



Minnesota Lamb & Wool
Producers Association

Shepherds' Bulletin

Spring 2002

President's Column

By Mike Haubrich

Early lambing for many Minnesota sheep producers is winding down at this point. Reports out in the field indicate that lambing has gone smoothly for most producers. The mild winter weather to this point has been welcome, but offered the challenge of never ending mud. When the groundhog saw his shadow this year, he predicted six more months of mud, not winter.

The USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service released the sheep and wool statistics the end of January 2002. Minnesota now has 115,000 breeding sheep (a 5,000 head increase) on 2400 sheep operations. Minnesota leads the nation in percentage of lambs born per ewe with 172%. On the negative side, Minnesota producers receive some of the lowest wool prices in the US with an average price for 2001 of only 12 cents per pound.

Don't forget the slaughter lamb and feeder lamb program (the Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program) was extended another year also and runs through July 31, 2003. You can sign up for the program through your local FSA office.

At press time, the details of the new ewe retention program through the FSA are yet to be released. This program is the result of

negotiations on removing the tariffs and quotas on imported lamb through the 201-trade case. Program details are yet to be released. It is anticipated that payments this spring will be around \$18 per ewe lamb retained in your flock.

The 2002 Farm Bill is now in conference committee and differences between the U.S. House of Representatives and the US Senate versions are being worked out. A Wool Marketing Loan Program was included in both versions and it looks good for a wool program in the 2002 Farm Bill. This program will be similar to LDP's for other agricultural crops. If this program is included in the final 2002 Farm Bill, the sheep industry will at least have a safety net to cushion the world-wide wool factors beyond our control.

As more and more sheep producers have Internet access, the MLWPA is looking at developing a web site to help keep our members better informed. Also, the cost of postage and printing of materials keep increasing. We would like to use email as a way of sending out information to help keep costs down. Please email Bob Padula at Padula@starband.net if you would like to receive MLWPA information electronically in the future.

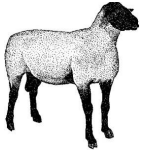
Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program

While the tariffs and quota portion of the 201 Trade Case were eliminated, the other programs are still available and new ones are coming. ASI worked hard and was able to secure an additional \$43 million in government assistance. The feeder lamb and slaughter lamb program is scheduled to be extended an additional year. Also, there will be a new \$13 million dollar ewe retention program in the next two years. Details were not available at press time, but are expected to be released in early April 2002.

Reminder that year three of the LMAAP is August 1, 2001 through July 31, 2002. Feeder lambs and slaughter lambs meeting the criteria outlined in the LMAAP are eligible for program payments. Sheep producers must contact their lamb buyers or marketing agencies to determine what procedures they need to follow in order to be eligible for payments. If you sell lambs directly to consumers, there is a provision allowing small processing facilities to certify eligible lamb carcass.

Your local FSA Office has the ability to print off the program procedures or you may access the information at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/201lamb/201.htm>.

Attention Sheep Producers ---- Scrapie Eradication Program



Regulations regarding Scrapie have changed and now affect the entire sheep industry. *Effective November 20, 2001 most Minnesota sheep will need official identification for interstate movement (sales and exhibition).* To get your required official flock identification ear tags contact Lindsey Aipperspach at the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at 1-866 USDA TAG (1-866-873-2824). Many of the choices of ear tags are free.

Effective 11/20/01 all sheep in the following categories are **required** to be identified using the official ear tags: Sheep of any age sold for breeding; sheep for exhibitions, including petting zoos; and all cull sheep over 18 months of age. Additional information can be found on the following websites:

National Institute of Animal Agriculture: www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie

USDA Official Website: www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/scrapie.htm

MLWPA Membership – Patty Anderson, Chair

This year we are focusing efforts on getting previous members back in the flock. Members listed in past directories were sent information on joining MLWPA. One of the biggest benefits to MN sheep producers is our national organization – ASI. Without the ASI lobbying for us in Washington, DC we would not have any government programs to help us compete in the international marketplace.

If you know of other sheep producers that are not members, please let me know so we can get information on becoming a member to them. It often works best if you, the neighbor, can discuss why MLWPA is beneficial for the sheep industry in MN and why you are a member yourself.

The target date for having the MLWPA membership directory complete is early May 2002.

MLWPA Officers

President - Mike Haubrich
1st VP - Steven Read
2nd VP - Jeremy Geske
Treasurer - Sheryl Hoffman
Secretary - Julie Schuch

MLWPA Regional Directors

North East - Foster Mooney
North West – Tom Scepaniak
West Central - Bob Padula
South West - Doug Mathias
South East - Robin Schmidt
Metro - Patricia Anderson

Dille and Ness Honored As Friends of the Minnesota Sheep Industry

The MLWPA honored two state legislators for their support of the Minnesota sheep industry. Senator Steve Dille and Representative Robert Ness were recognized at the MLWPA conference and trade show for their assistance in trying to get legislation passed to fund additional sheep education programs in the state of Minnesota. While the legislation was passed in both the Minnesota House and Senate, it was removed during the special session last summer.

MLWPA Resolutions passed at the Annual Meeting December 1, 2001

- *Where as* wool is an agriculturally produced commodity in Minnesota, and other commodity crops produced in Minnesota are supported under current Farm Bill Legislation, and Federal support of other agricultural commodities places sheep producers at a financial disadvantage within Agriculture,
Be it resolved the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association supports the inclusion of wool in the 2002 Farm Bill.
- *Where as* the population of timber wolves in Minnesota have exceed recovery goals outlined in the Endangered Species Act, and
 The State of Minnesota has passed a Timber Wolf Management Plan,
Be it resolved the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association support delisting of the timber wolf from the Endangered Species Act.
- *Where as* livestock predation is increasing and a serious threat to the economic viability of sheep production in Minnesota and the United States, the population of coyotes in Minnesota is increasing and coyotes are an unprotected species in Minnesota, and
 Under current law, the taking of coyotes by aid of artificial lights is currently illegal, and current law does not grant counties the authority to enact bounties on coyotes, and
 The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources does not have an effective predator control program to assist with predation control efforts for sheep producers,
Be it resolved the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association support efforts to implement and fund a livestock predator control program by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Be it further resolved* that the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association support the taking of coyotes by artificial lights and allowing counties the ability to enact bounties on coyotes.
- *Where as* Minnesota ranks 6th nationally in the number of sheep operations with over 2400 individual operations, 6th in number of lambs on feed, and 12th nationally in total stock ewe numbers, and sheep production is an economically important industry in Agriculture, and
 The University of Minnesota College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences is supported by tax paying sheep producers in Minnesota who utilize the University as a resource for profitable sheep production, and
 The emphasis on sheep production from the University of Minnesota College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences has decreased its emphasis on sheep production in the past 5 years,
Be it resolved the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association supports efforts to increase sheep production programming in Minnesota through the University of Minnesota College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Science. *Be it further resolved* that the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association request the University of Minnesota Extension Service to create a sheep extension position within the state to better assist the citizens of the state it serves.
- *Where as* leafy spurge is a noxious weed in Minnesota, and leafy spurge is a plant that sheep will consume and aid in the control and spreading of this noxious weed.
Be it resolved the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association encourage the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to utilize sheep as a biological control method for leafy spurge.

4-H Sheep Project News

Jeremy Geske, Extension Educator Dakota County

Even though lambing season may not be over yet, it is time for 4-H sheep project members to begin thinking about the fair season. 4-H breeding sheep need to be identified by May 15, and 4-H market lambs must be weighed and identified by May 15. There are several rule changes that will affect 4-H sheep project members in 2002.

One major change is that all 4-H sheep project members must comply with the Federal Scrapie Eradication Program. The new mandatory Scrapie program is primarily a record keeping and identification system that will create the opportunity to trace infected sheep to the source flock. All 4-H sheep project families should call the Board of Animal Health (651-296-2942) and “register” your flock (even if you don’t maintain a flock year round). Then you will be sent the official Scrapie tags (they are free, and you have a choice of metal or plastic). From that point on, when sheep leave your farm (to go to a show or sale, or when you sell them to someone), they must be tagged with a Scrapie tag. The person who raised them before you take them back to your farm should tag sheep you purchase. Keep records of all sheep bought and sold. This applies to:

- All sheep over 18 months of age
- All breeding sheep (including market ewe lambs) (including <18 months old)
- All Scrapie exposed, suspect, or test-positive sheep

Market wethers going to a terminal show or sale do not need to be tagged. It is still being debated whether or not market wethers going to county fairs will need a Scrapie tag. Call Dr. John Zack at the Board of Animal Health for more information.

Another requirement of 4-H sheep project members is the **Quality Assurance and Livestock Show Ethics (QA&E) Certification**. In order to be eligible to exhibit sheep, beef, swine, dairy, goats, poultry, or rabbits at the state fair, 4-H members must be QA&E Certified. Some counties may require QA&E certification to exhibit at the county fair as well. Check with your county Extension Office on the specific requirements for your county, and to get a list of the QA&E training session in your area. You will need to re-certify every two years. The purpose of this program is to make sure all 4-H food animal exhibitors understand their important role in producing safe, wholesome food. It also stresses the need for 4-H members to maintain a high standard of ethical behavior when exhibiting livestock.



A third major change is an adjustment on the *whiteface market lamb class*. To qualify for this class, a lamb must 1) have absolutely no black or brown on the head or legs, or 2) be registered as one of the following breeds: Cheviot, Columbia, Corriedale, Dorset, Lincoln, Montadale, Polypay, Rambouillet, Southdown, Targhee, or Texel.

You must bring registration papers for option 2. Lambs that do not meet either of these requirements will show in the blackface class. If you have questions about a whiteface breed not on this list, contact Phil Berg (507-825-5416) or Dave Resch (952-492-5410) to get a ruling from the state 4-H sheep show committee.

Sheep Care and Management Publication Available

Jeremy Geske, Extension Educator Dakota County

Extension Educators and veterinarians get many requests, by both experienced and novice sheep producers, for reference materials to help them manage their sheep enterprise. Dr. Scott Haskell, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, Extension Educators Jeremy Geske and Dave Resch, and other sheep specialists created a *Sheep Care and Management* manual.

Sheep Care and Management is 83 pages of information on genetics, reproduction, lambing, nutrition, health, marketing, facilities, manure management, predators, grazing, and wool. It is an excellent addition to any sheep enthusiast's library.

Sheep Care and Management is available for \$20 (also available on CD for \$25). Contact Dr. Haskell at haske003@umn.edu for ordering information. Proceeds from the manual will be used for developing additional resources for sheep producers.



This publication was developed with financial assistance from the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association, the University of Minnesota Extension Service Sheep Focus Team, the Minnesota Foundation for Responsible Animal Care, and the College of Veterinary Medicine. This manual (and CD) will be available for sale at the Spring Sheep Workshop, the Shepherd's Harvest Sheep and Wool Festival, Fall Sheep Day at Morris, and the MLWPA annual conference.

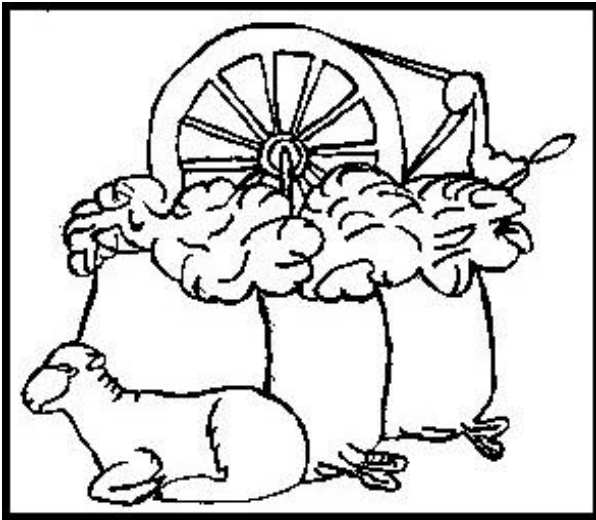
Shepherd's Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival ---May 11 And 12, 2002

The Washington County Fairgrounds in Lake Elmo will be the site of the fourth annual Shepherd's Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival to be held May 11 - 12. The hours are 9:00am - 5:00pm on Saturday and 10:00am - 4:00pm on Sunday. Admission and parking are free.

Visitors will be able to watch sheep being shorn, visit a "living catalog" sheep breeds display, and enjoy watching the boundless energy of border collies in herding dog demonstrations. An authentic Mongolian yurt will be set up on the grounds and visitors will be able to watch as it is erected on Saturday morning. A wide range of other activities will be featured in the two-day festival sponsored by the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association.

Jeremy Geske, Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, will offer the "Summer Sheep Workshop" for shepherds on Saturday. Topics include basic sheep nutrition, sheep husbandry, forage selection, and ram selection. Additional information is available by calling Pat Ryan at 651-459-8554 or visit the Festival web-site at <http://burroak.hypermart.net/festival.htm>

The Washington County Fairgrounds are located at 12300 North 40th Street, at the intersection of Washington County Road 15 and Minnesota Highway 5, east of Lake Elmo, Minnesota.



**SHEPHERD'S HARVEST
SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL
May 11 and 12, 2002**

INVENTIONS AND GADGETS CONTEST

Have you made some handy device or gadget that makes your sheep operation run more efficiently? A special mineral feeder perhaps or a collapsible pen. Enter your invention in our inventions and gadgets contest sponsored by sheep! Magazine. Prizes are offered for the best entries in adult and junior categories. The adult division is open to anyone while the junior division is for 4-H or FFA members or youth less than 21. Fill out the entry form included in this brochure giving a description of the item explaining the size, dimensions, how it is made, its intended use, and approximate cost. Include a photo of the item. Your invention can be displayed at the festival or a poster with descriptive information can be presented. The entry form should be sent to: Dr. Chuck Christians, 536 Inca Lane, New Brighton, MN 55112.

Inventions and Gadgets Entry Form 2002

Yes, I would like to enter the competition as (check one) Adult Junior (under 21)

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Project Cost \$ _____

Description of Invention/Gadget

(Please attach an additional sheet and include either a photo or drawing of your item)

Get More Production Out Of Your Pastures

Jeremy Geske, Extension Educator Dakota County

Optimizing the use of your pastures has several benefits. It reduces the amount of hay your flock will need, reduces the amount of labor and equipment needed to harvest hay, distributes manure in the fields (reducing barn cleaning and fertilizer needs), and increases forage production. It is not all fun and games, as it will likely mean increased fencing costs, as well as more time and labor to move animals between paddocks and monitor pastures.

In order to optimize your pasture, you need to know when to start grazing, when to stop grazing, and understand photosynthesis. Plants need leaves to absorb sunlight for photosynthesis to convert water and nutrients gathered by the roots into growth for the plant. A plant with few or no leaves can't grow very well.

Most pastures are grazed too early in the season. Stay out until mid-May or you can do long term damage to the pasture. Early spring growth uses up the nutrients stored in the roots, and then the leaves must be available for the plant to continue to thrive. For most plants, 4 to 8 inches is the minimum average plant height you must have before turning animals out to graze. The optimum height for most plants is 8 to 14 inches tall before you initiate grazing.

Knowing when to terminate grazing is just as important as knowing when to start. Pastures should have a minimum of 4 inches of stubble following grazing (preferably 8 to 10 inches). This may mean moving sheep to new paddocks frequently. Leaving more stubble will result in more re-growth. Grazing too closely removes the leaves and doesn't allow the plants to re-grow. In one experiment, half of a pasture was clipped down to 2 inches, while the other half was clipped down to 9 inches. One week later, the half clipped to 9 inches was up to 18 inches tall, while the half clipped down to 2 inches had only grown back to 4 inches tall. The moral of the story is "don't over-graze!"



Rotational grazing (sub-dividing pastures into smaller paddocks) can help optimize your pastures. It can lead to a longer grazing season, or an increase in stocking rate. Proper soil fertility can increase forage production. Utilize soil test results to develop a fertilization plan. Pasture mixes that include cool season grasses and legumes provide higher quality forage, and produce higher yields in the warm summer months than pastures without legumes. Control weeds by clipping them before they go to seed. You may want to spot spray problem weed areas in the fall.

Wool Possibilities in Minnesota Being Explored

Unlike many states, Minnesota has several mills and companies that use wool. During the next year, representatives from the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association will meet with several mills and companies within the state to see if and how they can use more Minnesota wool. By using Minnesota wool and being processed in Minnesota, there may be the potential to utilize the services of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Utilization and Research Institute to help both the Minnesota companies and sheep producers.

It is ironic that other sheep producers and wool companies in the US have developed relationships with these Minnesota-based companies to help create successful value-added wool products and ventures. Meanwhile Minnesota sheep producers continue to sell their wool in traditional ways, only to receive some of the lowest prices in the United States for their wool.

Calendar of Events Year 2002

April

13 MLWPA Board meeting
Glencoe, MN

May

11 - 12 Shepherd's Harvest Sheep
and Wool Festival -
Washington Co. Fairgrounds -
Lake Elmo, MN

15th

4-H Livestock Affidavits due
in county offices

June

24 - 27 National Targhee Show and
Sale
Midwest Stud Ram Sale
Sedalia, MO

December

6-7 MLWPA Conference & Trade
Show Rochester, MN

Future Newsletter Schedule:

July State Fair Edition

Sept/Oct Conference and Trade Show

Dec/Jan Conference Highlights and
Upcoming Legislative Issues

*MLWPA Newsletter
Rt. #5 Box 69
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