

Shepherd's Bulletin



Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association

Boniface Honored as ASI "Camptender"

Winter 2010

Four outstanding U.S. sheep industry members were honored for their contributions to the industry at an awards luncheon held Jan. 22, at the American Sheep Industry Association/National Lamb Feeders Association Convention in Nashville, TN.

The Camptender Award was presented to Richard 'Dick' Boniface of Cedar, Minn., for his contribution to the U.S. wool industry. Boniface began his wool marketing career at the North Central Wool Marketing Regional Co-op,

in which he was a wool buyer and supervisor of field staff. During his time there, he originated the grade and yield method of marketing wool making it possible to sell wool on a quality basis on the current market. In addition, he implemented and helped operate the wool testing lab. Boniface also helped organize the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association. From 1997 to 2008, Boniface and his wife, Juanita, were program coordinators for the Minnesota Foundation for



Dick & Juanita Boniface

Responsible Animal Care and gave leadership to designing and implementing Minnesota's Livestock Quality Assurance and

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President's Message - Don Adelmann

I would first like to wish a Happy New Year to all Minnesota sheep enthusiasts (and our sheep friends from neighboring states as well)!

I would like to thank the out-going Board members for their work this past year and welcome the five new members to the Board. I look forward to working with you.

Thanks also to everyone who attended the Shepherd's Holiday in Alexandria. We

had an excellent turn out A special thanks to those that helped make it all possible. We heard many positive comments about the event.

It is always nice to see all the "Make it With Wool" participants. Congratulations to the winners. Best of luck in Nashville, January 20th – 23rd.

I would like to thank Dan Persons and family (Rafters P Ranch) for their hospitality and farm tour.

Thanks too to all that helped. Nice job.

Make sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend this year's Shepherd's Holiday Saturday and Sunday, December 4th and 5th at Jackpot Junction in Morton, MN. On behalf of the entire Board, we welcome suggestions from members for speakers/topics.

As the challenges are many in the sheep industry

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www.mlwp.org

President's Message - *cont.*

(and farming in general) today, I would urge our members to promote the MLWPA by encouraging friends, neighbors, farmers and other shepherds to join the organization, and be active participants in our flock in 2010.

As I sit here and listen to the radio, the Southwest part of the state is shut down with wind, snow and cold. The lambing season for many is underway. Anyone who questions the quality of care that a shepherd provides his flock is probably not

aware of the late night and early morning trips we all make to the lambing barn, regardless of how cold and unpleasant the weather might be. The best way we can combat the growing attacks by animal rights activists is to tell our story. Our friends, neighbors and relatives need to know about the care we provide our sheep.

I hope that 2010 is a productive season, and I look forward to serving as your President.



Boniface Honored by ASI - *cont.*

Ethics Program for young producers, a program which now reaches 40,000 youth in the Minnesota 4-H program.

Acknowledging he had been given a great honor, Boniface said while accepting his award, "It's not a job that is going to make you a millionaire, but I got rich in another way. Over the years, I have worked with thousands of producers and it has been truly rewarding."

"I got rich in another way. Over the years, I have worked with thousands of producers and it has been truly rewarding." Dick Boniface

Joe Harper of Seneca Rocks, WV, received a standing ovation as he accepted the McClure Silver Ram Award for his lifetime of achievement and dedication in and for the U.S. sheep industry. An eighth-generation family farmer, Harper has built his flock to 400 ewes, operated a lamb

feedlot, became a wool buyer in the area and has utilized a number of innovations in marketing, breeding and predator control. He has served nine years on the USDA Wildlife Service Advisory Committee as a representative of the sheep industry and led support for a self-help predator control program in West Virginia. Harper was an original member of the American Lamb Board, serving from 2002 to 2008. He is active in the American Farm Bureau both nationally and in the state, and chaired the organization's Sheep Advisory Committee for two terms.

In his acceptance speech, Harper thanked all his family and fellow sheep industry members for the years of support, saying, "I am happy to be a part of an industry full of God-fearing, patriotic Americans."

A third-generation commercial sheep producer, Kim Aagard of Moroni, UT, was the recipient of the Environmental Stewardship Award.

Aagard has a Rambouillet ewe flock, which he grazes on a rotational basis over 5,000 acres in northern Utah. His rotational grazing has resulted in significant increased carrying capacity while improving lamb quality. He has spent much of his life working on weed and brush control on his summer range. In addition, Aagard has developed significant water sources and installed a large distribution system that naturally keeps the sheep in various grazing patterns minimizing overgrazing.

Receiving the Shepherd's Voice for Media, Colleen Shreiber of Austin, TX, is a full-time agriculture writer for the Livestock Weekly newspaper based out of San Angelo. Shreiber has written articles on sheep operations located across the western U.S. providing a vivid description of the ranch families engaged in lamb and wool production, helping readers understand the issues we all face.



View From the Hayloft - *Dan Persons*

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I really love this time of year. Don't get me wrong, I could do without the extreme cold and snow up to the boot tops but would not trade being around our ewes at lambing time for anything. We have just finished our first lambing group and are now in recovery mode when we can get barns cleaned out and sheep moved around and ready for the next round in February. This first group pushed us to re-examine our limits. With the help of my youngest daughter, Rachel, we managed to lamb out 360 ewes in just a little over 14 days. The rams were out with his group for only 11 days so at our peak we were lambing 50 ewes a day. We adjusted our lambing barn management a bit and lambed some of the ewes in our cold housing but with some great weather made it through.

Last week I had the opportunity to represent MLWP at the ASI annual convention as your voting delegate. Glenette Sperry was also there representing us and helping to make the MIWW competition a success. While there we had the privilege of witnessing Dick Boniface receiving the Campender award from ASI. Dick was indeed honored to be nominated by MLWP and humbled to be chosen for the award. Thank you Dick for all you have done for the sheep industry.

While at the conference I was able to sit in on the animal health committee meeting and heard reports on antibiotic use restrictions and on the process for getting new animal health products approved for use. There was also lengthy discussion on allowing non-veterinarians to do ultrasound to determine pregnancy. A policy requesting this did not pass, as each state sets these laws.

The Bighorn Sheep issues of the west are not going away and there is a continued threat to the ranches in those areas losing their grazing rights. There is also a group working on the Livestock Protection Dog issues that have surfaced in the past several years. ASI is in the process of heading off the desire by some to prohibit LPDs in much of the public lands due to excessive human conflicts. They will likely have a LPD certification program up and running by early summer to educate producers and inform the public on the use of LPDs. Predator control is common theme throughout the entire country.

One of the most powerful messages from the conference came from Bruce Vincent a third generation logger from Libby, Montana. He spoke on the reality that if we are not careful we will lose our 'social license to

farm' that is given to us by the non-farming public. He spoke of a new way of defending ourselves through constant public education and proactive legislative activities. If all we do is defend ourselves in the courts of law we will certainly be forced out of business. He reminded us that democracy is not a spectator sport and that we need to get involved at the local, state and federal levels to make sure that the truth is being told on the issues that affect us all. He tells us that the non-farming public is making the right decisions they simply are not given the right choices. If you ever get the chance to hear him speak do what ever you can to get there and listen.

So what next? Start educating the greater public. All of us have non-farming relatives. They are a good safe place to start. Then start standing up and speaking out when you see something in print or hear a myth perpetuated. Say yes when asked to be on the local zoning board, local Farm Bureau, Local Farmers Union, or any number of other opportunities to make a difference. Check out the website www.providerpalls.com for opportunities to spread our stories.

Good luck with your lambing season and keep your pencils sharp and your minds open.

Law School Publication Looks at HSUS

An article published in the journal of the University of Richmond's School of Law takes a tough look at the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). The article calls into question HSUS's advertising and fundraising efforts and contrasts that to how it actually spends the money it is donated. The article was written by Richmond law student .

"For less than a dollar a day, it seems like a common sense move for a pet lover with disposable income to contribute to the HSUS," the article states. "Who doesn't like the idea of an organization dedicated to rescuing animals from neglect? There is one minor detail left out of these commercials. HSUS is not a large network of animal shelters, as it would have you to believe. In fact, the HSUS does not own, operate or lease a single animal shelter in our country. Instead, it is primarily a special interest lobby that is shrewd enough to capitalize on the good name of local 'humane societies' that actually do the good work of taking in strays and finding suitable adoptive homes for unwanted pets."

MLWPA Winter 2010 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the MN Lamb & Wool Producers was called to order at 12:45 pm on Saturday, January 9, 2010 by President Don Adelman. In attendance: John Dvorak, Mike Haubrich, Karen Stormo, Jeremy Geske, Don Adelman, Dan Persons, Steve Scheffert, Randy Kinney, Terri Drimel, Becky Utecht, and guest Dan Lippert. The agenda was approved and introductions were made as four new Board members were present.

Becky Utecht read through the minutes of the Dec. 3, 2009 meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted. Don Adelman passed out the Treasurer's Reports in the absence of Treasurer Glenette Sperry. The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented. The balance in the checking and savings as of 1/8/10 was \$73,825.73

Old business: **Group Leaf** - Dan Persons relayed information from his meeting with Greg Leaf to discuss plans for a facelift of MLWP to include a logo update and build brand association. The first step is forming a committee consisting of a diverse group of MLWP members who will brainstorm to help Group Leaf identify our audience, evaluate our current brand association, and create a brand promise. **Youth Programs** - Much discussion on improving communication about expectations and duties of the MLWPJrA committee. **Budget** - Discussion took place on how much to increase membership dues for 2011 because of the projected budget deficit. It was moved and seconded to increase 2011 dues to \$40 for individual members

(\$110 for 3 year membership), \$120 for Allied/Associate members, \$30 for Friends of the Industry, \$10 for Junior membership, \$120 for Satellite Associations. Motion carried. **ASI Convention** - Dan Persons and Glenette Sperry will be going to Nashville for the conference. The Board discussed what a great honor it is that Minnesota's own Dick Boniface will be awarded the Camp Tender award this year. **Shepherd's Holiday** - Good attendance this year as compared to recent years. Positive feedback regarding the variety of workshops provided and the interest shown by workshop participants. Also positive comments on the food. Eighty-five people attended the Friday evening banquet, more people came on Saturday, and 34 people came for the Make It With Wool competition. Next year's conference will be held on Saturday-Sunday which may help increase attendance by those unable to attend the Friday sessions due to work schedules.

New business: **Spring Sheep Workshop** - The 2010 Spring workshop will be held Saturday, March 20 at the Dvorak farm in Webster, MN. John Dvorak led the discussion reporting on previous Spring workshops. (More information, including agenda and registration form on p. 15). **2010 Shepherd's Holiday** - The conference will be held Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 4-5, in Morton, MN at Jackpot Junction. This timeframe overlaps with the Minnesota Cattleman's annual meeting being held in the same location Dec. 3-4. It is hoped that the overlap will increase attendance and

that the two groups can work together with a joint Trade Show area. Jeremy Geske will meet with Steve May from the MN Cattleman's Association on the details. **ASI to D.C. trip** - Jeremy Geske and 1 to 2 other board members will be attending. Jeremy will line up visits with our congressional delegation. **Silver Bell** - Foster Mooney sent a letter stating that this will be his last year working on this. He laid out guidelines for the selection process which the board is considering. All Regional Directors are asked to recommend candidates from their area at the June meeting. **Duties** - Discussion on some of the duties performed by various board members. Jeremy will take over for Patty as membership co-chair with Glenette. Becky will take over for Jeremy as web-sire contact, Kirk will assist Don in preparing the board meeting agendas. Many other duties remained with the same person.

Committee reports: **Newsletter** - the deadline for articles is January 29. Should be mailed to members by the 2nd week in Feb. **Membership** - membership drive letters were sent out and have been coming in steady (as of 2/2 - 197 paid members in all membership classes - with a goal of doubling that by state fair time). **Legislative** - Jeremy reported on the state budget deficit and its potential impact on the Department of Agriculture and the Board of Animal Health, MPCA efforts, and HSUS activities in Minnesota.

The next meeting date is set for Saturday, April 10, at the Pizza Ranch in Glencoe. Meeting adjourned at 3:04 pm. *Becky Utecht, Secretary*

MLWPA Announces Starter Flock Program

Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association

Starter Flock Grant Application

BY JUNE 1, Send your application to:

Don Adelman, 10980 Little Ave., Cologne, MN 55322

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

Requirements of the Applicants:

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

Satellites may apply to MLWPA for youth scholarship funds

MLWP made the decision once again offer Starter Flock opportunities to the Satellite Associations. The Satellite associations may apply for a \$100 starter flock/scholarship stipend. The following criteria must be met:

1. The satellite association must be

current with their MLWPA dues.

2. The youth receiving the funds must be a paid member of MLWPA (family or Jr member).
3. The youth and/or satellite must submit a short written report on

how the funds were used .

Once those 3 criteria have been met, the satellite association will receive the funds from MLWPA.

Lippert Elected to ASI Executive Board

Mike Lippert, Olivia, MN, was elected to represent the National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA) on the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) Executive Board at the 2010 ASI/NLFA Convention in Nashville, TN.

Lippert, a second-generation lamb feeder, continues to run part of an operation established by his father in 1957. Lippert mainly purchases lambs from North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Minnesota, at 80 to 100 pounds, feeds them out to market weight at 135 to 150 pounds and ships them to major packers. In

addition, he farms corn, soybeans, alfalfa and vegetables with his brother Dan. Lippert is married to wife, Sharon, and has one adult daughter, Michelle.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business management from St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, and has used that knowledge in his feeding and farming operation.

Lippert served on the NLFA Executive Board from 1980-1992, served as vice president for the organization from 2005-2007 and, most recently, just ended his two-year

term as NLFA president. The immediate past president of NLFA goes on to represent the organization on the ASI Executive Board.

"I know most of the people on the board, so I think that my ability to communicate and work with them will make it easier to accomplish the goals of the board of directors and the voting membership," says Lippert of his election to the ASI Executive Board. "I am there to represent NLFA, so I am going to try to encourage and promote policies that will benefit lamb feeders and the whole industry."

Voluntary OPP/CAE pilot program extended

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health (BAH) has approved extension of the Voluntary OPP/CAE Test & Control Pilot Program as an optional add-on to the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (our initial 4-

year trial period expired this month). Now that we know the program has a future I'll soon be uploading info to the BAH website and resume trying to grow the base. There are 11 flocks enrolled at present, one of which

recently signed on and the owner strongly suspects OPPV.

For more information about the program, contact Judy Lewman at jl6250@visi.com or 952-472-4524.

Livin' La Vida Local! *by Casey DeRosier (intern with MDA)*

I had a very unique and fun experience at Grazeland Sheep Farm in Lindstrom and spent an entire morning with the owner, Sherry Stirling. I first met Sherry at the Minnesota State Fair where she was selling wool products. You may remember the photo taken of Sherry while I was visiting Minnesota Grown members at the fair. I also got a picture with Sherry's warm wool socks.

We started our morning off with a nice cup of coffee at a local coffee shop. I would need the coffee to keep me going since Sherry had plans for me to help out with morning

chores! And guess what - the chores ended up being a lot of fun! I helped feed the sheep and horses, and I even lifted a few hay bales - a good excuse for me to skip this gym this week.

After our morning chores and visiting with the animals, Sherry and I chatted in the toasty warm house. Then she showed me where she lays out all of the wool on a table to clean it. It was very soft and thick. There was enough wool on the table from one sheep to make three large wool blankets! We also looked at some beautiful sheep pelts that were oh so soft and cozy wool socks. The she told

me about Woolch. I had never heard of Woolch before! Woolch is a blend of wool fibers and wood shavings. It is used as a weed control and moisture retaining mulch. It is 100% recycled and is both herbicide and pesticide-free. I took a small sample home to try in my garden this spring.



Home Grown Economy Conference

U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson (DFL-MN) announced that “The Home Grown Economy 2010 – Equipping You to Build Community Based Food Systems” conference will be held in Marshall on February 15th and 16th.

In addition, to improve access for constituents throughout the 7th Congressional District, interactive video sessions will be held on Tuesday, February 16th at the following college campus locations: University of Minnesota, Crookston; University of Minnesota, Morris; Bemidji State University, and Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Fergus Falls.

“Changing attitudes about food, its impact on health and well-being, and growing opportunities for small farmers have sparked a movement across the country and in Minnesota of consumers seeking out locally grown foods, Peterson said, “and I’m hosting this conference to help get the word out and link people to the available

resources.”

“With this demand for more locally grown foods, farmers and rural communities can benefit from a variety of new opportunities. The farm to school program, linking local agricultural producers to school lunch and breakfast programs, is growing in Minnesota. Farmers markets and food co-ops are springing up all over the state and in grocery stores; “Minnesota Grown” and “locally grown” labels are being sought out by shoppers.”

“In 2007, I sponsored the first in a series of meetings on Local Foods, addressing how local foods can be an economic development engine for rural communities. Since then, I’ve held additional meetings on connecting local foods and economic opportunity.”

“This year I’ve invited USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to provide the keynote address. In addition, Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center

will present his insights on how food networks thrive and strengthen local economies. Panel presenters will provide information about what is happening at the local level and each regional site will be afforded an opportunity to discuss how they can expand upon their local community based food system.”

“By sponsoring this conference again, I’m hoping to provide people in western and northwestern Minnesota with practical and useful information about how local foods can become an economic development engine for farmers, rural communities and development organizations, and how we can all work together to meet growing market demands for healthier food.”

For more information on the 2010 Home Grown Economy conference, go to www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu, or contact Toni Merdan at Congressman Peterson’s office.

Wool Prices Best Since May 2008

Wool prices have opened the season strong with the Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) breaking 900c/kg.

At the close of trading on Wednesday in Melbourne and Sydney the EMI was at 904c/kg clean, a rise of 25c/kg over the pre-Christmas close

and at its highest rate since May 2008.

This week's rises, which were across all categories, particularly the middle microns, defied a strong exchange rate and a relatively large national weekly offering of more than 50,000 bales.

Consensus among both brokers and exporters was that this week's gains were being driven by supply concerns and further rises were likely over the next few weeks, prior to the Chinese New Year celebrations in mid-February.

U.S. Targhee Sheep Association Starter Flock

The USTSA is again offering a free registered Targhee Starter flock to be awarded to a deserving youth at the USTSA National Show & Sale in Arlington, WI – July 15-17th. The winner must be present to win and will

be awarded one ewe lamb, one yearling ewe, and one brood ewe. Each animal will be a USTSA registered animal, and at least QR in Scrapie Codon 171 genotype. The winner will also receive a \$150 credit

for use toward purchase of additional animals at the 2010 sale.

Applications, due April 1, are now available at www.ustargheesheep.org. Any youth, ages 9-17, as of January 1, 2010, may apply.

Legislative Update

Minnesota Legislative Session

The Minnesota legislature convenes on February 4. The state of Minnesota is facing an additional budget deficit of \$1.2 billion for the current biennium, 2010 – 2011 and an estimated budget deficit of \$5.4 billion for the next biennium, 2012 – 2013. The budget deficit is an issue legislators will be considering during the upcoming session. During odd numbered years the legislature will work on passing a large bonding bill. The DFL controlled legislature is looking at a bonding bill of around \$1 billion and Governor Pawlenty has already announced his proposal for a general obligation bonding bill that comes in at \$685 million. At least eight current members of the Minnesota House of Representative or Senate are vying for endorsement from their respective parties in the upcoming race for Minnesota Governor.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Budget

MDA and all state agencies are going through another round of budget cuts to address the state budget deficit. This next round of budget cuts has the potential to impact the core mission (food safety, animal health and environmental protection services) of the department according to MDA Commissioner Hugoson.

Credit for Animal Feed Purchases

Ag groups are working to ensure that adequate credit will be available for the purchase of livestock feed and other inputs. One option we are discussing is the establishment of a 30 day emergency lien that would ensure credit is available for feed purchases in emergency situations.

Bonding Bill – 10-Ton Roads

Farm Bureau and other groups support provisions in the bonding bill aimed at investing in rural roads and bridges. They are supportive of bond dollars going to the Routes of Regional Significance Account within the Local Road Improvement Program in order to support the development of a network of 10-ton roads connecting to the trunk highway system. This investment would ensure farm and ranch inputs move to the farm gate and commodities move to market in a timely and safe manner.

Green Acres

Landowners with land enrolled in Green Acres have received letters from their county assessor explaining changes the legislature made to the Green Acres program in 2009 and the establishment of a new Rural Preserve Property Tax (RPPT) program. Under these changes, assessors are now required to classify what was once generally known as agricultural land as either class 2a or class 2b. Class 2a land is land used to produce an agricultural product and Class 2b land is rural vacant land that does not qualify as agricultural land.

The classification is important because Class 2a land can remain in Green Acres. Beginning in 2013, Class 2b land will no longer be eligible for Green Acres and will need to be enrolled in the Rural Preserve Property Tax program to be eligible for property tax deferral. Landowners may remove Class 2b land from Green Acres by May 1, 2010 without having to pay back deferred taxes. Current Green Acres enrollees are able to transition their qualifying 2b rural vacant lands into the RPPT program by



2013 without having to pay deferred taxes on those lands.

All details of the Rural Preserve Property Tax program are not finalized but we do know that in order to qualify for the program landowners will need to have a conservation management plan developed by an approved plan writer and a recorded covenant for a minimum of ten years for the acres they wish to enroll in this program.

Deciding what is the best option for your land is difficult. Your first step is to meet with your county assessor to determine how much of your agricultural land is classified as 2a and how much is classified as 2b. Also ask your county assessor if they know what the assessed value of the 2b land will be and if they can give you a ballpark figure of what the property taxes will be on that land if it is not enrolled in the RPPT program. Hopefully this will help you in making your final decision.

Farm Bureau and others are working with legislators to better clarify what lands qualify as 2a or 2b. We will also be working to extend the May 1 deadline so landowners have more time to make this very important decision. You should get as much information as you can from your county assessor now; but may want to wait until the current May 1 deadline before making a decision.

Equine Property Taxes

The Department of Revenue (DOR) has prepared a draft report to the legislature on equine property tax issues. In summary, in order to qualify as “agriculture”, equine operations must “sell and agricultural product” as their primary function. So, if they are selling a significant number of breeding stock, they are considered agriculture. If it is a boarding facility that has 10 or more acres of pasture, they are considered agriculture (selling the pasture to the boarded horses). Training, riding lessons and other equine activities they do not consider as agriculture.

Several equine operations offer a combination of boarding, riding lessons, breeding, training, etc. DOR indicated that in these situations, it would up to the county assessor to determine the “primary” use of the land, and classify it accordingly. DOR also indicated that they would not oppose a bill that clarifies which equine-related activities should be considered agriculture (as long as it didn’t include the people with 1-2 pet horses).

Murkowski Seeks to Halt EPA Greenhouse Gas Regulation

Senator Lisa Murkowski (D-AK) has introduced a “disapproval resolution” block efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act through their proposed endangerment finding that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere threaten public health.

Rick Krause, American Farm Bureau Federation senior director of congressional relations, said the resolution is important because now

that Congress is unlikely to pass climate change legislation this year, EPA is taking the lead with new regulations to address it. EPA’s “endangerment finding” determined greenhouse gases are a threat to public health, which paves the way for regulation under the Clean Air Act.

Minnesota Farm Bureau President Kevin Paap sent a letter to Senators Klobuchar and Franken urging their support of the Murkowski resolution.

“On January 12, during the American Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Seattle voting delegates from around the country unanimously adopted a resolution that not only expressed opposition to cap-and-trade legislation but that also “strongly supports any legislation that would suspend EPA’s authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act,” Paap wrote. “This sent a strong message that farmers, not just from Minnesota but from around the country, are deeply concerned about the ramifications if EPA moves forward with their proposal.”

Unfortunately, DFL members of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, including Senator Klobuchar (D-MN), have circulated a dear colleague letter urging a “no” vote on the Murkowski resolution, which is causing some division within majority party. However, Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, among other Democrats, has pledged her support of Senator Murkowski’s efforts. A simple majority is needed to pass this resolution. To date, Senator Murkowski’s resolution has 40 cosponsors.

Health Care Update

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-N) has indicated that the Senate will not proceed with health care reform legislation until after the swearing in of Senator-Elect Scott Brown (R-MA). U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said the House does not have the votes to pass the Senate health care bill.

These two developments mean that health care legislation will need to be reworked in a way that attracts bipartisan Senate support since Democrats no longer have the 60 votes needed to move legislation through the Senate.

Freeze on Discretionary Spending Won’t Hit Farm Programs

President Barack Obama’s plan for a three-year freeze on discretionary spending would have little impact on commodity subsidies and other major farm programs, according to House Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN).

“We expected this,” said Peterson. “It only affects discretionary spending. The farm bill is mandatory spending, driven by a formula, not by appropriation. What’s put in the law drives what the spending is, and direct payments, for example, are pretty much fixed.”

Disaster Program Calculator

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA now has a web-based 2008 crop program payment calculator available to help producers calculate the financial benefits they may receive under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program. Contact your county FSA office for details.

National Make it With Wool Winners

Participants of the 62nd annual national Make It With Wool competition constructed patterns to create their own woolen works of art. The contestants presented their winning ensembles at the ASI annual convention on Jan. 23. The designers taking top honors at this year's national competition were Emilee Koss of Clarence Center, N.Y., and Carrie Holter of Jefferson, MD.

Marija Crockett of Atchison, KN., and Emily Parks of Bloomington, IL., won First Runner-Up Junior Division and Senior Division, respectively. Rachel Dyky of Baltimore, MD., was named the 2010 National Make It With

Wool Adult Winner. The winner of the Fashion/Apparel Design Award was Jaclyn Rehberg of Brookfield, WI.

A total of 59 junior and senior finalists representing 32 states modeled their creations at the national competition. Some 915 contestants nationwide entered competitions at the state level and utilized more than 2,731 yards of wool fabric and more than 212 skeins of yarn to create their garments.

Other winners and their awards include: **Alyssa Nelson**, Jackson, MN., \$1,000 scholarship, Mohair Council of America.



Alyssa Nelson (center)

MLWPA Membership Renewal form - THANK YOU!

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Street: _____ County: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Breed(s) raised: _____

*optional - youth (21 & under) interested in the Jr program: _____

1 yr family membership \$35 3yr family membership \$100 Youth only membership \$10/person (21 & under)

Friend of the Industry (no sheep) \$25 Associate/Allied membership (businesses) \$100

Payment Method:

Check (payable to MLWP)

Charge my VISA or MASTER CARD (circle which one)

Card number: _____

3 digit code: _____ Expiration date: _____

Billing address (if different from above): _____

e-mail Jeremy or
Glenette to see if
you have paid.

Please detach the completed form, and mail it (along with your payment to:

Glenette Sperry, 31460 Quinlan Ave., Center City, MN 55012

gtsperry@peoplepc.com

jgeske@fbmn.org

Unpacking the HSUS Gravy Train

Page 11

HSUS reported spending almost \$20 million on “campaigns, legislation, and litigation”—enough to worry any livestock farmer or hunter looking to keep their chosen lifestyle alive. The group collected over \$86 million in

contributions, and spent more than \$24 million on fundraising, including \$4 million on professional fundraisers. Think about it: 28 cents of every dollar contributed to HSUS goes back out the door to raise more money. HSUS even

paid a single “lockbox” company more than \$4.2 million to count and process its cash hauls.

For more information, go to: www.centerforconsumerfreedom.com.

U of M Sheep Listserve

The University of Minnesota now has a new "Sheep" listserv. Purpose of Listserv: This list is a free service by the U of M as a way for producers to share and discuss information about production and marketing of sheep. It can also be used to place announcements about upcoming related events. Please feel free to promote the sheep listserv to anyone who may be interested.

Please post information related to:

- *Sheep Production and Marketing
- *Sheep Breeding, Health and Nutrition
- *Sheep Informational Events and Happenings

LISTSERV instructions:

To Join the List: Send an email to listserv@lists.umn.edu

Leave the subject blank. In the body of the message, on a single line,

enter: SUBSCRIBE um-sheep The name of the subscriber example: SUBSCRIBE um-sheep George C. Starr

Information for Members:

Members may now send Email (from their userid@node) to:

um-sheep@lists.umn.edu

For more information, contact Wayne Martin at 612-625-6224 or marti067@umn.edu.

Thank you - Support of the NIFA

Dear Minnesota Agricultural Leader:

Last week 50 agricultural organizations wrote USDA Secretary Vilsack and the Office of Management and Budget Director Orszag to support the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and agriculture research and extension funding.

This broad-based support of agricultural research and extension is good news for Minnesota and the nation. I am writing to thank you and your national organization for taking this proactive action on this important issue.

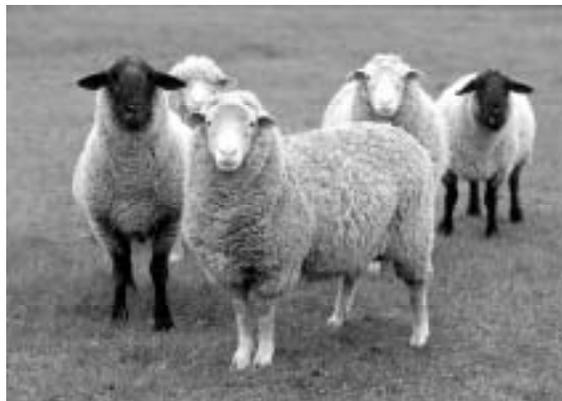
Research is important for the future of agriculture in Minnesota and the nation. The national effort to transform agricultural research to meet the needs of a changing world will not be possible without increased funding from the federal government.

Thank you again for your continued support of agricultural research and extension outreach at both the state and national level.

Sincerely,

Bev

Beverly R. Durgan
Dean, University of Minnesota Extension





MISSION & VISION

ALB MISSION

To increase the value of American Lamb for all segments contributing to the American Lamb Checkoff Program.

ALB VISION

A unified, thriving American Lamb industry that concentrates its resources around a prioritized and measurable plan that fosters the opportunity for profitability for all contributors.

IS LAMB PROMOTION *STILL*WORKING?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last year, based on the statistical analysis of the lamb checkoff expenditure data and lamb sales data through FY 2007, we reported that the Lamb Checkoff Program was effective in stimulating demand and increasing industry revenues. Our conclusion was that since the inception of the Lamb Checkoff Program, the checkoff generated an average of roughly 7.6 additional pounds in total lamb consumption per dollar spent on advertising and promotion and \$41.59 in additional lamb sales per dollar spent on advertising and promotion.

Is the Lamb Checkoff Program still working? Have the checkoff assessments paid by the industry and invested by the American Lamb Board (ALB) in lamb advertising and promotion activities continued to effectively increase lamb consumption in the United States? Have the benefits of the program in terms of increased industry revenues continued to be sufficient to outweigh the costs of the program? This report addresses these important questions through an updated statistical analysis of U.S. demand for lamb at the retail level of the marketing channel to isolate and measure the separate demand effects of the main economic determinants of that demand, including the ALB advertising and promotion program. The results of the analysis then are used to calculate an updated benefit-cost ratio (BCR) for the program.

The analysis utilizes historical data through 2007/08 and statistical procedures (regression analysis) to measure the effect of advertising and promotion on lamb consumption. All possible relevant economic factors affecting lamb consumption are considered, including: (1) the retail price of lamb; (2) the retail prices of beef, pork, and chicken; (3) disposable personal income; (4) population; (5) inflation; and (6) advertising and promotion expenditures for lamb. The analysis controls for the effects of all economic factors other than the lamb checkoff program and, thus, isolates the specific impacts of advertising and promotion on lamb. The results allow the measurement of the change in lamb consumption (and lamb sales at fixed prices) attributable to advertising and promotion dollar expenditures, holding all other factors constant.

The main conclusion from this analysis is that the Lamb Checkoff Program continues to be effective in increasing the demand for lamb at a highly positive benefit-cost ratio. Specific conclusions include the following:

- Doubling ALB lamb promotion expenditures in any given year would boost lamb consumption by 4.36%.

- The ALB lamb promotion program has resulted in roughly 8.05 additional pounds of total lamb consumption per dollar spent on advertising and promotion and \$44.45 in additional lamb sales revenue per dollar spent on advertising and promotion. Even if the share of the retail sales dollar earned by lamb producers was quite low, this level of total return to promotion nevertheless translates into a relatively high return to lamb producers from the Lamb Checkoff Program.
- Past promotion efforts over the 1978/79-2001/02 period were effective in enhancing lamb demand but less so than the recent activities of the ALB. In other words, the programmatic activities of the ALB have been relatively more successful in stimulating lamb than past promotional efforts.
- This high estimated return to lamb promotion implies that the Lamb Checkoff Program is greatly underfunded. Lamb checkoff assessment revenues and, thus, expenditures on advertising and promotion have been declining in recent years, except for the most recent fiscal year. Given the relatively high benefit-cost ratio (BCR) estimated for lamb promotion, the reduction in promotion expenditures over the last several years translates into a notable opportunity cost to the lamb industry in terms of lost industry revenues. These results also indicate that an increase in the assessment rate would generate a large return for every additional dollar of assessment paid by the industry. In other words, for every dollar in additional assessment NOT paid and spent on lamb promotion, the industry loses up to \$44.45 in revenue. Research shows that increases in checkoff assessment rates and total spending on promotion are usually accompanied by reductions in the associated BCR so that an increase in the lamb checkoff assessment would be expected to result in a lower return to promotion. But with such a high estimated BCR, the industry could increase the assessment rate substantially and still expect to generate a reasonable rate of return comparable to what is earned by the beef, pork, cotton, soybean, and other similar checkoff programs. Most of the major commodity checkoff programs spend a great deal more on promotion than the lamb checkoff program and have been shown to generate about \$2 to \$10 per dollar of promotion.

This analysis, thus confirms that ALB program expenditures since 2002/03 have not only continued to stimulate the demand for domestic lamb, after accounting for other economic forces, but also to increase industry revenues sufficient to outweigh costs of the program. Nevertheless, it is important to continue to monitor changes in retail lamb consumption due to advertising and promotional efforts.



DID EWE KNOW?

★ Despite hard economic times, demand for American Lamb is up over the past ten years and our promotions are delivering a good return.

★ The ALB represents all sectors of the industry and all geographic regions.

★ By law, the administration budget for the ALB is required to be less than 10 percent of the total budget, which means the bulk of your investment is spent on promoting American Lamb.

Christians Honored as 2009 Silver Bell Winner

Dr. Chuck Christians was recognized by MLWPA as the 2009 Silver Bell Award winner at the Shepherd's Holiday in Alexandria. Dr. Christians has made numerous contributions to the sheep industry over his career. Chuck always has a passion for helping producers and involving young people in the sheep industry. When you start listing everything Chuck has done from the Montadale Regeneration project, to the judging teams, to lamb promotion, and

so much more, you wonder why Dr. Christians hasn't won this award before. On behalf of the MLWPA board of directors, congratulations Chuck on recognition that is well deserved and long overdue.

Also honored at the annual meeting was the 2009 Youth Silver Bell winner - Sara Marquette of Buffalo, MN. Sara and her family raise Texel sheep. Sara enjoys lamb lead, Make it With Wool, and helping others get started with sheep.



Dr. Chuck Christians

Shepherd's Holiday brings many producers together

The 2009 MLWPA Shepherd's Holiday was a big success. If you were not able to join us at this year's conference, you missed out on a great line-up of speakers and informational sessions and a tour of Rafter P Ranch.

Attendance was up (85 people for Friday evenings' banquet, plus more for Saturday's program,

including 35 Make it With Wool participants. MLWPA President Persons provided additional lamb shanks for the hotel restaurant for their special - and they SOLD OUT!

Participants could choose from a variety of sheep management seminars, including workshops for hand spinners. Congratulations to the

winners of MLWPA first fleece competition.

Next year's conference will be at Jackpot Junction in Morton. The MLWPA board is busy with planning, so please submit any suggestions for speakers/topics to your regional director.

Sheep Shearing Contest Results

Contestants competed in the 2010 National Western Stock Show (NWSS) International Sheep Shearing Contest in Denver, Colo., on Jan. 24.

Participants competed in one of three skill levels - junior, intermediate or professional.

Top shearers in the junior division included first place--Jayson Foley, Wyo.; second place--Peter Larradle, Colo.; third place--Collin Kennedy, Ind.; and fourth place--Dylan Weaver, Wis.

The winners in the intermediate contest were **first place--Brian**

Fitzpatrick, Minn.; second place-- Steve Kennedy, Ind.; third place-- Symeon Caryl, Mich.; and fourth place--Rindy Harkness, Wyo.

Taking top honors in the professional category were first place-- Don Metheral, Canada; second place-- Loren Opstedahl, S.D.; third place-- Tony Troendle, S.D.; and fourth place-- Hilary Geitzen, N.D.

The American Sheep Industry Association was a sponsor of the event.



Join us at the Spring Sheep Workshop

Sheep enthusiasts of all ages and experience levels are encouraged to attend the Spring Sheep Workshop. There will be several hands-on sheep management sessions which are primarily geared towards 4-H and FFA sheep project members, but adults are welcome.

The Spring Sheep Workshop will be held Saturday, March 20 at the John Dvorak farm near Webster, MN. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m., and the sessions will start at 9:00. Lunch will be provided. The registration fee of \$15 includes lunch and refreshments.

Topics to be covered include: De-worming and parasite control, Sheep

Health, Animal Care, Scrapie Update, Showmanship, Sheep Management Basics, Ask the Expert, and more.

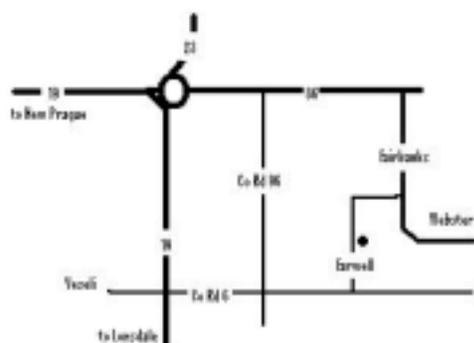
This is an on-the-farm workshop, so dress appropriately. Also, please clean your barn clothes and boots before you come to the workshop to protect the health of the Dvorak flock.

Pre-registration is encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. For more information, contact John Dvorak at 952-652-2402 or bjdvorak81@hotmail.com.

Spring Sheep Workshop Sessions

- **De-worming/Parasite Control**

- **Showmanship tips/demo**
- **Proper Animal Care**
- **Scrapie Program update**
- **Sheep Health**
- **Sheep Management Basics**
- **Ask the Experts**



Spring Sheep Workshop - Registration Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Topics I would most like to learn about: _____

No. of people attending = _____ x \$15/person = _____ (includes lunch and refreshments)

Make checks payable to: MLWPA

Mail your completed registration form, and check to:

John Dvorak

4325 Farwell Ave

Webster, MN 55088

952-652-2402

bjdvorak81@hotmail.com



Calendar of Events

2010

Feb. 5-6	Pipestone Lambing short course bus tour	Pipestone, MN
Feb. 6	Indianhead Sheep Producers Clinic	Rice Lake, WI
Feb. 21	MLWP Junior committee meeting <i>Contact Lynn Lee 218-861-6351</i>	Glencoe, MN
Mar. 6-10	Wisconsin Dairy Sheep School <i>Contact Clair Mikolayunas 608-332-2889</i>	Spooner, WI
Mar. 13-15	Montana Beginner Shearing School	Norris, MT
Mar. 16-19	Montana Advanced Shearing School <i>Contact Peggy Kelley 406-994-3415</i>	Norris, MT
Mar. 20	Spring Sheep Workshop [p. 15]	Webster, MN
Apr. 10	MLWPA Board of Directors meeting	Glencoe, MN
Apr. 16-18	Minnesota Sheep Shearing School <i>Contact Doug Rathke 320-587-6094</i>	Hutchinson, MN
May 5-7	ASI trip to DC	Washington DC
May 8-9	Shepherd's Harvest Festival <i>www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org</i>	Lake Elmo, MN
May 23-24	Corn Belt Sheep Sale	Des Moines, IA
June 1	Deadline for MLWPA starter flock applications	
June 3-5	Nugget All-American sheep sale	Reno, NV
June 21-26	Midwest Stud Ram Sale	Sedalia, MN
July 17	MN State Suffolk Show	Faribault, MN
July 18	MN State Suffolk Sale <i>Contact Jeremy Geske [p. 1]</i>	Faribault, MN

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

*Jeremy Geske
407 Horizon Dr. SE
New Prague, MN 56071*

We're on the Web!
mlwp.org

Minnesota farmers and ranchers are ensuring safe, affordable, locally grown food for Minnesota families.

Minnesota Farmers Care

• Animals • Environment • Food • Family

Care is a Priority.