Minnesota’s wolves have returned to the federal threatened species list following a federal judge’s ruling that rescinded a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2007 decision to delist the western Great Lakes population of gray wolves.

The gray wolf, commonly referred to as the timber wolf, was removed from the threatened species list in March 2007 and management of the wolf population became a state responsibility. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) managed wolves under the terms of a federally approved state wolf management plan.

The judge’s Sept. 29 ruling places wolves back under federal protection and management.

“As a result of this ruling, Minnesotans need to know there is no legal way for an individual to kill a wolf except in the defense of human life,” said Dan Stark, DNR wolf management specialist.

“Taking wolves to protect domestic animals may only be done by agents of the government.

“This was a technical legal decision that focused on federal rule-making procedures and will require the federal government to revisit its processes,” Stark said. “The ruling had nothing to do with the status of Minnesota’s wolf population

(Cont. on p.2)

MLWP Officers & Directors

• President—Dan Persons
  320-986-2336
  rafterp@runestone.net

• 1st VP—Don Adelman 952-466-2451

• 2nd VP—Sherry Stirling
  651-257-0827

• Secretary—Sheilina Nohner 320-237-3577

• Treasurer—Glenette Sperry 651-257-6735

• Past Presidents -
  Jeremy Geske 952-758-7938
  Bob Padula 320-269-7973

• NE Dir. - Warner Johnson
  651-257-0827

• NW Dir - Karen Stormo
  218-776-2223

• SE Dir. - Steve Scheffert
  507-833-3951

• SW Dir. - Doug Mathias
  507-376-9665

• WC Dir. - Mike Haubrich
  320-826-2526

• Metro Dir. & Membership Chair - Patty Anderson
  952-447-4184

• Satellite Reps are listed on the web site:
  www.mlwp.org
President’s Message - cont.

weather the storm and how long will the slump last? These are all questions that need to be asked and have the potential to make or break our businesses. I know it was no fun feeding five to seven dollar corn last year and the thought of $3.50 corn sounds good but will it or can it get lower yet. One thing I know is I can still make money at $3.50 corn if lamb prices will stay the course.

Once again we have seen a special interest group flex their power and have the Grey Wolf plan in Minnesota put in jeopardy. It is very important that any producer that is affected by the wolves or cares for those that are impacted by the wolf population write their legislators and contact the DNR with their concerns. I am going to make every effort to attend a meeting at DNR headquarters on October 29th to address this issue. This is an issue that will require diligence on our part to have an impact. As I stated in my last column, “It is the two legged predators that are often the most troublesome”.

I hope you are all planning to attend our annual conference December 5 and 6 in Hutchinson. We have a good program lined up and are planning on having a good time with plenty of time for socializing. The evening of the banquet should be a fun one with some fascinating entertainment, top notch meal, lively fundraising auction and socializing well into the night. Plan on attending, we need to support one another in any way we can. The annual business meeting will be on Friday afternoon and we need the input from all of you in shaping the future of the organization.

This year the board decided to cooperate with the U of M extension service to put on some sheep days around the state. We participated in four events around the state and touched approximately 100 producers from the NW, NE, SE corners and the metro area. The events were well attended and gave us a great opportunity to tell the story of MLWPA and the sheep industry. I thank the volunteers from our organization for their help in speaking at these events.

In light of the changes we have seen this past year and the challenges we all face I am reminded of the song by Bob Dylan – “Times They Are A-Changin’”.

Keep your pencils sharp and your minds open. See you in Hutchinson!!!

Gray wolves —Cont.

or the adequacy of state management.”

A survey last winter showed that an estimated 2,921 gray wolves live in Minnesota, which continues to rank second only to Alaska in wolf population among U. S. states. Minnesota’s wolf population surpasses the federal delisting goal of 1,251-1,400 wolves. The state has one of the highest wolf densities recorded anywhere, indicating that Minnesota’s wolf population is fully recovered, according to the DNR.

All wolf damage complaints should be reported to a local conservation officer, who will make appropriate contact with federal authorities. Only an authorized agent of the government is authorized to take wolves that cause damage.

Minnesota has more wolves than every other state except Alaska!

Editor’s note: MLWP and MN Farm Bureau have joined several other farm groups in expressing disappointment over the judge’s ruling. I conducted two radio interviews the week after the ruling.

The farm groups will continue to work with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, urging them to provide the necessary information that would allow the judge to reverse his decision. We will keep you posted as we learn more.

We have our friends at PETA and HOWL (Help Our Wolves Live) to thank for this. Animal rights groups want to protect the poor wolf, but don’t seem too concerned about our sheep that are being devoured.
2008 BAA Booth A Success - Kirk & Jill Roe family

Jill, Kirk, J.T., Lizzie, & Lexie Roe would like to thank you for the opportunity to help educate the public about the sheep industry at the 2008 BAA Booth. We continue to make several changes that were positive for MLWP and the Minnesota State Fair. State Fair Board & staff were very supportive of what the MLWP have allowed us to do with the booth. We were allowed to expand the booth area this year. We had signage and a table for demonstrations outside the sheep barn. Next year we will be able to expand into the “Wool Shed” the second four days of the Fair. Steve Pooch told us the booth looked very good again this year.

On behalf of MLWP, the Roe family would like to thank the following volunteers and donors:

Cindy & Kari Schneider (sheep for I sheared a sheep), Larry Swenson Family (lambs on a stick and display/petting sheep), Susan Gesch (spinning demo and merino wool info), Becky & Stan Utecht (display sheep and spinning demo), Stacie Busch (fitting demo and donated fleece), Wayne Busch (wool education demo), Jonathan Roe/Roe family (educational displays, meat cuts demo’s, display sheep, slick shorn demo’s), Sherry Stirling (fleece and woolch), Sheilina Nohner (American Lamb Board materials & “We Power” shearing demo with WCCO), Doug Rathke (WCCO shearing Demo) Glenette Sperry (Make It With Wool display), Alyssa Nelson (Make it with Wool modeling), Bob Padula (wool clothing and wool processing videos, items from Woolen Mills - Faribault Woolen Mill, St. Peter Woolen Mill and Northland Woolen Mill), Diane Moore, Terri Knowlan & Tasha Hock (Spinning Demonstration), Todd & Robin Schmidt, Jonathan Geifer, Warner Johnson, Charles & Jean Stark, Dick Boniface, Chuck Christians, Mary Fratzke & neighbor, Don Adelman, and 4-H sheep project members during 4-H Livestock weekend. Our apologies if we forgot anyone!

This year we had a larger wool section, (Woolen Mills from MN provided samples). The display about the steps of making raw wool into fabric always had visitors. The by-products section where we could play “What’s in your purse” was an area of interest. The meat section in the booth had nutrition and cooking information. Lamb stick samples were handed out each day after the educational presentation on “Proud to be an American…Lamb that is”. Over 1400 sticks were handed out during the fair.

The kid’s activity area was expanded. Small wooden benches and small tables were added this year for kids to sit at and do activities while the adults toured the booth, watched demos or just sat on a bench by one display pen.

We also had daily drawings for $35 towards lamb purchase, $15 certificate for wool/yarn purchase and various donated items including meat thermometers from ALB, and items donated by the St. Peter Woolen Mill. There were fitting demos, market lamb shearing demos, meat cuts presentation and spinning demonstrations. The public had the chance to make their own lamb kabob using ground lamb this year. The kabobs were cooked and eaten during the demo. These were done outside the sheep barn.

Lamb Lead contestants and past Make It With Wool winners modeled outfits and talked with the booth visitors. There were over 13 different education things they could attempt including a wholesale/retail cuts matching, word finds, breed ID, by-product identification, Sheep Bingo, “Do Ewe Know your Sheep” etc.

The Pack-O-Rama is a yearly Agrilympics activity scheduled by the State Fair. I sheared a sheep was an activity scheduled daily 1 to 1:30 pm, over 800 participated in this activity. The Baa Booth participated in five media spots (2 with WCCO TV, 1 morning with Fox 9 and 2 with KSTP radio). One of the WCCO and morning with Fox 9 actually took place at the BAA Booth.

Stacie Busch—fitting demo Cont. on p. 16
Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers
2008 Conference registration form
DECEMBER 5 & 6, 2008 – HUTCHINSON, MN
BEST WESTERN VICTORIAN INN

Name(s) __________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

Street    City    State    Zip    County

Phone# ___________________________ E-mail _______________________________

Costs: 

MLWP/MIWW Conference Registration
(for educational sessions, annual meeting & trade show)
MEMBERS: _____ x $10/person = _______   _____ x $15/person = _______
NON-MEMBERS: _____ x $20/person = _______   _____ x $25/person = _______

Banquet/Auction (Friday) _____ x $20/person = _____   _____ x $30/person = _______

Luncheon (Saturday) _____ x $10/person = _______   _____ x $13/person = _______

TOTAL ENCLOSED $ ____________

Completed registration forms and checks (payable to MLWP) should be sent to Glenette Sperry, 31460 Quinlan Ave, Center City, MN 55012 before November 20th, 2008 to receive the early bird special price.

You can also pay with Visa/Mastercard credit card by providing the following information:
Card Number: _______________________________ Expiration Date: _____________
Signature of cardholder: ___________________________ 3 digit code on back: _________

Funding assistance for educational materials at this conference has been provided in part through a cooperative agreement with United States Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency via the “Minnesota Grown” promotion group.

Hotel accommodations: Best Western Victorian Inn, 1000 Highway 7 West, Hutchinson, MN, 55350.
The MLWP rate is $80 + tax. Call 320-587-6030 or 800-369-0145 to make your reservations.
Shepherd’s Holiday agenda

Friday, Dec. 5

Noon—Registration & trade show opens
12:30—Opening remarks—Dan Persons, MLWP President
12:45—Trapping Coyotes—Foster Mooney, producer
1:45—Trade show / door prize drawings
2:15—Lamb cooking demo—Chef John Schumacher
4:30—Trade show / door prize drawings
4:45—Annual meeting, election, by-laws update
6:30—MLWP leg of lamb banquet
7:30—Entertainment
8:00—MLWP fundraiser auction

Saturday, Dec. 6

7:30—Registration, trade show, MIWW contest
8:00—Predator management—Janet McNally, producer
8:30—MIWW orientation, contest, rehearsal
8:50—Trade show / door prize drawings
9:00—LRP Lamb—Bret Oelke, U of M Extension
10:20—Trade show / door prize drawings
10:30—Livestock guard dogs—Janet McNally
10:30—MIWW workshop
11:20—Trade show / door prize drawings, last chance for silent auction bids, trade show closes at noon
Noon—ASI/ALB presentations
MLWP Jr report—Sheilina Nohner, youth coordinator
12:30—Silver Bell luncheon, presentations by last year’s winners—Drewry family, Roe Family
1:30—MIWW fashion show—Glenette Sperry, coordinator
2:30—Adjourn

Livestock protection is theme for Conference

The focus of this year’s MLWP Annual Conference (a.k.a. Shepherd’s Holiday) is predator control. Two highly knowledgeable, hands-on presenters will share their experiences.

Back by popular demand, Chef John Schumacher will work his culinary magic on a lamb carcass from start to finish. Learn how to cut, prep and cook lamb that will melt in your mouth. Chef John grew up on a small farm in western Minnesota. He is a world traveler, and a life-long hunter and fisherman. He brings over 30 years professional experience as the owner/operator of the renowned Schumacher’s New Prague Hotel and Restaurant. Chef John will have some of his cookbooks available for purchase.

The annual business meeting will take place prior to Friday night’s banquet. Complimentary hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar will be available. Surprise entertainment and a wonderful lamb banquet will follow. Friday evening’s festivities include with the annual fundraiser auction.

Proposed by-laws changes will be discussed at the business meeting Friday afternoon.

Once again, the state Make it With Wool (MIWW) contest will be held in conjunction with the conference on Saturday, Dec. 6. Contestants will compete for a chance to represent Minnesota at the National MIWW contest in San Diego in January. The MIWW fashion show will conclude the conference, taking place after the Silver Bell Luncheon and awards program.

Join us in Hutchinson, at the Best Western Victorian Inn, December 5-6. For hotel reservations, call 800-369-0145. Remember, for reduced registration and meal prices, register by Nov. 20.
On-Line Sheep Management Courses

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program is currently taking registrations for our On-line Sheep Management Classes. The online courses are designed for sheep producers.

Continuing with providing various delivery methods of educational information, the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program launched 4 online courses so sheep enthusiasts can keep current in the comfort of their own home or office.

The courses provide fundamental sheep management information designed for any size or type of sheep operation.

- Introduction to Sheep Management (LWMP 1001)
- Introduction to Sheep Health (LWMP 1300)
- Ewe Ration Formulation (LWMP 1502)
- Wool Characteristics and Properties (LWMP 1701)

These courses would be an excellent opportunity for youth and adults to learn more about sheep production within their own home or community.

The Introduction to Sheep Management course is a 14 lesson self-paced course with continuous enrollment. This is the online version of the successful home study course that provides an overview of year-long sheep management. The other courses are more structured and are designed for more interaction. The required textbook for the Introduction to Sheep Health is Gates’ Practical Guide to Sheep Disease Management (3rd edition) and the Sheep Production Handbook, 2002 Edition is required for the Ewe Ration Formulation course and the Wool Characteristics and Properties course. More information on these courses can be found on our web page www.pipestonesheep.com

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program is a sheep management education/consulting program offered by Minnesota West Community and Technical College located at Pipestone, Minnesota. The purpose of the program is to help sheep producers increase income and profit through the production of quality lamb and wool. To maximize the profit per ewe and realize the full potential of all sheep through use of modern management practices, new technologies and new approaches to marketing of both lamb and wool.

For more information visit the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program web page www.pipestonesheep.com or contact one of the Lamb and Wool instructors, Philip Berg, philip.berg@mnwest.edu, (507) 825-6799 or Mike Caskey, mike.caskey@mnwest.edu, (507) 825-6808. To register for one of the online courses contact Sue Lovell (507) 847-7929, sue.lovell@mnwest.edu or register on-line at www.mnwest.edu/formmail/formdl.htm

MN Farmers rank fifth in total CRP participation

Minnesota Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Perry Aasness announced that $109,921,113 in CRP annual rental payments will be sent beginning October 3 to Minnesota landowners for fiscal year 2009. USDA issues Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments throughout the year. These payments include an annual rental payment, a 50 percent expense reimbursement for establishing and managing cover as well as incentive payments for enrolling eligible high priority conservation practices.

Included in the $109 million are 63,094 contracts (1,774,132 acres) on 33,724 farms. The payments allow producers enrolled in the program to earn an average of $3,259 per farm or $62 per acre. Only Iowa, Texas, Kansas, and Illinois exceed Minnesota in annual CRP rental payments.

Nationally, CRP enrollment stands at 34.7 million acres, making it the largest public-private partnership for conservation and wildlife habitat in the United States. This voluntary program helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally-sensitive land. Producers enroll in CRP and plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve water quality, control soil erosion and enhance habitats for waterfowl and wildlife. In return, USDA provides producers with annual rental payments. CRP contract duration is from 10 to 15 years.

Editor’s note: For all the people who seem to think farmers are causing all our environmental problems, it is good to remind them that MN farmers are among the nation’s leaders in voluntary participation in conservation programs.

It's also fun to give our friends at FSA a bad time that CRP could stand for Coyote Repopulation Program.
COOL officially underway

ASI has long been on the record supporting COOL for sheep products and believes that the benefits provided to the industry and to consumers will be substantial. In its comments, the sheep industry strongly supports the use of a producer affidavit to ensure that meat covered by COOL is accurately labeled at retail. Several livestock industry groups reached agreement on wording of such an affidavit. ASI urges USDA to accept it as a valid country-of-origin claim.

Editor's note: You may have already received a copy of this affidavit from the auction(s) you typically sell your sheep at. By signing and returning this form, you are doing your part to comply with COOL. This avoids having to verify your sheep are “products of the USA” every time you sell.

There are no common terminology differences describing the meat from different age groups of species such as cattle and swine. Yet, there is a difference between lamb and mutton. The sheep industry, therefore, encourages the amendment of covered commodities to include mutton.

Like many other commodities, ASI, in 2000, developed and registered a trademark for Fresh American Lamb to be used by marketers to differentiate their product from imported and/or frozen sheep meat. Since this mark is clearly consistent with the labeling requirement of born, raised and slaughtered in the United States, it is recommended that the use of the trademark on packaging be allowed as proper evidence that the product packaged under this mark is a product of the United States.

Through USDA, the sheep industry operates the National Scrapie Eradication Program which includes a regulated animal identification program. Feeder and slaughter sheep being imported into the United States must carry official permanent identification. Since the rule allows for slaughter facilities to utilize the "National Animal Identification System or other recognized official identification system" as proof of animal origin, it is the request of the sheep industry that processors recognize the scrapie identification as a means to prove the origin of sheep at slaughter.

"This interim final rule is an improvement over earlier proposed rules on country of origin," commented Burdell Johnson (N.D.), ASI president. "The industry encourages the move that only sheep exclusively born, raised and slaughtered in the United States should carry the 'Product of the U.S.' label on them. The sheep industry is excited to finally have a program that will offer consumers the ability to identify where the meat is from that they buy at retail."

32 senators requested a number of changes to the interim final rule for implementing country-of-origin labeling (COOL) that becomes effective Sept. 30, 2008. The senators raised concerns about changing the provision that allows products of U.S. origin to be labeled more broadly as mixed origin. According to the letter, it was the intent of Congress that meat product exclusively born, raised and slaughtered in the United States will have its own label, such as "Product of the U.S." so that consumers could easily determine U.S. product from product that is from other countries. It is not the intent of Congress that all U.S. products or such product from large segments of the industry be combined with a multiple countries of origin category.

Another point involved USDA's move to categorize processed food items, which are exempt from labeling, many foods that consumers would expect to be labeled. According to the interim rule, foods that are fried, broiled, grilled, boiled, steamed, baked, roasted, cured, smoked or restructured would not require labeling. For example, a whole cooked chicken would not require labeling.

In conclusion, the senators asked the department "to work in good faith to ensure the rule reflects Congressional intent and agreement between producers and packers. Producers and consumers have waited long enough and deserve a common-sense rule that accomplishes the goal of letting them know where their food products come from."

What does COOL affect?
- Commodities included in the 2002 bill: Fresh beef, pork, fish, lamb, peanuts, fruits, and vegetables (whole muscle cuts and ground meat, not organs), wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish
- Commodities added in the 2008 farm bill: Chicken (not turkeys or eggs), goat meat, macadamia nuts, pecans, and ginseng
- COOL was enacted in 2005 for wild and farmraised fish and shellfish

What are the labels?
- U.S. Origin: Grown and processed or born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S.
- Product of the U.S., Country X and/or Country Y: Applies to muscle cuts of animals imported but not for immediate slaughter, ground meat, or commingled covered commodities
- Product of Country X and the U.S.: Product of covered livestock imported into the U.S. for immediate slaughter
- Product of Country X: Imported products

What does this mean to you?
- Operationally, probably not much: Producer affidavits are acceptable evidence for slaughterers to base a COOL declaration
- Marketing, probably not much in the short term: This is mandatory, so no one is going to pay you for your ability to prove origin. You could benefit from Age/source-verified programs

What will cool cost you?
* Estimated $3.50/hd of sheep or goats in first-year start-up costs for COOL. (From Jim Sartwelle, III, AFBF Livestock Economist)
**Legislative Update**

**Disaster Assistance Changes Included in 10 Acre Bill**

Before adjourning last week, the U.S. House and Senate passed H.R. 6849, a bill to waive the 10 acre provision in the farm bill for 2008. The bill is awaiting the President’s signature.

In addition to waiving the 10 provision the bill included several corrections to the supplemental disaster program. Many of the changes were strictly technical, but there were several more significant changes made to ensure smoother implementation of the program:

- “Ghost” crops (uninsured crops planted following a failed insured crop) are explicitly excluded from consideration under the supplemental disaster program. Producers will not be penalized for growing an uninsurable ghost crop behind a failed crop. The ghost crop won’t count towards the whole crop farm revenue guarantee calculation or the actual whole crop farm revenue calculation.

- A “de minimis” exception is provided for the risk management purchase requirement for disaster coverage. In other words, if a portion of the farm (such as the corners around a center pivot) is not of economic significance or if the fee required for supplemental disaster coverage exceeds 10 percent of the value of that coverage, then the risk management requirement is waived.

- In order to be eligible for a supplemental disaster payment, producers will be required to show a minimum 10 percent yield or quality loss for at least one crop of economic significance on the farm.

- The language clarifies that there is no link between the Supplemental Revenue Program (SURE) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). Grazing land does not have to be insured to be eligible for SURE, and crop land does not have to be insured to be eligible for LFP.

**Rescue Package has Ag Tax Benefits**

The financial rescue package passed by the House, 263-171, and signed by President Bush last week has a number of tax incentives that benefit agriculture. Of particular note are the “patch” in the alternative minimum tax and extension of the renewable energy production tax credit.

The law extends the renewable energy production tax credit, extends the alternative refueling stations tax credit, extends the biodiesel production tax credits and provides a bonus depreciation for property used to produce cellulosic ethanol. It extends the deduction of state and local general sales taxes and extends the enhanced charitable deduction for food donations and shortens the depreciation for farm machinery and equipment.

**MN Roll Call on the Rescue Package**

Yea: Cong. Kline, Ramstad, McCollum, Ellison, Oberstar, Senators Coleman and Klobuchar

Nay: Cong. Walz, Bachmann, Peterson

**USDA to Launch Public Access Initiative for CRP Land**

The U.S. Agriculture Department will fully implement President Bush’s directive to offer incentives to farmers and ranchers for opening up their land to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to the public for hunting, fishing, bird watching and other activities. The goal of the incentive is to double public access by providing up to 7 million acres of CRP land for public access in the next five years in participating states.

**President Signs 10-Acre Aggregation Bill**

The 2008 farm bill contained a provision (1101(d)) that prohibits farmers with 10 base acres or less on a farm from receiving direct payments, counter-cyclical payments or the new Average Crop Revenue Election program (ACRE) payments on that farm. Congress intended for farmers to be able to aggregate or reconstitute farms to meet this threshold, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) was not allowing farmers to aggregate or reconstitute farms, thereby eliminating almost 460,000 farm tracts from the farm safety net.

In response to USDA’s interpretation of this provision, the Senate and House passed a bill that eliminates the 10 acre provision for 2008 ONLY. The President signed this bill on October 13. Producers have 45 days (from beginning Oct. 13) to re-apply for payments on acres previously denied. It is important to note that when sign-up begins on November 1 for 2009 winter wheat, the 10 acre provision once again will apply.

**WTO Panel OKs EU Beef Sanctions**

The United States has been given the green light to continue imposing some $125 million in trade sanctions against European Union (EU) imports in
Legislative Update - cont.

retaliation for the EU’s ban on beef produced with growth promotants.

A World Trade Organization (WTO) panel ruled last week that amendments made to the EU’s anti-hormone rules in 2003 were not in themselves sufficient to warrant a lifting of the punitive damages that have been imposed by the United States since 1999. The split decision by the panel ruled that the United States and Canada were justified in keeping the sanctions in response to the EU ban on imports of U.S. and Canadian beef.

U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab said the decision shows that the United States did not violate its WTO obligations by making additional duties on certain EU products after the EU claimed it had come into compliance by amending its ban on beef from animals treated with growth-producing hormones.

Green Acres a Hot Topic

Last issue the changes made to the Green Acres program in the omnibus tax bill from the 2008 MN legislative session were highlighted. As affected landowners are becoming aware of what those changes mean to them, many are very upset. As a result, several legislators have held public meetings to get input, and have promised to work on either fixing the problems, or repealing the changes made last year. Some of the points being made by citizens include:

- Don’t change the rules in the middle of the game.
- There is value in preserving the “non-productive” ag land (don’t encourage owners to sell it for development.
- You should be able to transfer your farm to the next generation (or to another farmer) without having triggering the payback as long as the new owner continues to farm and wants to leave the land in Green Acres.
- The 7-year payback for non-productive land is too high.

Action will likely be taken on Green Acres early in the 2009.

Stop the Sales Tax Increase

MN Farm Bureau President Kevin Paap released the following statement opposing the ballot question that would increase our state sales tax:

“The Minnesota Farm Bureau opposes the proposed constitutional amendment to increase the state’s sales tax rate by three-eighths of one percent,” said Minnesota Farm Bureau President Kevin Paap.

“Farm Bureau policy developed and approved by our voting members clearly states that we oppose any increase in the statewide sales tax rate, and we oppose constitutionally dedicating a portion of the statewide sales tax for specific purposes,” said Paap.

According to Paap, many of the programs and projects that could be funded if the tax increase passes may be worthwhile and deserving of funding, yet, the decision to fund them should go through the legislative process just as funding decisions for all other state programs and projects. He added that an increase in the statewide sales tax rate should not be contained in the Minnesota Constitution.

“It is very important for voters to understand they are voting on a tax increase on the November 4 ballot. If this measure passes, it will result in a tax increase of over $11 billion over the next 25 years,” said Paap. “This tax increase will then be contained in the Minnesota Constitution. The only way the decision can be decreased or eliminated in the future will be to again amend the Minnesota Constitution through another ballot question.”

“We, the citizens of Minnesota, elect legislators to make the tough decisions on raising taxes and funding programs and projects, and we should allow them to do so,” said Paap. “By etching a sales tax increase into our state constitution we are tying the hands of those legislators as they grapple with the state budget in the future, and Farm Bureau cannot support this.”

Editor’s note: Proponents are not mentioning the fact that if passed, a lot of the new money could be used for land acquisition. Do we really want the DNR owning more land?

Mexico Lifts Age Restriction for Sheep Carcass Imports

ASI has learned that Mexico has lifted its age restriction on the importation of sheep carcasses. For over five years now, exporters had to comply with an age-verification system to demonstrate that sheep carcasses were from lambs of under 12 months of age. This will allow the exportation of older sheep and mutton carcasses to Mexico.

“This will allow U.S. exporters and Mexican importers to do business as there is significant demand for US sheep meat in Mexico, and it should also reduce a regulatory burden on sheep processors,” said Paul Rodgers, ASI deputy director of policy.

USDA is currently in the process of working with its field offices in various agencies to ensure their personnel have the appropriate certificates and processes in place.
Old McDonald had a cow and a whole lot of medical costs - from the Star Tribune, Sept. 16, 2008

Farmers and ranchers spend twice as much on health care, on average, than those who work off the farm, according to a report out Tuesday.

The average farmer or rancher spent $11,200 on health care, compared with $5,600 for non-farmers. That included premiums and out-of-pocket costs.

In Minnesota, 44 percent of farmers and ranchers reported spending more than 10 percent of their income on health care, according to the study, by the Access Project, a Boston-based think tank.

Farmers have a higher average income and are more likely to be insured than other Americans. But many of them buy health insurance directly or through an agent, which often is more expensive than group coverage through a large employer.

The 2007 study surveyed 2,017 non-corporate farm and ranch operators in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. An overview of the data was released a year ago and Tuesday's report provides further analysis.

Nearly a quarter of respondents said medical costs contributed to financial hardship for them or a household member.

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS NO DIFFERENCE IN LIVESTOCK FED ORGANICALLY VS CONVENTIONAL - CropLife America report

Researchers at the University of Copenhagen published the first-ever study to examine mineral and trace element retention in produce and then livestock across multiple cultivation methods over more than one growing season.

No difference was found between the levels of major minerals and trace elements in the fruits and vegetables grown using organic methods and those grown using conventional methods. Furthermore, when this produce was fed to livestock over a two-year period, no differences were found in the retention of minerals and trace elements.

Many people continue to pay up to 30-40% more for organic varieties of produce under the misguided impression it is healthier; however, science continues to support that consuming organic food is a lifestyle choice, rather than a health requirement.

Misguided Anti-Horse Transportation Bill Moves Forward

Under a bill approved by a U.S. House of Representatives committee, an individual could be punished with a three-year prison term for trafficking in horse meat, a product that is consumed in much of the world.

The Animal Agriculture Alliance learned that the misguided and misleadingly named Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act (H.R. 6598), a bill which would criminalize the sale and transportation of horses for the purposes of slaughter, was approved by voice vote and recommended to the House of Representatives by the House Judiciary Committee.

Multiple amendments intended to lessen the frightful negative impact the bill would have on horse welfare were defeated along largely partisan lines.

The American Sheep Industry Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Quarter Horse Association, American Farm Bureau Federation and National Cattlemen's Beef Association, among many others, oppose this fatally flawed bill.
American Lamb Board Directors Appointed

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer on Thursday announced five appointments to the 2009 American Lamb Board (ALB). Appointees will serve three-year terms. ALB was developed by the sheep industry to promote American lamb and sheep products.

Newly appointed board members are Leo J. Tammi, Mount Sidney, Va., representing producers; C. Patricia Tirrell, Charlotte, Mich., representing feeders; and Edward M. Allaway, Tinley Park, Ill., representing first handlers. Reappointed to the board are David J. Trotter, Marysville, Ind., representing producers and Laurie K. Hubbard, Bellefonte, Pa., representing seedstock producers.

American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) president Burdell Johnson stated that the organization is pleased the secretary used our producer nominations.

The 13-member board is composed of six producers, three feeders, one seedstock producer and three first handlers. The secretary of agriculture appoints approximately one-third of all board members each year.

ASI, a certified national nominating organization for producer members to the lamb board, supported the nominations of Trotter and Tammi for producer positions to the board as well as David McEwen (Mont.), Fred Pugh (N.C.) and Warren Cude (Texas).

Veggies shrink your brain!?!?

Scientists have discovered that going veggie could be bad for your brain—with those on a meat-free diet six times more likely to suffer brain shrinkage.

Vegans and vegetarians are the most likely to be deficient because the best sources of vitamin B12 are meat, particularly liver, milk and fish. Vitamin B12 deficiency can also cause anemia and inflammation of the nervous system. Yeast extracts are one of the few vegetarian foods that provide good levels of the vitamin.

The link was discovered by Oxford University scientists who used memory tests, physical checks and brain scans to examine 107 people between the ages of 61 and 87.

When the volunteers were retested five years later the medics found those with the lowest levels of vitamin B12 were also the most likely to have brain shrinkage. It confirms earlier research showing a link between brain atrophy and low levels of B12.

Editor’s note: This explains a few things about some the vegetarians I have met. Pass the lamb chops!

Mountain-Plains Sheep and Goat Conference

Researchers and extension personnel from Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming worked together to develop the Mountain-Plains Sheep and Goat Conference. The event will be held at the Island Grove Park exhibition building in Greeley, Colo., on Nov. 14-15, 2008.

This two day conference is a great opportunity for sheep and goat producers to learn about the latest information and management techniques available to the industries. A trade show will be held in conjunction with the meetings to allow producers the opportunity to see the latest available products.

In addition to the conference seminars and tradeshow, Saturday afternoon will be set aside for hands-on demonstrations of various management practices. Wool grading, meat goat selection, artificial insemination and reproductive ultrasound are just a few of the topics that will be covered during the afternoon session.

Complete information about the event is available at http://mountainplainssheepandgoat.com/.
What the critics don’t want consumers to know about ethanol - Terry Francl, AFBF Economist

This article examines what is probably the media’s best keep secret associated with ethanol – it is saving consumers a ton of money. The constant theme of critics, as expressed in the campaign being conducted on the behalf of the Grocery manufactures Association (GMA) consortium, is that ethanol has caused food prices to rise. The message has been very effective where the media is looking for either a sensational headline. There is only one problem with this message – it’s less than half the story.

Historically, food prices have risen at close to the core inflation rate, about 2.5% per year. Last year food prices rose at a 4% rate and in 2008 the USDA is currently projecting that food prices will increase in the 5-6% range. Taking the mid-point of 5.5% and subtracting the historical food/core inflation rate of 2.5% suggests that in 2008 food prices are likely to increase at a rate 3% higher than in the past.

It is projected that consumers will spend approximately $1.1 trillion dollars on food in 2008. Three percent of that is $33 billion. So it is likely that consumers will pay $33 billion more for food but save $70 billion in gasoline costs. That is more than a two-to-one savings. Critics won’t admit if it were not for ethanol, consumers would be paying over $4.60 per gallon, but that is the reality.

Also, only a limited proportion of the $33 billion increase in food costs can be directly attributed to corn. In a recent USDA publication it was noted, “Given that less than 1/3 of retail food contains corn as a major ingredient, these rising prices for corn-related products would raise overall U.S. retail food prices less that 1% per year above the normal rate of inflation.” Instead of the overall two for one savings figure when looking at corn alone, the actual savings-to-cost ratio might be as high as 6 to 1.

Summary: The best kept secret about ethanol is that for every extra dollar spent for food, consumers will save at least two dollars in gasoline costs. While it is understandable that food companies are frustrated with the higher ingredient costs (even though they are experiencing record or near record profits), it is more difficult to understand why they want to pursue a policy that will cost consumers more if the production of ethanol is reduced or eliminated in the US.
Pre-lambing Ewe Management – SheepLetter, Jan. 2000

Time and effort spent on the ewe flock pre-lambing can result in relieving stress during lambing and improve health of the baby lamb. A few management checks or changes at this time can save dollars and time down the road.

Pre-lambing vaccination - ewes should be vaccinated 3 weeks prior to lambing with Clostridia perfringes C & D with tetanus. This will stimulate the ewe's immune system to produce antibodies that will concentrate in her colostrum. The lambs will then have high levels of antibodies that will help prevent type C and tetanus. This is the best and most cost-effective way to protect young lambs against these two diseases.

Nutrition - ewes should be on an increasing plane of nutrition. Requirements for ewes in late gestation greatly increase as they approach lambing. Ewes carrying twins or triplets require even more feed. Any thin ewes should be sorted into a smaller group to allow them to: 1) eat a more concentrated ration and 2) have less competition for bunk space.

If the ewes have been maintained on cornstalks as their primary feedstuff it is critical that you begin feeding vitamins if you haven’t already. Crop residue has very low levels of vitamins and gestating ewes can become deficient. If the ewes are on a hay diet the vitamin level may be sufficient although you will still benefit from feeding a mineral high in Selenium and Vitamin E. These are important to ensure that the lambs are not born deficient in Selenium or Vitamin E which will predispose them to White Muscle Disease. Gestating ewe lambs are still growing and less competitive at the bunk so they need to be in a separate pen than the mature ewe flock.

If conditions allow, ewes should be shorn one month before lambing. This will allow the ewes to begin mobilizing energy from fat reserves. Also, lambs have a much easier time finding the udder of shorn ewes. Shorn ewes take up less space in the lambing barn and give off more heat into the environment. Care must be taken the first week after shearing. It is important that the ewes have dry shelter that will protect them from rain and snow. If the temperature is below zero shorn ewes will require additional energy which can most cost-effectively be supplied by increasing the grain fed to the ewes. Small amounts of exercise is beneficial to the pregnant ewe such as feeding in an outside lot or allowing the ewes access to a small pasture during the day. Often this gives the shepherd an opportunity to see slow, limping, ketotic or problem ewes. These are all candidates to move to a smaller group such as with the ewe lambs.

All feed fed to gestating ewes should be fed in bunks or feeders. Feeding gestating ewes on the group greatly enhances the transmission of abortion disease. Additionally, feeding 250 mg. per head per day of tetracycline will help control Chlamydia abortions. Any aborted fetuses and placenta need to be immediately removed from the pen to prevent transmission. The shepherd should always wear disposable latex gloves when handling aborted fetuses as many of the common causes of abortions can infect humans. Pregnant women should stay out of the lambing barn.

Have a sheep health question you want answered? Submit it to jgeske@fbmn.org

Don’t miss the 2008 Shepherd’s Holiday in Hutchinson, Dec. 5-6!
No Shortage of Challenges for Livestock Farms -

Editorial by Jeremy Geske

On September 30, I attended an MPCA meeting regarding the rule revisions for “Non-degradation” of our waters. Yes, there are a whole entourage of MPCA staff working on rules to prevent our “clean” waters from becoming impaired. Of course there are multitudes of other MPCA staff working on the “impaired” waters. Even though the overall goals and many of the procedures are very similar, the two groups of MPCA staff really aren’t that aware of what the other is doing. As one of the handful of people “lucky” enough to represent agriculture at all sorts of water-related meetings, this can be a bit frustrating.

A common theme of most of the water meetings I attend is that farmers receive a lot of the blame. It is also clear that the majority of those making the accusations have little understanding of modern farming or how farmers and ranchers manage their farms to protect soil and water. We have not done a good enough job of telling our story.

Back to the “non-degradation” meeting. Yes, it was as exciting and riveting as it sounds (OK not really). As I was glued to every word, I got an e-mail that a federal judge had overturned the decision to de-list the gray wolf. So even though Minnesota has more than twice as many wolves as the recovery goal set when they were first listed, they gray wolf remains on the endangered species list. Ranchers are not allowed to kill a wolf even if the wolf is killing our livestock. If only I could bottle and sell common sense, I’d be rich.

California voters will be voting on a ballot measure to eliminate gestation crates for sows, and cages for laying hens. If it passes (think of all the non-farmers who live in CA!), the poultry industry will be essentially eliminated from California. Even though we haven’t seen this in Minnesota yet, we have had county ordinances that severely limit the number of animals (other than traditional livestock) a farm can have, and we have had a bill introduced to set standards of care for dog and cat breeders. Many states, including MN will be dealing with animal rights initiatives in the future, especially as the majority of citizens are further removed from the farm.

Minnesotans will be voting on a constitutional amendment to raise the state sales tax to provide additional funding for the environment, wildlife and the arts. I wonder how many voters really understand how much money this will be and how it will be used? Do voters know that much of this money could be used for state agencies to buy more land?

By time you read this, the elections will be over and we will have new elected officials to deal with. Depending on the outcomes of a number of close races both at the state and federal level, we could face a whole new set of challenges for agriculture.

Regardless of what happens, one thing is clear. There will be no shortage of challenges for livestock producers. It will be more important than ever for farmers to be active in organizations that support them. There is strength in numbers.
MLWP Jr Association first meeting - Sheilina Nohner, Youth Coordinator

The first meeting of the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Junior Association (MLWPJA) was called to order on October 18, 2008 at 11:30 a.m. After introducing each other and participating in some mixers, the board members got right to work planning their activities and goals for the year. The first task of the board members was to decide on objectives for the MLWPJA. The group came up with two main objectives:

- Promote the Lamb and Wool Industry to Youth
- Promote the Lamb and Wool Industry to Consumers

Other things the MLWPJA board members are interested in taking part in during the upcoming year would be, in addition to promoting the lamb and wool industry to both youth and consumers,

- Attend the spring workshop
- Sponsor a scholarship
- Attend the annual American Sheep Industry conference
- Participate in trade shows
- Attend a national agricultural event encouraging MLWPJA objectives

All in all, the October MLWPJA meeting was a great success and a lot was accomplished! Everyone enjoyed getting together to discuss promoting the lamb and wool industry. Many great ideas were generated at the meeting and the board members are very excited to get those ideas going!

The next MLWPJA board meeting will be December 6th at 9:00 a.m. at the Shepherd Holiday Conference at the Best Western Victorian Inn in Hutchinson, Minnesota. All board members are encouraged to attend; this will be a very important meeting to get most of the previous ideas in motion!

Did you know?

By being a member of MLWPA, you can get the ASI Weekly News by email for free?
Just contact ASI for information on getting your email account set up.

info@sheepusa.org
## Calendar of Events

### 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 14-15</td>
<td>Mountain Plains Sheep &amp; Goat Conf.</td>
<td>Greeley, CO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 18-20</td>
<td>Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Hettinger, ND</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 20-22</td>
<td>MN Farm Bureau Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Brooklyn Park, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 21-22</td>
<td>ND Lamb &amp; Wool Convention</td>
<td>Mandan, ND</td>
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<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>MN Bred Ewe &amp; Doe Sale</td>
<td>Rochester, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 3-5</td>
<td>SDSU Shearing School</td>
<td>Brookings, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 5-6</td>
<td>MN Lamb &amp; Wool annual conference</td>
<td>Hutchinson, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 5</td>
<td>MLWPA Annual Banquet and Auction</td>
<td>Best Western</td>
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<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>MLWPA JrA meeting</td>
<td>Victorian Inn</td>
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<td>Dec. 6-7</td>
<td>U of Wisc. Shearing School</td>
<td>Arlington, WI</td>
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<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>Farm Transfer / Estate Planning</td>
<td>Cologne, MN</td>
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<td>U of M Extension</td>
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### 2009

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 15-16</td>
<td>Strategic Animal Ag conference</td>
<td>Willmar, MN</td>
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<td>Jan. 21-24</td>
<td>ASI Annual Convention</td>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
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<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>MFBF Sheep &amp; Goat committee mtg</td>
<td>Eagan, MN</td>
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<td>Feb. 6-7</td>
<td>Lambing Time Short Course</td>
<td>Pipestone, MN</td>
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<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>NDSU Little “I”</td>
<td>Fargo, ND</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 21</td>
<td>Spring Sheep Workshop</td>
<td>Webster, MN</td>
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<td>Dvorak Farm</td>
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More volunteers and demonstrators are always needed and welcomed. There was an increase in demonstrators from 2007 to 2008. We hope that there will be more interest in working the booth in 2009. We plan to have a volunteer signup sheet at the Annual Conference this December. We would like at least one “meat” expert and one “wool” expert working each shift. Some demos and people have already been scheduled for 2009. The FFA Stage can be used for a professional chef cooking lamb.

Kirk & Jill will start recruiting volunteers and demonstrators later this year and early in 2009. If you already know that you can volunteer or demonstrate for the 2009 BAA Booth please complete the volunteer sheet at Annual Conference or call Kirk & Jill at (507)525-0970 or email them at kwroe@bevcomm.net. We’re looking forward to 2009 and hope you are too!