



Minnesota Lamb & Wool
Producers Association

Shepherds' Bulletin

Summer 2002

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MLWPA Web Address:
www.mlwp.org

President's Column

By Mike Haubrich

As more and more sheep producers have Internet access, the MLWPA has developed a web site to help keep our members better informed. The MLWPA will now make the newsletter available electronically on our Web Site. Everyone listing an email address in the 2002 directory is on our email list and will get an announcement for the newsletter. If you have email or change email addresses, please contact Bob Padula at padula@starband.net to keep current.

We finally have some better prices in our lamb and wool markets. There is no doubt in my mind that the efforts of the American Sheep Industry Association are part of the reason for these higher prices. Additionally, the ASI continues to work extremely hard for us legislatively. It was ASI that got us the ewe lamb retention program resulting in a payment of \$18 per eligible ewe lamb retained in your flock. It's time sheep producers who are not members of MLWPA join and help pay for the benefits that ASI and MLWPA provides for every sheep producer in the state.

The Minnesota State Fair is a time where sheep producers have the opportunity to meet with the public and promote our industry. I encourage everyone to take some time and volunteer to help out at either the MLWPA booth or the Baa Booth. Details can be found in the newsletter.

Tough Times Never Last, Tough People Do

By Frank Moore, President, American Sheep Industry Association



Tough times never last, tough people do. That could very well be the credo of the American sheep industry, as it has certainly experienced some tough times over the years. However, thanks to the dedication and tenacity of our producers, the U.S. sheep industry is still striving to improve lamb and wool market conditions, and the rate of return to producers.

Challenges facing the U.S. sheep industry, and the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI), in recent years have included the loss of the National Wool Act in the 1990s to the loss of the second referendum, the downsizing of ASI and a serious decline in both sheep and sheep producer numbers. And yet, many of you have hung in there, making any necessary adjustments in your operation and continuing to work for the betterment of the entire industry.

ASI's contributions to the betterment of the industry have been considerable. I sometimes wonder if I sound like a broken record when I talk about these contributions. However, I still find in my travels and talking with other producers that some of you are not aware that the many payment programs U.S. sheep producers have received in recent years are the direct result of the hard work of ASI and its state affiliate and producer members. From slaughter and feeder lamb payments to the retained ewe program to emergency wool payments – all have resulted in millions and millions of dollars of payments directly to producers, which very likely would not have happened had it not been for ASI. You can also thank ASI for the wool loan deficiency payment program contained in the current Farm Bill.

Speaking of wool, in addition to its many other efforts, ASI's American Wool Council has been working to increase marketability of wool with a focus on the international market, which has been the greatest growth market in recent years. In fact, this spring and summer, ASI's Wool Council brought over groups of foreign wool buyers to learn more about the wool market in the United States. The resulting sales are still coming in and will likely well exceed more than one million pounds.

And one last aspect of the U.S. sheep industry of which I am very proud is its heritage. I think most of you know that the American Sheep Industry Association is the oldest national livestock organization in the United States. One of its predecessors, the National Wool Growers, dates all the way back to 1865! Fully 137 years after the national association was founded, it is still working as an organization driven by producers for producers.

And that's where I want to offer my thanks, to all U.S. sheep producers, who in belonging to their state sheep association, are in turn a member of ASI, and are thereby ensuring the continued success of a wide variety of programs that benefit all producers.

You've made changes over the years to better adapt to consumers' wants and needs, and yet there are still some aspects of sheep ranching that will never change.

Like the combined tiredness and joy that comes after a week of non-stop lambing. Or catching up with friends at an annual sheep show and sale, or lobbying our leaders in Washington during ASI's annual spring trip.

Whether your sheep operation is your single source of income, a supplemental income or even just a hobby, your opinions, insight and suggestions are vital to overall success of this industry. And that success begins with your involvement in your state sheep association.

MLWP Now on the Internet!

By Jerry Ryan - Burr Oak Farm

Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association (MLWP) have contracted with Burr Oak Farm to develop, implement and maintain a web site for the organization. The purposes of the MLWP Internet site are to:

1. Provide information about the organization
2. Provide a source for current industry news
3. Enable electronic distribution of the Newsletter
4. Encourage sheep producers to join the organization
5. Provide contact information for the Officers and Directors of the organization
6. Highlight the activities of MLWP
7. Enable MLWP members to advertise their products on the Internet.

This web site is now available on the Internet by directing your "browser" (Internet Explorer or Netscape) to the address www.mlwp.org.

The site consists of several "pages" of information arranged in categories:

Home Page - This page lists the overall goals of the MLWP, includes the purposes of the organization and provides links to the other information on the site.

Officers and Directors - Lists the Officers and members of the Board of Directors. If the Officer or Director has email, the user may simply click on the provided email address and compose and send an email message to that individual.

Calendar of Events - A listing of sheep-related-events around the region. Members are encouraged to submit listing and an email link is provided.

Newsletter - The current and recent issues of the Shepherd's Bulletin newsletter are available for viewing and/or printing. Contact information for the Editor of the newsletter is provided.

Discount Buying - Provides information of the membership benefits provided by the MLWP discount buying program and has details of how the program works with the various vendors who participate in the program.

Membership - This page spells out some of the benefits of being an MLWP member and contains information and a form for joining the organization.

Conference - Information on the annual Shepherd's Holiday conference and trade show. Contact information is provided for the organizers of this event and there is a provision for sending email with suggestions or comments.

Silver Bell - The Minnesota Sheep Producers Silver Bell Awards are given annually to one or two top sheep producers who are exemplary of excellence in modern sheep production methods and production levels. Background information on the award and nomination forms is provided.

MIYWW - MLWP supports the Make It Yourself With Wool (MIYWW) program. This page describes the MIYWW program, summarizes the participation criteria, provides contact information, and provides downloadable entry forms.

Member Links - Members of MLWP who have personal web pages or web pages for their farm may have them listed on this page as a courtesy to the membership. An email link is provided for submitting information for inclusion.

Ads - MLWP members may purchase advertising space on this page in order to promote their products and flock offerings. Pricing and terms of for these ads are under development by the MLWP Board.

Other Links - The Internet has a vast and varied collection of information. This page serves as a collection of Internet sites that MLWP members have found to be very informative or otherwise especially useful. An email link is provided to nominate web sites for inclusion.

This first version of the MLWP web site will continue to evolve and change to reflect the direction and mission of MLWP. We are always looking for suggestions on how it could be improved to meet the needs and vision of our industry. Visit the MLWP web site at www.mlwp.org and let us know your thoughts. Please direct your improvement suggestions and comments to Jeremy Geske, (651) 480-7704, geske002@umn.edu.

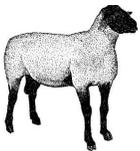
Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program

Reminder that year four of the LMAAP is August 1, 2002 through July 31, 2003. Feeder lambs and slaughter lambs meeting the criteria outlined in the LMAAP are eligible for program payments. Sheep producers must contact their lamb buyers or marketing agencies to determine what procedures they need to follow in order to be eligible for payments. If you sell lambs directly to consumers, there is a provision allowing small processing facilities to certify eligible lamb carcass.

The Ewe Retention program is also ongoing for year 4. Payments for year three of the LMAAP year three were \$18/hd for each eligible ewe lamb. Only two ewe lambs retained, pay your MLWPA dues.

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

Attention Sheep Producers ---- Scrapie Eradication Program



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

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

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

MLWPA Membership – Patty Anderson, Chair

We will have membership forms available at the state fair this year for sheep producers to join or re-new their MLWPA membership. New people joining MLWPA at the state fair will receive 4 month of membership benefits, and have their name listed in the 2003 directory.

ATTENTION DIRECT MARKETERS!!!

Do you want to have State Fair visitors know you have lamb, wool, or dairy sheep products for sale?

Well, here is your chance to get the word out! As yet another benefit of MLWP membership, a Free Direct Market Listing to the Minnesota Sheep Industry will be handed out at the State Fair Commercial Booth.

Anyone interested in taking advantage of this great opportunity should send in pertinent information by Monday, August 12th to:

Patty Anderson, 4145 200th St. E. Prior Lake, MN. 55372.

MLWP COMMERCIAL BOOTH AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

What Is The MLWP Commercial Booth?

The commercial booth is sponsored by the Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers. It is the only source of income for our organization besides our membership dues and sponsorships. Through Mary Lue's in St. Peter, Faribault Woolen Mills in Faribault, and private sheep producer vendors, this booth provides fair visitors with more complete information about sheep; explaining how they are cared for and also displays many byproducts of our industry. Fair visitors are educated on our products by receiving cutting charts on lambs, instructions on how to prepare the different cuts, recipes, wool care cards, and the Sheep Reporter; which is an excellent source for children to learn more about sheep.

We exist to educate and inform the public about the different sources of our products and how they relate to sheep, the producers and the potential customers. As a producer we are at an advantage of having quite a few woolen mills in our state and we need to work with them because their products are advertising our raw products.

What Can You Do?

Volunteer!! People like you are needed to assist in staffing the Commercial Booth. Work shifts are 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. and 3:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. If you can't work a whole shift, even working a couple of hours during meal times would be most helpful. The booth is open all 12 days of the State Fair, August 22 - Sept. 2, 2002. If you enjoy talking to the public and sharing your knowledge, this can be a very gratifying experience for you.

*To volunteer, please call Patty Anderson at 952-447-4189
Or e-mail PATMEADOW@prodigy.net*

Sheep resource book available --- Jeremy Geske

Do you need a handy sheep reference manual? Dr. Scott Haskell, DVM, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, teamed up with Extension Educators Jeremy Geske, Dave Resch, and several other sheep specialists to develop an 83-page text covering *Genetics and Selection, Reproduction, Lambing Management, Nutrition, Flock Health, Sheep and Lamb Marketing, Housing and Working Equipment, Protecting the Environment, Predators, Planning and Managing a Grazing System, Wool Marketing*, and a *Glossary* of sheep terms.

To order a copy of the text, send a check for \$20 (plus \$3.00 shipping and handling) payable to the **University of Minnesota Sheep Text**, to Dr. Scott R.R. Haskell, 225 Veterinary Teaching Hospital, 1365 Gortner Ave, St. Paul, MN 55108. The information is also available on a CD for \$25 (plus \$5 shipping and handling).

Proceeds from the text will be used for scholarship for veterinary students. Copies will be available at the MLWP annual conference.

The Baa Booth™ at the Minnesota State Fair

Sponsored by the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers in cooperation with the Minnesota State Fair

The Baa Booth™

Is a lamb and wool industry educational booth, which provides fair visitors with more complete information about sheep, their products and how producers care for sheep. The booth will provide fair visitors the opportunity to view assorted displays and participate in various activities while visiting the booth.

The Mission

The Baa Booth™ exists to educate and inform the public about the lamb and wool industry. Informing the consumer about how the animals are cared for; how the animals contribute to their lives; how the lamb and wool industry contributes to the economic, social and environmental well being of society; and how producers and other people play an integral role in making all of this happen.

The Baa Booth™ Needs You!

Volunteers

Every day, during the first 8 days, of the fair the Baa Booth features regular demonstrations and activities throughout the day.

Volunteers are needed to help in staffing the booth and running the activities.

Dates: August 22 through the 29th, 2002, the first 8 days of the Fair.

The Booth is open:

9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Weekdays**
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Weekends**

(**Exceptions: the Booth closes at 3 p.m. Sunday, August 25 and 2 p.m. Thursday, August 29 due to animal changeover)

Volunteers are asked to volunteer for a three-hour shift in return for a free gate ticket and parking pass in the volunteer lot. Extra people are needed to assist with the Wool Pack-O-Rama that will be held, Wednesday, August 28.

Sponsors

Sponsors are still needed to provide educational materials. Prizes and/or cash donations to assist with the operation of the 2002 Baa Booth™ and for the long-term success of the Baa Booth™. Please contact the coordinator with any questions.

Questions? About the Baa Booth may be directed to the booth coordinator: Doris Mold, phone: 651-645-3275, fax: 651-917-9637 or e-mail: doris@sunriseag.net.

Please return this response form by August 15, 2002 to aid us in mailing your tickets in a timely manner

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

I would like to work at the booth (check all that apply and please specify times, below)

8/22 8/23 8/24 (opens at 8) 8/25 (opens at 8, closes at 3) 8/26 8/27
 8/28 8/29 (closes at 2)

(Please sign up for a minimum of three hours to receive a free ticket)

Return forms to: Doris Mold, 1778 Eustis St., Lauderdale, MN 55113

USDA TO BEGIN COLLECTION OF LAMB CHECKOFF ASSESSMENTS JULY 1, 2002 --- © ASI Press Release

Denver - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service announced today it will begin collection of lamb checkoff assessments beginning July 1, 2002.

Producers, feeders and packers will all contribute to this self-help program. Domestic lamb producers, feeders, seedstock producers and exporters will pay one-half cent (\$.005) per pound of live lambs sold. In addition, first handlers, primarily packers, will be assessed 30-cents-per-head of lambs purchased by the first handler for slaughter. Lamb importers will not be assessed.

The program is expected to raise approximately \$3 million plus each year to fund promotion, research and information programs. The program's board of directors, who will be appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, will determine specific programs. The process for industry organizations to nominate representatives to the board began in May. The 13-member board will include: six producer representatives, three feeder representatives; three packers; and one seed stock producer.

"This American lamb program is sorely needed in our industry, and while this board should have been in place already and tackling the problems of the lamb market, it needs to move forward as rapidly as possible," said American Sheep Industry Association President Frank Moore. "Few producers have been at all pleased with live slaughter lamb prices of the past year, and this American Lamb program provides a critical tool for our industry to address a better lamb price."

The collection process will involve first handlers and exporters collecting the assessments from producers, feeders and seedstock producers and remitting the applicable form and assessment due to the Secretary at the following address: Lamb Promotion, Research and Information Program, c/o the Secretary at USDA, 23029 Network Place, Chicago, Ill. 60673-1230.

The order calls for a delayed referendum to be conducted no later than three years after assessments begin. During this time period, refunds may be requested.

Information and forms also are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/mpb/rp-lamb.htm>.

Expansion of CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing Program

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman approved 18 states for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) emergency haying and livestock grazing statewide, making all CRP participants basically eligible for the emergency measure. Minnesota was included in the announcement.

Previously, the USDA authorized the program on a county-by-county basis in states most stricken by severe weather. CRP participants must submit applications for individual approval to their local FSA offices. Haying and grazing is authorized until August 31, 2002, or until disaster conditions no longer exist, whichever comes first. CRP participants who are unaffected by disasters or do not own livestock can make their CRP acreage available for grazing or haying, or can donate hay to those in need. Annual CRP payments will be reduced unless the hay is donated.

Sheep producers are encouraged to call their local FSA office for more program details.

USDA ANNOUNCES EWE LAMB PROGRAM --- ASI Press Release

Denver - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on March 27, 2002, published the new rule on the extension of the Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program (LMAAP) for an additional year through July 31, 2003. The new rule includes the much anticipated ewe lamb expansion payment program that will provide incentives for producers to purchase or retain breeding ewe lambs.

Per the agreement with the 201 petitioners, USDA has allocated an additional \$37.7 million for the extension of LMAAP. Of that amount, \$26 million will be allocated to the new ewe lamb expansion payment program for years three and four of LMAAP, while the remaining funds are for payments for feeder and slaughter lambs marketed during year two through year four of LMAAP.

"We are very pleased that USDA issued this program rule consistent with the information released last fall," Wyoming sheep producer and ASI President Frank Moore said. "The program is designed to be simple and effective. Program details and application forms will be in FSA county offices shortly."

To be eligible for the ewe lamb expansion payment, a sheep operation must retain or purchase ewe lambs into their herd Aug. 15, 2001, through July 31, 2003. The producer must certify that the eligible ewe lamb meet several basic criteria, including: not older than 18 months of age; identified with an Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service approved scrapie program (compliance with the federal interstate movement restrictions for scrapie as it applies to the state in which you operate) and does not possess any of the characteristics of parrot mouth or foot rot.

Eligibility requirements also include certification of the number of ewe lambs retained or purchased since Aug. 15, 2001, in order to receive the \$18 per head payment. Producers will also need to certify to several basic quality factors of the lambs, including retention in a herd for a production cycle.

Producers are reminded that slaughter and feeder lamb payments will continue through the extension of LMAAP as well. LMAAP is designed to help relieve economic injuries suffered by the domestic lamb and sheep industry and to help stabilize market conditions. The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) was instrumental in securing the LMAAP program, which was part of an initial \$100 million industry assistance package first announced in 1999 after the industry filed a Section 201 trade case against imports. The additional assistance was announced in August when the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said the United States would comply with a World Trade Organization ruling that overturned the 1999 decision by the U.S. International Trade Commission that prompted the United States to impose restraints on lamb meat imports.

Notable Quote from Theodore Roosevelt

"Every man owes a part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."

Silver Bell Award Nominations

The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Silver Bell Awards are given annually to one or two top sheep producers who are examples of excellence in modern sheep production methods and production levels. Selection criteria include flock size, lambing and weaning rate, lamb and wool production and net return per ewe. In addition, the selection committee will look at less tangible factors such as adopting new technology and a contagious enthusiasm for sheep production. Adult applicants must be members of the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association.

There are separate awards for the following categories: Commercial Flock, Lamb Feeder, Purebred Flock, Youth, and Distinguished Service. Explanations and the selection criteria are available on the MLWP website at: www.mlwp.org.

The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers are currently taking applications for the 2002 Junior and Senior Silver Bell Awards. Applications are due by November 15, 2002; awards will be presented at the Shepherd's Conference December 6 – 7, 2002. Winners will be honored at the Silver Bell Luncheon on Dec. 7. The 2001 winner will also give a presentation at that luncheon.

If you have an interest in applying or know someone whom you believe should apply, we encourage you to obtain and complete the application, which is available by contacting Jeremy Geske at (651) 480-7704 or geske002@umn.edu. Applications should be returned to Jeremy Geske, Dakota County Extension Office, 4100 220th ST W, Farmington, MN 55024 by November 15, 2002. Application forms are also available on the website: www.mlwp.org

West Central Research and Out-Reach Center Update --- *Bill Head*

The summer is winding down and projects that were started this year are also near conclusion. Several projects were started this summer including the final year of collections on the systems research that compares the forage based production system to a confinement production system. We have three years of data that compares these two systems and production and economic results will be presented at the annual Fall Field at WCROC on Saturday September 21, 2002. This study is unique in that 200 of the 250 ewes used in the study are full sibs. One sib was placed in each production system to eliminate some of the variation that is due to genetics.

A summer intern is finishing up the data sample analysis on a project that was conducted last fall. This study was evaluating supplemental feeds used to finish lambs grazing alfalfa. The treatments were a control

(No supplement), 1.5% of body weight corn, or 1.5% of body weight soybean hulls. Results of this project will also be presented at the Fall Field Day.

A final study that is just finishing up deals with feeding melengestrol acetate (MGA) to ewes to get them to cycle earlier in the breeding season. Feeding melengestrol acetate (MGA) has been shown to induce estrous activity and ovulation in anestrous ewes, but fertility is poor, resulting in undesirably low lambing rates. This project is designed to determine the effectiveness of estradiol priming, prior to MGA administration. This should allow increased response to the progestin and increase the likelihood of fertile estrus cycles. Potentially, this may be used to increase the number of ewes lambing and number of lambs born, at a time that conception and lambing rate is normally very low. Lambing year-round improves the efficiency of labor and facilities and levels cash flow through out the year.

Preparing Your Rams for the Breeding Season --- *Jeremy Geske*

A successful lamb crop is the result of management decisions made well before the breeding season begins. A little attention to ram selection, nutrition, and health this summer can pay big dividends next lambing season.

The first step is to select and use superior rams to sire your next lamb crop. Identify traits that are important to your production system and evaluate your ewe flock to see where improvement is needed. Then find rams that are superior in those traits. Growth, carcass, and wool traits are highly heritable, so rams that excel in those areas will have immediate impacts on your next lamb crop. Selection is a combination of analyzing production records and visual appraisal (for structural soundness, muscle, testicle size, etc.)

Rams should enter the breeding season with a body condition score of 3.5 to 4.0. Many rams have reduced appetite during the breeding season, so they should be in good shape at the start, as they will likely lose condition. Overly fat or overly thin rams may have difficulty settling ewes.

Rams should be de-wormed and have their hooves trimmed prior to the breeding season. Breeding Soundness Exams should be done on all rams before breeding to check for fertility problems. At the very least, utilizing a marking harness to monitor ram activity, because you don't want to wait until the lambing season starts to find out your ram wasn't fertile. Newly purchased rams should be quarantined for a couple weeks before introducing them to your flock to help prevent the spread of disease.



Don't Skimp on the Quality of Your Rams --- *Jeremy Geske*

Never underestimate the value of your rams. Rams and ewes each account for 50% of the genetics of your next lamb crop; however, since there are usually many more ewes in a flock than rams, the impact of each ram is much greater than the impact of each individual ewe. Good rams can generally be purchased for \$300 - \$500, with outstanding rams sometimes selling for more. Divide that by the number of ewes he will be mated to in the next 2 or 3 years, and the cost is only a few dollars per breeding service.

Superior rams are often well worth the money. As an example, let's compare the value of an average ram (90day weight = 100 pounds) to a great ram (90day weight = 140 pounds). We'll assume the following: rams are similar in other traits, rams will be mated to 40 ewes for 2 years, and 150% lamb crop weaning percentage. The second ram was 40 pounds heavier at 90 days of age, multiplied by the heritability of 90-day weight (.25) equals 10 pounds, divided by 2 (since half the genetics of the lambs will come from the ram) means that the lambs sired by the second ram would average 5 pounds heavier at 90 days than lambs sired by the first ram. Take 5 pounds and multiply by the number of lambs produced (40 ewes x 150% x 2 years = 120 lambs) and you get 600 pounds of extra lamb. Multiply that by the price of market lambs (\$0.70) and you get a \$420 advantage of the second ram over the first ram. If you keep replacement ewe lambs out of him, his value is even greater because his daughters will also have the genetics for superior growth. When shopping for your next ram, plug in your own flock figures and you can calculate the value of potential rams for your own situation.



2002 MN State Fair Sheep Show information

Open Class Schedule

Thursday, August 22

11:30 am Wool Show

Friday, August 23

8:00 a.m. Superintendent's Special
(White-face Breeds)

9:00 a.m. Rambouillet

12:00 noon Columbia

3:00 p.m. Montadale

4:30 p.m. Natural Colored

Saturday, August 24

9:00 a.m. Weigh Quality Lambs

2:00 p.m. Quality Lambs

2:30 p.m. Market Lambs (White-face)

3:00 p.m. Border Cheviot

5:00 p.m. All other breeds

Sunday, August 25

10:30 a.m. Exhibitors Meeting

11:30 a.m. Lamb Lead

Tuesday, August 27

8:00 a.m. Superintendent's Special
(Black-face Breeds)

8:30 a.m. P.A. Anderson Challenge
Trophy

9:00 a.m. Hampshire

1:00 p.m. Suffolk

Wednesday, August 28

8:30 a.m. Market Lambs (Black-face)

9:30 a.m. Southdown

1:00 p.m. Dorset

Thursday, August 29

10:00 a.m. Exhibitor Meeting

4-H Sheep Program

Wednesday, August 21

8:00 a.m. Barns ready for Livestock

Thursday, August 22

8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Lamb Lead Interview Sign-up

10:00 a.m.- noon Market Lamb Weigh-In

10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Breeding Ewe Verification

Noon Wool Show Check-in

1:00 p.m. Exhibitor meeting

2:00 p.m. Wool Show Judging

3:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Sheep Interviews and

Call-backs

Friday, August 23

9:00 a.m.-3:00p.m. Lamb Lead Interviews

10:00 a.m. Make-up Interviews

4:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Market Lamb Show

4:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Breeding Ewe Show

Saturday, August 24

8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Lamb Lead Show

11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Showmanship

6:00 p.m. Purple Ribbon Auction

8:30 p.m. Market Lamb Load Out

Sunday, August 25

2:00 p.m. Herdsmanship Awards

3:00 p.m. Livestock Released

President Signs Farm Bill; Working Group Formed And Web Site Announced

On May 6, 2002, President Bush signed the \$190 billion Farm Bill, which includes the new wool loan deficiency payment program. During an early morning bill signing ceremony, Bush said the six-year bill “will provide a safety net for farmers, and will do so without encouraging overproduction and depressing prices.”

Bush’s signing of the bill was followed later in the week by an announcement from Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman about the formation of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill Working Group to expedite implementation of the bill.

“USDA employees have been working for many months in anticipation of the new Farm Bill,” Veneman said. “Our Farm Bill implementation team will include key career and sub-cabinet officials, with all mission areas working together to ensure an efficient and timely process.”

Veneman also announced the launch of a Farm Bill Web site where farmers, ranchers and the general public may learn the latest information about the new bill. The Web site address is www.usda.gov/farmbill. Clicking on commodity programs on the site and then on wool and mohair will take sheep producers to a brief question-and-answer section about the new farm bill wool and mohair program. Questions and answers regarding the wool and mohair loan are updated frequently. For answers to basic questions, refer to the following question and answer piece compiled by USDA.

Note – At press time, details for the program are not available. Future issues of the newsletter and upcoming MLWPA meetings will have information on the program as it becomes available.

When Selecting Rams - Don’t Forget Wool --- Bob Padula

Most sheep producers already know that rams kept or purchased for the flock have a tremendous impact on the financial side of their operation. Growth rates, carcass traits, replacements, and wool quality are all impacted for years to come. Because wool traits are generally highly heritable, it is important that sheep producers keep wool in mind when selecting rams.

Even if you are only purchasing rams for terminal sires, wool is still important. Pelt value does impact the value of market lambs; and the ram used for that terminal cross has an impact on pelt quality and prices. Excessive colored fibers, spots, hair, kemp and medullated fibers are defects that can be passed on to the ram’s offspring. Pelts with defects are less valuable, and therefore have a financial impact on your sheep operation. The price difference between a high quality pelt and a poor quality pelt can easily be \$8.00 – that’s an \$8 per head premium or discount – depending on how you look at it.

Producers must decide for themselves how much emphasis they are going to place on wool in their flock and should set reasonable and obtainable goals. Before setting goals, producers need to know what they are currently producing, so they can make changes if desired, or maintain the existing wool quality and select rams that will help them excel in some other production trait. What you decide for wool emphasis is up to you; but be consistent and stick with something you like and can market.

When Selecting Rams - Don't Forget Wool (continued)

For operations that place more emphasis on wool, goals should be specific and include economically important wool traits – clean fleece weight, yield, fiber diameter, flock uniformity, wool staple length and strength. All of these traits can be objectively measured and the information should be used to help decide what wool qualities your rams must have.

From a wool perspective, fiber diameter (grade) generally receives the most emphasis. The fiber diameter of the ram you select is dependant on what grade of wool you have, and what fiber diameter you want for your flock. If you want to maintain your flock fiber diameter, you can use rams with the same fiber diameter as your ewe flock. If you want finer wool, you will have to use finer rams. Naturally, using coarser wooled rams will result in offspring with coarser wool. Because rams tend to have coarser wool than the main ewe flock, producers can generally use a ram that is one to two microns coarser (one USDA Wool Grade) than their ewe flock and not worry about increasing the diameter of the ewe flock. For example, a ewe flock of 24 micron (60's USDA Grade) can use a 25-micron ram (58's grade) and should be able to maintain a 24-micron wool clip.

However, the fiber diameter must be known and objectively measured. Too often, producers will “look” and the fleece and guess at the grade. Visual appraisal, even by the best-trained appraiser is only 70% accurate. Are you willing to risk your wool clip for \$7.50? – The cost of a mid-side sample.

One problem to avoid with selecting for fiber diameter, is what I call “chasing the market.” This is where sheep producers buy fine wool rams when wool prices are high for fine wool. By the time the offspring from the fine wool rams are producing in the flock, wool prices have turned around, and they get discouraged with wool and switch to coarser wool rams and focus on meat production. Then when better prices for fine wool returns, they have coarse wooled sheep in the flock - so they repeat the cycle – ending up chasing the market. Not only are they chasing the market, the flock lacks uniformity in wool making it more difficult to have a sound selection program and creates additional problems for wool marketing.

Even though wool traits are moderately to highly heritable, environmental influences do factor into the fleece grown on the ram. For this reason, producers should find out as much about the flock origin as possible. If the sheep are managed in a similar manner to how you manage your flock, there is a higher chance that the wool will be similar. The best way to evaluate different rams from different flocks is through a central ram test, where all the rams are run under the same conditions, or using Expected Progeny Differences (EPD's) which are available in certain breeds enrolled in the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP).

Wool quality is really quite simple, but most people want to make it complicated. Because wool traits are moderately to highly heritable, progress can be made through ram selection quite easily. The opposite is also true if you use a ram with poor wool quality! In short, use a ram that has “better” wool than your flock, and your wool will improve. Use a ram with poorer wool, and your wool clip value will be reduced.

Three simple steps to follow when selecting a ram for wool quality:

1. Know what you have for wool first,
2. Set your goals for wool quality,
3. Buy or use rams that will help you meet your goals by using objectively measured wool traits and performance data on the rams.

MLWPA Executive Board Highlights
Sat. June 1st, 2002 10:00 a.m.
Glencoe Community Center

Members Present: Mike Haubrich, Jeremy Geske, Julie Schuch, Sheryl Hoffman, Patti Anderson, Doug Mathias, Foster Mooney, Robin Schmidt, Karen Geske, Gene Holmquist, George Mead, Todd Schmidt

President Mike Haubrich called the meeting to order. The minutes of the April 13th meeting were read and approved. Sheryl Hoffman gave a treasurers' report that was approved. Sheryl will also look into moving the MLWP account to Wells Fargo bank in Hutchinson, MN.

President's Report

The National Lamb feeders are offering a summer conference on July 21-25th in Greeley, Colorado. Mike reminded everyone to make sure you are up-to-date on the Scrapie information before the summer show season. Mike reported on the Natural Lamb meeting held at U of M-Morris. There was not a lot of interest shown by producers, but the MN Dept. of Ag will continue working on this project.

Committee Reports

State Fair Baa Booth: Julie Schuch gave the Baa Booth committee report. She and Bob Padula met with Doris Mold. It was brought up that the State Fair has put more money into the Baa Booth than the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers have - something to think about. Bob Padula will contact ASI for videos and promotional materials. Patti Anderson will bring membership information for 2002-2003. There will be copies of the newsletter on hand for people who sign up for membership.

It was approved that MLWP buy a TV/VCR combination to be used at the Baa Booth at the State Fair, and for other promotional activities. MLWP will also pay \$5 per ticket for volunteers to work at the Baa Booth, with a maximum of 50 tickets.

Shepherd's Harvest Festival: There was a good crowd despite the cold, rainy weather. For next year, Pat Ryan will not coordinate, but there have been 3-4 other people who have volunteered to do so. It will continue to go on.

ASI Report: A wool marketing loan program for wool looks promising in the 2002 Farm Bill, which will have LDP payments for wool, similar to other crops. Watch for details in the future.

Old Business

Sheryl Hoffman has decided not be treasurer next year; please forward suggestions to Mike Haubrich.

Website: Reported by Jeremy Geske. The committee suggested working with Pat and Jerry Ryan. It was recommended to not have a breeder's forum at this time. Jeremy will continue to work with Pat on the site.

Annual Conference: There is a Goat Association in MN, but they are not interested in going together with us for a conference.

MLWPA Executive Board Highlights (Continued)

Commercial booth: Patti Anderson has reached a verbal agreement with the St. Peter and Faribault woolen mills. The companies will each have one person work in the Commercial booth for the 3-9 shift. Patty will also use the booth for the membership drive. Space in the booth will be divided as follows: vendors 40%, Faribault 30%, and Mary Lou's 30%. One of the woolen mills will have a trailer at the fair. The cost of the booth this year is \$2,426.11 plus \$100 for trailer space rental. It was approved that MLWP buy 75 tickets for volunteers for the commercial booth this year.

Directory: Changes and corrections for the next directory were discussed.

Other: MLWPA is not registered to do bulk mailings; it is not cost-effective. It was approved to purchase a "Friend of the Industry" plaque for the Chippewa County Extension office for their help with the newsletter. Anyone with informational material for the State Fair Baa Booth should get it to Bob Padula. In addition, it was noted that highlights from the secretary's minutes should be included in the newsletter.

The next meeting date was set for Sat. Sept. 7, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. at the Glencoe Community Center.

Pipestone Lamb and Wool Management Program Takes Advantage of American Sheep Industry Association Program

Via the State of Minnesota, the Pipestone Lamb & Wool Management program recently purchased a Lyco Dominator wool press from the American Sheep Industry Association's wool press program. The ASI Wool Council developed a program to help offset the costs of getting wool presses into the hands of sheep producers in the United States. Through the ASI program, producers are able to purchase a wool press at factory door prices in Australia. The Wool Council was able to negotiate a deal with Woolsacks, Inc. of Fredricksburg, TX, the USA distributor for Lyco, to forgo their typical margins on the wool presses and further reduced transportation savings by ordering full container loads of presses at a time. In addition, the ASI is assisting woolgrowers by paying for the ocean freight, importation costs and handling costs for the presses.

The results of the ASI program are a savings of over \$3,000 per wool press to the woolgrower. Wool presses are available for \$5100 for an 11 hp Honda gasoline engine or \$5300 for a 220-Volt three-phase motor. Growers are responsible for transportation from Fredricksburg, TX.

Wool presses are used to package classed or graded wool into an internationally accepted form and material for marketing; the nylon packaging material is considered non-contaminating, compared the current jute wool bag. The wool press creates a 440 lb, rectangular package that increases wool density, allowing for increased freight efficiency compared to the traditional round wool bag. In addition, this form allows for sampling and testing to be conducted to international standards, which is necessary for international trade.

Funding for the ASI portion is part of the Wool Trust Funds administered by the American Wool Council. These funds are a direct result of ASI and the MLWPA lobbying efforts. Your state dues in the MLWPA help pay for the ASI lobbying efforts.

Note - The ASI program has a few wool presses remaining, and plans to continue the program for the upcoming year. Contact Bob Padula (320) 269-7973 if you are interested in a wool press.

Calendar of Events Year 2002

August

22 - Sept. 2 Minnesota State Fair
Saint Paul, MN

September

7 MLWPA Board meeting
Glencoe, MN

12 Montana Ram Sale
Miles City, MT

21 Fall Sheep Day Program
WCROC, Morris

November

5 Election Day

December

6-7 MLWPA Conference & Trade Show
Rochester, MN

2003

February

6-9 ASI Annual Convention
Washington, DC

Future Newsletter Schedule:

Sept/Oct Conference and Trade Show

Dec/Jan Conference Highlights and
Upcoming Legislative Issues

March/April Spring Issue

July/August State Fair Issue

*If you have a calendar item that you would like
included, please send information to:
Bob Padula*

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