

# Shepherd's Bulletin



Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association

## Little Ag vs. Big Ag? Best bet on both By Allen Levine

Healthy, safe food served in school lunches. Control over our national obesity epidemic. Local farmers making a living selling nutritious food.

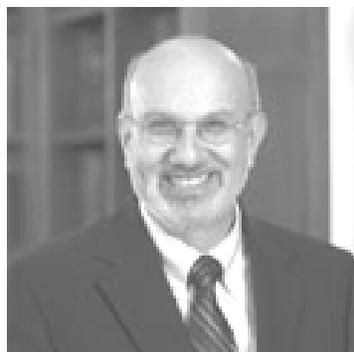
None of these goals seem controversial at first glance. But many recent books, web sites and movies about the food industry and healthy eating have turned something as simple what we eat into a political litmus test.

"Food, Inc.," a movie that in its promotions promises to "lifts the veil on our nation's food industry," opens nationwide. Its contributors include Eric Schlosser and Michael Pollan, both of whom have written best-selling books on similar topics. Their basic premise is that Americans' diet is too dependent on big food producers, from the field to the

table, and that we'd all be better off eating a mostly plant-based diet of foods grown by small, local producers.

Fair enough. But then "Food, Inc." goes further. A companion book and promotional website call on viewers to take action on food-related causes — not just taking personal actions like growing a vegetable garden, but joining efforts with varying degrees of political overtones.

The movie's negative portrayal of agribusiness giant Monsanto prompted that company to launch its own campaign counterattacking the film, complete with a dedicated website featuring film clips of "real farmers talking



Dr. Allen Levine

about farming" and point-by-point rebuttals. Healthy, safe food comes from traditional agriculture.

Associations representing the livestock, meat and poultry industries have launched a similar site.

The back-and-forth between the two viewpoints seems to go on endlessly and often is based on incomplete

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## View From the Hayloft - Dan Persons, President

Below are this year's replacement ewe lambs. They are content with lots of room and an appropriate diet. In a time of year that we usually have chores down to one TMR load a day for the ewe lambs, we find ourselves with the feedlot full of open ewes that had to be pulled off the pastures for lack of grass.

Today was the start of our winter lambing cycle as we turned out rams with all of the ewes. Actually the breeding season started two weeks ago with the turn-out of teaser rams and feeding a flushing ration. That must have been working as the teasers were fairly active the last couple days. I am

thankful the temperatures have dropped a bit today.

I hope you will all mark your calendars and plan on attending the Shepherds Holiday December 4 and 5 in Alexandria, MN. The conference schedule has been expanded this year to

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## Summer 2009

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## President's Message - cont.

give more time for workshop sessions. The board has decided to try and offer a more diverse array of workshops to fit more interests. We have also put together a post-conference on-farm session that will offer a farm tour and several hands-on demonstrations. The conference registration will begin Friday morning at 8:00 with the first session at 9:00 and will end at 1:30 Saturday afternoon with the on-farm session following from 2:00 to whenever....

News from ASI is that they are putting together a taskforce to look at what will be needed to increase sheep numbers in the US. Numbers have been on the decline and yet the demand for our product is not falling.

## Bet on Both —Cont.

research or half-truths. Why have we let eating — one of our most basic functions as humans — become a political issue for the privileged classes? Millions of people don't have enough to eat, period. Millions more have little choice but to eat what's cheap and readily available, which in turn may lead to obesity and its accompanying costly medical issues.

Sometimes it seems that no good deed goes unpunished: Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug, who saved a billion people worldwide from starvation in the 1960s and '70s, has been criticized for the environmental and economic effects of the Green Revolution. (The critics apparently don't faze Borlaug, now 95, who replies that if you've never been hungry yourself, you have no right to argue with his results.)

Pop-culture books and movies about healthy food aren't a bad thing: Americans obviously still are

The packing industry feels there is room for much more expansion of lamb meat in the US, but need the promise of increased supply before they can guarantee a product to customers. It's the proverbial chicken and egg dilemma. I would really like to hear what some of you have to say on this issue. What keeps us from expanding production? What limits our ability to produce more lambs? Who will take over when we are ready to retire? How can we ensure the continuation of successful farms?

I want to express my sincere gratitude to those individuals who have the passion and energy to dedicate towards our booths at the State Fair and other festivals throughout the year. Too often we

overeating and not eating well, and some of the advice is worthwhile. But truly solving the problems around providing good, safe food globally will take a more comprehensive approach that looks at all of the scientific research on health, environment and land use as it relates to food, rather than simply reporting on the studies that support an

**Allen Levine is  
Dean of the CFANS  
at the U of MN.**

ideological argument. Such an unbiased approach won't happen quickly; both biotechnology and organic-food supporters have much to lose by conceding any ground to their opponents.

Food and agriculture policy is complicated. But it seems pretty clear that neither extreme viewpoint on

take for granted the work of others and forget the sacrifices they make for the greater good of our industry. Thank You!!

Do you have any used sheep equipment that is in good condition that you do not use any more or know of a neighbor that has gone out of production and has some good equipment available? Would you consider donating it to MLWPA to be sold at our annual fundraising auction? We are always looking for ideas and items for this fundraiser. If you have something to offer contact myself or Travis and Jeanine Fowler.

Til next time, keep your pencils sharp and your minds open.

food sourcing is practical as a policy solution or on a personal level. While some believe that buying locally produced food — or better yet, growing and cooking it ourselves — may be safer and healthier, it's not realistic to think that everyone is able to do so or that advances in agricultural productivity and food technology should be ignored when people are hungry.

Let's get back to the real issues and make informed choices about eating and producing food. Let's concentrate on balancing the needs of those who have too much with those who don't have enough. Our food production systems are abundant and varied — let's appreciate that instead of trying to impose one value system on everyone.

*Allen Levine is dean of the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota. The views he expresses are his own and do not reflect an official position of the University of Minnesota.*

## MLWP Announces Starter Flock Winners

Three MLWP Junior members were awarded starter flock scholarship funds to be used towards the purchase of a ewe for their flock. The winners are: **Abbie Weckman, Elizabeth Roe, and Kelly Froehlich.**

Abbie and her family raise commercial sheep near Shakopee. Lizzy and her family raise Suffolks and club lambs near Blue Earth. Kelly and her family raise Lincolns near Grasston.

Congratulations to Abbie, Lizzy and Kelly! We look forward to progress reports on your flocks.

Watch for more information next winter about the 2010 MLWP starter flock program. Several breed associations also have scholarships for youth to use towards the purchase of ewes. All MLWP junior members are encouraged to apply!



## Endurance Shearing Record Set in the US - *from ASI*

Two American shearers set precedent for marathon endurance sheep shearing in the United States on July 11-12 at Estacado Industries Inc. in Dimmitt, Texas. Attempting the feat of shearing for 24 hours straight was **Doug Rathke** (48) of **Minnesota** who sheared a total of 607 sheep and **Gavin McKerrow** (60) of Wisconsin who sheared 487 sheep.

To put these benchmark numbers into perspective, Rathke sheared 25.29 sheep every hour (2:23 minutes per sheep) and McKerrow sheared 20.26

sheep per hour (2:58 minutes per sheep). The shearers were allowed breaks, but the duration of each rest was added to the end of the time period to ensure each shearer sheared for a full 24 hours. As the sheep passed through the hands of the shearer, their physical stamina and mental preparedness wore; however, each animal that came out of the chute was as fresh and lively as the first one sheared.

The two shearers participated in this endeavor to bring positive

attention to shearing in the United States and to build an interest in sheep shearing as a means of employment.

“It is troubling to me that I am continuously hearing about shearing records being broken in other countries, and nothing is being attempted here. We hope to get

the ball rolling with U.S. shearers to see what kinds of ‘records’ they can break and get more young people interested in the profession,” says Rathke on the reason for organizing the event.

Twenty volunteers from around the country were on hand to bring up the sheep and record times and monitor sheep and wool handling. A nurse monitored the well being of the shearers’ health while an extension agent ensured that the sheep were properly handled.

Sponsors of the event included Estacado; Glen Fisher, American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) president; Lister/Wahl Corp.; Mid-States Wool Growers; Groenewold Fur and Wool Co.; Perfect Water; and ASI.

Both shearers are participants in ASI’s Certified Sheep Shearer Program which pledges their commitment to shearing in a manner that promotes wool quality and good animal husbandry in the United States.





# MLWP Seeks Silver Bell Award Nominations

The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers are currently seeking nominations for the 2009 Junior and Senior Silver Bell Awards.

Applications are due by November 20, 2009. The Silver Bell Awards will be presented at the Shepherds Conference and Trade Show, December 4 & 5, in Alexandria.

## ***Silver Bell Award History***

The Silver Bell Award has awarded annually to one or two Minnesota shepherds who have excelled in modern sheep, lamb, or wool production for over 25 years.

Over the years, the selection criteria has included flock size, lambing and weaning rate, lamb and wool production per ewe, sale price of lamb and wool, gross return per ewe, and the following less tangible but equally important factors:

- Attitude toward the adoption of new technology.
- Use of financial as well as flock production records.
- Willingness to commit labor, feed, capital, and managerial effort toward the profitable production of a quality product from their flocks that reflects well upon the entire sheep industry.
- An apparent faith and confidence in the “old ewe” and in their efforts to consistently generate a substantial part of their farm income with a ewe flock.
- A contagious enthusiasm for sheep, coupled with a record of profitable production that encourages others to follow a

similar program.

- Civic contributions to their community.

The selection of the state’s most profitable flock, the largest lamb crop, the heaviest shearing ewes, or the best appearing flock was not the goal. Rather, we have chosen sheep producers who are exemplary of what all shepherds should strive to be.

## ***General Rules and Guidelines***

A shepherd can receive the award only once in a lifetime. If there is no individual worthy of receiving the award, one will not be presented. The individual should show longevity in the sheep business. All aspects of the sheep industry will be considered equal, including commercial, dairy, purebred, and hand-spinning farms.

There shall be a Junior Silver Bell award based on the same criteria as the adult Silver Bell award, except that the nominee must be less than 21 years of age and a current FFA or 4H sheep program participant. Selection emphasis for this category will focus on how they have gone out of their way to promote the sheep industry.

Selection of individuals to receive the award will be done by a committee of the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers with at least one previous award member on the committee. It will be the responsibility of the committee to determine the degree of excellence of each nomination and to select the winner based on the collective subjective judgment of the committee.

The Silver Bell Award will be presented at the annual MLWP

conference. All winners will be notified prior to the MLWP annual conference. Winners will be asked to give a short presentation at the following year’s annual conference.

## ***Criteria for the Award***

Individual must meet the following criteria to be nominated for the Silver Bell Award:

- Be a paid current member of MLWPA.
- Excelled in the PRODUCTION of sheep, lamb, or wool.
- Excelled in the PROMOTION of sheep, lamb, or wool.
- Excelled in the production and promotion of sheep, lamb, or wool over an extended period of time.

## ***Letter of Nomination***

Individuals do not need to be notified that they are being nominated for this award. Nomination letters may be kept on file for future years if there are more nominees than awardees in a given year.

The letter of nomination should not be verbose. There is no set format. Try to limit your letter to one page. Focus on how the person being nominated meets the criteria for the award and what they have done to distinguish themselves from other shepherds. Each letter of nomination must stand on its own merit.

Letters of Nomination for this year’s Silver Bell awards must be submitted not later than November 20, 2009 to Selection Committee Chair: Foster Mooney, 9710 Jewel Lane, Chisago City, MN 55013.



# Farmer Involvement in TMDLs is Critical

A significant number of Minnesota's rivers and lakes have been identified as "impaired" because of one or more pollutants. Impaired waters do not meet water quality standards for one or more pollutants.

The federal Clean Water Act establishes a course of action once waters are placed on the impaired list. At some point, MPCA or its designee conducts a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) project. The idea is that a diverse group of stakeholders will be assembled to evaluate the data about that water body and the surrounding landscape in an attempt to allocate the various sources of the pollutant and come up with recommendations for reducing each source's contribution.

The number of TMDL projects in Minnesota is rapidly increasing. Despite the fact that stakeholder involvement is required by the Clean Water Legacy Act, many of these projects are being conducted with little

or no farmer input. Many of the folks involved in writing these TMDL reports have minimal understanding of modern agriculture, and as a result, agriculture tends to receive a large share of the blame in most TMDLs.



As farmers, we certainly want to do our part of clean up our waters, but we don't want to be blamed for impairments we didn't cause. A recent example is in the Lake Shaokatan phosphorus TMDL. Sheep on over-grazed pastures are listed as a source of phosphorous, even though there are no sheep farms in the watershed!

We need farmers participating in

these stakeholder groups to bring some common sense to the table, and make sure the group looks at all sources of impairments, and not just blame everything on the farmers.

The Minnesota Agriculture Water Resources Coalition (MAWRC - of which MLWP is a member), and several agricultural groups (MN Soybean Growers, MN Corn Growers, MN Farm Bureau, and others) have been working hard to get more farmer involvement in TMDL projects. Training is available for farmers on how to be effectively involved in the process. In addition, MAWRC and other Ag groups are working with MPCA to improve the process and increase stakeholder involvement.

If you hear of TMDL meetings in your area, get involved and encourage other farmers to get involved as well. If we don't speak up, there are plenty of non-farmers who would gladly speak for us.

## Call for nominations for MISA Board

This is a message from the MISA Board of Directors Nominations Committee.

We seek your help in identifying individuals potentially willing to serve on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA.) The purpose of MISA is to bring together the diverse interests of the agricultural community with interests from across the University community in a cooperative effort to develop and promote sustainable agriculture in Minnesota

and beyond. A term on the MISA Board is three years. You may nominate yourself or someone else to serve on the Board.

Beginning in September 1, 2009, the following vacancies on the Board will be filled:

- >Two (2) sustainable agriculture practitioners (e.g. farmers and ranchers); and,
- >One (1) representative of the sustainable agriculture community (e.g., non-governmental organizations, business, government and citizen

representatives.)

The complete announcement can be found at [http://www.misa.umn.edu/MISA\\_Board\\_Nominations.html](http://www.misa.umn.edu/MISA_Board_Nominations.html)





# 7 Things You Didn't Know About HSUS

*Source:* Center for Consumer Freedom

1) The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is a “humane society” in name only, since it doesn’t operate a single pet shelter or pet adoption facility anywhere in the US. In 2007, HSUS contributed only 3.64 percent of its budget to organizations that operate dog and cat shelters. In reality, HSUS is a wealthy animal-rights lobbying organization (the largest and richest on earth) that agitates for the same goals as PETA and other radical groups.

2) Beginning on the day of NFL quarterback Michael Vick’s 2007 dogfighting indictment, HSUS raised money online with the false promise that it would “care for the dogs seized in the Vick case.” The New York Times later reported that HSUS wasn’t caring for Vick’s dogs at all. And HSUS president Wayne Pacelle told the Times that his group recommended that government officials “put down” (kill) the dogs rather than adopt them out to suitable homes. HSUS later quietly altered its fundraising pitch.

3) HSUS’s management includes a former spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a criminal group designated as “terrorists” by the FBI. HSUS president Pacelle hired John “J.P.” Goodwin in 1997, the same year Goodwin described himself as “spokesperson for the ALF” while he fielded media calls after an ALF arson attack at a California veal processing plant. When asked by reporters for a reaction to an ALF arson fire at a farmer’s feed co-op in Utah (which nearly killed a family sleeping on the premises), Goodwin replied, “We’re

ecstatic.” That same year, Goodwin was arrested at a UC Davis protest celebrating the 10-year anniversary of an ALF arson at the university that caused \$5 million in damage.

4) According to a 2008 Los Angeles Times investigation, less than 12 percent of money raised for HSUS by California telemarketers actually ends up in HSUS’s bank account. The rest is kept by professional fundraisers. And if you exclude two campaigns run for HSUS by the “Build-a-Bear Workshop” retail chain, which consisted of the sale of surplus stuffed animals (not really “fundraising”), HSUS’s yield number shrinks to just 3 percent. In 2004, HSUS ran a telemarketing campaign in Connecticut with fundraisers who promised to return a minimum of 0 percent of the proceeds. The campaign raised over \$1.4 million. Not only did absolutely none of that money go to HSUS, but the group paid \$175,000 for the work.

5) Research shows that HSUS’s heavily promoted U.S. “boycott” of Canadian seafood—a protest against Canada’s annual seal hunt—is a phony exercise in media manipulation. A 2006 investigation found that 78 percent of the restaurants and seafood distributors described by HSUS as “boycotters” weren’t participating at all. Nearly 2/3 of them told surveyors they were completely unaware HSUS was using their names in connection with an international boycott campaign. The Canadian government is on record about this deception, saying: “Some animal rights groups have been misleading the public for

years ... it’s no surprise at all that the richest of them would mislead the public with a phony seafood boycott.”

6) HSUS raised a reported \$34 million in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, supposedly to help reunite lost pets with their owners. But little of that money was spent for its intended purpose. Louisiana’s Attorney General ended his 18-month-long investigation into where most of these millions went, shortly after HSUS announced its plan to contribute \$600,000 toward the construction of an animal shelter on the grounds of a state prison. Public disclosures of the disposition of the \$34 million in Katrina-related donations add up to less than \$7 mil.

7) After gathering undercover video footage of improper animal handling at a Chino, CA processing plant in November of 2007, HSUS sat on its video evidence for three months, even refusing to share it with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). HSUS’s Dr. Michael Greger testified before Congress that the San Bernardino County (CA) District Attorney’s office asked the group “to hold on to the information while they completed their investigation.” But the District Attorney’s office quickly denied that account, even declaring that HSUS refused to make its spy available to investigators if the USDA were present at those meetings. HSUS chose to release its video footage at a more politically opportune time, as it launched a livestock-related ballot campaign. Meanwhile, meat from the processing plant continued to flow into the U.S. food supply for months.

# Gray Wolves ~~off~~ ~~on~~ ~~off~~ ~~on~~ ~~off~~ on the Endangered Species List...

Its almost impossible to keep track anymore, but for the time being, gray wolves are back on the endangered species list as the lawsuits continue.

Despite overwhelming evidence that gray wolves have recovered in Minnesota to a population of two - three times what was originally set as the recovery goal, misguided animal rights groups continue to challenge common sense and waste time and resources that could be used to protect species that are actually endangered.

Meanwhile, ranchers in northern Minnesota continue to suffer livestock losses from wolves. The only bright spot here is that the legislature separated out funds to reimburse farmers who suffer crop and livestock damage from wolves or elk into different account, so ranchers who can prove wolf depredation on their

livestock should be able to get reimbursed faster (the last couple years, the funds ran out early due to high crop losses caused by elk, and farmers were put on a waiting list until the next round of funding became available).

Stay tune, by the next issue, they may be off the endangered species list again...*(sarcasm intended)*.

## *Why are they are back on the list?*

Minnesota's gray wolves will return to the endangered species list under a settlement today between the U.S. government and several groups that fought to return the wolves to the list. In March, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar upheld a decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the species from the endangered species list in the state. The Fish and



Wildlife Service estimated that gray wolves number about 4,000 in northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, and no longer needed federal help. The Obama administration had ordered a review of the decision. Salazar previously said he had concluded that dropping the wolf from the list was justified by its strong comeback in two parts of the nation, including the Upper Midwest. The settlement involved groups including the Humane Society of the United States and the Center for Biological Diversity.

## Dombek inducted in Pipestone Sheep Hall of Fame

Each year, the Pipestone Lamb and Wool program inducts a new person into the Pipestone Sheep Hall of Fame. Selection is based on outstanding accomplishments in sheep production by a member of the Lamb and Wool Program and/or in recognition of valuable contributions to the Program by a person from education, research or allied industries.

This years' inductee is Randy Dombek from Ivanhoe, MN. Randy has been a member of the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program for 30 years and has served on the Program's Advisory committee for 20 years. He

runs over 900 ewes and is an innovator who has helped pioneer many cutting edge management practices, including: built the first modern "state of the art" lambing barn; developed a low labor/low cost production system; self feeding soybean hull pellets on pasture to flush ewes; self feeding soybean hull pellets and dry distillers grain to lactating ewes and utilized low labor management concepts.

Randy also generously shares his sheep management knowledge with thousands of sheep producers through various workshops, bus tours and individual visits to his farm. Visiting

Randy's farm is always valuable to producers because of his "straight talk" answers, innovative sheep management practices and his willingness to share both what has worked and what hasn't.

Because of his innovation, outstanding sheep production practices, long time success in the sheep business and willingness to share his knowledge with others plus his dedication to the success of the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program make Randy Dombek a very deserving inductee in the Pipestone Sheep Hall of Fame.

## Legislative Update

### **USDA-Price Increases for DPPSP**

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack announced on July 31 that the Obama Administration is taking immediate action to support struggling dairy farmers by increasing the amount paid for dairy products through the Dairy Product Price Support Program (DPPSP). The increases will be in place from Aug. 2009 - Oct. 2009.

The increase will raise the price paid for nonfat dry milk from \$0.80 per pound to \$0.92 per pound, the price paid for cheddar blocks from \$1.13 per pound to \$1.31 per pound, and the price of cheddar barrels from \$1.10 per pound to \$1.28 per pound.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is currently reviewing federal dairy policy to determine what changes are needed to reduce price volatility and enhance farmer profitability.

### **U.S. House Passes Food Safety Bill**

On July 31, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Food Safety Enhancement Act (H.R. 2749) 283-142. All of Minnesota's members of the U.S. House voted in favor of this bill. The Senate must now act on the House bill or take up a food safety bill of its own; the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) expects the Senate will use S. 510 introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) rather than the House bill.

U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) was successful in obtaining exemptions from most of the bill's provisions for farms. USDA will continue to regulate feed grain farms and livestock and poultry farms, rather than the FDA.

Farm groups are still concerned about creating a new system, as well as the impact of the legislation on growers of fruits and vegetables. There is no timeline for Senate action.

### **Senate Approves Ag Spending Bill**

On August 4, the U.S. Senate approved the fiscal year 2010 appropriations bill for the U.S. Agriculture Department, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and related agencies by a vote of 80-17, clearing the way for a conference committee to take up the legislation in September. The price tag of the bill totals \$125 billion.

More than 80 percent of the funding in the measure, \$100.8 billion, is for mandatory programs such as food stamps, which have seen a sharp increase in demand during the recession. The Senate legislation also would provide substantial increases to international food aid and farm support programs financed through the Commodity Credit Corporation, which would receive \$13.9 billion, up 25 percent from last year.

The Senate voted 60-37 to approve an amendment by Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) to add \$350 million to the measure for milk price supports to increase government purchases of surplus dairy products.

By unanimous consent, the Senate voted to slash funding for the National Animal Identification System in half, from \$14.6 million to \$7.3 million. The House axed all funding for the program in its version of the spending bill passed last month.

### **Court Denies Farm Bureau Petition in Cotton Council Case**



On August 3, the full Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals denied Farm Bureau's petition for a rehearing of National Cotton Council (NCC) v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

AFBF filed a petition in April asking the full Sixth Circuit to rehear the Jan. 7, 2009, decision issued by a three-judge panel in the case. That decision reversed an EPA rule that would have clarified that federal Clean Water Act (CWA) permits are not required for pesticide application to waters or over waters, so long as the application complies with pesticide labeling laws.

In June, the full Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals granted an EPA request for a two-year stay in NCC v. EPA. This "stay of the mandate" makes the original EPA rule valid until April 2011 and defers any potential pesticide permitting requirements until that time.

AFBF is disappointed in the court's decision and will consider its options. Meanwhile, AFBF has been and will continue to work with EPA in the development of a permitting system. EPA is expected to release a general permit prototype later this month.

### **Farmable Wetlands Program Begins**

USDA recently announced that producers can begin signing up for the Farmable Wetlands Program on Aug. 3 at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices. The program is a component of the Conservation



## Legislative Update - cont.

Reserve Program (CRP) authorized in the 2008 farm bill. Authorized incentives include a payment of \$100 per acre, an incentive payment of 40 percent of the cost to establish the practice and a 120 percent rental rate.

The voluntary program was developed to restore up to 1 million acres of U.S. farmable wetlands and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation.

For more information on FSA's conservation programs, producers are encouraged to stop by their FSA county office in person or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

### CSP Sign-Up Begins

U.S. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced that the USDA will begin continuous sign-up for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) on August 10, with the first sign-up period cutoff on Sept. 30.

CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation practices, while adopting additional procedures on their operations. Congress renamed and revamped the former Conservation Security Program to improve its availability and appeal to agricultural and forestry producers.

The program will be offered to producers nationwide through continuous sign-ups. Eligible applicants may include individual landowners, legal entities and Indian tribes. Agricultural and forestry producers must submit applications by Sept. 30 to be considered for funding in the first ranking period. Congress capped national acreage enrollment at 12,769,000 acres for each fiscal year.

### India Rejects Any Greenhouse-Gas Cuts Under New Climate Treaty

India said it will reject any new treaty to limit global warming that makes the country reduce greenhouse-gas emissions because that will undermine its energy consumption, transportation and food security.

Cutting back on climate-warming gases is a measure that instead must be taken by industrialized countries, and India is mobilizing developing nations to push that case, according to Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh.

"India will not accept any emission-reduction target -- period," Ramesh said. "This is a non-negotiable stand."

India, which has more than 800 million people living on less than \$2 a day, is talking with Brazil, China and South Africa on taking a common stand in negotiations that richer countries like the U.S. and Britain must reduce their emissions 45 percent by the year 2020 from 1990 levels.

That level of reduction worldwide may be enough to ensure the global average temperature rises no more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times, according to a UN climate agency, which suggested a 25 percent-to-40 percent cut over the same three-decade period.

The 27-nation European Union, promising a 20-percent reduction, Japan, pledging an 8 percent cut, and the U.S., committed to return to 1990 levels by 2020, all fall below the UN target for gases such as carbon dioxide.

"We are not re-negotiating the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change," Ramesh said, referring to the treaty that entered into force in 1994 and laid the groundwork for emissions cuts by richer nations. "There is no way India is going to accept any

emission reduction target, period, between now and the Copenhagen meeting and thereafter."

### Senate Committee Approves Clean Water Restoration Act

On June 18, the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee voted 12-7 in favor of the Clean Water Restoration Act, S. 787, which amends the Clean Water Act (CWA) by replacing the term "navigable waters" with "waters of the United States."

During mark up of the bill a substitute amendment was offered by Senators Baucus (D-MT), Klobuchar and Boxer (D-CA). Their amendment was agreed to. The amendment makes a number of changes to S. 787. However, the amendment continues to delete the term "navigable" and replace it with "all waters of the United States." Senator Klobuchar voted in favor of moving S. 787 out of committee as amended.

Farm Bureau remains concerned that the legislation will needlessly expand the federal reach of the CWA, with significant negative impacts on farmers, ranchers, local governments and local economies without improved protection of the nation's critical water resources.

### Health Care Legislation Delayed

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced President Obama's August deadline for finalizing health care legislation will not be met. Senate Democrats canceled plans to vote on a health care reform bill a few hours after Obama reiterated his support for the August deadline.

On the House side, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has not committed to a vote before adjournment.

# Pipestone Honors Gunderman - Outstanding Producer

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program recently honored two members of the program who have achieved outstanding production, performance and profit from their sheep operations.

The first recipient of the outstanding producer award is Russell Gundermann from Westbrook, Minnesota. Russell has raised sheep for 30 years and has been a member of the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program for that entire time. Over that time, he has grown from a 100-head ewe flock to a little over 600-head of Finn Cross ewes today. He excels as a low cost producer who consistently is one of the two or three producers in the program with the lowest annual ewe feed cost and therefore the lowest annual cost of production. Russell runs a low labor operation and has excellent sheep management skills and pays close attention to details and timely management.

In addition, he has served on the Lamb and Wool Program advisory committee for several years. He also has hosted on-farm training sessions, bus tours and has served on producer panels at shortcourses.

The next recipients of the outstanding producer award are David and Julie Hofland from Hartley, Iowa. Dave and Julie have raised sheep for over 20 years and have been members of the Pipestone Lamb and Wool program for 18 years. Their flock has steadily grown from less than 100 head to about 550 Finn Cross and Polypay type ewes. They excel as a high production flock that consistently markets around a 200 percent lamb crop or better. Since they started raising sheep, they have kept and used extensive production records in breeding, culling and selecting their replacement ewes. They also select all rams used in their flock based on production records. In addition, they

do a good job of keeping ewe feed costs low and are consistently in the elite end of program members for lamb feed efficiency. Dave and Julie work well together in making good, timely management decisions that positively affect their bottom line profits.

In addition to their sheep production accomplishments, the Hoflands have helped many new people get started raising sheep and have served as mentors to them. They have also worked tirelessly in representing and promoting the sheep industry as directors, officers and workers for the Northwest Iowa Sheep Producers Association and the Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board.

The elite production levels, flock profitability and industry leadership make Russell Gundermann and Dave and Julie Hofland very worthy recipients of the Pipestone Outstanding Producer Award.

## Importance of Biosecurity

Livestock in the US are just as mobile as people, traveling across the country and sometimes overseas in mere days. Though this allows for a broader range of business prospects, it also paves the way for potentially harmful viruses and bacteria to be spread quickly. Biosecurity is now more important than ever.

Some of the basic steps to maintaining biosecurity on farm are:

- Limiting the number of people on the farm
- Not allowing recent international

travelers on farm

- Banning any person displaying signs of sickness
- Mandating all farm workers and visitors wear personal protective equipment including boots, gloves, masks, and coveralls
- Reporting any unusual behavior or signs of illness in livestock to a veterinarian immediately

Taking these steps, alongside of many other important biosecurity practices, will help prevent the

potential spread of disease.

Help keep Minnesota's livestock industry healthy and thriving. Please visit [www.bah.state.mn.us](http://www.bah.state.mn.us) and click on "Quick Links - Biosecurity" for more information.



## MLWP takes part in MN Ag Ambassador Institute

The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers had four representatives attend the 14th annual Minnesota Agricultural Ambassador Institute (MAAI) in St. Paul. Donnie Drewry of Farmington, Kathy Hansen of Cold Spring, Jodee Oelke of Barrett, and Ashley Schiefelbein of Kimball took part in the three-day youth leadership development program.

Also among the 33 individuals taking part were representatives from the Minnesota Pork Board, Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council and FFA.

The MAAI combined hands-on activities, speakers, and tours to encourage and develop communication and leadership skill of youth who have an interest in agriculture and agribusiness.

The MAAI participants toured Canterbury Park in Shakopee, CHS grain shipping facilities in Savage, and the Minnesota Public Radio facilities in St. Paul. Participants also took part in an etiquette dinner at the Machine Shed restaurant in Lake Elmo.

Speakers at this year's program included Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff members who talked



**Front: Kathy Hanson and Donnie Drewry, Back: Kevin Paap - MFBF, Jodee Oelke, Ashley Schiefelbein, and Joe Martin - MN Dept of Ag**

about their careers in agriculture and the state agriculture department's food safety and regulatory programs, and consumer and production agricultural services Communication and leadership training presenters were Bryn Poliska, National Pork Board Knowledge Transfer Specialist, and

Kevin Paap, Minnesota Farm Bureau President.

The institute's primary organizers are the Minnesota Pork Board and the Minnesota Farm and Food Coalition. Additional funding for the event comes from several other commodity and agricultural groups.

## U.K. PLAN CUTS 'HIGH CARBON' LAMB FROM MENUS

The United Kingdom's Committee on Climate Change is developing menus to combat climate change by cutting out "high carbon" food such as lamb, which the group claims pose a serious threat to the environment because they expel methane.

The committee is encouraging

consumers to eat more potatoes and seasonal vegetables, as well as pork and chicken, which they say generate fewer carbon emissions. "Changing our lifestyles, including our diets, is going to be one of the crucial elements in cutting carbon emissions," said David Kennedy, of the committee.

A government-sponsored study on greenhouse gases in the U.K. found that producing 2.2 pounds of lamb released the equivalent of 37 pounds of carbon dioxide.

*Editor's note: Even sheep are not safe from the climate terrorists.*

# "America's Dairyland" Under Attack by PETA

If the animal-rights group PETA had its way, Wisconsin's license plate slogan "America's Dairyland" would be changed to "America's Cow Hell."

"Today's factory farms are hell on Earth for animals and shouldn't be celebrated on Wisconsin license plates," says PETA campaign coordinator Lindsay Rajt. "People who care about cows shouldn't be forced to use their cars as free advertising for an industry that forcibly impregnates cows and then tears their babies away and locks them up in veal crates for the remainder of their short lives."

PETA has sent the following letter to Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle:

*Dear Governor Doyle:*

*On behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our thousands of members and supporters across Wisconsin, I am writing to ask you to endorse an alternative to the ubiquitous "America's Dairyland" license plate out of respect for the many Wisconsinites who do not wish to support animal abuse on factory farms. Instead of the "America's Dairyland" slogan with the quaint barn in the background, we'd like to see a new license plate that reads, "Wisconsin: America's Cow Hell" and has a more realistic image, perhaps depicting sick cows in a cramped, filthy factory-farm shed.*

*The dairy industry is far from the romanticized fairy tale of Old MacDonald's Farm that milk companies want consumers to envision. In real life, thousands of cows are forced to live in barren, severely crowded factory-farm feedlots, where they spend their days mired in mud and their own feces. Most factory-farmed cows suffer from a painful udder infection called mastitis, which is exacerbated by filthy conditions and the growth hormones that farmers routinely give to cows so that they will pump out milk like machines, not mammals. Of course, cows only produce milk during and after pregnancy, so to force them to keep giving milk, they are repeatedly impregnated using what farmers call a "rape rack." Their calves are taken away shortly after birth; most calves spend their short lives confined to veal crates, unable to move. After several years of milk production, the cows' worn-out bodies are ground up and turned into hamburgers. In addition to causing immense animal suffering, the dairy industry is a leading contributor to climate change as well as air and water pollution in the Badger State.*

*Caring and informed Wisconsinites are increasingly making the compassionate choice to go vegan; these kind folks are dismayed that their vehicles are being used as free advertising space for the cruel dairy industry. Please encourage the legislature to create an alternative license plate that provides an accurate depiction of this abusive and environmentally destructive industry. Madison-based Alliance for Animals (AFA) has produced a sticker that can be placed over "America's Dairyland" until the permanent "America's Cow Hell" plate is available. Attached is a photograph showing the sticker on a car owned by PETA staffer/AFA member Jackie Wochos. Wisconsin residents can order a license plate sticker at AFA's Web site.*

*Thank you for your consideration.*

*Very truly yours,*

*Ingrid E. Newkirk*

*President*

*PETA*





## Commissioner Hugoson urges USDA to reshape animal identification discussion

Citing the importance of animal traceability in responding to food safety threats and livestock disease outbreaks, Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson and Minnesota State Veterinarian Dr. Bill Hartmann today sent a joint letter to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack urging him to resume the discussion about implementing a national animal identification system.

Commissioner Hugoson and Dr. Hartmann acknowledged the controversy generated by earlier debates over the proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS), and they encouraged Secretary Vilsack to set aside the bogged-down debate about whether to implement that system. Instead, Hugoson and Hartmann suggested a greater emphasis on practical issues related to development of a modern, high-quality animal traceability system that respects producer privacy concerns while also

providing animal health officials with timely information needed to fight animal diseases and foodborne illnesses.

“While most parties can agree on the importance of improving animal traceability for food safety, animal health and marketing purposes, it seems very difficult to find consensus on how best to build workable systems to accomplish these goals,” they wrote in their letter. “Rather than being drawn into the debates ... take this opportunity to reshape the discussion with a focus on how we improve animal traceability.”

The letter urged greater involvement of state animal health officials, citing their role as first responders to animal diseases. Hugoson and Hartmann said this role makes it vital for state responders to build and maintain accurate and updated information systems with producer contacts and livestock

premises information.

“We believe the most important component of a disease investigation is the ability of state officials to contact affected livestock producers or handlers in a timely manner,” Hugoson and Hartmann wrote. “Overreliance on a national database system may lead to problems ... a better blueprint would be to empower states to build modern, accurate, and nationally compatible systems to effectively trace animal diseases.”

The letter points out that a less centralized system with greater state involvement may be easier for some producers to accept.

“We believe enhancing state systems will garner more producer participation and improve animal disease response and traceability,” Hugoson and Hartmann wrote. “Additionally, data privacy concerns can be better addressed by state statutes.”

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

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

## Green Acres and Rural Preserves Fact Sheets

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has released Green Acres and Rural Preserve Fact Sheets to help landowners answer questions about the two property tax programs designed to preserve agricultural land and open space. The Green Acres program has been around for several years, but changes have been made to it in the last two state legislative sessions. The

Rural Preserves program was created this year. It is similar to the Green Acres program, but is designed for non-ag land.

The Green Acres Fact sheet can be found at: [www.taxes.state.mn.us/property\\_tax\\_administrators/other\\_supporting\\_content/2009258%20Fact%20Sheet%205%20](http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/property_tax_administrators/other_supporting_content/2009258%20Fact%20Sheet%205%20)

(1).pdf

The Rural Preserves Fact sheet site is the same through content/ the last part is:

[2009144%20Rural%20Preserveves%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://2009144%20Rural%20Preserveves%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

Ask your county tax assessor for more information about these programs.

# Livestock Investment Program grants available

The Minnesota Department of agriculture (MDA) is accepting applications for the 2009 Livestock Investment Grant Program (LIGP) as part of the newly created Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation



Program (AGRI). These grants are available to qualifying livestock producers and provide reimbursement of up to 10% of their investment in

buildings and/or capital equipment.

Grant applications will be competitively scored using an evaluation profile and ranked on their relative merit in each category. A review committee will evaluate the applications and notify recipients in early 2010. ***Give special attention to the evaluation profile when answering questions on the application.*** If you applied for, but were not granted an LIG in 2008, your application remains active and will be considered along with the 2009 applicants.

Receipts for purchases or services

are not requested as part of the application process. Only grants that are approved will need to provide proof of payment. Grants will be paid to eligible producers after they have submitted proof of payment to MDA.

LIGP applications must be postmarked by **Nov. 30, 2009**. All applications must be originals (no e-mail or faxed copies). Keep a copy for your records. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed or accepted.

More information, and an application form can be found at: [www.mda.state.mn.us/livestockinvestmentgrant](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/livestockinvestmentgrant) (or call 651-201-6500).

## LRP-Lamb Sales Will Resume

Sales of the Livestock Risk Protection-Lamb (LRP-Lamb) plan of insurance will begin again on Sept. 14, according to USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). Sales under the 2009 and 2010 Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) Lamb Specific Coverage Endorsements were suspended due to the unavailability of pricing information and was no longer available for sale.

The American Sheep Industry Association's (ASI) Sheep Venture Company (SVC) and the Livestock Marketing Information Center have been working with RMA and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) for nearly a year on several enhancements to LRP-Lamb.

As a result the RMA published the following informational memo:

"On June 25, 2009, the Federal

Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) Board of Directors approved a number of program changes, including:

- A new pricing procedure that uses a lamb carcass price converted to a calculated live price using Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) data;
- The addition of a 20-week endorsement;
- Expansion to the state of Washington;
- A reduction in the maximum size of the Specific Coverage Endorsement from 7,000 head to 2,000 head.

A new LRP Lamb Specific Coverage Endorsement, 2010-1-LRP Lamb, reflecting the above changes is now available. Producers interested in purchasing an LRP Lamb Specific Coverage Endorsement will need to contact a crop insurance agent and complete an application that will be submitted through the approved

insurance provider to FCIC. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) publishes a list of agents authorized by insurance providers to write livestock insurance on its Web site at <http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/companies/indexLPI.cfm>.

"We are very pleased that this great risk management tool will once again be available to the sheep industry this fall ... the changes are very positive both for the sustainability of the program and its usefulness to producers," said Margaret Soulen Hinson, ASI vice president.

The 2010 reinsurance year LRP-Lamb materials may be accessed on the RMA Web site from the Livestock page at [www.rma.usda.gov/livestock/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/livestock/).



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**Did you know?**

**By being a member of MLWPA, you can get the ASI Weekly News by email for free? Just contact ASI for information on getting your email account set up.**

# Calendar of Events

## 2009

Aug. 27—Sep. 7	MN State Fair	St. Paul, MN
Sep. 8	Wyoming WGA state ram sale	Douglas, WY
Sep. 17	Montana Ram Sale	Miles City, MT
Sep. 18	Newell Ram Sale	Newell, SD
Sep. 26	SD Sheep Growers Assoc Annual mtg	Huron, SD
Oct.	MN Hampshire Young Shepherd's Scholarship deadline	
Oct. 31	North Star Bred Ewe Sale	Pipestone, MN
Nov. 7-20	NAILE (Louisville)	Louisville, KY
Nov. 19-21	MN Farm Bureau Annual mtg	Brooklyn Park, MN
Nov. 20-21	ND Lamb & Wool annual mtg	Mandan, ND
Nov. 28	MN Bred Ewe & Doe Sale	Rochester, MN
Nov. 30	Application Deadline for Livestock Investment Grant program	
Dec. 4-5	MLWPA Shepherd's Holiday	Alexandria, MN

## 2010

Jan. 20-23	ASI Annual Convention	Nashville, TN
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*If you have a calendar item or news releases that you would like included, please send information to:*

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



**Not ready for the PGA!**

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

### Lamb Chops w/ Cranberry-Orange Salsa

#### Lamb Chops

2 tablespoons orange juice  
 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
 8 American lamb loin chops, 1-inch thick

#### Cranberry-Orange Salsa

1 medium orange, peeled and chopped, or  
 1/2 cup canned mandarin oranges, chopped  
 1/4 cup finely chopped onion  
 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies,  
 drained  
 1/4 cup dried cranberries, soaked in hot  
 water for 10 minutes and drained  
 1/4 cup orange marmalade  
 1 tablespoon finely chopped cilantro or  
 parsley  
 1 tablespoon white vinegar

#### Lamb Chops

Combine orange juice and Worcestershire  
 sauce. Brush lamb chops with orange juice  
 mixture.

To Grill: Cook over medium-hot coals. Grill  
 4 inches from coals for 5 minutes. Turn and  
 grill 4 to 6 minutes longer or to desired  
 degree of doneness.

To Broil: Cook chops 4 inches from heat  
 source for 5 minutes. Turn and cook 4 to 6  
 minutes longer or to desired degree of  
 doneness.

Serve chops with Cranberry-Orange Salsa.

#### Cranberry-Orange Salsa

Combine all ingredients. Cover and chill  
 several hours or overnight.