, a note to be aware of is that NASS only reports lambs lost after docking. Lambs lost prior to docking are not counted.

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) estimates that approximately 30 percent of predation in lambs occurs prior to docking. According to data collected from five western states that reported pre-docking, lamb-loss numbers in 2004, ASI estimates an additional 50,000 to 60,000 lambs were lost across the entire nation prior to docking.

This adjustment raises the total number of sheep and lamb losses from 247,200 to nearly 300,000.

Common Predators - Coyotes were responsible for 51.7 percent of total predator kills on sheep, followed by dogs at 22.7 percent and mountain lions/cougars/pumas at 7.7 percent. Bear, fox, eagles, wolves and bobcats also prey on sheep and lambs. The leading non-lethal control measures used to control predatory kills for the majority of sheep and lambs include guardian dogs and other guardian animals, hunting/trapping, night penning or confinement and fencing. Ranchers and farmers spend in excess of $9.8 million annually on non-lethal control measure in an effort to safeguard flocks.

Depredation - In 2001, ‘depredation’ - the act of predators killing sheep - accounted for 37.3 percent of all sheep-death losses, making it the single, largest cause of sheep mortality. It also made it a very expensive one; U.S. sheep producers lost more than $38 million in potential income due to predator kills of sheep and lambs. Depredation accounts for 15 percent of the total cost of sheep production, second only to feed and pasture costs.

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