

# Shepherd's Bulletin



Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association

## 85% Approval for Lamb Check-off! - From Sheep Industry News, May '09

Spring 2009

By an astounding margin of 85.1 percent, the members of the U.S. sheep industry voted to continue the deduction on sheep sales to support the marketing of American lamb. These are the certified results of the nationwide vote that was conducted at U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency offices during February 2009 and announced today by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

"This is the second referendum since the inception of the program in 2002 and both have recorded overwhelming

approval for an industry-funded lamb promotion," remarks Peter Orwick, executive director for the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI). "Sheep producer volunteers encouraged a yes vote in the referendum to keep this valuable tool alive in the fight for a piece of the meat market in the US.

"This promotion effort is designed for American lamb only and is the key to providing additional visibility for domestically grown lamb in the meat cases of the nation's retailers as well as in the restaurant trade," Orwick adds.

ASI President Glen Fisher, a Texas sheep



producer, comments that the lamb program is the only livestock checkoff program that has producers, feeders and meat packers all contributing funds to the promotion effort. He relays that the vote had to be approved on both the individual votes as well as the volume of sheep

(cont. on p.2)

### MLWP Officers & Directors

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- *Metro Dir. & Membership Chair - Patty Anderson*  
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## View From the Hayloft - Dan Persons, President

The barn below is still full of close-up ewes and families waiting to be transferred out to the family barn. It is sure nice to lamb out ewes when the weather is more moderate. A couple weeks ago we shipped the last of our fall born lambs and have just finished resorting finishing lambs so

the pens are better matched in weight.

I want to thank MLWPA for the opportunity to once again represent Minnesota sheep producers in Washington DC. My daughter, Rachel, was able to go with me this year and got a good taste of how the nations sheep producers

work together to meet some common goals. This years major areas of concern were Wildlife Services funding, Livestock Indemnity Program, Scrapie Funding, National Animal ID, H2A Worker rules and the new global warming debates. We had productive visits with

(cont. on p.2)

[www.mlwp.org](http://www.mlwp.org)

## President's Message - cont.

Senator Klobuchar and Congressmen Peterson, Walz, Oberstar and Congresswoman Bachman. We tried and were unable to get appointments with Congressmen Ellison, Kline, McCullum and Paulson but did stop at their offices, introduced ourselves and left information on the industry and our needs. I am always impressed by the professionalism of the people who represent the sheep industry and our ability to put up a united front. It was a pleasure to expose Rachel, who is also a partner in our ranch, to the national aspects of our association and to have her meet fellow producers from across the country.

Your association has been busy this past winter and spring in helping to introduce more people to our industry. In February we had a booth and demonstrations at the Midwest Hospitality convention in Minneapolis. The annual spring workshop was held in March and was host to many youth looking to increase their knowledge and skills. April took our youth to the Minnesota FFA convention for a booth highlighting our organization and in

May we were well represented at the annual Shepherds Harvest Festival in Lake Elmo. These events would not have been possible to attend if it were not for the tremendous dedication of many of our members. We also need to thank the American Lamb Board for a grant that helped to fund our attendance and materials at some of these events. We owe a debt of gratitude to those of you that take the ram by the horns and get things done.

This past winter posed interesting challenges to our operation and caused us to change the way we have done things in the past. With an extreme shortage of ewes lambing in January and huge lambing groups in February and March we were forced to find room for many more families than normal. We have always weaned our lambs at 60 days and after consulting with Pipestone Lamb and Wool and some fellow producers we were encouraged to wean at 45 days. I was apprehensive but at 32 days we put the first 80 ewes on a drydown ration and vaccinated for C & D. At 45 days we removed the lambs and boosted the C & D. The lambs took



off and did very well for us. Now as we look to the future we will re-evaluate our scheduling and how we group our ewes. There are times we need to get out of our comfort zone, think outside the box and make new standards for our farms.

At our last Board Meeting we spent quite a bit of time discussing the annual conference and what will be offered for workshops. You should all mark December 4 and 5th on your calendars, line up a chore person and plan on attending this year. There will be workshops and social activities of interest to all and we are working out the details of an on-farm session that will compliment the workshops.

As you move into summer schedules keep some time open to talk to fellow producers and share your common ground. Until next time... keep your pencils sharp and your minds open.

## Lamb Promotion Referendum passes —Cont.

represented. In the volume vote, a record setting 93 percent supported

**In Minnesota, just over 80% of participating producers (representing 86% of the sheep) voted yes. Voter turn-out in all states was very low.**

the referendum.

A 13-member volunteer board, known as the American Lamb Board,

representing these segments of the industry collects the funds and administers all the programs.

"The promotion board and its programs deliver benefits to the lamb market and it has also been extremely successful in avoiding conflict among industry segments, so much so that the principal concern around the referendum was motivating folks to vote when there was little to no controversy over the issue," Fisher concludes.

State	Yes	No
California	126	5
Colorado	60	7
Iowa	89	15
<u>Minnesota</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>16</u>
Montana	146	40
North Dakota	25	11
Ohio	100	24
South Dakota	92	43
Texas	158	6
Wisconsin	28	6

# MLWP Announces Starter Flock Program

Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association

## Starter Flock Grant Application

The MLWPA will grant up to five \$100 grants to individuals who wish to get started in the sheep industry. The applicants will compete for these grants and awards will be determined by the Board of Directors of the MLWPA. The purpose of the grants is to help the individuals in the purchasing of breeding sheep only.

### Requirements of the Applicants:

1. Must be a Junior Member of MLWPA either through individual membership or through a family membership.
2. Must be under the age of 21 at the time of the application deadline.
3. Must buy breeding sheep from any reputable breeder.
4. Must submit application to the President of MLWPA by no later than June 1<sup>ST</sup>.
5. Only one grant will be awarded to any individual in their life-time; however individuals may apply multiple years if not awarded a grant.
6. The Application will be in the form of a one page written essay including the following information:
  - a. Name, address, phone number, birth date.
  - b. Brief description of future plans for production.
  - c. Brief description of past and current involvement in the sheep industry.
  - d. Brief description of plans for care of the animals including feed and facility arrangements.
7. The grant will be paid to the individual following the submittal of a one page report on the sheep purchased and how the project is progressing including a photo of the applicant with the sheep purchased. This report is must be submitted prior to the annual conference of the MLWPA.

## Other Starter Flock Programs

### SE MN Sheep Producers Starter Flock program

For details contact Todd & Robin Schmidt at: [trebfarm@clear.lakes.com](mailto:trebfarm@clear.lakes.com) or 507-377-1045.

### MN Suffolk \$100 scholarships

\$100 towards a purchase at the state Suffolk sale or Rochester Bred Ewe sale. Application deadline is June 30. Contact Tom Curley at 507-930-5203 or [Thomas.Curley@ndsu.edu](mailto:Thomas.Curley@ndsu.edu)

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### MN Hampshire \$100 Young Shepherds Scholarships

\$100 towards the purchase of a Hampshire ewe at the Rochester Bred Ewe sale. Applications due in October. Contact Dale Carter at 320-239-4962.



# The BAA Booth Needs You!

For the third year, the Kirk and Jill Roe family from Blue Earth, MN has again taken on the responsibilities of organizing the BAA Booth at the Minnesota State Fair. The BAA Booth needs you to volunteer for working this MLWPA educational booth. All activities and information will be at the booth to make your time easy and fun.

**Please complete this form and return by August 1, 2009.**

The Baa Booth runs for the first eight days of the Fair only (August 27th - September 3rd)

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

If we need to call you regarding volunteer times, would you prefer daytime or evening? \_\_\_\_\_

Industry Affiliation: (farmer, veterinarian, student, 4-H member, FFA member etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have sheep you want to display or an educational display or demonstration you want to bring? If so, please let us know. Do you have by-products you can bring to the booth? Maybe you can bring wool samples or feed samples. Please let us know below!!!

\_\_\_\_\_

The scheduled shifts are: 9 a.m. to noon, noon to 3:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

**Please X the shift(s) you would be willing to work:**

- |                                   |                                  |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Thursday Aug 27th Morning _____   | Sunday Aug 30th Afternoon _____  | Thursday Sept 3rd Morning _____  |
| Thursday Aug 27th Afternoon _____ | Monday Aug 31st Morning _____    | Thursday Sept 3rd Afternoon _____  |
| Thursday Aug 27th Evening _____   | Monday Aug 31st Afternoon _____  | <b>Return to:</b> Baa Booth Co-chairs<br>Kirk & Jill Roe<br>320 E. 11th Street<br>Blue Earth, MN 56013-2147<br>(507) 526 - 5845 Home<br>(507) 526 - 7571 Fax<br>(507) 525 - 0970 Cell<br>kwroe@bevcomm.net |
| Friday Aug 28th Morning _____     | Monday Aug 31st Evening _____    |  |
| Friday Aug 28th Afternoon _____   | Tuesday Sept 1st Morning _____   |  |
| Friday Aug 28th Evening _____     | Tuesday Sept 1st Afternoon _____ |  |
| Saturday Aug 29th Morning _____   | Tuesday Sept 1st Evening _____   |  |
| Saturday Aug 29th Afternoon _____ | Wed. Sept 2nd Morning _____      |  |
| Saturday Aug 29th Evening _____   | Wed. Sept 2nd Afternoon _____    |  |
| Sunday Aug 30th Morning _____     | Wed. Sept 2nd Evening _____      |  |

# USDA Announces Results of Lamb Checkoff

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that lamb producers, feeders, seedstock producers, and first handlers of lamb and lamb products who voted in a national referendum, Feb. 2-27, 2009, have approved the continuation of the Lamb Promotion, Research, and Information Order, commonly known as the Lamb Checkoff Program.

Of the 1,971 valid ballots cast, 1,678 or 85.1 percent favored the program. Opposing ballots totaled 293 or 14.9 percent. Additionally, of those persons who cast valid ballots in the referendum, those who favored

continuing the program, accounted for 93 percent of the total production voted, and those opposed accounted for 7 percent of the total production voted.

For the program to continue, it must have been approved by at least a majority of those persons voting for approval who were engaged in the production, feeding, or slaughter of lambs during calendar year 2008 and who also represent a majority of the volume of lambs produced, fed, or slaughtered.

The goal of the Lamb Checkoff Program is to strengthen the position

of, and to develop and expand the markets for, ovine animals and ovine products. Under the program, producers, seedstock producers (breeders), feeders, and exporters are required to pay an assessment of one-half cent (\$.005) per pound when live ovine animals are sold. The first handler, primarily packers, pays an additional 30 cents per head on ovine animals purchased for slaughter. Importers are not assessed. AMS oversees activities carried out under the Commodity Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 1996, which authorizes the order.

## Agriculture sector serving us all well

*Editorial from the LeCenter Leader, March 11, 2009*

It has been said that the strong agriculture industry has somewhat insulated South Minnesota in the economic downturn. Hug a farmer.

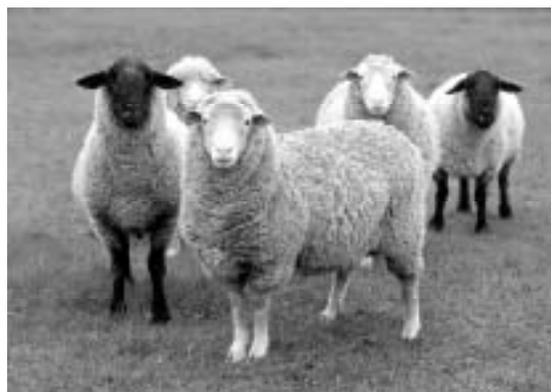
When farmers have money they spend it. They are an economic stimulus program in and of themselves. They have been for decades, centuries really.

Farmers' investment benefits all of us. They figure out ways to buy \$600,000 combines. They pop for trucks and tools and TVs. Farmers borrow money from banks and pay it back with interest. The high cost of agricultural land has an effect in the economic wheels going around. Farmers pay huge taxes that help our schools, counties and other government units. They're generous to churches.

Of course, way beyond the economic stimulus farmers provide is the fact that they put food on our tables, in our lunch boxes and atop our backyard barbecues. We eat to live and live to eat.

The big picture shows farmers, and everyone in the agriculture industry, giving our economy a degree of buoyancy. Farmers and folks in the agriculture industry are getting squeezed in tough economic times. No one is immune.

But, count on this: As they have for centuries, farmers will work however long of hours needed to feed the people. They've proven that in good times and bad — when prices have been drastically low, they've been there for us.



### *Editor's note:*

**So often editorials in local papers (and especially in the twin cities papers) are anti-agriculture, I thought it was a refreshing change to see a positive editorial like this one. As farmers, more of us should take the time to promote the good work we do by submitting an editorial to our local paper.**

# Animal enthusiasts challenge Humane Society agenda - *From The Wendover Times (NV) Feb. '09*

A group of animal enthusiasts from around the state visited Carson City last Monday to meet with lawmakers as a preemptive measure against the Humane Society of the United States' schedule to lobby for its animal rights agenda in Nevada this past Saturday.

Tim Stoffel from Reno, organizer of the group's efforts, Chris Vaught from Washoe Valley, Zuzana Kukol and Scott Shoemaker from Pahrump and Deanna Croasmun from Wendover registered as non-paid lobbyists and spoke with various assembly members and senators.

They explained the difference between the animal rights movement and animal welfare, and asked legislators to look into the Humane Society agenda and its connections to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and other animal rights groups.

The group, speaking in support of animal welfare, pointed out that the Humane Society is a national lobbying group, is not affiliated with any of the humane societies or shelters in Nevada and does not represent the interests of Nevada voters.

The group requested lawmakers look to Nevada animal owners and caretakers, those who are hands-on with animals, to help shape any proposed legislative measures put forth by national animal rights groups like PETA or the Humane Society.

Animal rights is the concept that animals should not be used by or regarded as the property of humans

and therefore should not be used as food, clothing, research subjects or entertainment.

In contrast, the animal welfare viewpoint is that it is morally acceptable for humans to use animals for food, in animal research, as clothing and for entertainment, as long as the animals are treated in a reasonable, humane manner.

Kukol, president of Rexano, a nonprofit organization based in Henderson, which supports responsible exotic animal ownership, explained the importance of animals staying labeled as property. "The U.S. Constitution guarantees American citizens property rights. Animals are considered property under our legal system, and rightly so. Even though we think of our animals as our beloved family members, legally they need to stay property," she said.

"If animals have rights and we are their guardians, we can no longer buy and sell pets and food animals, and if somebody takes your animals from you, it would no longer be considered stealing if we get rid of the legal status of animals as property." "Many animal rights groups have an agenda of removing the status of animals as property, and they will not be satisfied until everybody is a grass-eating, carrot-eating vegan. We need to be vigilant and stop the insane, lunatic animal rights legislation that has been introduced in many states and at the federal

level."

According to Vaught, who owns and works with Australian Kelpies, a herding breed of dog, Nevada animal owners, caretakers and enthusiasts are organizing via an online Yahoo list, NVPetLaw, in response to anticipated animal rights legislation that may be introduced now that the Humane Society has made Nevada one of its targets.

After spending the day with lawmakers, Vaught said, "I think we did good and I am positive we can work together effectively to fight whatever might come our way."

After returning to Wendover, Croasmun, pet owner and exhibitor, said, "This was an important first step. It was a good learning experience for us and gave us the opportunity to introduce ourselves and our position to our lawmakers." "An interesting point I noticed during the meetings is that many of the lawmakers we talked to said they hunt and fish, and a couple were also ranchers. I think the Humane Society and the other animal rights groups may find Nevada lawmakers a hard sell."



# Salazar OKs removing Great Lakes gray wolves from endangered list - *March 6, 2009*

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said Friday he was upholding a decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove gray wolves in the Northern Rockies and the western Great Lakes from the federal endangered list. Salazar said wolves would remain a protected species in Wyoming because its law and management plans were not strong enough. But management of the predator will be turned over to state



agencies in Montana and Idaho and parts of Washington, Oregon and Utah, in addition to the Great Lakes states of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The Obama administration had ordered a review of the removal decision announced in January, shortly before the Bush administration departed. Salazar said he had concluded that dropping the wolf from the list was justified by its strong comeback in the two regions, which together have a population of nearly 5,600 wolves.

"The recovery of the gray wolf throughout significant portions of its historic range is one of the great success stories of the Endangered Species Act," he said in a conference call from Washington, D.C. Wolves in the other parts of the lower 48 states, including the Southwest, remain on the endangered list.

Courts have overturned previous attempts to remove the wolf from the

list, and future legal battles appear likely. Environmental groups immediately pledged a lawsuit over the estimated 1,500 wolves in the Northern Rockies. A federal judge in Missoula, Mont., last year had sided with those groups when they filed a lawsuit saying the animal's long-term survival remained at risk, particularly in Wyoming. The government in January came back with its plan to leave Wyoming out.

"What we had hoped was the new administration would have taken a deep breath and evaluate the science," said Jamie Rappaport Clark, vice president of Defenders of Wildlife and a former Fish and Wildlife Service director under President Clinton. "Whether it's (Bush Interior Secretary) Kempthorne or Secretary Salazar, the concern remains the same," she added. "It's the same plan that I fear doesn't protect the wolf's long-term sustainability."

## Producers should expect harder attacks

"The industrial activism movement "is coming at us like a freight train," it affects all of livestock and poultry production, it affects states with and without ballot initiatives and there will likely be federal and state legislation restricting the way livestock and poultry are grown, according to Chad Gregory, senior vice president of the United Egg Producers.

He emphasized that the "freight train" analogy came from a cabinet

secretary in the Obama Administration. Gregory noted that the Humane Society of the United States' (HSUS) agenda involves stopping all food animal production in the U.S.—leaving consumers only a choice of a vegetarian diet.

Gregory spoke last week at the "Simmering Issues Workshop" at the Midwest Poultry Convention, held at RiverCentre in St. Paul."

To read the full article:

<http://www.feedstuffsfoodlink.com>



# Legislative Update

## Omnibus Ag & Veterans Finance Conference Committee

The Omnibus Ag & Veterans Finance Conference Committee reached agreement on the majority of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) budget provisions contained in HF 1122 on Friday, May 1. However, the committee did not reach final agreement on the bill last week because of some outstanding Veterans issues. It is expected that the committee will finish their work early the week of May 11 with the full House and Senate then acting on the conference committee report on HF 1122.

Major provisions of interest to Farmers contained in HF 1122 now include:

- Ag 21 – A one-time appropriation of \$1 million would go to establish Ag 21 with the money being used to fund the livestock investment grant program for the next biennium. Negotiations continue over the name of this new program.
- MDA budget – A reduction of \$200,000 to MDA's administrative budget and no specific reduction to MDA's Marketing and Development Division. The Senate had proposed reducing the administrative budget by \$700,000 and the Marketing and Development Division by \$906,000. The House proposed reducing MDA's administrative budget by \$1.33 million.
- Ethanol Producer Payment – The conference committee proposes shifting \$6 million of ethanol producer payments to the 2012-2013 biennium. The ethanol producer payments would not be

cut – they would be shifted to the future.

- Pesticide fees – An annual increase of approximately \$2.5 million in the pesticide fee. Approximately one-half would be charged for non-agricultural pesticides. The increase in revenues would be used to fund important MDA pesticide regulatory functions.
- Fertilizer fee – The fertilizer fee would be increased \$880,000 and the increased revenues would be used to fund the activities of the Fertilizer Research & Education Council. Farm Bureau has a seat on this council.

These provisions were agreed to by the Conference Committee on Friday, May 1. We do not expect them to change. However, anything is possible until the committee completes its work.

### EPA Won't Seek Re-hearing in Pesticide Case

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has stated it will not seek a rehearing of the full Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals to rehear a January 7 decision issued by a three-judge panel in *National Cotton Council v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*. That court decision reversed an EPA rule that would have clarified that federal Clean Water Act permits (CWA) are not required for pesticides application to waters or over waters, so long as the application complies with pesticide labeling laws. Instead, EPA has requested a delay of two years before the new permits would be required.

The Sixth Circuit court reasoned that any application of a chemical pesticide that results in excess or residual



pesticide finding its way into navigable waters of the U.S. constitutes the discharge of a "chemical waste" and therefore a "pollutant" subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting requirements. The court ruled that the term "pollutant" includes all biological pesticides, so application of a biological pesticide that results in any of the pesticide entering such waters also is a regulated discharge.

Since the passage of the CWA in 1972 and major reforms of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) in 1972, EPA has never required NPDES permits for the application of pesticides. The court's broad ruling will now require – for the first time – that pesticide application be permitted under the CWA when it will result in the addition of pesticide residue to a water of the U.S. The court's ruling is not limited to direct discharges to water and also may have opened the door to questioning the reach of the long-time agricultural stormwater exemption from the definition of a point source under the CWA.

If the ruling stands, EPA must develop an NPDES permitting scheme for pesticide users. The permits will be either individual site-specific permits for individual pesticide applications or some type of general permit.



## Legislative Update - cont.

### **Report Finds that Ethanol had Little to do with Increased Food Prices**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a report that shows ethanol production had very little impact on the overall run-up in food prices last year. According to CBO estimates, from April 2007 to April 2008, the rise in the price of corn resulting from expanded production of ethanol contributed only between 0.5 and 0.8 of a percentage point to the overall 5.1 percent increase in food prices measured by the Consumer Price Index. Over the same period, certain other factors -- for example, higher energy costs -- had a greater effect on food prices than did the use of ethanol as a motor fuel.

### **Climate Change Bill Hearing Begins in the U.S. House**

Representatives Henry Waxman (CA) and Edward Markey (MA) released a discussion draft of an energy/climate change bill. Mr. Waxman chairs the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Mr. Markey chairs the subcommittee, respectively, with jurisdiction over climate and energy legislation. While the bill has not been formally introduced, hearings begin this afternoon.

### **Clean Water Restoration Act**

Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) reintroduced the Clean Water Restoration Act (CWRA) which would replace the term “navigable waters” with the term “waters of the United States” for determining what waters are protected by the Clean Water Act. Farm Bureau and other Ag groups oppose the bill because it would dramatically expand the regulatory reach of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army of Engineers, and would result in the

regulation of any or all of our nation’s water resources.

*Editor’s Note: This is the companion bill to the CWRA introduced by Congressman Oberstar (D-MN).*

### **Food Safety Modernization Act**

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) has introduced the Food Safety Modernization Act (H.R. 875). The bill would combine the food safety functions of the current Food and Drug Administration (FDA) into a separate division of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), establish a food safety commissioner and update food safety laws that affect the 80 percent of the food supply regulated by FDA. H.R. 875 would re-state that the new Food Safety Administration has authority to conduct on-farm food safety inspections. (FDA already has that authority but simply lacks the resources to carry it out.)

Farm groups oppose efforts to eliminate years of food safety expertise by creating a new, single food safety regulator. Rather than streamlining authorities, the result would be less organization, more energy expended in transition than inspections, and the cumulative loss of valuable knowledge

H.R. 875 would affect only those food safety authorities currently housed at FDA and would not affect the meat and poultry inspections performed by USDA. A “Myths and Facts” breakdown can be found below.

The legislation is unlikely to move independently, but was introduced to be considered in the larger debate of food safety authorities. It is intended to be part of the ongoing discussion – among the White House Food Safety Working Group, legislators and the public – about possible restructuring of the existing food safety system. DeLauro has a track record of

introducing similar bills in Congress in the past and it is unlikely that this bill would pass without serious revisions.

*Myths and Facts H.R. 875*

**MYTH:** H.R. 875 “makes it illegal to grow your own garden” and would result in the “criminalization of the backyard gardener.”

**FACT:** There is no language in the bill that would regulate, penalize or shut down backyard gardens. The focus of this bill is to ensure the safety of foods sold in supermarkets.

**MYTH:** H.R. 875 would mean a “goodbye to farmers markets” because it would regulate and penalize “each farmer who wishes to sell locally.”

**FACT:** There is no language in the bill that would result in farmers markets being regulated, penalized by any fines or shut down. Farmers markets would be able to continue to flourish. In fact, the bill insists that imported foods meet strict standards to ensure that unsafe imported foods are not competing with locally-grown foods.

**MYTH:** H.R. 875 would result in the “death of organic farming.”

**FACT:** There is no language in the bill that would stop or interfere with organic farming. The National Organic Program (NOP) is under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Food Safety Modernization Act only addresses food safety issues under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**MYTH:** H.R. 875 would implement a national animal ID system.

**FACT:** There is no language in the bill that would implement NAIS. Animal ID issues are under the jurisdiction of the USDA. The FSMA addresses issues under the jurisdiction of FDA.

# MDA Livestock Development - 2008 Activity Report

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture Livestock Development Team (LDT) demonstrated its effectiveness and generated activity in a number of areas in 2008. Many of these projects and responsibilities are on-going.

## Producer Assistance

\*Provided on-site assistance to more than 40 livestock producers to discuss economic, permitting, and environmental issues on their farms.

\* Provided technical assistance to several local units of government in the rewriting of zoning ordinances or the development of new ordinances. The team works in the best interest of producers to help ensure the protection of prime farmland and to maintain open communication with government leaders.

\*Conducted on-site audits of 38 recipients of Livestock Investment Grants to verify the monies would be used as stated for the award.

## Outreach

\*Co-coordinated the Minnesota Livestock Grant Program, including the review of 576 grant applications for these grants.

\*Supervised, audited and administered the Dairy Development and Profitability Team project as well as the Dairy Business Planning Grant program. Over 400 farms participated under the dairy profit teams and 45 business planning grants were distributed statewide.

\*Provided presentations or staffed information booths on a variety of livestock industry topics at meetings of



county and township associations, extension educators, and commodity organization meetings throughout the year to provide assistance and materials to livestock producers.

\*Assisted the Board of Animal Health in disseminating information to producers about bovine tuberculosis (TB) as part of the state's efforts to eradicate the disease.

\*Created materials explaining the state's Open Lot Agreement (OLA) to help producers know what options they have in meeting the agreement deadline.

\*Coordinated the activities of two livestock advisory groups - the Dairy Advisory Committee and the Beef Profitability Strategic Task Force. LDT members presented pertinent livestock information at these groups' regular meetings as well as led discussions on current issues regarding the livestock sector and how the state can enhance their development and sustainability.

\*Promoted a pilot project for the voluntary recycling of agricultural plastics. An estimated 50 tons of agricultural plastics were recycled and diverted from the land fill. There are plans to expand this collection process statewide next year.

\*Created a workgroup to examine the potential impact of the new FDA feed ban rule regarding rendering of cattle over 30 months of age to discuss what options cattle producers may have for carcass disposal.

\*Worked with Kandiyohi County and the Willmar Economic Development Commission to coordinate the 7th Annual Strategic Animal Ag Conference.

\*Provided maintenance of a comprehensive website of up-to-date area zoning maps and data pertaining to local government ordinances and makes this information available to producers.

\*Created several publications highlighting the livestock industry and promoting Minnesota as a great state to expand or relocate a livestock farm.

\*Assisted in the promotion of the Commissioner's Good Farm Neighbor Award, a monthly award honoring Minnesota livestock producers for their exemplary animal care, environmental stewardship and community involvement.

## MDA LD Team members

Curt Zimmerman - Project Supervisor  
Jim Ostlie - Livestock Development  
Rob Sip - Land Use Planner  
Dave Weinand - Grants

# Antibiotics needed to keep animals healthy, food safe - *From FB News, April 6, 2009*

Just when many people are worried about the cost and safety of food, some want to limit farmers' ability to use one of the tools they have to produce plenty of safe food—antibiotic drugs.

The American Farm Bureau Federation says livestock producers need to be able to continue using antibiotics, both for animal health and food protection.

“In order to raise healthy animals, we need tools to keep them healthy, including medicines that have been approved as safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration,” said AFBF President Bob Stallman. “Restricting access to these important tools will jeopardize animal health and compromise our ability to contribute to public health through food safety.”

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) have introduced the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (S. 619, H.R. 1549). The bill would require the Food and Drug Administration to review its approvals of antibiotics used in food animals and phase out nontherapeutic uses—defined in the bills as usage “for growth promotion, feed efficiency, weight gain, routine disease prevention or other routine purpose.”

The bill's introduction followed recent news reports about growing concern over humans' resistance to antibiotics. A New York Times article pointed to samples of pork found to contain Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, a

multi-drug resistant bacterium.

The tests were done by the Union of Concerned Scientists, an environmental group that was already critical of large-scale livestock production. The tests found that five of 90 samples of pork tested positive for MRSA in Louisiana and one pork sample out of 300 tested positive for MRSA in the Washington, D.C., area. However, there is no evidence that the cause of the pathogen's presence in meat was the use of antibiotics on farms, and the article's author, columnist Nicholas Kristof, says it could have come from humans who handled the meat.

The National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System, at the Centers for Disease Control, Food and Drug Administration and USDA, keeps track of resistance trends in humans, food and animals. So far, the program has produced seven years of data, through 2004, showing stable or declining trend patterns in drug-resistant bacteria in food animals and humans, according to the Animal Health Institute (AHI).

Farmers use antibiotics to treat sick animals, prevent illnesses during times when animals might be more susceptible to infection and promote growth by adding very low doses of antibiotics to animals' food. While some might argue that the growth promoting objective is not as necessary as the other two, AFBF says restricting antibiotics could have negative unintended consequences for animal health.

“Antibiotics are important for keeping animals healthy, and if a farmer has to wait for a veterinarian to come out to the farm to prove that an animal is sick before he can give medicine, that will cause delays and possibly cause more animals to become infected,” explained Kelli Ludlum, AFBF animal welfare specialist.



*Photo courtesy of AVMA*

The AHI says the consequences of a ban in 2000 on growth promoting uses of antibiotics in Denmark show that a ban in the U.S. is not a good idea. It says the Danish ban has resulted in more death and disease among animals and greater amounts of antibiotics used to treat animal diseases that might have been prevented. Non-therapeutic use has declined, but therapeutic use has increased 135 percent. The ban has not produced the intended benefits. Resistance to some antibiotics has decreased in animals, while resistance to others has gone up. And there is little evidence to suggest that antibiotic resistance in humans has declined.

In the U.S., all drugs used on animals are approved by the FDA. In addition, the safety assessment for food animal antibiotics requires drug companies to submit human food safety studies to ensure meat from animals treated with the antibiotic will be safe for human consumption.

## ARS and Partners Set Their Sights on Scrapie in Goats - *Ag Research*, April

Goats are tough, spirited animals. But they're no match for scrapie, a form of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. In goats and sheep the degenerative disease causes tremors, lip-smacking, weight loss, a hopping gait, and other peculiar symptoms. Scrapie-afflicted animals cannot be cured, and they eventually die.

Since 2001, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has coordinated an accelerated National Scrapie Eradication Program to eliminate the disease from U.S. sheep and goats. But transmission routes, progression, and genetic underpinnings of scrapie in goats are poorly understood. Low occurrence rates, underreporting, and the inconvenience and cost of tissue testing make eradication challenging.

The good news is that a new, live-animal test to detect scrapie is being applied to goats. There's also an ongoing study of goat genes that might confer resistance to the disease.

The new method, known as the "rectal mucosal-associated lymphoid tissue (RMALT) test," is based on the currently used third-eyelid test. Developed by the Agricultural Research Service and Washington State University (WSU), the third-eyelid test has been used by APHIS and state veterinarians since 2002 as an official test to detect scrapie in sheep. It involves snipping a tiny piece of lymphoid tissue from the animal's nictitating membrane, or third eyelid, staining it with antibodies, and examining it under a microscope. Lymphoid tissue is used because it tends to collect malformed proteins

called "prions," which are thought to cause scrapie.

Researchers in Norway and Scotland modified the method for a different site: lymphoid tissue in the lining of the animal's rectum. The rectal biopsy has also been used in deer, elk, sheep, and now goats. It's quick to perform and relatively painless to the animal—thanks to a dab of local anesthetic.

"Rectal biopsy also allows for more repeat samples from an individual animal when needed," says ARS microbiologist Katherine I. O'Rourke, a member of the scrapie research team, which includes APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) and Wildlife Services, the National Park Service, Colorado State University, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

In January 2008, APHIS-VS approved use of the RMALT test as a scrapie-detection tool after large-scale validation trials comparing its accuracy (87%) to third-eyelid biopsies and postmortem exams of tissue from infected sheep. Additional work on the accuracy is under way. APHIS has incorporated the RMALT test into the National Scrapie Eradication Program.

A key facet of scrapie prevention in sheep flocks involves use of selective breeding to increase the number of sheep with the version of the prion protein gene (dubbed "R171") that confers resistance. For now, goat producers don't have that option. Despite searches by ARS and WSU scientists at Pullman, as well as at other labs, the R171 prion gene version has never been found in goats.



But there are several different gene variants in goats, some of which might confer resistance to scrapie. No one has confirmed genetic resistance in goats thus far, but some tantalizing leads are emerging.

"In sheep, the discovery of resistance genes was key to developing a broadly accepted eradication program. If scrapie is found in a flock, only the genetically susceptible sheep are removed, allowing the producer to maintain quality animals," says O'Rourke. "As we learn more about goat genetic resistance, we hope the same approach can work for them."

In related work, the Pullman scientists are monitoring six goats from a Michigan farm with a known history of scrapie infection. In March, two of the infected goats, named "Nutmeg" and "Meeko," gave birth to three kids, providing the scientists with an unprecedented look into parent-to-offspring transmission of scrapie and inheritance of genes affecting the animal's response to the disease.

"We learned that—unlike in sheep—the goat placenta is not a very reliable indicator of the scrapie status of the dam," says O'Rourke. "We'll do some more research to determine why this is, and how it affects transmission in a herd."



## Capitol Hill Hears from America's Sheep Producers

Sheep producer leaders from 23 states flocked to the Hill this week to represent the collective interests of the American sheep industry. U.S. senators and representatives were visited as part of the American Sheep Industry Association's (ASI) annual spring trip to Washington, D.C.

Continued funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (WS) agency was a top priority as producers talked with the staff from their respective congressional offices. The sheep industry is proud to help feed and clothe the people of America and of

the world, but in return, it needs the support of the federal wildlife agency to continue to share the responsibility of damage control with state and local government, and landowners.

Other topics of discussion included the codification of the shepherd legislation, expanded research on the transmission of disease between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and the passage of the Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act.

"There are a lot of new faces in Washington, and this trip was a great opportunity for the industry to educate

the new congressmen on the top sheep concerns," stated Bob Benson, co-chair of the ASI Legislative Action Council and Indiana sheep producer. "Issues throughout the industry vary depending on location and size; however, many things remain consistent across all operations, such as attacks on livestock production waged by animal rights groups."

"This annual event for producer leaders provides a chance to advocate the industry's united voice to federal policy makers," said Gary McGehee, co-chair of the ASI Legislative Action Council and Texas sheep producer.

## Fisher Delivers ID Remarks to Vilsack

American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) President Glen Fisher (Texas) delivered remarks on Wednesday during a roundtable discussion on animal identification held by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. This event is the first in a series of listening sessions aimed at gathering feedback and input that will assist the secretary in making decisions about the future direction of animal identification and traceability.

During his remarks, Fisher reiterated the ASI policy that supports an animal identification system if several serious provisions are met. Fisher also described the system the sheep industry has in place today.

"When the National Scrapie Eradication Program was initiated in

2001, a mandatory, functional and practical ID system was implemented, and today we have over 90 percent of the sheep premises recorded in the national scrapie database. The implementation of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) for livestock should not be duplicative of the program sheep producers follow within the scrapie program."

"Because producers bear the cost of production loss each time an animal is penned, restrained and handled, the cost of ID, database services, supplies and devices should be bore by the public sector," continued Fisher. "Implementation of this system must not economically burden any sector of the U.S. sheep industry."

Fisher also noted that NAIS should

accommodate all the various production systems in the United States, including group movement of owned animals for management purposes, as well as movement through feeder and slaughter channels. Group ID is the most effective method for achieving traceability in the feeder/slaughter channels.

In conclusion, Fisher emphasized that even with the importance of animal identification, it is of no value if a lamb is dragged from its mother and killed by coyotes. The sheep industry encourages the support of the department for the federal share of predator management.

A copy of the formal statement submitted by Fisher is available for review at [www.sheepusa.org](http://www.sheepusa.org).

**Mark your calendars now for the 2009 MLWPA Shepherd's Holiday, December 4-5, in Alexandria.**

**Ideas for speakers/topics can be submitted to any MLWP board member.**

## Changes to FSA Wool Program

Changes to the way loan repayment rates are calculated for both wool Marketing Assistance Loans and for the Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) program went into effect on April 15. The most noticeable change is that there will now be a new 30-day average repayment rate in addition to the familiar weekly repayment rate. The repayment rate that will be in effect for the following week will be the lower of the two calculations.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will publish loan repayment rates for graded and non-graded wool once a week to be effective from Wednesday morning through the following Tuesday evening as has been the case since the initiation of the program. The new format for reporting prices incorporates the two programs.

"Adding the 30-day rate will be helpful for producers, especially when the wool market rises quickly,"

explains Peter Orwick, executive director of the American Sheep Industry Association, adding that the 2009 wool season so far is the perfect example of when this type of marketing assistance is crucial. "Slow sales due to the weakened economy



and major changes in currency exchange rates have producers looking for the benefit of additional revenue through a deficiency payment or the cash flow of a marketing loan for spring expenses."

The 30-day average repayment rate allows producers to watch the market signals for the past few weeks and determine when it is financially beneficial to either repay the marketing loans or to take out an LDP. The 30-day average also helps to smooth price spikes in the market due to weekly market volatility. In the past, the weekly repayment rates and subsequently wool LDP rates have changed dramatically from one week to the next. The new adjustments will help stabilize program benefits and allows for time needed to make better marketing decisions for wool.

These changes are in response to requirements in the 2008 Farm Bill legislation mandating the addition of a 30-day repayment rate calculation.

For more information go to your county FSA office or check online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&object=prsu&topic=col-nl-wm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&object=prsu&topic=col-nl-wm).

## What If We Got It Wrong

Mike Rowe, from the Discovery channel's television show Dirty Job's, explains his experience of castrating lambs using the advice from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) versus the practice of a sheep rancher. He comes to realize that farmers use animal husbandry management

practices with the health of the animal in mind, and he begins to wonder if maybe PETA and HSUS have it all wrong. Maybe it is time to be responsible instead of simply talking about the responsibilities of others.

He theorizes about this country's war against work, and he gives praise to hard workers that do the jobs others couldn't dream of doing.

The video is available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-udsIV4Hmc&eurl=http%3A%2F%2Fcausematters%2Ewordpress%2Ecom%2F2009%2F03%2F25%2Fmisconception%2Dwork%2Dethic%2F&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-udsIV4Hmc&eurl=http%3A%2F%2Fcausematters%2Ewordpress%2Ecom%2F2009%2F03%2F25%2Fmisconception%2Dwork%2Dethic%2F&feature=player_embedded).

### 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](mailto:info@sheepusa.org)**

# You Can Affect the Quality of Your Wool Clip

The American Wool Council (AWC) is encouraging all producers to participate in the certified wool clip program. This program is a self-certification effort to improve wool quality and is designed to let purchasers of U.S. wool know what efforts growers have taken at shearing time to ensure a quality clip.

"Due to the world-wide economic situation, it looks like the 2009 wool marketing season will be challenging," stated Jim Bristol (MI), AWC chair. "One way that growers can help to assure a market for their wool is to participate in the certified wool program and to let the buyers know what steps have been followed at shearing to prepare a quality clip."

The certified program points out 10 steps that growers can follow to improve the quality of their clip. A few of the items are:

- minimize contamination;
- short sheep by wool type prior to shearing;
- package different types of wool and off-sorts separately;
- use new and approved wool packaging materials;
- label wool bales properly and keep a record; and
- notify the buyer of the steps taken to improve the wool clip.

The buyers of U.S. wool are also being asked to support the wool quality improvement programs by asking for certified wool clips.

"All of the wool programs implemented by the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) are inter-related," concluded Bristol.

"Therefore, the reputation of the U.S. wool clip depends on the participation

of all growers, large or small.

Successful wool programs starts at the farm. In order for the wool council programs to be successful, it must start at the farm with quality improvement."

The forms and information about the certified wool clip program are available on the ASI Web site, [www.sheepusa.org](http://www.sheepusa.org), for producers to access and print. Growers should check all the boxes that apply to the clip and bring a copy when the wool is delivered.

Questions about the certified wool clip program can be directed to Bob Padula, the American Sheep Industry Association's wool quality improvement consultant, at 320-269-7973 or by e-mail at [rfp@mvtvwireless.com](mailto:rfp@mvtvwireless.com).

## Sheep for Profit School

July 8-11, 2009

- Professional Sheep Management & Business School
- Improve Sheep Management Skills
- Increase Profitability
- Develop Enterprise Goals
- Develop Business Relationships
- Includes Farm Tours



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## Calendar of Events

2009

May 22-23	National Corn Belt Sale	Des Moines, IA
May 28-30	Nugget All-American Sheep Sale	Sparks, NV
June 1	MLWP Youth starter flock application deadline	
June 10-13	Columbia National Show & Sale	Tooele, UT
June 13	Iowa Sheep Industry Assoc. Annual mtg	Adel, IA
June 22-27	Midwest Stud Ram Sale	Sedalia, MO
June 30	MN Suffolk Scholarship application deadline	
July 8-11	Pipestone Sheep for Profit School	Pipestons, MN
July 12-15	NLFA Sheep Industry Leadership School	Greeley, CO
July 16-18	National Targhee Show & Sale	Miles City, MT
July 18	MN State Suffolk Show	Faribault, MN
July 19	MN State Suffolk Sale	Faribault, MN
Aug. 22	Iowa Hawkeye Suffolk Sale	Des Moines, IA
Aug. 27—Sep. 7	MN State Fair	St. Paul, MN
Sep. 18	Newell Ram Sale	Newell, SD
Oct.	MN Hampshire Young Shepherd's Scholarship deadline	
Oct. 31	North Star Bred Ewe Sale	Pipestone, MN
Nov. 28	MN Bred Ewe & Doe Sale	Rochester, MN
Dec. 4-5	MLWPA Shepherd's Holiday	Alexandria, MN

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

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[www.mlwp.org](http://www.mlwp.org)

### Grilled Lamb Kebabs

#### Ingredients:

1 pound of ground lamb.  
1 cup of onion, chopped finely.  
½ cup of chopped fresh cilantro, lightly packed.  
1 tablespoon of melted butter.  
1 tablespoon of sliced green serranos chilis.  
1 teaspoon of garam masala.  
½ teaspoon of freshly-ground black pepper.  
Salt, to taste.  
Vegetable oil, to brush grill.

#### Directions:

Combine all ingredients thoroughly and shape into logs that can be placed onto skewers.

Cook on the grill, about 2 inches from the heat source, for about 3 minutes on each side.

