

Shepherd's Bulletin

Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association



Sheep Producers Descend on DC - Congress Quickly Passes Farm Bill

Spring 2008

Okay, so maybe we didn't have THAT much to do with it, but it was nice to see congress finally agree on the new Farm Bill. A special thanks should go to Congressman Collin Peterson (D-MN), Chairman of the House Ag Committee, for his leadership.

Dan and Laura Persons, Bob Padula and Jeremy Geske attended the ASI Spring Trip to DC representing MLWPA. We attended the lamb chop barbeque on May 7, visited our congressional offices on May 8, and met with USDA officials on May 9.

In addition to Peterson and his staff, we were able to meet with the ag staff



Bob Padula, Congressman Collin Peterson, Dan Persons, Laura Persons and Jeremy Geske

for Senators Coleman and Klobuchar, as well as Congressmen Walz, Kline

and Oberstar, and Congresswoman Bachman.

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View From the Hayloft - Dan Persons, President

The floor of the hayloft is just about empty now and the pens beneath are much quieter these days. We moved the first 270 ewes out to pasture last week after synchronizing them and putting rams in with them. By the number

of harness marks on them we should be busy next October. The next 120 are being synchronized now and will go out with the rest on Thursday. It seems strange to be breeding ewes while we still have 300 ewes left to lamb but

for us this is a response to the needs of our changing industry.

At our last board meeting we discussed several topics of importance to our

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www.mlwp.org

President's Message - cont.

organization and to sheep production in general. I have been working with Wayne Martin from the U of M extension service on putting on several sheep special sessions around the state to better relay the opportunities and challenges producers face in Minnesota. A part of these sessions will be to listen to what producers need from extension and from MLWPA. The next thing we talked about is the formation of a task force to begin confronting the challenges that OPP presents to flock owners and to look into ways that MLWPA could be a partner in tackling this disease that causes considerable economic losses in the sheep industry. At our winter meeting we briefly discussed pursuing a state check-off system and decided to research the possibilities. We recognize that in these lean times the last thing we need is another expense but on the other hand we also see that

the public research facilities for sheep have been cut to the bones or eliminated in many states and that we need to begin doing more for sheep production than simply promoting niche markets and value added schemes. There are bigger needs for disease research, vaccine development, feed trials and education than can be fulfilled through our small annual dues that are only paid by a minority of the producers. If we are to see our industry flourish everyone needs to be a participant in the process.

I want to thank MLWPA for sending Jeremy Geske, Bob Padula and myself to Washington DC the first week of May. I owe a special thank you to my daughter, Laura, for coming with us as well. She participated in all of our meetings with legislators and the USDA and was a great addition to our



conversations with these individuals. She also helped me navigate around town and kept me out of trouble. We were well received by most, but not all, of the offices we visited and came away feeling that our voices were heard and that they were genuinely concerned. One of the highlights was getting to sit in on the press conference unveiling the new Farm Bill (Food, Nutrition, Energy Bill). This bill contains two key items relating to sheep. We were able to

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MLWP to DC —Cont.

We expressed our support for the passage of the farm bill which included several provisions for sheep producers (highlighted in another article). We also explained the importance of increased funding for predator control/damage programs, and our opposition to legislation that would ban some forms of predator control methods. In addition, we talked about the need to return the scrapie eradication program back to full funding and the importance of keeping our H2A worker program intact. We had positive feedback from the staff at most of the offices regarding our concerns. Bachman and Ramstad (with whom we did not get a

chance to visit) were the only ones from Minnesota's delegation who voted against the Farm Bill.

Learn more about sheep provisions in the Farm Bill on p. 3

Congressman Peterson's staff invited us to attend the press conference announcing an agreement had been reached on the Farm Bill, which was pretty exciting. We were disappointed to learn later that day from the Secretary of Agriculture that the President would likely veto the Farm Bill. The good news is that the

bill passed the Senate and the House with enough votes to over-ride a veto if necessary. Secretary Schafer was on the same flight back to Minneapolis as Jeremy, so they got to visit a little more about the Farm Bill and other issues.

The Friday meetings at USDA were very informative, covering a wide range of topics including: some adjustments to the LRP-lamb program, National Animal ID, trade issues that could affect US sheep producers and mandatory price reporting.

The MLWP Directory (p. 52-53) has info on contacting Congress.

Sheep Programs in the Farm Bill —Peter Orwick, ASI

The U.S. House and Senate each voted to approve the conference report of the new farm bill and by such strong margins to indicate if the president vetos the legislation, Congress will be able to over ride it. Below is a brief recap of the primary sheep programs of the legislation.

Loan Rates for Nonrecourse Marketing Assistance Loans (wool LDP)

The base loan rate for graded wool remains at a \$1.00 per pound for the 2008 and 2009 crop years and increases to a \$1.15 base for the 2010 – 2012 wool clips. The ungraded rate was authorized at the current 40 cents for the life of the farm bill. While we are pleased the farm bill conferees did increase the wool loan rate, it would obviously been better to have it effective for this year however the shortage of money has plagued this farm bill since the start and each of the three or four commodities that secured an increase have to wait until 2010 for implementation.

National sheep industry improvement center

The House bill provides for the continuation of the National Sheep Industry revolving fund to promote strategic development activities and collaborative efforts to strengthen and enhance the production and marketing of sheep or goat products in the United States; by optimizing the use of available human capital and resources within the sheep and goat industries, and adopting flexible and innovate approaches to solving the long-term needs of the U.S. sheep or goat industry. The House bill eliminates the requirement that the National Sheep Industry Improvement

Center be required to privatize its revolving fund and authorizes appropriations of \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

The Senate amendment renames the program as the National Sheep and Goat Industry Improvement Center. The Senate amendment also eliminates the requirement that the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center be required to privatize its revolving fund. The Senate amendment provides for new mandatory funding of \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, to be available until expended, and authorizes \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012 for infrastructure development, business planning, production, resource development and market and environmental research.

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision with modifications. It retains the existing name of the Center and provides \$1,000,000 in mandatory funds for the Center.

Market Access Program (MAP)

Funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program will continue at \$200 million and \$34.5 million annually respectively in the new legislation. This authorizes interstate shipment of state inspected meat as supported by ASI policy.

High priority research

Funding for research on drugs for minor species and minor uses for major species. Also funding for research on the Bighorn Sheep diseases and in the interaction with domestic sheep.

Livestock Disaster Programs

Livestock Indemnity Program

Definition of Livestock: Cattle (including dairy cattle); bison; poultry; sheep; swine; horses; & other livestock, as determined by USDA.

Eligible Losses: Producers are paid for death losses of eligible livestock in excess of normal mortality rates due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, disease, wildfires, extreme heat, and extreme cold. (No county, state, or other trigger required.)

Payment Rates:

Indemnity payments to an eligible producer on a farm shall be made at the rate of 75 percent of the market value of applicable livestock on the day before the death of the livestock occurred.

Livestock Forage Program

Covered Livestock: Eligible livestock must have been owned, purchased, leased, or subject to a contractual agreement during the 60 days prior to the beginning date of the disaster. Eligible livestock include those that are owned, leased, under a contractual agreement with an owner and grazed on eligible grazing land, or subject to a purchase agreement.

Exception: Livestock fed in a feedlot and not grazed as a part of a livestock producer's normal operation are not eligible for LFP.

Eligible Producer: An eligible livestock producer is an owner, contract grower, or cash or share lessee that provides pastureland or grazing land that is physically located in an eligible county for livestock.

Pipestone Facility Tour and Profit School

Sheep Facility Bus Tour

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program will host a sheep facility tour on Monday, June 9, 2008. The purpose of the tour will be to show the latest innovations in sheep buildings, handling systems, feeding systems and facility layout. Tour participants will see a state of the art lambing barn, hoop barns, remodeled buildings, drive thru feeding barn along with various feeding systems designed to reduce labor and minimize feed waste. Each farm also has sheep handling systems that are unique from one another. In

addition, this will be an opportunity to hear the philosophy of sheep production from four successful sheep producers.

Sheep for Profit School

The Sheep for Profit School is a professional management and business school for the sheep industry. The purpose of the school is to help producers improve their sheep management skills; increase the profitability of their sheep operation and form business relationships. The school will be intense and combine

lecture, group discussion and visit two outstanding Pipestone area sheep operations. Expert instructors with diverse and practical sheep experience will help you define your vision and build a practical plan to achieve your goals. This is a three and a half day investment that will change your sheep operation and how you view the sheep industry. The dates are July 9-12.

Pictures of the tour stops, program schedule and registration information can be found on our web page www.pipestonesheep.com

Farm Bill Sheep Provisions - cont

Exception: A producer who leases pasture on a rate-of-gain basis is not eligible.

Eligible Pasture: Native or improved pasture with permanent vegetative cover or planted to a crop specifically for the purpose of grazing eligible livestock, that is physically located in an eligible county.

Exception: CRP acreage released for haying or grazing is not considered eligible pasture.

Carrying Capacity: The normal carrying capacity of a livestock producer's eligible pasture land is determined. The number of livestock eligible for payment cannot exceed the producer's normal carrying capacity.

Normal Grazing Period: The normal grazing period is the period of time when grazing occurs in a year in the absence of a drought or fire.

Insurance Requirement: A livestock producer must have insured the

grazing land through crop insurance or noninsured assistance program.

Sold Livestock: If a livestock producer sold eligible livestock because of drought during the two years prior to the current year, payment may be issued for 80% of the normal rate.

Payment Rate: The payment rate is calculated for one or two or three months. A monthly payment rate is calculated according to the amount of corn is needed to feed one beef cow for one month, which is a standard of 15.7 pounds. The 15.7 pounds of corn is adjusted according to the type and size of other livestock. The value of the corn per pound is determined by dividing by 56 the higher of the national average corn price for either; 1) 12 months prior to March 1 of the disaster year; or 2) 24 months prior to March 1 of the disaster year. The monthly payment rate for one month is calculated according to the following:
 $.60 \times 30 \times \text{Pounds of Corn} \times \text{Value of}$

$\text{Corn per Pound} = \text{Monthly Payment Rate}$

County Eligibility: The U.S. Drought Monitor is used to determine a county's eligibility for LFP.

Monthly Payments: The U.S. Drought Monitor uses drought categories as a measure of the severity of a drought.

D2 Category for 8 weeks during the grazing season = 1 monthly payment.

D3 Category at any time during the grazing season = 2 monthly payments.

D3 Category for 4 weeks during the grazing season = 3 monthly payments.

D4 Category at any time during the grazing season = 3 monthly payments.

Losses Due to Fire: Payments (50 percent) may be issued to livestock producers who lease federal land, but were unable to graze the land due to fire.



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

September 20 - 21, 2008

Saturday 9 - 5:30, Sunday 9 - 4

**Codington Co. Expo Complex,
Watertown, SD**

Workshops with

Blade Shearer, Kevin Ford;

Knitting Instructors Rick Mondragon and Kathleen Taylor;

as well as respected regional teachers.

Workshops

Fiber Animal Displays

Photography Contest

ALSA Llama Show

Fiber Competitions

Fiber Vendors

Sheep Shearing Demo

Continuous Spinning Circle

Saturday Supper

& much more

Free Admission & Parking

visit our web site for more information

www.northcountryfiberfair.org

Gray Wolf Control Guidelines for 2008 - MN DNR

Gray wolves in Minnesota were removed from the Federal endangered species list in March of 2007. Gray wolf depredation management was widely accepted as way to reduce wolf-human conflicts and develop tolerance in the State for a recovering wolf population. Since 1978, wolves have been trapped and relocated or euthanized when verification of livestock or dogs have been killed or injured by gray wolves. Under State management, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will take an integrated approach to wolf depredation management. This approach incorporates the DNR Division of Enforcement, DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, the US Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (WS), and State certified predator controllers for gray wolves, hereinafter referred to as gray wolf controllers.

In anticipation of delisting, the 2000 Minnesota legislature passed a wolf management bill including a requirement for a State certified predator control program for gray wolves. As part of the Minnesota gray wolf management plan the DNR has developed a State certified predator control program for gray wolves, which will operate in addition to the continuing gray wolf depredation control program conducted by WS. The DNR will provide a process by which individuals can apply, receive training, and become certified gray wolf controllers. Gray wolf controllers are intended to provide a resource for people to manage wolves involved in depredation of livestock, domestic

animals, and pets, primarily for preventative depredation management in gray wolf management zone B.

The Minnesota DNR Division of Enforcement will be responsible for monitoring gray wolf controller activities; including reviewing applicants, conducting criminal background checks, and notifying the DNR Wolf Management Specialist of verified livestock losses and requests from the public for opening gray wolf control areas. Conservation officers will be the primary contact for gray wolf controllers and for ensuring that individuals are following established guidelines for conducting gray wolf control activities.

Gray wolf controllers will work closely with conservation officers, livestock and pet owners, and wildlife biologists to implement and sustain a gray wolf control program. Gray wolf depredation control is widely recognized by wildlife managers and the public as an important tool for public support of wolf management and conservation. However, trapping of wolves is a highly sensitive wildlife management issue for some members of the public. Mandatory gray wolf trapper education is critical to building a successful, highly respected program. Through a cooperative agreement with DNR and WS, all gray wolf control applicants will learn about the history of wolf depredation management in Minnesota, basic wolf biology, and techniques for trapping wolves humanely and effectively. Gray wolf controllers must conduct their work using responsible, ethical trapping

methods, and respect landowner's private property rights and other potential conflicts with human activities.



Individuals participating in the program are required to provide detailed information of their activities to provide program managers with the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the program while gathering data to modify and improve techniques for the humane capture of wolves. Further, annual data will be reviewed for the programs effectiveness at preventing and reducing wolf depredation of livestock, domestic animals, and pets. The DNR will closely monitor participant's compliance with gray wolf control guidelines and will regularly review, evaluate, and enforce requirements of gray wolf controllers.

Certification of controllers

A person may not participate in the

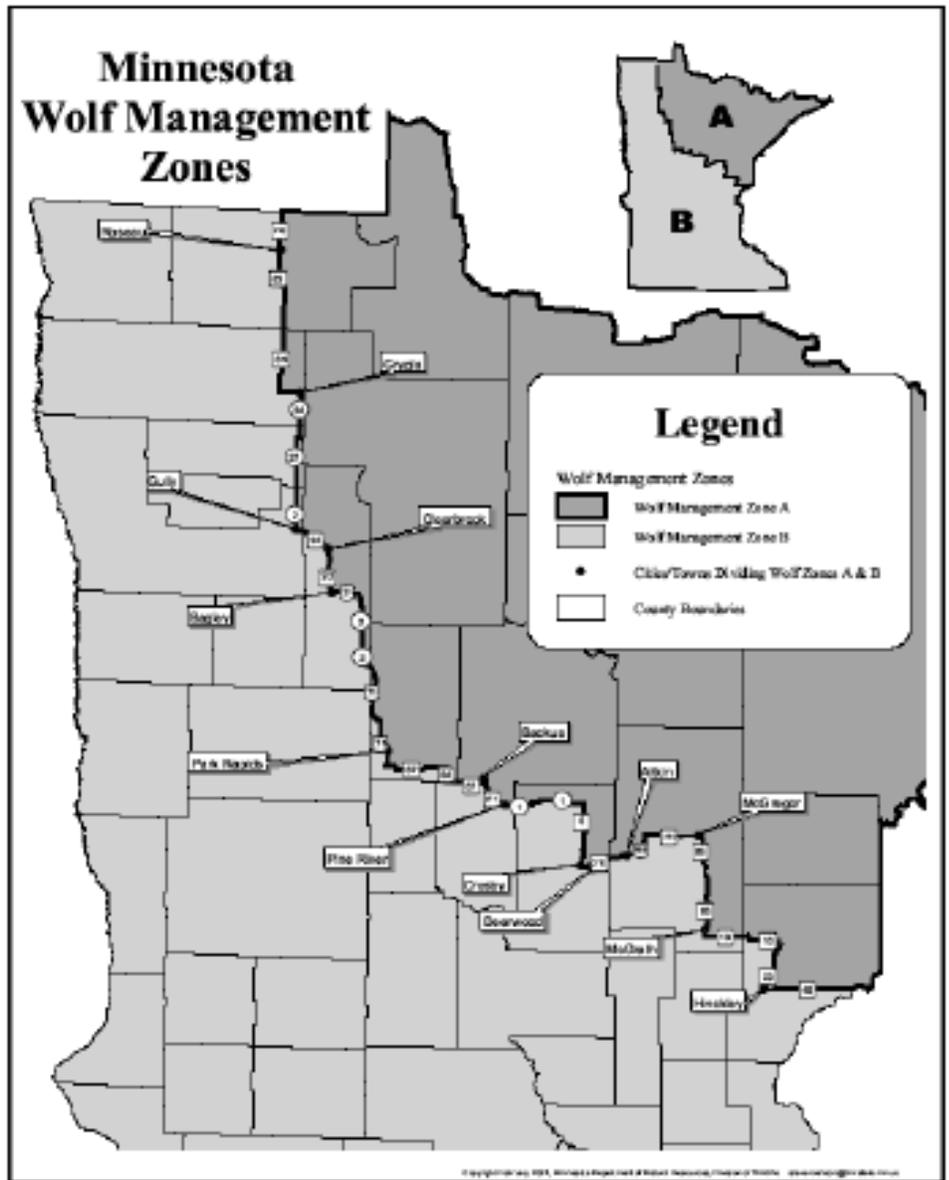
gray wolf control program unless the person is certified. A person will not be certified unless the person completes all information requested on the application (Appendix B) and meets the following qualifications:

A. For three years prior to the date of application, the person must not have been convicted of a Game and Fish violation and have never been convicted of a felony.

B. The person must either demonstrate or attest to the person's skill in hunting or trapping, including the ability to distinguish signs, tracks, and trails of predators.

C. The individual must have at least seven years of trapping experience, be at least 18 years of age, and be able to legally obtain a State-trapping license. State law requires that persons born after December 31, 1989, who have not been issued a trapping license in a previous license year may not obtain a trapping license without a trapper education certificate. The Minnesota Trappers Association conducts trapper education courses statewide, free of charge to the participants, and issue certificates that satisfy the trapping license requirement.

Application for certification as a gray wolf controller must be made on forms available from a local conservation officer. The application shall include a summary of the applicant's experience and must include reports from conservation officers or other Department personnel as to the ability and reliability of the applicant. Applicants must also submit an authorization for the DNR to conduct a criminal background investigation.



After receiving the gray wolf control application form from an applicant, the DNR will conduct a criminal background check. If the applicant meets eligibility requirements, including qualifications of experience, ability, and reliability and passes a background check, the applicant will be notified by a local conservation officer of their eligibility for the gray wolf control training course offered by WS. Upon successful completion of the gray wolf control training course, the applicant

will be notified by the DNR Division of Enforcement of their approval for gray wolf control certification.

To see the complete guidelines or learn more about the wolf program:

Contact Dan Stark
 Wolf Management Specialist
 MN Department of Natural Resources
 500 Lafayette RD, Box #20
 St. Paul, MN 55115-4020
 651-259-5175
 dan.stark@dnr.state.mn.us

Legislative Update

2008 Legislative Session Ends Early

On May 18, a late night session and an early afternoon agreement among leadership brought the 2008 Minnesota legislative session to a close. Below is a summary of items impacting agriculture this session.

Bovine TB Eradication and Control

Governor Pawlenty signed legislation to assist state agencies and farmers in the eradication and control of bovine tuberculosis (TB). Rep. Dave Olin, DFL-Thief River Falls, and Sen. Rod Skoe, DFL-Clearwater, lead the charge for development and passage of this legislation.

The legislation grants the Board of Animal Health (the Board) the authority to control tuberculosis and the movement of cattle, bison and farmed cervidae within and between tuberculosis zones in the state.

The legislation increases the Board's appropriations by \$472,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 and \$2.252 million for each year thereafter for monitoring, testing, eradication, education and outreach and other activities the Board takes to control and eradicate bovine TB.

A new voluntary herd buyout program is established for beef producers in the bovine TB management zone. This zone is an area within a ten-mile radius around the five presumptive TB positive deer sampled during the fall 2006 hunter harvested surveillance effort. Cattle owners who voluntarily participate in the program would be eligible for a payment of \$500 per animal. This would be in addition to any salvage value of the animal. They would also qualify for a \$75 annual payment for each animal until the Bovine TB

management zone is declared Bovine TB free. To participate in the program, cattle owners will need to sign a contract with the Board of Animal Health and agree to not put any livestock on their land until the area is declared Bovine TB free. The program is funding at \$3.350 million from the State General Fund.

The work is not done on this issue as participants in the buyout will need an exemption from federal capitol gains tax laws which require them to re-populate within two years.

The only reason TB hasn't impacted the sheep industry is because there is no reliable TB test for sheep, otherwise we would be facing some of the same restrictions as cattle, bison, cervidae, goats, and camelids.

Biodiesel

The Omnibus Agriculture policy bill signed by Governor Pawlenty contains provisions to establish the following timeline for increasing the statewide biodiesel content in diesel fuel sold in Minnesota:

- May 1, 2009: 5 percent – year round;
- May 1, 2012: 10 percent – April through October only; and
- May 1, 2015: 20 percent – April through October only.

The legislation states that biodiesel produced from palm oil is not biodiesel fuel for meeting the biodiesel content requirements unless the palm oil is contained in waste oil or grease.

The following criteria must be met before the state moves to the B10 or B20 levels:

- Federal standards or ASTM specifications must be in place for the higher blends;



-Sufficient supply of biodiesel must be available with 50 percent of the biodiesel produced in Minnesota;

-Blending infrastructure must in place to ensure quality fuel; and

-The higher blend can be suspended if there is a shortage of biodiesel or there is a price disparity negatively impacting diesel fuel suppliers.

Ag land Property Taxes

The tax bill signed by Governor Pawlenty contained a provision that reduced the property tax class rate on the first tier of ag land homestead property from .55 to .50 effective with property taxes payable in 2009. It is projected this will result in a property tax savings of \$15 million for Minnesota farmers.

Livestock Investment Grants

The Omnibus Agriculture Policy signed by Governor Pawlenty contains language establishing a livestock investment grant program. To qualify, a person who raises livestock would need to make an investment in qualifying expenditures of at least \$4,000. They would then qualify for a grant of ten percent of their investment up to a maximum investment of \$500,000 or grant of \$50,000.

Livestock owners could qualify for this investment in several years until they reach \$500,000 in investments. Livestock qualifying for this program include; beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, goats, mules, farmed

Legislative Update - cont.

cervidae, ratitae, bison, **sheep**, horses, and llamas. The program will be funded at \$1.0 million for the first year.

MLWP cooperated with MN Farm Bureau to make sure sheep were included in this legislation.

Truck Weights – 6 and 7 Axles

Legislation signed by the Governor will allow a road authority to issue an annual permit authorizing a vehicle or combination of vehicles with a total of six axles to haul raw or unprocessed agricultural products and be operated with a gross vehicle weight of up to:

(1) 90,000 pounds; and

(2) 99,000 pounds during winter months.

-The fee for a six axle permit is \$300.

A road authority may issue an annual permit authorizing a vehicle or combination of vehicles with a total of seven axles to haul raw or unprocessed agricultural products and be operated with a gross vehicle weight of up to:

(1) 97,000 pounds; and

(2) 99,000 pounds during winter months.

-The fee for a seven axle permit is \$500.

In both cases, posted bridge weight limits must be followed.

Transportation Funding Bill

The transportation funding bill authored by Rep. Bernie Lieder, DFL-Crookston and Sen. Steve Murphy, DFL-Red Wing, passed the MN House and Senate and was vetoed by the Governor. The House and Senate voted to override the Governor's veto. The vote in the House was 91-41 and the vote in the Senate was 47-20.

The state gas tax will increase two cents per gallon on April 1, from 20

cents per gallon to 22 cents per gallon. The state gas tax will increase an additional three cents per gallon on October 1, from 22 cents per gallon to 25 cents per gallon. A provision to index the state gas tax to inflation was removed from the legislation. This tax applies to both gasoline and undyed diesel fuel.

A one-half cent per gallon of gasoline debt service surcharge will go into effect on August 1. The debt service surcharge will be adjusted annually and can go no higher than 3.5 cents per gallon of gasoline. Revenue from the debt service surcharge must be used to pay off trunk highway bonds. Motor vehicle sales registration tax (license tab fees) will increase on purchases of new vehicles as of Sept 1.

Metropolitan counties, upon action of county commissioner, may impose a metropolitan transportation sales tax of 0.25 percent and a motor vehicle sales excise tax of \$20. This revenue must be used to fund transit projects in the seven-county metropolitan area. Counties in greater Minnesota may impose a local transportation sales tax of 0.5 percent and a motor vehicle sales excise tax of \$20. Taxes imposed under this section are subject to approval by a majority of the voters of the county or counties at a general election who vote on the question and can only be used to fund specific transportation projects.

Several bills that were potentially bad for agriculture were defeated including:

- ***Pesticide Drift***
- ***Pesticide Recordkeeping***
- ***Pesticide signage requirements***
- ***Eliminating ethanol payments***
- ***Reducing/delaying bio-diesel requirements***

- ***California Clean Car Standards***
- ***Dog & Cat Breeders Act***

National Issues

Farm Bill

The Farm Bill is covered in other parts of this newsletter.

Mandatory Price Reporting

Covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

Clean Water Restoration Act

Congressman Oberstar's (D-MN) bill (H-2421), now that the Farm Bill debate nears conclusion), will likely resurface as one of the biggest issues with a potential adverse impact on agriculture. H-2421 and the companion bill in the Senate (S-1870) would amend the 1972 Clean Water Act and replace the words "navigable waters" with "waters of the United States." Further, it defines "waters of the United States" with such unbelievable scope that federal agencies would be required to regulate use of every square inch of the United States! These bills have very little to do with either clean water or restoration. It's mostly about land use control and expanding the power and reach of the Corps of Engineers' use of the Clean Water Act of 1972 to regulate almost all private property.

MLWP members are urged to contact Senators Coleman and Klobuchar as well as their Congressman to urge them to vote against the Clean Water Restoration Act (H-2421 and S-1870).

Contact information can be found in your MLWP Membership Directory. It is helpful to contact their district offices here in MN as well as their DC offices.

Mandatory Price Reporting Gives Producers Transparency, Accuracy - American Farm Bureau

The American Farm Bureau Federation today hailed a final rule issued by the Agriculture Department that requires meat packers to report prices paid to producers for food animals. Farm Bureau has been an ardent supporter of the livestock mandatory price reporting (LMPR) law and has worked tirelessly toward its implementation.

"The implementation of LMPR will allow for more accurate and timely reporting of most wholesale and retail meat prices and increase transparency in the reporting of livestock sales," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "The LMPR also offers new market information on pricing,

contracting and demand conditions, which will greatly benefit livestock producers."

Under the LMPR law, packers are required to report all transactions involving the purchase of livestock, as well as details of domestic and export sales of boxed beef and lamb cuts. Packers that annually slaughter 125,000 cattle or 100,000 swine are required to report under LMPR. Packers or processors of 75,000 lambs annually are required to report under the law, as well as importers of 5,000 metric tons of lamb meat.

The LMPR will provide the basis for newly published market news reports, including reports that cover the

prior day swine market; forward contract and formula marketing arrangement cattle purchases; packer-owned cattle and sheep information; sales of imported boxed lamb cuts and live lamb premiums and discounts.

AFBF welcomed the implementing rule at a time when pork producers are being financially hard hit.

"We are optimistic that LMPR will help the pork industry with prices at this critical time," continued Stallman, who said live market hog prices had plunged to levels not seen in nearly a decade, while wholesale pork prices recently hit their lowest in four years.

The new implementing rule of the LMPR will take effect July 15, 2008.

ASI Pleased with Mandatory Price Reporting Rule - ASI Weekly

USDA recently issued the final regulation to re-establish and revise the Livestock Mandatory Reporting (LMR) program. The rule to re-implement mandatory price reporting of domestic and imported product has been anxiously awaited by ASI.

"The mandatory reporting program has been one of the most progressive advances in the U.S. lamb market in this decade, and we are pleased it will once again be fully implemented," stated Burdell Johnson, ASI president. "Our industry has been at risk for the two-and-a-half years since the initial law expired. This risk is not just from the loss of market reporting but also from the fact that our livestock risk protection program for lamb is based

on this market reporting."

Johnson added that he was pleased to know that this summer all companies will resume reporting markets, including the lamb importers that steadfastly refused to provide price information unlike the domestic lamb companies that continued reporting during this voluntary period.

The statutory authority for the program lapsed on Sept. 30, 2005. At that time, AMS sent letters to all packers required to report under the 1999 Act, requesting they continue to submit information voluntarily.

ASI Executive Director Peter Orwick said that LMR for lamb is without question a key factor to the

steady lamb market the past six years.

"Mandatory reporting, once finally operating in 2002, did what we hoped and that was to avoid the serious volatility we saw in the lamb markets of the 90s," commented Orwick. "The mandatory program is the only way to have price reporting on imported lamb made public. While it is disappointing that we have more than a two-year gap in price report data due to delays in the final reauthorization and rules, the industry looks forward to the program's full implementation."

Johnson expressed support to the domestic companies that continued reporting during the voluntary period.

Still Time to Complete Your Ag Census - ASI Weekly

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer this week reminded America's farmers and ranchers that they should still plan to respond to the 2007 Census of Agriculture either by Internet or postal mail.

"More than 2 million responses have already been received," said Schafer. "I sincerely thank those who have fulfilled their responsibility by completing and returning their census

forms. However, a good number of producers have not been heard from, so I'm encouraging everyone to help make this the most accurate Census of Agriculture on record."

Conducted every five years, the Census of Agriculture is the only source of consistent and comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation. That information is used by town

planners, policy makers, agribusinesses and others to make important growth-generating decisions that will shape rural communities for future generations.

Forms can be returned by mail or submitted online. For more information, or for assistance with completing the 2007 Census of Agriculture, call 888-424-7828 or visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

ALB Announces Funding Programs - ASI Weekly

The American Lamb Board (ALB) is now soliciting applications for two funding opportunities, its Matching Grant Program and its Supplier Cooperative Funding Program. Both programs are designed to further the goals and objectives of ALB's strategic plan. All funds must be used to promote only American lamb. The deadline for submitting applications is June 30, 2008.

The industry matching grant

program is designed to fund projects and activities that promote American lamb. There is \$20,000 available to fund matching grants.

There is a total of \$30,000 available to fund the supplier cooperative funding program. This program is designed to encourage American lamb suppliers to promote American lamb through targeted retail and/or foodservice promotions. The promotions should incorporate an

innovative use of marketing techniques to provide incentives for restaurants and/or retailers to promote and support American lamb. A priority will be given to programs that are focused on high-consumption markets. The cooperative funding program requires a dollar-for-dollar match, and in-kind contributions do not qualify as matching funds.

Sioux Falls Stockyards Reduces Business Week - ASI Weekly

The Sioux Falls Stockyards is reducing its business week to four days. The terminal livestock market, at one time, the largest in the United States, will no longer do business on Mondays.

For decades, livestock numbers handled at the major markets have been declining. The Sioux Falls, S.D., market can do in four days what until now they've been doing in five, says

Bernie Sichmeller, manager of the stockyards.

The South St. Paul Stockyards closed their chutes for good April 11. Changing marketing trends have long since taken their toll on public livestock markets in Sioux City, Iowa; Omaha, Neb.; Kansas City, Mo.; St. Louis, Mo. and others, but Sichmeller says there are no such plans to close Sioux Falls, which is owned by New

York-based Canal Capital Corporation.

The sheep auction, which has been held on Monday, will be moved to Tuesday and hogs will be handled four days a week instead of five.

The facility is a public market for hogs, feeder pigs, fed cattle, feeder cattle and sheep. The new schedule is effective in May.

Brother International Corporation Awards Project Runway Sewing Machine to Winning MIWW Designer

Budding fashion designers and experienced seamstresses put their skills to the test Jan. 24 – 26, 2008 at the National Make It With Wool competition held in Las Vegas. Taking the runner-up prize in the senior division for her award-winning wool ensemble was Sheilina Nohner, 21, of Watkins, Minn. Nohner received a Project Runway Limited Edition Innov-ís 40 sewing machine from Brother International Corporation.

“What a great prize and honor to receive the Project Runway Limited Edition Innov-ís 40 sewing machine,” said Nohner. “It is a great looking machine that is an asset to any seamstress no matter what their skill level. The wool competition wouldn’t have made it 60 years if it weren’t for companies like Brother supporting it.”

Nohner’s four-piece grey wool suit with red pin striping earned the nod of runner-up in the senior division, open to youth ages 17 to 24. Co-running a 400-head sheep operation with her husband, Nohner put her sewing savvy and wool expertise to use to craft the award-winning suit. She learned how to sew at the age of five from her mother and has been constructing



Sheilina Nohner, Watkins, MN

garments ever since. As a participant in the competition since the age of nine, Nohner has been designing more difficult pieces each year.

“Brother is extremely proud to support the Make It With Wool competition,” said Dean F. Shulman, senior vice president of Brother International Corporation and head of the company’s Home Appliance Division. Brother shares in the contest’s vision to encourage personal creativity in sewing. We developed the Project Runway series machines for seamstresses like Nohner who need

machines capable of bringing their design aspirations to life.”

The Project Runway Limited Edition Innov-ís 40 sewing machine features 40 built-in utility and decorative stitches, including five styles of one-step buttonholes. With variable speed control, the Innov-ís 40 retains its full power while controlling the sewing speed. The easy-to-read LCD window displays the stitch selection, length and width giving designers like Nohner the functionality they need to create personal couture. The Innov-ís 40 boasts fast and easy threading with a Quick-Set™ bobbin saving wear and tear on the eyes. Enthusiasts like Nohner can feel confident knowing fabrics ranging from denim to satin will feed smoothly with the Innov-ís 40 and its 7-point feed dogs.

Since 1996, winning designers from the Make It With Wool contest have walked away with a Brother sewing machine. For more information about the Make It With Wool competition visit www.sheepusa.org. For more information on Brother sewing machines, go to: www.brother-usa.com.

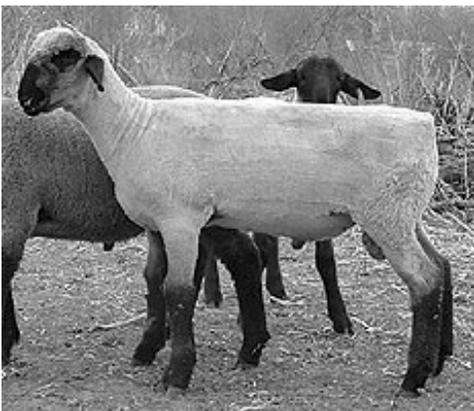
Do you want to sell your products at the MLWPA booth at the state Fair?

We are looking for some more vendors for the State Fair if you have product you would like to sell at the MLWP Commercial Booth. If you work 36 (or more) hours, MLWP gets 20% of your sales (to cover MLWP’s costs associated with having the booth and making the arrangements). If you choose not to work, MLWP gets 35% of your sales. Interested parties need to get in touch with Patty Anderson (patmeadow@yahoo.com or 952-4474184) as soon as possible to develop a work schedule. Patty also needs a list of what you would want to sell. You will receive tickets to get in to the state fair. The MLWP booth has generated in excess of \$40,000 in sales the last several years.

Don’t miss a great opportunity!

Breeding Season Ram Management - Dr. Larry Goelz, Pipestone Vet Clinic

Once you turn the rams out into the ewe flock ram management is not done. If possible rams should be observed daily. I prefer observing rams in the evening as you are more likely to see them chasing ewes than during



the heat of the day. Rams should be actively chasing ewes during the evening and sometimes you may even observe mounting. This confirms that the libido (desire to breed) is good in the ram. If the ram has a breeding harness new marks can be recorded and a reasonably accurate due date can be calculated. Marking crayons can be switched every two to three weeks (moving from light colors to darker) to help keep track of ewes that remark. Rams should also be observed for general health. Rams should be athletic and sound on their feet. Any lameness is cause to consider pulling a ram out of the breeding pasture. During the act of breeding a ram must be able to support nearly all his weight on both back legs. If one is painful he will not breed. When a ram dismounts half of his weight lands on both front feet; if one is sore he will not breed.

Back injuries are a common reason

for pulling rams from the breeding pasture. Breeding requires both strength and flexibility in the spine. As rams age the spine becomes less flexible as calcium bridging starts to fuse the vertebrae. If this bridging cracks the ram will experience intense pain and have no desire to breed. Intervertebral disks can also become compressed or inflamed and cause compression of the spinal cord. This is often evident as pain or hind limb weakness or lameness. While lameness from a foot injury carries a good prognosis for recovery and a future as a breeding ram a back injury will nearly always reoccur the next time that a ram mounts a ewe.

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

Other reasons that rams may have to be pulled from the breeding pasture include pneumonia, rapid weight loss or testicular injury. Pneumonia or fever in general may cause temporary infertility if the testicles get too warm. Testicles are outside of the body for a reason. Sperm cannot be produced at body temperature. Therefore if body temperature increases 2-4 degrees the sperm in the testicles and epididymis are at risk of being dead. It takes 60 days for a sperm cell to be produced so fever can cause 60 days of infertility. Testicular injury is not common but obviously ends the ram's ability to

breed ewes. After any insult to the testicle such as infection or trauma the first sign is swelling and heat. Heat will cause temporary infertility just like fever. After the swelling phase you may notice one or both testicles shrink in size. This is a poor prognostic indicator as it indicates that the sperm producing tissue is dead.

Rams will lose weight during breeding season, especially ram lambs as they are still growing and will not eat enough during breeding season to grow and maintain their weight Ram lambs may need to be pulled out of the breeding pasture if they get too thin. Often this is late in the breeding season when most of the ewes are bred and fewer rams are necessary to "clean-up" the remaining open ewes.

Treatment for rams that have to be pulled from the breeding pastures is aimed at 1) salvaging the ram to use later in the breeding season or for next year's breeding season or 2) salvaging the ram for cull value. In most cases severe injury, weight loss, etc producers will be better off by culling the ram immediately. As far as we know treatment with Bamamine (flunixin), long-acting penicillin, Excenel, Naxcel or Nuflor is not detrimental to fertility. Treatment with dexamethasone or LA-200 can cause transient infertility for 60 days.



NDLWPA launches starter flock program

The North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association has launched the perpetual starter flock program to help youth get into the sheep and wool industries. The program, created with assistance from the North Dakota State University Extension Service, is open to youth ages 10 to 18.

Each youth selected for the program will receive 10 ewes from the association. The animals will be purchased at the association-sponsored ewe sale at the Bowman (N.D.) Livestock Market in September. Also, the association will provide program participants with a list of producers who have volunteered to supply an RR

ram. The participants will be responsible for arranging with the producer to obtain the ram.

"We hope this will encourage young people to become involved in an industry that is growing in numbers," says Lyle Warner, NDLWPA president. "The growth and survival of the sheep industry, as any industry, is dependent on getting new people involved in the business."

"The perpetual starter flock program is an excellent example of how the North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association and NDSU Extension Service are working together to revitalize the state's sheep

industry," says Justin Luther, NDSU Extension sheep specialist.

To be eligible for the program, youth must have a strong desire to become involved in the sheep industry. Active involvement in 4-H or FFA is beneficial, but not necessary. One of the requirements for participants is that they return 20 percent of the cost of the ewes to the association in September of the second, third and fourth years after receiving the sheep to perpetuate the program's efforts.

[Editors note: MLWPA offers incentive money for satellite organizations to provide starter flocks or youth scholarships.]

AMI Launches Updated COOL Web Site - ASI Weekly

The American Meat Institute has unveiled an updated version of its country-of-origin labeling (COOL) Web site, www.countryoforiginlabel.org. Mandatory COOL is scheduled to go into effect Sept. 30. The new site contains a summary of information about the implementation of COOL as it exists under the law as enacted in 2002. The site also includes information relating to possible changes that may occur through passage of the 2008 Farm Bill. Sections on the site include information about who needs to label products; how to determine what meat products need a label; labeling categories; record-keeping requirements; international trade; and a support desk that links visitors to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Marketing Service experts who can help explain the details of the law.

Editorial - U of M Profs cooperate with producers - Jeremy Geske

In the last issue I was critical of the U of M's efforts to do a needs assessment for agriculture in Minnesota and to address the needs of MN sheep producers. Therefore, it is only fair that I give credit when credit is due.

I would like to publicly thank Dr. Jon Wheaton for reaching out to a handful of producers to participate in an out-of-season breeding research project. As one of the cooperating

producers, I am hopeful that the project will yield results that will be helpful for those wanting to develop more effective methods of attaining fall lambs from breeds that don't normally lamb in the fall.

As a humorous side note to this project, one of my responsibilities was to give half the ewes a shot of progesterone after removing the CIDRs. Of course I managed to accidentally stick myself with one of

the syringes. So far, I haven't come into heat...

I'd also like to thank Dr. Susan McClanahan (U of M Vet School). Dr. McClanahan has been bringing students out to area sheep farms for several years to give them hands-on experience working with sheep producers. I think we can all attest to how important it is to have veterinarians with some sheep experience.

The following have paid MLWP dues after the directory was printed

Tracey / Travis Schacherer (3 yr)
1778 201st Ave, Madison, MN 56256
320-598-3679
Suffolk, Rambouillet, Columbia,
BoerX goats

Dr. Keith Wilts/ Dr. Lisa Sell
7416 Co Rd 37 NE
St. Michael, MN 55376
763-295-2287 - wiltsell@tds.net
Commercial whiteface

North Country Fiber Fair (Friend)
c/o Tracy Kellen
Beardsley, MN 56211
320-265-6319

St. Peter Woolen Mill (Friend)
c/o Pat Johnson
101 W. Broadway
St. Peter, MN 56082
507-934-3734



Help Spread the TRUTH about HSUS - ASI Weekly

At a recent trade show, a member of a branch office of the Animal Agriculture Alliance was handing out items promoting the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), with \$2 per item going to support the vegan activist group. When approached about their support of HSUS, the staff indicated that they believed they were benefiting the national group that supports local shelters, unaware that less than 3 percent of HSUS' nearly \$90 million budget goes to animal shelters. When informed that HSUS is the main funding source behind many anti-animal agriculture activities, including the gestation crate bans in Florida and Arizona, the ballot initiative in California and much more, the staff immediately stopped distributing the items. It is our belief that most people reading this have a solid idea of the agenda of HSUS, PETA and other similar groups. However, many others may not. Please help spread the word to others.

Scrapie Prions Detected in Blood - ASI Weekly

Amorfix Life Sciences Ltd. announced this month the detection of endogenous prions in the blood plasma of asymptomatic scrapie-infected sheep. The company had previously reported detecting symptomatic sheep which was a requirement for testing of human variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the United Kingdom.

"Identification of scrapie sheep prior to symptoms is critical for an effective program to eradicate the disease," said George Adams, Ph.D., chief executive officer for Amorfix. "For the first time, we have been able to sort scrapie infected and unaffected sheep using a simple blood test."

Scrapie-infected lambs as early as 17 months of age were detected by the Amorfix EP-TSE(TM) test. Sheep normally show symptoms of scrapie at three years to five years of age. Detection of infected sheep two to three years prior to symptoms will allow effective removal of infected animals before they have the ability to infect other sheep in the flock.

Amorfix is in discussions with potential partners to complete product development, regulatory approvals and commercialize the EP-TSE(TM) test. The company continues to validate its test through the UK process and participate in the development of a

common technical specification for a CE Mark (CE Mark is a mandatory requirement for products intended for sale or placed into service in Europe).

"A blood test that performs well and is reasonably priced would be a very useful tool in eradicating scrapie," stated Paul Rodgers, deputy director of policy for the American Sheep Industry Association. "We hope that Amorfix and others who are working toward prion detection in blood are successful and will be able to eventually gain approval for its regulatory use through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service."

Calendar of Events

2008

June 9	Pipestone lamb & wool facility tour	Pipestone, MN
June 9-14	Columbia National Show & Sale	Danville, IN
June 14	Iowa Sheep Industry Assoc. Annual mtg	Adel, IA
June 23-28	MW Stud Ram Show & Sale	Sedalia, MO
June 14	Iowa Sheep Producers annual mtg	Adel, IA
July 7-12	Rambouillet National Show & Sale	Evanston, WY
July 9-12	Sheep for Profit School	Pipestone, MN
July 13-16	NLFA Sheep Leadership School	Dixon, CA
July 19	MN State Suffolk Show	Faribault, MN
July 20	MN Jr. Suffolk Show	Faribault, MN
July 20	MN State Suffolk Sale	Faribault, MN
Aug. 15-17	MN State Hampshire Show	Fairmont, MN
Aug. 15-17	MN State Dorset Show	Fairmont, MN
Aug 21-Sep 1	MN State Fair	St. Paul, MN
Aug. 22	MN State Fair 4-H Sheep Show	St. Paul, MN
Sep. 19	Newell Ram Sale	Newell, SD
Oct. 25	Northstar Bred Ewe Sale	Pipestone, MN
Nov. 29	MN Bred Ewe & Doe Sale	Rochester, MN
Dec. 5-6	MN Lamb & Wool annual conference	Hutchinson, MN
Feb. 6-7 `09	Lambing Time Short Course	Pipestone, MN

If you have a calendar item or news releases that you would like included, please send information to:

*Jeremy Geske
407 Horizon Dr. SE
New Prague, MN 56071
jgeske@fbmn.org*

*We're on the
web!
www.mlwp.org*

President's Message - cont.

secure a target price for wool of \$1.15 up from \$1.00 and a million dollar commitment to fund the USDA sheep research facility in the east. Your legislators that voted for this bill need to be thanked profusely, especially those Republicans that crossed paths with the President to vote for this very good piece of legislation. For those that voted against the bill they need to be reminded of all of the good things it does for us. Do we all realize that only 16% of this bill actually goes to farm programs? Over 2/3 goes to food and nutrition programs for schools and those in need, 1/6 for conservation programs, and about 1/6 for farm programs..

Remember to shear your lambs, keep a light on at night and switch to lower protein diets in a timely manner to keep you lamb finishing costs a bit lower and your profits a bit higher.

Keep your pencils sharp and your minds open.

