Spring Sheep Workshop Draws Record Crowd

Over 100 sheep enthusiasts attended the 2011 MLWPA Spring Sheep Workshop at the Rafter P Ranch near Kensington, MN. In addition to farmers from across Minnesota and neighboring states, several 4-H youth and college students participated, making it the most well-attended MLWP event in years.

It was a great opportunity to learn about sheep production and management on one of the larger sheep farms in the state owned by Dan and Kayleen Persons. Many of the strategies used at Rafter P can be applied to other sheep flocks, regardless of size according to Dan.

"It's still the same ideas," Dan said. "You are just using a different method to get it done."

Dr. Kathleen Head gave a presentation of hoof care. Participants were able to get some hands-on practice trimming hooves.

Bret Oelke, and Lambassador, Jodee Oelke, gave a demonstration on fitting breeding ewes.

Cont. on p. 2

We had a good turnout for the spring workshop, April 2nd at Rafter P Ranch hosted by Dan and Kayleen Persons and family. What a great job. Many thanks to the speakers, helpers and all that participated. A good time was had by all.

The annual Shepherd Harvest Festival was May 7th and 8th at Lake Elmo. It was nice to see old friends and meet some new ones too. Thank you to Patty Anderson and everyone that helped her.

Save December 3rd and 4th 2011 for the Shepherd’s Holiday. Hope you will plan to attend.

If you have any nominations for the Silver Bell award please call me at 952-466-2451.

Hope you have a safe and successful planting season despite the late, wet and stressful spring.

Check out our new, improved website:

www.mlwp.org.
Sheep Farmers in Washington DC

Sheep producers from across the country converged on Washington DC May 2nd through the 5th to discuss current industry concerns. Representing Minnesota were John Dvorak of Webster and Dan Persons of Kensington.

Monday afternoon the group met with the ASI Washington DC staff to get briefed on the issues that would be talked about. Robert Benson of Indiana led the discussion as the Chairman of the ASI Legislative Council. John Dvorak and Jeremy Geske of Minnesota also serve on this council. Fran Boyd and Dustin Bryant of Meyers and Associates represent ASI in Washington DC briefed the delegation on pending and past legislation that have impacted the industry.

After the briefing session the attendees were special guests of the New Zealand Embassy and enjoyed a delicious meal of New Zealand specialties. The New Zealand Ambassador to the United States addressed the delegates and thanked them for a great working relationship. They stressed that there is room for everyone in the international sheep trade and that they will continue to seek favorable trade agreements for the international markets. The New Zealand sheep industry is facing the same problems as the American sheep industry in shrinking numbers, escalating costs and increased regulations.

Tuesday morning the delegates met with various staff of the USDA. The funding levels for wildlife services and predator control were major topics of discussion. ASI was assured that wildlife services will continue to do all they can to have their budget restored and make sure financial resources are channeled where needed the most. The loss of rangeland in the west due to wildlife conflicts was discussed and they will make a concerted effort find a way to resolve this loss by utilizing abandoned grazing allotments where possible.

Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday the offices of all of the Minnesota Congress and Senators were visited. The staff was introduced to the status of sheep production in Minnesota and the United States. ASI is actively working to get

Cont. on p. 3

Spring Sheep Workshop - cont.

Jeremy Geske delivered a presentation on Animal Rights Activists. The session generated much discussion from participants on what we as farmers and ranchers can do to proactively protect our industry.

MLWP thanks Dan Persona and John Dvorak for hosting and coordinating the event.

[Editor’s note: The MLWP Board of Directors will begin planning for the 2012 Spring Sheep Workshop this fall. If you have ideas for locations, and topics, please contact your regional director, or any member of the board. If you are willing to host the workshop on your farm, and would be willing to help coordinate the event, contact John Dvorak.]

Cont. on p. 3

Is It Done Yet?

For those that do not have a lot of experience cooking with lamb, determining when it is done is the biggest challenge. An overcooked rack of lamb is an expensive mistake. Carving into an undercooked roast can be an embarrassment at a dinner party. Do not rely on guesswork—a good meat thermometer will provide reliable results. DO NOT cut into a roast or chop to check doneness. Use an instant read thermometer to give you a quick, accurate reading.

American Lamb always benefits from rest before serving—the rest allows the meat’s juices to settle. Give thin cuts like chops 5 minutes before serving and allow 20 minutes before carving roasts. Keep in mind that the meat’s internal temperature typically rises 5-10 degrees as it rests. Remove lamb from cooking heat when the thermometer reads 5-10 degrees less than your desired temperature.

To ensure lamb remains safe throughout cooking, the USDA recommends cooking ground lamb to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160°F as measured on a food thermometer. Other cuts, including roasts and chops, should be cooked to 145°F for medium-rare, 160°F for medium, and 170°F for well-done.

Learn more at: www.americanlamb.com

Spring Sheep Workshop - cont.

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Dan Persons—host of the 2011 MLWPA Spring Sheep Workshop
Photo courtesy of Agri-News
PROMOTE SHEEP AS A BAA BOOTH VOLUNTEER

Please consider volunteering for the 2011 Minnesota State Fair Baa Booth. The following information will help us make your experience in the Baa Booth rewarding and fun. The State Fair is an opportunity to reach out to hundreds of thousands of potential consumers who likely know very little about sheep farming.

**** Please note **** The Baa Booth runs for the first eight days of the Fair only (August 25th through September 1st)

If you can help out, please complete the information below and send it to:

Jodee Oelke
15734 200th Ave
Barrett, MN 56311
jmoelke@gmail.com
218-770-2428

Name _____________________________

Phone (h) ________________________ Cell ______________

T-shirt size: ______________

If I need to contact you regarding volunteer times, would you prefer daytime or evening? ___________________________ and the best way to reach you is: home phone - cell phone - e-mail

Call or e-mail me if you have questions. You can volunteer as many times as you like.

I can volunteer the following time(s)
Help with set up prior to Fair_______
Thursday Aug 25th Morning_______
Thursday Aug 25th Afternoon_______
Thursday Aug 25th Evening_______

Friday Aug 26th Morning_______
Friday Aug 26th Afternoon_______
Friday Aug 26th Evening ________

Saturday Aug 27th Morning ______
Saturday Aug 27th Afternoon ______
Saturday Aug 27th Evening ______

Sunday Aug 28th Morning ______
Sunday Aug 28th Afternoon ______
(Closes at 3)

Monday Aug 29th Morning ________
Monday Aug 29th Afternoon ______
Monday Aug 29th Evening ________

Tuesday Aug 30st Morning ________
Tuesday Aug 30st Afternoon ______
Tuesday Aug 30st Evening ________

Wednesday Aug 31st Morning ________
Wednesday Aug 31st Afternoon ______
Wednesday Aug 31st Evening ________

Thursday Sept 1st Morning ________
Thursday Sept 1st Afternoon ________
(Closes at 2)

SHEEP FARMERS IN D.C. - cont.

the Grey Wolves taken off of the endangered species list and have control of them passed on to state agencies. The Minnesota legislators all gave the impression that they would be in favor of this change. Other topics covered were the Minor Species/Minor Use labeled drugs and the process to get drugs listed for use in sheep, rebuilding the industry and the need to have regulations that are not burdensome and the multiple use of public lands as it pertains to the grazing of livestock and environmental protection.

Wednesday evening was the time of the annual Lamb Barbeque for key government staff as a thank you from our industry for their support. We are always reminded that they appreciate that when the sheep producers come to town they have a united voice and a consistent message to take to their representatives.

Dan Persons and John Dvorak on Capitol Hill
The Lippert brothers know a thing or two about feeding lambs – it’s in their DNA.

“My father was for many years the largest lamb feeder in Minnesota,” relates Mike Lippert, a second-generation lamb feeder from Olivia, who still feeds lambs on that very same farm his father began in 1957. Brother Dan, of Blomkest, also feeds lambs in the area on a separate farm, running a 4,000 capacity lot.

“He just saw a profit potential in sheep and how quick you can rotate them and just always enjoyed working with them,” Dan adds about their father. That knowledge was passed down to the brothers, who each have fed lambs since they returned to the farm after college.

Mike and Dan also know a thing or two about bringing all segments of the industry together and giving their knowledge and time back to an industry that has played a large part in their family throughout the years.

A Lifetime in the Industry

“The sheep industry has been good to us and our families,” Mike says.

Due to the location and availability of feed, the family was in a prime area to feed sheep. By 1963, the Lipperts’ father was running two feedlots containing around 22,000 head of lambs.

“Our location is probably why the lamb feeding industry started in this area,” Dan says, adding that the natural economic advantage was that the lots were at the midpoint between lamb production in the West and consumption of the East.

In addition, the abundant availability of reasonably priced feedstuffs has been a key to the feeding business.

“We probably feed about a half of the crops we raise,” Mike relates.

Today, Mike and Dan both run separate farms, growing crops like corn and soybeans, alfalfa, canning peas and sweet corn. They buy a majority of their lambs out of the Dakotas, Montana and Minnesota, with some from Texas and Wyoming. They send their lambs to processors in Detroit, Iowa and Colorado.

“We run separate feedlots and we each have our own ground, but we share equipment, collaborate and compromise with each other,” says Mike. That collaboration and compromising attitude goes far beyond the brothers’ farming and feeding operations, they have taken it to a national scope in order to help the sheep industry pull together and move forward toward a successful future.

Mike and Dan currently serve on two important boards in the U.S. sheep industry: Mike serves as the National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA) representative on the American Sheep Industry Association’s (ASI) Executive Board and Dan represents feeders on the American Lamb Board (ALB).

“It’s kind of a family tradition to be involved and at the table,” says Dan, who was appointed to ALB in March 2010. “I was happy to get appointed as a representative for the lamb feeders, but it’s not just about representing feeders, I am hoping we can make some industry-wide improvements in the sheep business.”

Some of those improvements, according to Dan would be improving efficiencies in a small industry, focusing more on production and limiting the price volatility that can hit the lamb market.

“Too often, profit in the sheep business has come from owning the lambs at the right time, rather than producing a desirable product. But, it isn’t about the lamb feeder getting a few cuts on the producer. There are pretty good values for all, and hopefully we get into a system where everyone has a piece of the pie rather than just those who are
LIPPERTS - CONT.

holding lambs at the right time,” he adds.

Dan says the work being done by
the lamb board is going a long way to
making that a possibility and
solidifying a unified industry that is
pulling toward the same goals. “The
ALB is working on many things that
are allowing people to consume lamb
in additional ways. When prices are
high, consumption can grow by
moving beyond the center of the
plate with appetizers and salads
using our product, you don’t have to
buy only big primal cuts. This adds
value and can make lamb pretty
versatile and increase the value for
all in the industry,” he says.

For Mike, his involvement with
NLFA has allowed not only a voice to
represent feeders but also is a way
to bring all sides of the industry
together for a common purpose.
The Lipperts have been involved
with NLFA since its inception in
1957, and Mike attended his first
NLFA meeting in 1975, and from
there, served on the board from
1982 to 1992 and came back in
2005 to serve as vice president for
two years, president for two years
and now serves as the immediate
past president. As such, he sits as
the NLFA representative to the ASI
Executive Board for two years.

“I represent the interests of the
lamb feeders to the whole industry
and the working relationship
between ASI and NLFA is very open
and cordial. We may have
differences of opinion but there are
no longer areas of contention, and
that is important,” he relates. “The
lamb industry is as much about
lifestyle as it is about economics for
all of us, and I would like to believe I
can make a difference by giving my
time.”

Looking to the Future

“It’s a strong family interest in
lambs, and I have a personal interest
in continuing the family business
down that road,” says Dan of
continuing his feeding operation. “I
like feeding and now my son has
expressed interest, so we are going
to maintain the feedlot and hope to
continue around the 4,000 head
capacity.”

Mike says he just did a rebuild on
his feedlots but may be more
selective with his feeding schedule.

“At times I will be full, but I will
pick and choose the times to feed so
I can enjoy the fruits of my labor,” he
says.

But both Lipperts point to a few
challenges that may need to be
addressed for the

“We like to buy directly off
ranches, but there are times we have
difficulty filling load lots,” says Mike.

However, the recent higher prices
and efforts toward growing the
industry are a positive step.

“It’s great to see producers
making money, and I would love to
see producers expand facilities and
flocks. We are all inclined to pay
more attention to the operation as
long as prices are up, but we all need
to make a commitment to the future.
The committee working on expansion
is a critical thing right now. We need
to stabilize inventory,” Dan says.

He also adds that he sees
indications of growth in production in
some areas, and with about half of
all lamb in this country imported, the
domestic market has a lot of room
for that growth.

“Keeping the support industries
and having enough re-investment in
the infrastructure to keep it going is
big,” adds Mike of future issues for
the industry, adding that fewer sheep
numbers means less investment in
trailers, veterinary products,
research, etc. “Losing one of our
packers will certainly trickle down,”
he says.

But if producers do what they can
to get the best prices for their lambs,
it will go a long way to continued
support of the infrastructure, and the
Lipperts have a suggestion as to how
producers can do that.

“Most people do a tremendous
job with breeding, worming and
vaccination, but if I can communicate
one thing, the high prices they will
receive will depend on how well their
lambs are acclimated to the feed
yard,” Mike relates. “They spend all
those months attached to their
lambs, so the more they can do to
make it less stressful on the lambs
the better. If you do this, we will pay
more for it. I will pay more for
weaned, started lambs.”

“It’s a cost to the industry. Any
inefficiency is, but if producers can
make their lambs better prepared to
adapt to the feedlots, death loss is
reduced tremendously. Weaned
lambs adapt very quickly to feeders
and waterers and a new
environment,” Dan adds. Bottom
line, says Dan, as producers and
feeders we need to all stick together
and make it easier for each other to
stay in business.

“We are buying, and you are
selling. We are not adversaries
– there are too many common
challenges for us not to work
together.

Scrapie Genotyping Funds

The Minnesota Board of Animal
Health has funds available for sheep
producers to test up to 10 rams for
scrapie resistance. Funds are availa-
ble on a first-come, first-serve basis.
Contact your district veterinarian to
make your appointment while funds
last. (Not sure who your district vet
is? go to: www.bah.state.mn.us and
click on sheep and goats, then Scra-
pie disease programs, then on Free
scrapie susceptibility testing.)
MLWPA Board Meeting Highlights—March `10 Becky Utecht

The meeting was called to order by President Adelmann. The Secretary's report was read and approved with meeting date correction. The Treasurer's report was discussed and approved as submitted. The ending balance total in all accounts was $72,521.34.

Committee reports:
Membership/Directory/Newsletter: Jeremy Geske reported member dues are coming in, currently have 211 memberships [now 280]. Renewal notices have been distributed multiple times. The directory and newsletter will be mailed out in June. Newsletter submissions are due by May 27 and directory submissions due by May 1. The MLWP newsletter is posted on the ASI website.

Youth Committee:
Steve Scheffert handed out a proposal for reorganization of the MLWP Youth Program. After discussion, motion to adopt the new structure of the MLWP Youth Committee was approved. Motion passed to appoint Steve Scheffert and Kirk Roe as acting Ambassador Coordinator and Youth Committee Advisor until the December meeting.

ASI/ALB Report:
Karen Stormo reported on the Northern Plains Conference. She noted the need for a tablecloth with the new MLWP logo.

Old business:
Starter Flock: information will be in the newsletter.

Shepherd’s Harvest: Don has been in contact with Julie McKenzie regarding MLWP participation in the festival. Catherine Friend, author and MLWP member, offered to sign books in the MLWP booth. Several Board members volunteered to help in the MLWP booth. Becky to contact Patty and the booth volunteers.

Shepherd’s Holiday: the 2011 MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday will be held at Jackpot Junction in Morton. Contract to be signed this week. Discussed timing/days of event, the addition of a spinning area, and instructors for all classes.

National Lamb Feeders School: in Sioux Falls, SD, July 10-13 this year.

Spring Workshop: To be held at Dan Persons’ farm on April 2nd beginning at 9:00 a.m.

ASI Washington D.C. Trip: Dan Persons and John Dvorak will go this year.

New Logo/Printing: Need new logo table cloth, banners, and brochures.

Rambouillet Breeders Sponsorship: Motion was approved to support the Rambouillet Breeders in the amount of $500 for their National Show and Sale to be held in Pipestone this year.

Website: Discussion on website changes. We need to provide current information to be put on the site.

Next Meeting: June 25th at Litchfield Pizza Ranch.

What do you want to see at the Shepherd’s Holiday?

The 2011 MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday annual conference and Trade Show is scheduled for Dec. 3-4 at Jackpot Junction in Morton. While planning is underway, the board needs your input to make the event a success.

The board would like to offer a number of fiber-related classes. If you have ideas for topics and presenters, or if you would consider teaching a class, please contact Becky Utecht (320-679-4117 or becky@riveroakssheep.com), Terri Drimmel (651-257-4871 or roundaboutacres@gmail.com) or Karen Stormo (218-776-4871 or sheepfarm@gvtel.com).

The board would also like to offer sessions for youth. If you have ideas for topics/speakers, please contact Steve Scheffert (507-835-3951 or back40ty@gmail.com) or Kirk Roe (507-526-5845 or kwroe@bevcomm.net).

If you have ideas for general sheep production topics/speakers, or for a keynote speaker you want to hear, contact Jeremy Geske (612-756-1200 or jeremy.geske@gmail.com) or Dan Persons (320-986-2336 or rafterp@runestone.net). If you are interested in serving on the MLWPA board of directors let Jeremy or Dan know.

If you have nominations for the Silver Bell Award, (or an idea for someone that deserves a distinguished service or friend of the industry award) please contact President Don Adelmann at 952-466-2451.

If you want a booth at the trade show, and/or have items for the fundraiser auction, contact Travis and Jeanine Fowler (507-436-5273 or tjfranch@frontiernet.net).

If you have questions about the Make It With Wool contest, contact Ginette Sperry (651-257-6735 or gtsperry@frontiernet.net).

With your help, we can make this an outstanding event. Starting this fall, watch for updated Shepherd’s Holiday information on our website: www.mlwp.org.
Parasitism is the most expensive disease in the sheep industry if one considers the cost of deworming and the decreased performance that is caused by parasites. Due to variation in climatic conditions, location and sheep density, no single recommendation can be made that will be effective across the country. However, there are a few things to keep in mind when developing an internal parasite control program.

Internal parasites can be considered in three broad groups: roundworms, tapeworms and flukes. Roundworms attach to the intestinal surface and suck blood or serum from the animal. The most serious of these parasites is Haemonchus contortus. These worms will drain enough blood that the sheep will become anemic, very unthrifty and may die from blood loss. Other parasites in this group are Ostertagia, Nematodirus and lungworms. Haemonchus is the most efficient at developing resistance to dewormers. Generally if the deworming program can control Haemochus the other roundworm will be controlled as well. Young growing lambs are particularly susceptible to roundworms and should be dewormed when they are 3 to 4 months old.

Tapeworms do not do as much damage to sheep as roundworms. The greatest concern is that if large numbers of worms are present they can physically block the intestinal tract and cause death.

Flukes invade and migrate through the liver. Sheep are very sensitive to flukes and even one fluke can cause enough damage to kill a sheep. The life cycle of flukes requires a snail intermediate host. Therefore fluke problems are found in areas of standing water. One species of fluke, Fasciola magna can also infect deer and is a serious problem in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

In developing a deworming program always keep in mind the two populations of parasites: one population of adult worms in the animal and one population of immature larvae on the pasture. If you deworm sheep and turn them out in an infected pasture they will be reinfected with worms in 30 days. Plan your deworming to coincide with pasture rotation. Nearly all infective larvae are killed by freezing temperature so late fall is an excellent time to deworm your ewes as you can keep them clean all winter.

The best time for fall deworming is after the first killing frost. Deworming at this time will allow parasite free ewes until lambing. If a white wormer, such as Valbazen or Panacur is used in the summer, then Levasol (Tramisol) or Ivomec are excellent choices for fall deworming.

Remember to refrain from using Valbazen on early pregnant ewes as it has been shown to cause fetal defects in the first trimester of pregnancy.

Levasole and Tramisol contain the same drug and concentration of drug, they can be considered as equivalent. Valbazen is effective against flukes at 6ml 100#. Valbazen should not be used in pregnant ewes as the active ingredient, Albenazole can cause developmental defects in the fetus.

Internal parasites can be cost-effectively controlled by the use of pasture rotation, freezing temperatures, strategic deworming and periodic fecal analysis by your veterinarian. Parasitic worms that infect sheep are species specific. They only affect ruminants and cannot be passed to humans or other monogastric animals.

For sheep health questions and supplies, visit their website at:

www.pipevet.com
Or call: 800-658-2523

[Editor’s note: MLWPA thanks the Pipestone Vet Clinic for their support of our organization, as well as the sheep industry in Minnesota.]
Legislators Head Home (for now?)

The Minnesota House of Representatives, Senate and Governor Dayton were unable to reach an agreement on a state budget for the next biennium which starts July 1 by the constitutionally mandated legislative adjournment time of midnight, May 23. Legislators now head home and wait for Governor Dayton to call them back for a Special Session. The state constitution requires adoption of a balanced state budget by the start of the biennium. If that does not happen, state government could shut down.

Governor Dayton had signed the Agriculture Finance budget bill earlier in the session. The House and Senate sent the rest of their budget and tax bills to the Governor and he has vetoed them.

The Governor and Republicans remain approximately $3.6 billion apart in their positions on the state budget. Republicans are holding tight on a state budget of $34 billion. The Governor’s proposal is a state budget of $37.6 billion. The Governor had proposed closing the gap with increased taxes. He changed his proposal to look at $1.8 billion in increased cuts and $1.8 billion in increased taxes.

Ag Finance Bill Signed Into Law

On Friday, April 15, Governor Dayton signed the agriculture finance bill that the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate passed earlier in the week. This bill provides funding for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) for the next biennium beginning July 1. Although, the bill cuts the MDA’s budget, the cuts will not significantly impact MDA’s important food safety, animal health and environmental protection services.

All of the ethanol producer payment program deficiency payments will be made in fiscal year 2012. The Agriculture, Growth, Research and Innovation program will be funded at $2.3 million in fiscal year 2013. This program will have a base funding level of $10.2 million per year in fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

Other provisions contained in the legislation include:
- $100,000 is appropriated each year for MDA to hire a licensed education professional for the Agriculture in the Classroom program;
- Clarifying that the MDA Commissioner has the sole regulatory authority over terrestrial application of pesticides;
- Farmers will be allowed to bury concrete and reinforcing bar from a building or structure on their farm. A farmer must record the location of the buried material with the county recorder; and
- Clarifying that the Minnesota Board of Animal Health is responsible for regulating and oversight of the disposal of all animal mortalities.

This legislation also reduced the budget for the Minnesota Board of Health by 5%. The budget for the Agriculture, Utilization and Research Institute (AGRI) was reduced by 5%, leaving them with a budget of $2.6 million per year.

Green Acres/Rural Preserve

Governor Dayton signed HF 12, the Green Acres/Rural Preserve legislation. The legislation aims to simplify the administration of the Green Acres and Rural Preserve programs, as well as make it easier for landowners to participate. The legislation mainly impacts the Rural Preserve program.

A conservation management plan and covenant are no longer required to enroll property into the Rural Preserve program. An aerial photograph that clearly delineates the land being enrolled in Rural Preserve must be provided by the landowner when applying for the Rural Preserve program. The application deadline for Rural Preserve is May 1. That date is extended for 2011 only to August 1. Any covenants currently in place for property in the Rural Preserve are terminated.

The 10-acre minimum requirement for enrolling land in the Rural Preserve program is replaced with a requirement that only land contiguous to class 2a property under the same ownership is eligible to be enrolled in the Rural Preserve program – no minimum acreage requirement. Also property must be homesteaded to be eligible for either Green Acres or Rural Preserve.

Any lands properly enrolled in Green Acres that were removed from the program between May 21, 2008 and April 15, 2011 are allowed to be reinstated in the program at the request of the landowner.

Any lands removed from either Green Acres or Rural Preserve is subject to a three-year payback of deferred taxes.

The Commissioner of Revenue must convene a stakeholders group including both Farm Bureau and Farmers Union to explore alternative methods for determining the taxable

State Estate Tax Exemption

The Tax Bill vetoed by Governor Dayton included a provision raising the state estate tax exemption for small businesses and farmers by $4 million. This would be an addition to the existing $1 million exemption for a total exemption of $5 million.

To qualify for the increased exemption the property must:
- Be classified as agricultural homestead for property tax purposes;
- Owned for a three-year period prior to the date of death;
- A family member must farm the property for a three-year period following the date of death; and
- The estate and qualified heir agree to treat the property as qualified farm property.

Game and Fish Bill

Several provisions impacting agriculture are contained in this legislation. The House and Senate have passed this bill and the Governor has not taken action yet.

Currently state law prohibits an open season on gray wolves for five years after the gray wolf is delisted from the Endangered Species Act. This legislation eliminates the five year waiting period.

Under this legislation:
- A county or town board may offer a bounty for taking coyotes.
- Any farmer grazing cattle on state land is not liable for damage to property or the death of or an injury to a person due to the inherent risks of livestock activities.

In a confidential interim report circulated to the parties in the dispute May 20, the three-member WTO panel backed Canadian and Mexican arguments that the COOL requirements violated provisions of the WTO's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement), according to sources familiar with the findings.

The panel agreed with the complainants that the COOL requirements resulted in imported cattle and pork from Canada and Mexico being treated less favorably than U.S.-origin cattle and pork, in violation of Article 2.1 of the TBT Agreement. The panel ruled that the COOL requirements did not fulfill the stated U.S. objective of helping to inform consumers of the origin of meat, thus violating Article 2.2 of the TBT Agreement requiring that technical regulations not be more trade-restrictive than necessary to fulfill a legitimate objective, the sources said.

While the ruling is only preliminary, WTO panels rarely alter their interim conclusions in the final ruling. The panel is expected to issue its final ruling to the parties by the middle of the year, with the WTO making public the ruling sometime in September. The United States will then have 60 days to decide whether to appeal the panel's findings.

Cattle and hogs are the subject of this dispute—it is unclear at this time what impact this ruling could have on lamb and other products covered by COOL legislation.

Gray Wolf Delisted Again

In May, Interior Secretary Salazar announced that the Gray Wolf in MT, ID and portions OR, WA and UT, had been removed from the endangered species list. A ruling for MN, MI and WI is pending. Environmental groups have filed a lawsuit against USFWS.
STARTER FLOCK FUNDS

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 15.
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.

BY JUNE 15, Send your application to:
Don Adelmann,
10980 Little Ave., Cologne, MN 55322

STARTER FLOCK FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES

Minnesota Suffolk Sheep Assoc.
MSSA is offering three $100 scholarships towards the purchase of a registered Suffolk at either the MSSA state sale or the Rochester Bred Ewe Sale.
Deadline for application is June 30.
Contact Sara Saul (saramsaul@gmail.com) for information and requirements.

Minnesota Hampshire Sheep Assoc.
MHSA is offering four $200 scholarships to the purchase of a registered Hampshire ewe at the Rochester Bred Ewe Sale.
Deadline for application is Nov. 1.
Contact Tom Bobendrier (bobendrier@svtv.com) for requirements and application details.

US Targhee Sheep Association
USTSA offers a starter flock (3 ewes) to one deserving youth at their national show and sale. The Application deadline is April 1.
Check the USTSA website next winter for 2012 starter flock information.

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ASI Reveals the Let’s Grow with TwoPLUS Campaign

The U.S. sheep industry is finding itself amidst an encouraging time: lamb prices are at an all-time high, the wool market is the highest it’s been since 1989 and the cull ewe and pelt markets are very lucrative. However, from the farm gate through to the lamb and wool processing level, there is a shared concern about meeting the demand for lamb and wool production in the United States.

Lamb processors, from the commercial market channel to the rapidly growing nontraditional markets, are clamoring for a greater supply of lamb. In 2011, two major announcements to carry American lamb in our nation’s grocery stores occurred: Kroger, one of the nation’s largest grocery store chains, launched an American lamb branded campaign and Super Walmart made a commitment to exclusively carry American lamb in its stores. And the nontraditional market channels, which include on-farm sales, farmers markets and small processors serving ethnic communities, have grown exponentially over the years. In fact, one-third of the U.S. lamb crop has moved outside the traditional industry infrastructure to feed this nontraditional lamb market.

As an industry, we must supply the traditional market channel to keep American lamb in the nation’s largest grocery store chains and restaurants all while meeting the emerging demand for American lamb in the nontraditional markets.

This robust demand for product is also being experienced in the wool market. The U.S. military, the largest domestic consumer of U.S. wool, is excited for the opportunity to clothe our troops in high-performance washable wool products. The equipment that makes washable wool-top has been installed in the United States and is being used for a variety of domestically produced wool products that are already reaching the military and commercial markets.

A strategy to strengthen the lamb and wool industry's infrastructure by increasing the number of sheep in production is vital for the long-term sustainability of the industry. This is why the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is calling on sheep producers, both large and small, from east to west, to help accomplish the goal of growing our flock. ASI has come up with a formula to address these shortages within just a few years, it's called Let's Grow with twoPLUS. With three goals in mind, the primary objective of this campaign is to encourage current producers to expand their sheep numbers by 2014. This initiative will result in 315,000 more lambs and 2 million more pounds of wool for the industry to market.

The three goals are: encourage producers to increase the size of their operation by two ewes per operation or by two ewes per 100 by 2014; encourage sheep producers to increase the average birthrate per ewe to two lambs per year; and encourage producers to increase the harvested lamb crop by 2 percent - from 108 percent to 110 percent.

ASI has developed a website (www.growourflock.org) and materials to help spread the word of the initiative. The site includes a video explaining the twoPLUS program, Let’s Grow partners who are participating in the campaign, resources for producers, an open forum for producers to communicate with one another and a section for media promotion.

To enter, create a short original video (no longer than five minutes) and upload it to Youtube.com. Then email the link of your video and your contact information (name, address, email and phone number) to amy@sheepusa.org. Entries will be judged on creativity, appropriateness and effectiveness. The submission deadline is June 30, 2011, and the grand-prize winner will be announced on ASI's and ALB's Facebook page by mid-July.

Additional Let's Grow activities and resources will be revealed throughout the year to continue the promotion of the campaign and assist producers in meeting the goals of increased production.
USDA ANNOUNCES EXPORT PROMOTION ALLOCATIONS

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) awarded fiscal year 2011 funding to approximately 70 U.S. agricultural organizations to help expand commercial export markets for their goods.

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) has been awarded $161,354 through the Foreign Market Development Program and $381,466 through the Market Access Program to work with expending markets. "The sheep industry made a strong showing with positive results from these programs in past years," said Rita Kourlis Samuelson, ASI’s wool marketing director. "This is extremely important funding for the U.S. wool industry as it continues to explore and expand new markets."

The general purpose of these programs, although there are some differences, is to create, expand and maintain foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and support projects that benefit whole industries rather than individual companies. Depending on the program, applicants must be nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organizations, U.S. agricultural cooperatives or a state agency. Applicants must agree to cost share and contribute resources to their proposed activities.

ASI CONDUCTING 2011 SHEEP PHOTO CONTEST

Attention all photographers: It is time to start thinking about the American Sheep Industry Association’s (ASI) 2011 Photo Contest. The contest is open to all who wish to enter, which means you do not have to be involved in the U.S. sheep, lamb or wool industries to participate. The only rule is that your photograph must include sheep. Entries must be postmarked by Aug. 19, 2011.

Entries will be judged on clarity, content, composition and appeal. More than $1,000 will be awarded, with awards of $125 going to the grand prize winner in each of the four categories listed below; $75 for the first runner-up in each category; and a $50 prize for the second runner-up in each of the four categories.

The winning photos will be highlighted in the October issue of Sheep Industry News and will be available on Oct. 1 at www.sheepindustrynews.org. Only the grand prize winner, first runner-up and second runner-up in each category will be notified of their winnings.

Four categories:
1. Action - Photographs of activities such as shearing, wool classing/skirting/baling, moving/trailing sheep, lambing, tagging, showing, feeding, etc.
2. Scenic - Photographs of sheep outdoors. (Photos entered in this category cannot include people.)
3. People and Sheep - Photographs containing pictures of people and sheep.
4. Open Category - Photographs with subject matter that does not fall into the three above-listed categories.

Other Contest Rules:
1. ASI can use or reproduce all entries at the discretion of ASI. In addition, entries will not be returned.
2. Pictures taken with digital cameras can be submitted via hard copy or electronically.
3. All entries must be at least 3"x5" color or black-and-white high-resolution pictures.
4. Entries must be submitted in the name of the person who took the photograph.
5. Entries are limited to two per category.
6. Only photographs that have been taken in the past six years can be entered.
7. Photographs submitted in previous ASI photo contests cannot be re-entered.

The following information needs to be included with each submission: title of photo; category (from the four listed above) into which it is being entered; photographer’s name; mailing address; phone number; email address; and approximate location/date of photo. Entries should be mailed to: American Sheep Industry Association; Attn: Photo Contest; 9785 Maroon Circle, Suite 360; Englewood, CO 80112. Entries should be emailed to amy@sheepusa.org with the subject line of ASI Photo Contest.

2010 winner from Karen Aakre, MN
SUPERIOR Closes Iowa Plant - Reprinted in part from the Sioux City Journal

Superior Farms closed its lamb slaughter plant in Hawarden, Iowa. California-based Superior said it will keep open a six-employee station that buys lambs from area producers. In addition, the company will leave the equipment in the plant, which has the capacity to slaughter up to 240,000 lambs annually. “We really feel there is a lot of potential for the lamb industry in that area, and we want to be a resource for growers so they can stay in business,” Superior spokeswoman Angela Gentry said.

The American Sheep Industry Association reminds the industry that many of the lambs that have previously supplied the Iowa plant are entering into the nontraditional market instead, leaving the plant with less supply. Through the push to rebuild the national flock, it is forecast that industry growth will result in adequate lamb supply for both the traditional and nontraditional markets in that region. “As livestock becomes more available, and the flocks start growing, we will re-open as we are able to,” said Gentry.

A Letter to Producers - Greg Ahart, Superior Farms

When Superior Farms acquired the Iowa Lamb facility in Hawarden, Iowa last fall we at Superior knew that there would be some skepticism inside the producer community. During a conversation that I had immediately following that announcement with Glen Fisher (TX) he made a comment that we probably wouldn’t be judged on buying Iowa Lamb, but rather by our actions after the purchase, and those words have stuck with me.

When we started having conversations internally about the need to close Hawarden it was sad for many of us. We knew the psychological impact to the Midwestern sheep community wouldn’t be positive, and we knew that there were many people who would like to believe that closing that facility was part of our intent all along. Let me clear that up, as well as address our plans going forward.

Superior Farms is committed to the domestic sheep industry. Besides our known business to producers, we’re also heavily involved in both lamb meal for pet food and the casing (small intestines for sausage) business, and a significant amount of that business is dependent upon domestic lamb products for the supply of materials. It is because of our belief in the future of the American sheep industry that we chose to invest the amount of money that we did in the Iowa Lamb acquisition.

When people would ask questions about our intent for the Iowa facility we were always very straightforward with our answers. We needed to process about 240,000 lambs a year (which is roughly equivalent to last year’s throughput) through that facility in order to cover the overheads and justify keeping it open. With that being said, for the second quarter of our fiscal year, which if February, March, and April we harvested 29,000 head of lambs through that plant. We don’t believe that the Midwestern supply has changed that significantly, but we do believe that some suppliers elected to take their lambs elsewhere. As a result, we could not afford to keep it open. The decision to operate that plant or not was made by others, not us.

Going forward: we don’t want the Midwestern producer community to feel any negative impacts as a result of us being forced to close the plant. We will continue to operate our buy station network in the Midwest, and the yards in Hawarden will be converted into the “master” buy station. If full loads destined for Denver can’t be assembled at the outer buy stations they will be brought to Hawarden for consolidation or to be topped off. We’re covering the freight west, not the producer community.

The plant in Hawarden is being ‘mothballed’ as opposed to dismantled. All equipment will remain in place, the refrigeration is still on, and the kill floor chain is still oiled. If availability of Midwestern supply permits, we want to be able to turn that plant back on.

We want to reassure the producers of our commitment to the Midwestern lamb supply. We have and will continue to be competitive in the market, and wish to build up relationships and partnerships with Midwestern sheep producers. We are always willing to explore single year and multi year contracts – that allows producers to do what they do best and us to do what we do best – with each side knowing they have either a place to go with their lambs or get lambs from. We aren’t looking to buy your lambs for just one year – we want to earn your trust, prove to be good partners, and be your chosen place to sell your lambs for the years to come.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or concerns. Direct number to my office is 530 297-3512, my cell phone is 916 716-0089, and my email is greg.ahart@superiorfarms.com.
The Natural Resources Defense Council filed a lawsuit this week against the Food and Drug Administration claiming that FDA has not adequately addressed the use of antibiotics in animal production. The suit filed by NRDC, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Food Animal Concerns Trust, Public Citizen, and Union of Concerned Scientists, alleges that there is “growing evidence that the spread of bacteria immune to antibiotics around the world has clear links to the overuse of antibiotics in the food industry.” according to a news release issued by NRDC. However, no scientific studies backing the allegation were cited in the news release.

“The FDA needs to put the American people first by ensuring that antibiotics continue to serve their primary purpose – saving human lives by combating disease,” said Peter Lehner, NRDC executive director. “The coalition suit would compel FDA to take action on the agency’s own safety findings, withdrawing approval for most non-therapeutic uses of penicillin and tetracyclines in animal feed,” according to the release.

“We can’t let these precious medicines be wasted so we can save—literally—a few pennies per pig.” said Richard Wood, FACT executive director. The suit would also compel the FDA to respond to the citizen petitions filed by several of the plaintiffs in 1999 and 2005.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is moving to corral the use of antibiotics in food animals, challenging organized veterinary medicine to grapple with an issue on which it has long resisted change.

The FDA is worried that antibiotics on farms may breed drug-resistant pathogens that could endanger public health. The agency is now at work on a new policy document that stands to be the federal government’s strongest-ever position on the issue. As indicated in a draft policy guidance released in June 2010, the FDA supports two main changes:

- Restrictions on certain antibiotics meant to spur growth in livestock;
- Increased veterinary oversight of food-animal antibiotic use, in particular the vast quantities of non-prescription drugs now administered as “medicated feed” with no requirement for veterinary supervision.

For years, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the largest veterinary professional organization, has opposed restrictions on food-animal antibiotic use. In public statements and Congressional testimony, the group has argued that there’s no proof that using antibiotics in food animals presents a significant public health risk and has maintained that restrictions on the drugs would imperil animal health and food safety. This stance aligns the AVMA with drug makers and the meat industry and draws criticism from the human medical and public health communities.

The organization also is under pressure from within the profession. During the past three years, public debates at the AVMA annual meeting and among members of a special task force on the issue have shown that many veterinarians question the wisdom of some routine uses of antibiotics in livestock and would like to see veterinarians play a more significant role in supervising the use of drugs in food animals.

“I think veterinarians should have the primary responsibility in deciding when it is appropriate to use antibiotics, rather than producers or feed companies,” said AVMA member Dr. Susan Chadima, a companion-animal veterinarian in Topsham, Maine. “As medical professionals, we need to be directly involved in the choice and use of antibiotics in animals.”

Like most calls from public health advocates for restrictions on animal-antibiotic use, the FDA’s draft policy guidance focuses on two of the four FDA-labeled uses. There’s little discussion of seriously restricting the uses for disease control and disease treatment.

The two disputed uses are:

- Growth promotion/feed efficiency. Such uses are meant to increase an animal’s rate of growth and/or the weight it gains per unit of feed consumed. These uses are also known as “production” uses because, in the words of the FDA, they “are not directed at any identified disease but rather are expressly indicated and used for the purpose of enhancing the production of animal-derived products.”
- Disease prevention. Such uses help prevent infections common in food-animal operations.

[Editor’s note: Bans on these antibiotics in other countries have not improved human health, and have decreased animal health.]
## Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 20-25</td>
<td>Midwest Stud Ram Sale</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.midwestramsale.com">www.midwestramsale.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 6-9</td>
<td>Sheep for Profit School</td>
<td>Pipestone, MN</td>
<td>Jodi Christensen 507-825-6800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10-13</td>
<td>NLFA HW Leadership School</td>
<td>Sioux Falls, SD</td>
<td>Mike Caskey  <a href="mailto:mike@caskeypinelawnfarms.com">mike@caskeypinelawnfarms.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 11-16</td>
<td>Rambouillet National Show &amp; Sale</td>
<td>Pipestone, MN</td>
<td>Burk Lattimoire  <a href="http://www.rambouilletsheep.org">www.rambouilletsheep.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 15-16</td>
<td>US Targhee Sheep National Show &amp; Sale</td>
<td>Brookings, SD</td>
<td>Darrell Deneke 605-696-0167</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 23-24</td>
<td>MN Suffolk Show &amp; Sale</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske  <a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29-30</td>
<td>Center of the Nation NSIP sale</td>
<td>Spencer, IA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 2-4</td>
<td>Farm Fest</td>
<td>Redwood Falls, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 18</td>
<td>National Sheep Shearing contest</td>
<td>Mount Morris, MI</td>
<td>Deb Caryl 810-653-1436</td>
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<td>Aug. 26-27</td>
<td>MN State Fair 4-H Sheep Show</td>
<td>St. Paul, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 24-Sep. 1</td>
<td>MN State Fair Open Sheep Shows</td>
<td>St. Paul, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 2-4</td>
<td>MN State Fair FFA sheep Show</td>
<td>St. Paul, MN</td>
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<td>Sep. 9-11</td>
<td>Wisconsin Sheep &amp; Wool Festival</td>
<td>Jefferson, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wisconsinsheepandwoolfestival.com">www.wisconsinsheepandwoolfestival.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 13-20</td>
<td>National Sheep Dog Finals</td>
<td>Carbondale, CO</td>
<td>Raymond Riesland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 15-16</td>
<td>Newell Ram Sale</td>
<td>Newell, SD</td>
<td>Pipestone Vet Clinic 507-825-4211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>Northstar Bred Ewe Sale</td>
<td>Pipestone, MN</td>
<td>Todd &amp; Robin Schmidt 507-377-1045</td>
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<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Minnesota Bred Ewe Sale</td>
<td>Rochester, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske  <a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Dec. 3-4</td>
<td>MLWP Shepherd’s Holiday</td>
<td>Morton, MN</td>
<td>Glenette Sperry  <a href="mailto:gtsperry@frontiernet.net">gtsperry@frontiernet.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>MN MIWW Contest</td>
<td>Morton, MN</td>
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<th>2012 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 25-28</td>
<td>ASI Annual Convention</td>
<td>Scottsdale, AZ</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sheepusa.org">www.sheepusa.org</a></td>
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This year’s Shepherd’s Harvest festival proves that the interest in sheep and wool products continues to grow at a healthy clip. The festival, held Mother’s Day weekend at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Lake Elmo, MN, filled every nook and cranny with vendors, classes, fleece displays and demonstrations. Bringing together people from all over the sheep world, the festival gives an opportunity for the public to see and learn about all things related to raising sheep and bringing their wool to market.

Regular highlights include a sheep breed display, sheep shearing, fleece skirting and dog herding demonstrations. This year, there were several spinning demonstrators, fiber competitions, and MLWP’s Patty Anderson taught a well-attended class on Starting A Small Flock.

Local shepherds show off their breeds and enter their fleeces in the state’s largest competition. This year there were more than 120 entries in the 2011 fleece competition which represents a 20% growth over last year. The festival continues to encourage both shepherds and the public to get more involved and more knowledgeable about fleece, wool types and ways to use wool. You can see lots of pictures taken by festival goers on their website at www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org.
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