Jeremy Geske was just nine years old when his father said he could pick out two sheep from his flock. He happened to pick the best ewe lamb, and he picked so well, that his father let him have the ewe lamb’s twin sister to start the 4-H flock. Every year after, he selected another ewe lamb from his father’s flock.

“If you have the number one draft pick every year, you end up with a pretty good flock after 10-12 years,” Geske said. “I kept the offspring and that’s how I got started in sheep.”

When he reached adulthood, he had already built a high quality Suffolk flock. In similar fashion, the U.S. sheep industry hopes to build up sheep numbers through a program called “Let’s Grow with Two Plus.”

Sponsored as an American Sheep Industry (ASI) Association initiative, the primary objective of this national campaign is to encourage current sheep producers to expand the size of their flock by two ewes per flock or by two ewes per 100 head.

Today, Geske serves as the assistant executive director of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association and the Minnesota Pork Board. At his small family farm, he

Cont. on p. 2
“**L**E**T**S **GROW**” — **C**ONT.

featuring those original bloodlines.

“Most of the sheep are sold as breeding stock, we try to select for the genetics that make us more competitive on a national basis than other seed stock producers,” he said. “A large part of our business is also selling rams as terminal sires to commercial breeders. A lot go out West to the mountain states. This year with lamb prices being good, ram prices have also been good.”

Geske and other sheep producers recently held a media event to say the industry needs more sheep and sheep producers.

“We need help growing our industry a little bit,” said Burton Pfliger, ASI secretary/treasurer and a sheep farmer from Bismarck. “This is a program and an initiative that we developed to try to build upon what we have and to entice new producers into the industry as well.”

Lamb and wool prices are at all time high prices. Cull ewe and pelt markets are also strong in 2011. The ASI hopes these incentives help build sheep numbers and the infrastructure needed to meet growing demand for lamb and wool products.

Kroger, one of the nation’s largest grocery store chains, launched an American lamb branded campaign in 2011. Sixty percent of the American lamb at retail is successfully distributed via Kroger.

Super Wal-mart also committed to exclusively selling American lamb for 2012 and 2013.

In addition, nontraditional sales continue to grow. On-farm sales, farmers markets and local locker plants are serving ethnic markets. The ASI determined that one-third of the U.S. lamb crop has moved outside the traditional industry infrastructure to serve nontraditional lamb markets.

The U.S. Armed Forces are also asking for wool products for the military. Wool offers many benefits to the military, including wool’s fire retardant and protective properties.

Technology, called Superwash, is also now available in the United States to produce high quality wool garments that will not shrink when washed.

With all of these new opportunities, the ASI is calling on sheep producers to expand. In addition to growing their flocks by two head per 100, producers are also asked to increase the average birthrate per ewe to two lambs per year. The final goal is to increase the harvested lamb crop by 2 percent – from 108 percent to 110 percent.

As of Jan. 1, 2011, there were about 5.53 million head of sheep in the United States. The top producing states include Texas at 880,000 sheep, California, at 610,000 sheep, Colorado at 370,000 sheep, and Wyoming at 365,000 sheep. South Dakota had 275,000 sheep, Montana had 230,000 sheep, Minnesota had 130,000 sheep, and North Dakota had 78,000 sheep.

Texas and Arizona have the largest numbers of sheep operations – 8,700 and 5,000 respectively. California comes in next with 4,100, Pennsylvania with 3,800,

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Trent Loos to Address MLWPA

Don’t miss the 2011 MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday, highlighted by the keynote speaker—Trent Loos. Trent is one of the most nationally recognized pro-agriculture speakers in the country. His appearance at the MLWPA and MSCA annual meetings is sponsored by AgStar Financial Services.

Loos records, produces and sends his radio programs from wherever his travels take him using his laptop computer and the internet. He presently has a radio listening audience of 4 million and can be heard on more than 100 stations across the country.

Trent’s radio programming includes daily Loos Tales and Rural Route programming as well as Dakota Trails & Tales, Colorado Trails & Tales, Loos Trails & Tales and Illinois Truth be Told.

Loos also can be found addressing agricultural and non-agricultural groups alike. Among his favorite audiences are our nation’s youth where he takes the opportunity to talk with them about the importance of food as a matter of national security and the value of their involvement in today’s food production.

Trent was raised on a diversified farm near Quincy, IL. He entered the hog business at a young age and has been involved in livestock production ever since. He and his wife Kelli operate a purebred Limousin and Angus herd. They enjoy working cattle, training horses and raising their three daughters on their ranch in central Nebraska.

“Let’s Grow” — Cont.

and Iowa with 3,500 operations. Minnesota has 2,500, South Dakota has 1,700, Montana has 1,500 and North Dakota has 680 operations. “We have some smaller sheep flocks, but certainly have a large number of producers,” said Pfliger.

In 2010, the U.S. sheep production sales were $786 million. About 163 million pounds of lamb and mutton were consumed in 2010, mainly on the East and West Coast. The U.S. also produced 30.6 million pounds of greasy wool in 2010, with an average fleece rate of 7.3 pounds. The U.S. sheep pelt is also the largest in the world, averaging 8.5 square feet. There are many uses for these products, and prices have rebounded to record levels.

With record high demand and the concern that the U.S. sheep producer can meet that demand, led to the Let’s Grow with Two Plus campaign.

“Our goal moving forward is we must continue to supply that traditional market channel – to keep the American lamb in our largest grocery store chain,” he said. “At the same time we need to keep feeding that emerging demand for lamb in those non-traditional markets.”

The American Sheep Industry is encouraging producers to use tools like increasing the ewe ration ahead of breeding to increase the number of lambs conceived. Teaser rams, crossbreeding, vaccinations and an emphasis on health are also encouraged. The Sheep Industry Handbook is also available to producers to work through management schemes that may present a problem.

“If you have a healthier ewe and a healthier lamb, everything seems to work better,” Pfliger added.

Predators, disease and mortality are real concerns within the sheep industry. The sheep industry intends to help producers find answers to these challenges. Lambing barns, predator fences, guard dogs and parasite control can help keep lambs and ewes alive.

The total cumulative effect of these initiatives could result in an increase inventory of 315,000 more lambs. At today’s market prices, the value is $71 million more for sheep producers.

An additional 2 million more pounds of wool would equate to an additional $3 million.

The initiative is also set up to encourage and facilitate new producers into the sheep production business. The ASI has teamed up with many state associations to serve as a mentor network to new producers. For more information, farmers can visit growourflock.org or sheepusa.org to read stories about sheep producers and learn more.
**Calling Young Sheep Entrepreneurs**

The future for the sheep industry, as well as agriculture in general, is dependent upon tapping into the next generation of producers. That is exactly what the Emerging Sheep Entrepreneurs Committee is hoping to accomplish at the 2012 American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) Convention in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"We are planning a program that will cover topics that are relevant and engaging to younger producers in the sheep business," commented Burdell Johnson, chair of the Emerging Sheep Entrepreneurs Committee. "We also see this as an opportunity to recognize these producers and to introduce them to ASI as well as to the other national sheep organizations that participate in the convention."

The objective of the committee is to put together a program designed to bring relevance to the day-to-day operations of sheep producers between the ages of 25 and 40. Money matters, lending opportunities, profit potential, direct marketing, farm insurance and food safety are just a few of the topic areas being considered.

To encourage participation at the ASI convention in Scottsdale, young entrepreneurs who will be attending the event for the first time can receive a $200 discount off the registration fee. The discount will be applied on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to the first 25 registrants.

Current ASI members can also participate in the program by bringing a younger sheep producer with them to the convention. Members will receive a $50 registration fee discount.

"This program works in conjunction with the Let's Grow initiative designed to increase sheep numbers in the United States," stated John Cubiburu, vice chair of the committee. "Adding younger producers to the industry helps to perpetuate the critical work of the sheep industry into the future."

The Emerging Sheep Entrepreneurs Committee will be meeting during the ASI convention in Scottsdale on Saturday, Jan. 28. Registration forms will be available in November at www.sheepusa.org. Additional information is available by calling ASI at 303-771-3500.

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**When a Rat isn’t a Pig, isn’t a Dog or a Boy – Bob Padula**

When animal rights activist and PETA founder Ingrid Newkirk proclaimed “a Rat is a Pig is a Dog is a Boy”, I wonder if she realized how her words would be twisted, using her own logic and now science to do so. The on again/off again saga of the Timber Wolf is an example.

It appears that “science” is going to be used to put the “Wolf” – Eastern, Timber, a mixture of the two, and the crosses of Wolves mating with coyotes - back on the Federal Endangered Species list. Therefore it appears that a wolf isn’t a wolf – unless you have an agenda.

My view point is simple - as long as “Government” (either Federal or State) protects, controls or has management jurisdiction over “Wolves” – they should be financially responsible for the creation and maintenance of programs to address the problems and damages caused by the animals they are protecting and promoting. For the record, I have never had a sheep killed by a wolf, although a wolf was hit by a car 4 miles away.

I realize that a Wolf, isn’t a Coyote, isn’t a Bear, isn’t a Cougar, – but they are all predators and cause problems for Minnesota livestock.

It is time for the State of Minnesota to create an animal damage program to be administered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (not the MN-DNR) that will provide assistance to ranchers for damage caused by wildlife The Department of Ag can design programs that pro-actively support intervention strategies and not solely rely upon reactionary programs dealing with damages after the fact.

Potential funding can come from the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment (the Lessard - Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund) created for promotion of wildlife habitat and conservation programs. On a State level, why not use some of these funds to help mitigate the damages and losses caused by the programs they helped create in the first place?

In addition, perhaps it is time local units of government (county and township) to be allowed to collect taxes on land enrolled in taxpayer funded conservation programs, (such as CRP, CREP, WHIP, RIM) and include state lands and wildlife management areas. These taxes can be used for local level programs. Is 50 cents too much to ask when in my area average CRP payments are over $100/acre for this year’s sign-up – and landowners can “piggy back” programs/payments such as CRP and Walk-in-Access?

As a farmer, hunter, and conservationist, I am willing to pay this tax on land I have enrolled in taxpayer funded conservation programs. When farmers are not willing to help ourselves and their neighboring farmers – what message does that send?
The Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association will hold our annual business meeting on Sunday, Dec. 4, at Jackpot Junction, in Morton. We hope to see many of you there in attendance of the Shepherd’s Holiday seminars and social events.

In addition to developing our annual budget for the organization, one item of major importance is the election of officers to represent you on the MLWPA board of directors.

As a dues-paying member, this is your organization. You have the right and the responsibility to provide input on the budget, the activities you’d like to see the organization pursue, and to vote for the sheep producers you want serving on the board of directors. Also, each year there are open positions on the board, and I would ask that you consider running for the board.

Board members are elected to serve one-year terms. While there are no term limits, board policy has been that the President serve no more than 2, one-year terms. As Don transitions to a new role as Past-President, Vice-President Kirk is ready (and willing) to run for the office of President. In addition, a couple other board members have expressed a desire to not seek re-election, creating some open positions.

The nominating committee has been busy reaching out to new potential board members to fill those openings. We are pleased to announce that we have candidates that have agreed to seek the offices of 1st and 2nd Vice-Presidents, and candidates considering running for the open regional director positions. The committee is still seeking a candidate for the position of secretary.

The MLWPA board meets quarterly at a central location, with meetings lasting about 3 hours. In addition, the board meets the night before the annual conference at the conference location.

If you are interested in running for a position on the board, or if you have questions about serving on the board, please contact Jeremy (612-756-1200 or jeremy.geske@gmail.com). It is OK to run against current board members.

(Editor’s note: Secretary Becky resigned at the last board meeting for family health reasons. We thank Becky for her service to MLWPA and offer our sincerest condolences for her loss. Our hearts also go out to the family of Jerry Ryan who passed away unexpectedly. For years, Jerry has assisted the board with the MLWP website.)

HONEY BAKED LEG OF LAMB

# Servings: 8 servings

Marinade
1/2 cup dry white wine or chicken broth
1/3 cup honey
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh mint or 3 tablespoons dried mint
2 tablespoons grated lemon peel
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
4 to 7 lbs boneless Leg of Lamb

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Marinate time: 4 to 24 hours
Cook time: 1-1/2 to 2 hours

Combine marinade ingredients. Reserve 1/4 cup for basting.

Place lamb in large sealable plastic bag and pour marinade over lamb. Seal tightly and refrigerate four hours or overnight. Remove lamb from marinade and discard marinade.

Place lamb on rack in baking pan. Bake in 325°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes per pound, or until desired degree of doneness: 145°F for medium-rare, 160°F medium or 170°F for well. Baste.

Remove lamb from oven, cover lightly and let sit for 10 minutes. Internal temperature will rise approximately 10 degrees.

There is a story behind every bite of American Lamb you take. Before it ever makes it to your table, American Lamb is raised by skilled farmers across the country from pastoral grasslands, to high country meadow. America’s sheep producers are committed to raising and supplying only the best quality lamb. Hands-on involvement from pasture to plate ensures that American Lamb meets the highest standards for flavor, tenderness and freshness.
Since When Did Agriculture Become a Dirty Word?

Americans have a lot of questions about how food is grown and raised, the impact on our health and the health of our planet. This October, many Americans will enter into positive discussions about their food during World Food Day (Oct. 16) and Food Day (Oct. 24). America’s farmers and ranchers recently kicked off The Food Dialogues, the launch of a new effort to bring together different viewpoints on farming and ranching and the future of food. The recent Food Dialogues town-hall style webcast offers background information on various issues related to how food is grown and raised in America, while the Food Dialogues website is a destination where the online conversation continues. Missed the webcast? Click on the videos at www.fooddialogues.com/foodday/ to see highlights.

While nearly all Americans agree that food production is important to the success of the country, they are split over whether it is going in the right or wrong direction. Consumers think about food production constantly, yet know very little about how food is brought to the dinner table. Overwhelmingly, farmers and ranchers share the same values as consumers on issues related to environmental stewardship and animal care.

The purpose of the consumer survey was to ask Americans what additional information they want to learn more about related to how food is grown and raised in the U.S. The survey revealed that consumers have become disconnected from their food, yet think about the subject regularly. According to the survey findings:

- 72 percent of consumers know nothing or very little about farming or ranching
- 69 percent of consumers think about food production at least somewhat often
- 70 percent say purchase decisions are affected by how food is grown and raised, with three-quarters (72 percent) of Americans saying they think about this topic while purchasing groceries
- 42 percent or two-in-five Americans say the way that food is grown and raised has improved in the last 10 years, while a slightly smaller group say it has worsened (37 percent)
- Those who say the way that food is grown and raised has improved cite food safety (22 percent) and food quality (17 percent), whereas respondents who said the way food is grown and raised has worsened also cite food safety (21 percent) and food quality (21 percent)
- Of all the aspects of how food is grown and raised, Americans are most satisfied with the availability of healthy foods (73 percent) and food safety standards (66 percent)
- One in five consumers who say food production has worsened in the last 10 years cite environmental impact as the top area of demise
- 79 percent of consumers say producing healthy choices for all consumers is very important for farmers and ranchers to consider when planning farming and ranching practices

Consumers also were asked to identify the top five topics they want more information about; responses included:

1. How chemicals are used in farming/ranching
2. How pesticides are used in farming/ranching
3. Food safety standards
4. Effect of government regulations on farming/ranching
5. How antibiotics are used and genetic engineering in crops

The goal of the farmer/rancher survey was to identify topics that farmers and ranchers wished Americans had more information about.

- 86 percent of farmers/ranchers responded that the average consumer has little to no knowledge about modern farming/ranching
- 58 percent of respondents in this survey felt consumers have a completely inaccurate perception of farming and ranching
- Nearly all farmers and ranchers say that protecting the environment (99 percent) and practicing humane animal care (96 percent) are very or somewhat important goals or practices related to their business
- 80 percent of farmers/ranchers say that consumers have little to no knowledge about proper care of livestock or poultry
- 83 percent of farmers/ranchers responded that new ways of improving yields with fewer environmental inputs will have a major impact on farming/ranching in the future

When asked which top five topics were most important to educate consumers about, farmers and ranchers responded:

1. The effect of pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics on food
2. Where food comes from in general
3. Proper care of livestock and poultry
4. Effect of government regulations on farming/ranching
5. Economic value of agriculture
Time and effort spent on the ewe flock pre-lambing can result in relieving stress during lambing and improve health of the baby lamb. A few management checks or changes at this time can save dollars and time down the road.

**Pre-lambing vaccination** - ewes should be vaccinated 3 weeks prior to lambing with Clostridia perfringes C & D with tetanus. This will stimulate the ewe’s immune system to produce antibodies that will concentrate in her colostrum. The lambs will then have high levels of antibodies that will help prevent type C and tetanus. This is the best and most cost-effective way to protect young lambs against these two diseases.

**Nutrition** - ewes should be on an increasing plane of nutrition. Requirements for ewes in late gestation greatly increase as they approach lambing. Ewes carrying twins or triplets require even more feed. Any thin ewes should be sorted into a smaller group to allow them to 1) eat a more concentrated ration and 2) have less competition for bunk space. If the ewes have been maintained on cornstalks as their primary feedstuff it is critical that you begin feeding vitamins if you haven’t already. Crop residue has very low levels of vitamins and gestating ewes can become deficient. If the ewes are on a hay diet the vitamin level may be sufficient although you will still benefit from feeding a mineral high in Selenium and Vitamin E. These are important to ensure that the lambs are not born deficient in Selenium or Vitamin E which will predispose them to White Muscle Disease. Gestating ewe lambs are still growing and less competitive at the bunk so they need to be in a separate pen than the mature ewe flock.

**Shearing** - If conditions allow, ewes should be shorn one month before lambing. This will allow the ewes to begin mobilizing energy from fat reserves. Also, lambs have a much easier time finding the udder of shorn ewes. Shorn ewes take up less space in the lambing barn and give off more heat into the environment. Care must be taken the first week after shearing. It is important that the ewes have dry shelter that will protect them from rain and snow. If the temperature is below zero shorn ewes will require additional energy which can most cost-effectively be supplied by increasing the grain fed to the ewes.

**Management** - Small amounts of exercise is beneficial to the pregnant ewe such as feeding in an outside lot or allowing the ewes access to a small pasture during the day. Often this gives the shepherd an opportunity to see slow, limping, ketotic or problem ewes. These are all candidates to move to a smaller group such as with the ewe lambs. All feed fed to gestating ewes should be fed in bunks or feeders. feeding gestating ewes on the ground greatly enhances the transmission of abortion disease. Additionally, feeding 250 mg. per head per day of tetracycline will help control Chlamydia abortions. Any aborted fetuses and placenta need to be immediately removed from the pen to prevent transmission. The shepherd should always wear disposable latex gloves when handling aborted fetuses as many of the common causes of abortions can infect humans. Pregnant women should stay out of the lambing barn.

**Register for the Shepherd’s Holiday**  
Dec. 3, 4 - Jackpot Junction, Morton, MN  
Seminars, Farm Tour, Trade Show, MIWW, Auction, Banquets, Good times!

**Interested in hosting an on-farm Spring (Summer or Fall) Sheep Workshop in 2012?**  
Contact your John Dvorak (or your Regional Director) for information on what it takes to host a program.
CAPITOL CONNECTION

EPA Decides to Back Off on Farm Dust Regulations
The federal government is backing away from tighter air-quality regulations that generated a controversy over farm dust. The Environmental Protection Agency said in a statement that it hopes the action ‘finally puts an end to the myth that the agency is planning to expand regulation of farm dust.’

[Editor’s Note: Many of us working in agricultural policy are convinced that EPA’s desire to regulate farm dust is not a myth; however, EPA received enough negative feedback from farmers, farm organizations, and congressmen representing rural areas that they decided not to proceed at this time.]

Free Trade Agreements Finally Pass
President Obama called the passage of trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea, as well as Trade Adjustment Assistance, a major win for American workers and businesses. He said the vote will significantly boost exports, support tens of thousands of American jobs and protect labor rights, the environment and intellectual property.

“We are pleased that both Houses of Congress acted swiftly to support tens-of-thousands of American jobs today by ratifying trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama, as well as trade adjustment assistance to help train workers for the 21st century economy. For American agriculture, passage of these agreements means something as big as $2.3 billion in additional exports, supporting nearly 20,000 jobs here at home,” said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

[Editor’s Note: These FTAs will have little impact on the US Sheep Industry, but should help other segments, especially pork.]

Talk in D.C. about Reforming CRP
With Farm Bill discussions beginning, several individuals and groups have been discussing potential reforms to the CRP program. A recent proposal floated by former USDA-NRCS Chief Bruce Knight calls for:

• Capping program at 20 million acres, rather than the current 32 million acres.
• Removing one-third of potentially productive acres and returning them to crop production.
• Allowing expanded use of CRP lands, such as grazing and forage crops on another one-third of acres.
• Allow one-third of highly erodible acres to remain undisturbed.

Several livestock organizations are supporting these reforms, hoping they would provide some relief from high feed prices.

Legislation Introduced to Change Renewable Fuel Standard
Legislation (H.R.3097) has been introduced by Congressman Goodlatte (R-Va) and Costa (D-Calif) and 26 others that would change the national Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) in an attempt to lower the price of corn.

Under the bill the EPA could lower the RFS when projected year-end stocks of U.S. corn fall below 10 percent of anticipated use. The USDA currently forecasts the 2011-2012 corn stocks to be 5.3 percent of expected demand.

For further perspective, in 2004-2005 when the RFS was implemented, 53 percent of the U.S. corn crop was fed to livestock and poultry and 12.5% was consumed by the ethanol industry. This year for the first time, more corn will be turned into ethanol than fed to animals, USDA says.

Rep. Goodlatte also introduced H.R. 3098, the Renewable Fuel Standard Elimination Act, which would completely eliminate the RFS and force ethanol to compete in a free market.

NASS Eliminates January Sheep Inventory Report
In light of funding reductions in fiscal year (FY) 2011 and the likelihood of additional reductions in FY 2012, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) conducted deliberate reviews of all programs against mission- and user-based criteria, aimed at finding cost savings and forward-thinking business efficiencies so that key timely, accurate and useful data remains available in service to agriculture.

As a result, the agency is discontinuing or reducing a wide range of agricultural survey programs. The decision to eliminate or reduce these reports was not made lightly, but it was nevertheless necessary, given the funding situation. Because of the timing of the agency's survey work during the coming year, these decisions are necessary now.

"NASS decided to eliminate the only annual report they provide for the sheep industry," commented Peter Orwick, executive director for the American Sheep Industry Association. "Our requests this fall to continue the report were not met, and we have not been able to identify an alternative vehicle to conduct a national inventory count.
The Senate this week began debate on the fiscal 2012 appropriations bill for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies. The funding bill includes $7 million for an animal traceability program, which would allow animal health officials to better identify, control and eradicate diseases. Totaling $19.78 billion in overall discretionary spending, the measure contains $138 million less in discretionary spending than the fiscal 2011 bill.

The Senate bill, however does not include – as the House agriculture spending bill does – language prohibiting the U.S. Department of Agriculture from implementing its proposed regulation on the buying and selling of livestock – the GIPSA rule. Despite the lack of Senate language, Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., criticized the GIPSA rule.

“USDA wants stockyards to justify the price for every animal they buy? If that isn’t big government then what is? In what other industry would this be allowed?” said Inhofe Wednesday on the Senate floor.

In a separate action, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and Ranking Member Pat Roberts, R-Kan., and House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., and Ranking Member Collin Peterson, D-Minn., co-signed a joint letter sent to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction – the so-called Super Committee – proposing agriculture and nutrition programs be cut $23 billion over 10 years. The Super Committee, with recommendations from various committees, must cut $1.2 trillion from the federal budget. A plan put forth by Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Ind., and Sen. Dick Lugar, R-Ind., promises to cut $40 billion from the agriculture budget. The Senate and House have a Nov. 1 deadline to provide specific recommendations for cuts.

EPA proposes collecting CAFO info

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing that concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) submit basic operational information. The EPA does not have facility-specific information for all CAFOs in the U.S.

The EPA’s proposal would require CAFOs to provide basic information through a simple online form, including: facility contact information, production area location, whether the CAFO has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, the number and type of animals, and the number of acres available for land application of manure. The EPA’s proposal does not change which CAFOs need permits under NPDES but will allow the agency to carry out its CAFO permitting programs more effectively.

The proposal, which is part of a settlement agreement reached with the Natural Resources Defense Council, Waterkeeper Alliance, and the Sierra Club, includes two options regarding which CAFOs would be required to submit information. The EPA is requesting public comment on both options, as well as alternative approaches, for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register. The EPA will hold two webcast sessions on November 9 and November 17, to present the proposed rule requirements to the public and to answer questions. The EPA plans to take final action on this proposal by July 2012.

For more information, see http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/afo/aforule.cfm.
The Minnesota Scrapie Eradication Program assists sheep and goat producers in identification, control, and eradication of Scrapie from their flock or herd. Nationally recognized as a leader in scrapie eradication, our program is one of the nation's largest and most successful and has served as a model for other states and countries.

The program consists of the following components:
- flock genotyping (or genetic testing) to determine a sheep or goat's susceptibility to Scrapie;
- identification of pre-clinical infected sheep through live-animal testing and slaughter surveillance;
- tracing of infected animals to their flock of origin; and
- providing effective cleanup strategies that allow farmers to stay in business, preserve breeding stock, and be economically viable.

When exposed or infected flocks are found, USDA provides indemnity, Scrapie testing, genotyping, and tracing of exposed animals sold from infected and source flocks.

Register with the MN Board of Animal Health today and receive FREE ear tags for your flock: www.bah.state.mn.us. You can sign up by phone at 651-201-6809.

What should I do if I suspect that a sheep or goat has scrapie?
Scrapie is a reportable disease; contact the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

If the suspect animal is alive, a regulatory veterinarian will examine the animal and make recommendations as needed. Tissues may be collected and submitted to the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). A blood sample (purple top tube) should be sent to a USDA approved genotype laboratory. In some cases indemnity may be paid.

If the animal is dead, tissues will be collected and submitted to the VDL. The owner must deliver either the head or the entire animal to the lab. The head of any suspect dead animal should be handled carefully and chilled (not frozen) until delivery. Rabies testing will also be performed on any scrapie suspect animal that is presented to the VDL.

What will happen if my sheep or goats are exposed to scrapie?
Each case may be handled differently depending on the details of the investigation, but in general the following will occur:
- the flock will be genotyped for Scrapie susceptibility and high risk sheep (QQ's) will be purchased and removed for testing;
- information on the positive animal will be collected;
- information on trace-outs/sales will be collected;
- the premises will be cleaned and disinfected;
- the premises will be put on a post-exposure monitoring and management plan; and
- all goats commingled with the infected animal will be purchased for testing as there is no approved genetic or live animal test for goats at this time.

In the event that a flock received a sheep or goat from an infected flock:
- trace animals will be genotyped and high-risk sheep (QQ's) will be either purchased for testing or live animal tested;
- if the trace animal is no longer present, further genotyping or live animal testing may be done; or
- if you receive a goat from an infected herd/flock, that animal must be purchased for testing as there are no approved genetic or live animal tests for goats at this time.

The Minnesota Make It With Wool contest will be held in conjunction with the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Annual Conference, December 3, 2011 at Jackpot Junction. The Make It With Wool contest displays the beauty and versatility of wool. Contestant construct and model their creations at the contest. Participates in the Junior, Senior and Adult divisions are given the opportunity to advance to National competition. Along with the garment contest, Minnesota sponsors a quilt and novelty contest. For more information check online at www.mlwp.org, and click on the Make It With Wool tab. Pre-registration is required by November 7, 2011.
The divide between a utopian vision of food production and the realities of modern, agriculture grew ever wider as Worldwatch Institute released a report on global meat production and consumption. Offering little more than a rehash of unsubstantiated claims regarding livestock production, Worldwatch fails to add serious discussion to the debate about food production, and their actions don’t serve the world’s population that are poor and hungry.

“Much of the vigorous growth in meat production is due to the rise of industrial animal agriculture, factory farming,” said Worldwatch’s Danielle Nierenberg, senior researcher and director of Nourishing the Planet. “Factory farms pollute the environment through the heavy use of inputs such as pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers used for feed production.”

Worldwatch says meat production worldwide has tripled over the last four decades and increased 20 percent in just the last 10 years. Worldwatch sees that as a bad thing, not progress toward feeding hungry people.

“Livestock provide 40 percent of the value of the world’s agricultural output and support the livelihood and food security of nearly 1 billion people, according to the FAO (the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization),” says Tom Field, of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Assoc.

Washington State University assistant professor of dairy science Judith Capper says we shouldn’t assume that greater livestock production also increases environmental impacts. “Global meat consumption has increased, yet improvements in efficiency in developed countries have led to a reduction in both resource use and waste output (including greenhouse gases) over the past century. It is a misnomer to assume that more extensive or historical systems have lower environmental impacts.”

Worldwatch’s report attacked modern food animal production in various ways. For instance, the report says, “Dirty, crowded conditions on factory farms can propagate sickness and disease among the animals, including swine influenza (H1N1), avian influenza (H5N1), foot-and-mouth disease, and mad-cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). These diseases not only translate into enormous economic losses each year—the United Kingdom alone spent 18 to 25 billion dollars in a three-year period to combat foot-and-mouth disease—but they also lead to human infections.”

Pretty scary stuff, especially to the vast majority of Americans who have no understanding of livestock production or their diseases. But to Field and Professor Capper, it’s just hogwash.

“The link between the listed animal diseases and ‘factory farming’ is nonsensical,” Capper says. “Epidemiological evidence showed that avian influenza was spread by small backyard chicken flocks that were not confined – no outbreaks occurred in large-scale modern facilities with biosecurity measures in place. The release wording implying a link between ‘dirty’ and ‘factory farms’ is implicit but is not borne out by science. The UK spent a large amount of money on foot and mouth disease because a huge outbreak occurred. This was entirely unrelated to ‘factory farms’ or ‘dirty conditions’ and was instead a result of infection failing to be reported and swine being transported to market.”

Worldwatch, however, stops short of calling for an end to eating meat and dairy products. They just believe, “Eating organic, pasture-raised livestock can alleviate chronic health problems and improve the environment.”

The report claims, “Grass-fed beef contains less fat and more nutrients than its factory-farmed counterpart and reduces the risk of disease and exposure to toxic chemicals. Well-managed pasture systems can improve carbon sequestration, reducing the impact of livestock on the planet. The use of fewer energy-intensive inputs conserves soil, reduces pollution and erosion, and preserves biodiversity. Pastoral farming systems, especially in developing countries, improve food security and sustain the livelihoods of millions of farmers worldwide,” said Nierenberg. “Eating less meat and supporting pastoralist communities at every level is essential to combat the destructive trend of factory farms.”

However, Capper says the “majority of research on the human health effects of eating meat and milk from pasture-raised livestock has shown no beneficial effect. Even when specific nutrients (e.g.,omega-3 fatty acids) have been shown to increase in plasma after consuming grass-fed meat or dairy, these have not translated into meaningful human health indices. Studies comparing the effect of consuming meat from corn-fed vs. grass-fed steers have shown beneficial effects of corn-feeding on oleic acid (related to diabetes and metabolic syndrome).”

It’s also misleading for the Worldwatch report to imply that cattle in the U.S. are not already using sustainable grazing systems. “Ninety-seven percent of the farms and ranches in the United States are family owned, and the beef breeding herd is pastoral,” says Field. “The stocker sector is pastoral,
WORLDWATCH FAILS TO HELP THE HUNGRY - PART II

and the feedlot sector provides a highly sustainable and efficient management protocol that is designed around good nutrition and health for cattle while reducing GHGs and providing a more time and resource effective approach to producing a high quality protein source for the world’s consumers.”

Worldwatch also condemned the use of antibiotics in livestock production, using a wide brush to paint a scary picture of superbugs contaminating the environment and destroying human health.

“Mass quantities of antibiotics are used on livestock to reduce the impact of disease, contributing to antibiotic resistance in animals and humans alike,” the report said. “Worldwide, 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in 2009 were used on livestock and poultry, compared to only 20 percent used for human illnesses. Antibiotics that are present in animal waste leach into the environment and contaminate water and food crops, posing a serious threat to public health.”

Worldwatch, like many other groups, repeats the unfounded claim that livestock contribute “to antibiotic resistance.” But the scientific evidence is not clear.

“There is serious scientific doubt as to whether antibiotics used for livestock are a risk factor for resistance when compared to antibiotics for companion animals and human use,” says Capper.

Field says, “A tremendous amount of international research has been done on this topic, and to date there is no conclusive scientific evidence indicating that the judicious use of antibiotics in cattle leads to antimicrobial resistance in humans.”

Scientists say antimicrobial resistance is a complex issue, and Field believes “we need more research and a comprehensive, nonpolitical evaluation of all the peer-reviewed science related to all animal use, human use and industrial use to effectively understand the issue and find solutions.”

Antimicrobials are an important tool for animal agriculture, and producers use those products to improve the health and well-being of their animals.

“Ranchers have an obligation to protect cattle health and welfare,” Field says. “We also have an obligation to protect human health by providing a safe beef supply. That’s why, for generations, cattle producers have worked closely with veterinarians in the careful use of antibiotics to prevent, control and treat disease.”

Preventive medicine keeps cattle healthy, and healthy cattle are the foundation of a safe food supply, Field says.

“The cattle industry strives daily to provide best possible management of their animals through superior genetics, nutrition, veterinary care, housing and handling. Cattlemen continually look for new or improved production practices that help minimize the use of drugs and prevent diseases. Animals can get sick, like humans, sometimes requiring the use of medication. Beef producers and veterinarians take great care to promptly detect illness and, when necessary, select and use antibiotics carefully and judiciously so we can provide American consumers with safe, wholesome and nutritious beef.”

The beef industry’s Judicious Use Guidelines, and NCBA’s policies and their Producer Code of Cattle Care, specifically recommend avoiding the use of antibiotics that are important in human medicine, and not to use antibiotics if the “principle intent is to improve performance.”

Field notes that the primary class of antibiotics used for performance are ionophores, which are not used in human medicine, nor are there plausible links to human therapeutics.

When compared with other countries, the U.S. has significantly lower animal disease rates. That’s due to herd health programs aimed at prevention and treatment of disease.

“Agenda-driven, non-science-based banning of antibiotics would ultimately harm animal health and animal welfare, and food safety and security,” Field says. “Decisions affecting animal and human health are far too important to be based on anything other than sound, peer-reviewed science. “It’s easy to target America’s livestock producers. But it won’t solve the issue.”
2011 Shepherd’s Holiday - MLWPA Conference Agenda tentative

Friday December 2nd
7:00 pm MLWPA Board meeting

Saturday December 3rd
8:00 am Registration Opens
Trade Show Opens
Make It With Wool Registration

8:50 Welcome - Don Adelmann, President

9:00-9:45 Concurrent Sessions
Session A: Fiber workshop
Speaker TBD
Session B: Managing Heat Stress in Rams
Dr. Larry Goelz, Pipestone Vet Clinic
Session C: Raising Orphan Lambs
Phil Berg, Pipestone LWP

9:15-9:30 Make it With Wool - orientation
Glenette Sperry

9:30-11:00 MIWW (in garment) rehearsal

10:00-10:45 Concurrent Sessions
Session A: Fiber workshop
Speaker TBD
Session B: Feeding the Ewe Flock
Phil Berg, Pipestone LWP
Session C: Show Lamb workshop
Todd Franz, producer

11:00-11:45 Concurrent Sessions
Session A: Fiber workshop
Speaker TBD
Session B: Sheep Management Topic TBD
Speaker TBD
Session C: Youth Session
Speaker TBD

11:00 - 2:00 MIWW Judging

NOON-2:00 Silver Bell Luncheon
Sponsored by the MN Soybean Research & Promotion Council
Presentation from 2010 Winners
Announcement of 2011 Award Winners

2:00 MIWW Fashion Show

3:00 Concurrent Sessions
Session A: ASI ALB updates
Bob Benson, ASI, Dan Lippert, ALB
Session B: Sheep Management Topic TBD
Speaker TBD
Session C: MLWPA Junior committee meeting
Jolene Ouelke, JT Roe, Kelly Froelich
All junior members welcome!

3:30 MIWW - pick up & pay for silent auction items

4:00 Keynote address: Pride in Animal Agriculture
Trent Loos,
Rancher, Radio Personality, Motivational Speaker
Sponsored by AgStar Financial Services

5:30 Wine & Cheese Social (cash bar)
Trade Show closes

6:30 MLWP annual Banquet
meal:
Sponsored by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association

8:00 Live Auction - John Goelz, Auctioneer

Sunday - December 4th
8:00 Registration Opens

8:30-10:15 Marketing Panel - Jeremy Geske moderator
Speakers TBD
(will cover lamb & wool marketing options)

10:30-11:45 MLWPA annual business meeting

11:50 Closing Comments - MLWPA President
Conference Adjourns

Noon Lunch - On your own

1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Option Farm Tour
Hosted by the Brad Myers family
Session: Necropsy Demonstration (On-Farm) tentative
Dr. Larry Goelz, Pipestone Vet Clinic

Agenda Subject to Change!

Thanks to our major sponsors: MN Corn Growers Association, MN Soybean Research & Promotion Council, AgStar Financial Services!
Directions to the Brad & Kris Myers farm (72325 Co Rd 21—Redwood Falls): From the Casino—get back to Hwy 19/71. Go North on 71 to Co Rd 2/690th Ave. Go left/West on Co Rd 2 to Co Rd 1. Right/North on Co Rd 1 to 720th Ave. Left on 720th Ave to Co Rd 21. Right on Co Rd 21 for 1/4 mile to 72325.
### Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 11-13</td>
<td>Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium</td>
<td>Eau Claire, WI</td>
<td>Claire Mikolayunas (608) 332-2889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17-19</td>
<td>Minnesota Farm Bureau Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Brooklyn Center, MN</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@fbmn.org">info@fbmn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 19-21</td>
<td>ND Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Hettinger, ND</td>
<td>Chris Schauer (701) 567-4323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 19-22</td>
<td>Certified Wool Classing School</td>
<td>Hettinger, ND</td>
<td>Chris Schauer (701) 567-4323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Minnesota Bred Ewe Sale</td>
<td>Rochester, MN</td>
<td>Todd &amp; Robin Schmidt 507-377-1045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2-3</td>
<td>NDLWP annual conference</td>
<td>Mandan, ND</td>
<td>Wyman Scheetz <a href="mailto:wscheetz@westriv.com">wscheetz@westriv.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 3-4</td>
<td>MLWP Shepherd’s Holiday</td>
<td>Morton, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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Conference major sponsors: Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, AgStar Financial Services

<table>
<thead>
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<th>2012 Date</th>
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<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 8-9</td>
<td>Michigan Sheep Breeders annual meeting</td>
<td>Lansing, MI</td>
<td>Pat Tirrell <a href="mailto:tirrellpat@hotmail.com">tirrellpat@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 25-28</td>
<td>ASI Annual Convention</td>
<td>Scottsdale, AZ</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sheepusa.org">www.sheepusa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 10-11</td>
<td>Cornell Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Harford, NY</td>
<td>Doug Rathke 320-587-6094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 16-21</td>
<td>Montana Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peggy Kelley <a href="mailto:kelley@montana.edu">kelley@montana.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12-13</td>
<td>Shepherd’s Harvest Festival</td>
<td>Lake Elmo, MN</td>
<td>Julie Mackenzie (612) 961-9625</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30-Jun 1(?)</td>
<td>Nugget All American Sheep Sale</td>
<td>Reno, NV</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 18-22(?)</td>
<td>Midwest Stud Ram Sale</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5-8</td>
<td>National Junior Suffolk Show</td>
<td>Brookings, SD</td>
<td>Taylor Peck <a href="mailto:peck676@yahoo.com">peck676@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 6-8</td>
<td>All American Junior Sheep Show</td>
<td>Des Moines, IA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.countrylovin/AAJSS/">www.countrylovin/AAJSS/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>MLWP Shepherd’s Holiday</td>
<td>Mankato, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
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<td>President</td>
<td>Don Adelmann</td>
<td>952-466-2451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Vice President</td>
<td>Kirk Roe</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kwroe@bevcomm.net">kwroe@bevcomm.net</a> 507-526-5845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd V.P.</td>
<td>Steve Scheffert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:back40ly@gmail.com">back40ly@gmail.com</a> 507-835-3951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Becky Utecht</td>
<td><a href="mailto:becky@riveroakssheep.com">becky@riveroakssheep.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Glenette Sperry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gtsperry@frontiernet.net">gtsperry@frontiernet.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE Dir.</td>
<td>Terri Drimmel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:roundaboutacres@gmail.com">roundaboutacres@gmail.com</a> 651-257-4871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Dir.</td>
<td>Karen Stormo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sheepfarm@gvtel.net">sheepfarm@gvtel.net</a> - 218-776-2223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Dir.</td>
<td>John Dvorak</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bjdvorak81@hotmail.com">bjdvorak81@hotmail.com</a> 952-652-2402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Dir.</td>
<td>Mike Haubrich</td>
<td><a href="mailto:haum@midstate.tds.net">haum@midstate.tds.net</a> 320-826-2526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC Dir.</td>
<td>Randy Kinney</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rkinney2@mmm.com">rkinney2@mmm.com</a> 320-554-6495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME Dir.</td>
<td>Patty Anderson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:patmeadow@yahoo.com">patmeadow@yahoo.com</a> 952-447-4184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Presidents: Dan Persons</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rafterp@runestone.net">rafterp@runestone.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeremy Geske</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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**Have an idea for the newsletter?**
Send it to:
Jeremy Geske - editor
31307 171st Ave
New Prague, MN 56071

Phone: 612-756-1200
E-mail: jeremy.geske@gmail.com