Berger's Honored as Pipestone County Farm Family of the Year

Marlin and Donna both grew up on dairy farms in Kandiyohi County, but after they married, they moved to Pipestone County where Marlin started his career as a high school agriculture instructor in Jasper, MN. In 1965, Marlin accepted the teaching position in Pipestone. In 1974, they began a registered Suffolk sheep business and have worked to improve their flock ever since. Marlin and Donna's son Philip is also involved with the family sheep business. Philip and his wife Laurel have four children; Samantha (19), Andrew (16), Hannah (12), and Isaac (10). The entire family is happily involved with a Red Angus cattle operation as well as the Suffolk flock.

In the community, Marlin was an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor, where his goal was to develop leaders. He sought to develop leadership skills that would help his students acquire and lead productive careers in the field of agriculture.

Phil & Laurel Berg family, Marlin & Donna Berg

President's Message - Coccidiosis in Lambs - Kirk Roe

What a whirl wind of a summer! I can’t believe that August is almost over.

Spring brought a good planting season for most of the state as well as good growth for hay and pastures. Then it became too wet, too dry, too hot all in the same month.

As I travel the state some crops look good and some are quite stressed. Some corn fields look like it is mid-October, while some fields have already been chopped. This will bring challenges for feeding the ewes and lambs into next year.

We are into my favorite time of the year. The “Great Minnesota Get Together” where the Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers will be very much involved with your Commercial Booth, BAA Booth, youth and open class sheep judging and many more fair activities.

Fall sports are just around the corner as well as the beginning of the 2012 – 2013 academic year. It won’t be too long and we will be attending school sports, concerts and...
other important activities daily.

The Lamb Ambassadors have really been busy this year promoting the Minnesota sheep industry at county, regional and state events. These young people are really organized and have excellent leadership. They are a big asset to this organization.

Please visit the association’s website (www.mlwp.org). It is out of

hicipation and looking good.

Thanks to Melanie Pamp and her committee.

Your board is currently planning the Shepherds Holiday Conference for December 1 in Mankato, MN. The planning committee has some high powered speakers and educational sessions planned for this one day event. If you have any suggestions for topics please contact your Regional Director or myself.

If you have any questions or comments please contact me at:
P.O. Box 52, Rake, IA 50465-0052
Cell phone: (507) 525-0970
email: roefarmandbusiness@gmail.com
Good luck with your fall lambing and field work.

Sheep Producers Honored as FFOY

agriculture. Philip came to Pipestone as an extension educator for 10 years and now is a Lamb and Wool instructor for Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Laurel is a Campus Marketer at Minnesota West Community and Technical College. All the Bergs have been involved with 4-H, FFA, youth education events, and other activities at the local, state, and national levels where they are able to promote agriculture.

[Ed. Note: The bergs have been long time members of MLWPA and the MN Suffolk Sheep Association. Congratulations Berg family!]

Four additional county Farm Family honorees are sheep producers. They are:

The Christopher family in Jackson, MN has been a life-long grain and livestock operation. Brent and Kevin Christopher grain farm 1600 acres of a corn and soybean rotation. They utilize GPS technologies and follow best management practices. The Christophers also have a flock of 70 ewes that produce club lambs for the grandchildren and other 4-H members.

The Anderson family in Pipestone began in 1855 with the purchase of 90 acres by Lawrence Anderson (Bryon’s father). In 1981, Ginny joined the operation when she married Byron right on the farm. In 1997, the Andersons began raising registered Angus beef for 4-H. Over the years, they have worked hard to improve the herd thru selective breeding. At one time, the Andersons had 175 head of sheep for wool and meat production.

Currently, the Andersons manage 24 Angus beef and 10 sheep. The animals are used for perfecting the breeds and showing for 4-H. One pen of sheep took a State Fair Championship last year.

Arne Stoen is a 4th generation farmer who began farming on his grandfather’s homestead in 1956. When he first began, his operation had grain, hay, dairy, feeder cattle, and hogs. Along the way he added Suffolk sheep. In 1983, Arne sold the tillable land and dairy herd. Today Arne and his wife Carol raise Suffolk sheep. The Stoen family are active in the West Central MN Sheep Producers.

In 1913, Kevin’s grandparents Henry and Ethel Voorhees moved to Swift County. They began their eight-cow dairy with while raising ten children. Their 7th child, Leonard, is Kevin’s dad. Leonard, Margaret, and their sons Kevin and Craig continued to build the dairy farm. They developed a 40-cow registered Guernsey herd. Over the years they purchased a beef farm, remodeled the dairy barn, and increased their herd. Today they milk 350 cows in a compost barn. The cattle on the farm are housed on four farm sites. Beyond the dairy cows and heifers, they have 75 cow-calf operation, dairy steers, and 25 market-type ewes and club lambs.

[MLWPA congratulates all of the 2012 Farm Families of the year. See them all at: mnfarmfamilies.cfans.umn.edu ]

MSSA Honors Benda, Berg and Martens

The Minnesota Suffolk Sheep Association recognized Don & Dorothy Benda, Marlin & Donna Berg and Carl &Dorothy Martens for their long time support of the junior sheep shows. All three families have helped numerous families get started in the Suffolk business. All three families are or have been members of MLWPA as well.
USDA under fire for backing ‘meatless Mondays’

The USDA is under fire from ranchers and Capitol Hill after encouraging employees to go vegetarian one day a week and warning that meat production contributes to climate change. The department has since backed away from the statements, but not before causing a bovine brouhaha.

"This move by USDA should be condemned by anyone who believes agriculture is fundamental to sustaining life on this planet," said J.D. Alexander, president of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Assoc.

The offending comments came in an online newsletter to employees about "greening" efforts. The update schooled employees on ways to save energy, and participating in what’s known as the "Meatless Monday" initiative. "One simple way to reduce your environmental impact while dining at our cafeterias is to participate in the "Meatless Monday" initiative," the USDA newsletter said.

The update went on to cite the "many health concerns" associated with "excessive consumption" of meat. It noted that many people are just not ready to go all-vegetarian, and said forgoing meat one day a week "is a small change that could produce big results."

Following complaints by the cattlemen’s association, Kansas Republican Sen. Jerry Moran called on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to clarify the comments.

"Never in my life would I have expected USDA to be opposed to farmers and ranchers," Moran said. "American farmers and ranchers deserve a USDA that will pursue supportive policies rather than seek their further harm. With extreme drought conditions plaguing much of the United States, the USDA should be more concerned about helping drought-stricken producers rather than demonizing an industry reeling from the lack of rain."

But the USDA later said that passage in the newsletter was included without proper clearance. (and the comments have been removed.)

MLWPA Board Meeting Minutes - Jeremy Geske

- Vice-President John Dvorak called the meeting to order. The Agenda was approved.
- Jeremy Geske read the minutes from the last meeting - they were approved as presented.
- Glenette Sperry presented the treasurer’s report. Balance as of 6/15 = $658.97 (checking), $69,549.22 (savings) for a total of $76,133.19. After discussion, the treasurer’s report was approved.
- Membership report – Jeremy Geske indicated were are at 282 in all classes. The membership directory is done and will be mailed soon.
- Newsletter – Jeremy Geske reported the next issue will be August. Article deadline 8/3. Discussion followed on where articles come from.
- Kelly Froehlich delivered the youth report. MN Ag Ambassador Institute – Kelly F. and Scott Dangles attending. MLWPA needs a table cloth with logo – or standing banner. Jeremy G./Mike Haubrich moved/2nd to hire Melanie Pamp to make 2 table clothes with logo and website adjustable for 6 and 8 ft table. Motion carried.
- Old business:
  - John D. discussed a possible Fall workshop at the George Warrant farm near Kasota, on Sept. 8. [Ed. Note–due to scheduling problems–this event has been postponed until spring of 2013.]
  - John D. reported on DC trip. Briefing meetings with ASI – big issue was Senate Farm Bill. Met with USDA – one issue was lamb depredation and record keeping requirement; wildlife services facing uphill battle. John was in every office except Cravaack and Bachmann.
  - Shepherd’s Harvest Festival report – Don Adelmann and Mary Radermacher were in the booth. 8,000 people attended. Booth sales totaled about $1200. Signed 2 new members.
  - Mary ia working with Loretta Pedersen on re-stocking trailer for state fair. Also working on schedule for commercial booth.
  - Silver Bell Award update – Randy Kinney discussed the need to clear up some discrepancies in the application form.
  - Faribault Woolen Mills – John D. & Jeremy G. still following up on getting them more involved. Mary R. will ask them about participating in the booth.
- New business:
  - Website – Sara Brakke gave an update. The website is once again live and updated. Suggested to sell ads on side of webpage. All MLWPA members are encouraged to send in photos for use on the website and in the newsletter.
  - State Fair Baa Booth – Dan talked with Bred and Jodee Oelke. Will not be Jodee and Jo Bernard this year. Bred and Lori willing to set up and take down, but not run it. After discussion, Dan Persons was chosen to assign board members to be responsible for a day and recruit people to man the booth.
  - National Lamb Feeders School – Randy K. was accepted. It is in PA in July. Should be a good program.
  - Shepherd’s Holiday – Jerry discussed potential agenda items and Keynote speaker options. Karen Stormo has 2 fiber speakers lined up. 2013 options – move back to the north.
  - Mike H./Don A. moved & 2nd to sponsor hole at FB golf tournament for $200. Motion Carried
  - HSUS/UEP egg amendment to Farm Bill. Jeremy G./Melanie P. moved /2nd for MLWPA to sign on to letter with ASI opposing the amendment – members encouraged to contact Senator Klobuchar to oppose the amendment (dictating how we raise livestock.) Motion carried.
  - Jeremy G. reported MN Corn Growers have resources to help the livestock industry. Suggestion was to look at lamb media promotion, check with the American Lamb Board – could we use something they did in twin cities media. [Note: ALB suggested hosting a “Lamb Jam” event in the twin cities.]
  - Mike reported on ALBs proposal to increase the lamb check-off rate from .005 to .007. Discussion on how MLWP could get some check-off money for promotion in MN.
  - Trailer – we need to get the new logo on the trailer. Melanie P. can construct the new logo. She needs dimensions of logos from Loretta P.

Next meeting date: Sept. 8 (tentative) in Mankato.
Building a “Foundation for the Future” for the sheep industry was the goal of this year’s National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA) Howard Wyman Leadership School. Held in Pennsylvania, the focus of the school was on alternative markets for lamb products, whether it be direct to consumer, through farmers markets, live-animal trade or a type of on-farm harvesting.

This year marked the first time the school was held on the East Coast to help participants gain an insight to non-traditional marketing. Although for some producers attending the school, non-traditional lamb marketing is the norm; however, Milt Ward, president of NLFA from Idaho, stated it best, “The trip has been a real eye opener for us Western boys.”

Participants traveled to Pennsylvania, including a stop in New Jersey, to soak in the knowledge from the various producers, processors and marketers that help make the sheep industry in the East tick. Attendees also participated in a group project in which each one had the opportunity to expand an operation into alternative markets. In between the tour stops, the groups brainstormed about the pros and cons of their proposed situation and provided solutions to the question. The groups were encouraged to use the experience and knowledge they gained on the tour to determine their solutions. The school then concluded with the groups presenting their solutions and getting feedback from all those in attendance.

To assist with the coordination of the schools, NLFA chose Pennsylvania shepherds, Greg and Laurie Hubbard and Joanne Evans who determined the tour stops to showcase the wide variety of opportunities in niche marketing.

The school kicked off with a dinner sponsored by Catelli Brothers, one of the largest veal and lamb companies in the US and a major producer of fresh, easy-to-prepare consumer food products. Although Catelli does sell both imported and domestic lamb, the company features American lamb on billboards, truck wraps, menu features, point-of-sale materials and on-product packaging.

Catelli also dove into some of the challenges regarding the present American lamb market relaying that some retail and foodservice customers have moved to imported lamb for cost and consistency reasons. He also provided a cost comparison of American lamb vs. imported lamb for foodservice operators and retail chains.

As far as the future of American lamb, Catelli provided some insight for the industry listing:
- the need for reduction in costs;
- must have consistent quality and yields;
- a need for convenient, innovative products;
- education on menu applications for foodservice customers; and
- education for consumers on product usage and health benefits.

Day two was the start of the bus tour. The first stop was at a small custom harvest shop and auction that sells 50 to 100 head of lambs a week in addition to cattle, chickens, goats and rabbits. Although a majority of it’s customers were once Muslim, it now sells sheep to a variety of nationalities. Although the younger generations of immigrants are acclimating to more the traditional method of buying meat in a supermarket, therefore not buying animals on farm, the harvest shop has not experienced a drop in demand as new immigrants are consistently coming to America and want to harvest animals like they do in their homeland.

Smoker Sheep and Goat Auction in Gap, Pa., which holds a bi-monthly auction that averages 500 head of sheep and goats per sale, was the next stop on the tour. Ken Smoker opened his auction in 2004 and specializes in the ethnic trade. Smoker relayed to participants that the slower economy has even impacted the ethnic trade causing families to buy less lambs than they did just a few years ago.

A stop at a Suffolk seedstock operation followed the auction. MacCauley Suffolks in Atglen, Pa., raises about 180 ewes on 400 acres. Although historically this operation raised sheep for show and seedstock, Bill MacCauley is starting to diversify his product by integrating sheep for commercial production.

The stop at the New Holland Livestock Stables was intriguing for many of the school’s attendees. This sale barn averages 1,500 sheep and lambs on its Monday sales with as many as 7,000 head of sheep and goats moving through the auction process during peak demand times. As New Holland accepts lambs from all across the country, many producers attending the school had sold lambs through the auction but never had the opportunity to experience it first-hand. Although prices had slipped recently at the auction, competition remained fierce among ethnic buyers representing a variety of nationalities.

The final stop of the day was at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, Pa., which has a livestock for academic work including a Hampshire and Dorset flock.

Marcho Farms was the first stop on the third day of the school and one that participants found very informative. “We are the butchers of 25 years ago,” says Bob Russell,
Recently, a proposed amendment to increase the assessment rate for the Lamb Promotion, Research and Information Order was published in the June 12 Federal Register. I am writing to you to give you some background on this proposed amendment and to ask for you to share your feedback.

The proposed amendment would increase the assessment rate from $.005 to $.007 per pound for live sheep and lamb sold by producers, feeders and seedstock producers. For sheep and lamb purchased for slaughter by first handlers the rate would increase from 30 cents to 42 cents per head. This equates to about $700,000 additional funding to educate consumers, retailers and chefs on the benefits of American Lamb.

The American Lamb Board first decided to request this increase in assessments a year ago. It was a time of tight supplies and decreased imports. What a difference a year makes.

Today, the U.S. lamb industry is struggling with a very different market. Imports are coming back strong. Prices are coming down. Many in our industry are hurting. As a manager at Kroger, I see how the economic downturn has affected the way people eat as I watch shoppers economizing like never before.

So why increase the rate now? The American Lamb Board has been in existence for 10 years and has not had any increase in assessments. In recent years, the American Lamb Board budget has dropped to about $1.8 million. While this seems like a large budget (especially to a small Midwest sheep producer like me), it is small when compared to the budgets of most other checkoff programs. And, more importantly, it is less than what Meat and Livestock Australia spends in the US to promote Australian Lamb.

The American Lamb Board proposed this increase because we can't keep doing more with less, general manager, regarding the fabrication work that is done at Marcho Farms, which deals mainly with American lamb. One of the company’s marketing niches is that they offer a process verified lamb product which requires lamb to be raised by certified growers, lamb that is source verified, lamb carcasses that weigh from 60-85 pounds, lamb carcasses that are graded U.S.D.A. Choice and carcasses with a yield grade 3 or better. Russell echoed Catelli’s comments regarding customers demanding a consistent product, which can be a challenge at times. However, he concluded the visit saying, “American lamb is the best product on the market and that’s why we buy it.”

The next stop on the tour was Valley Shepherd Creamery in Long Valley, N.J. Valley Shepherd raises approximately 500 East Fresian ewes that produce one to three pounds of milk per day.

What sets Valley Shepherd apart from other sheep dairies is that cheese is made on-site and sold through 26 weekly farmers markets and at its three retail stores located in New Jersey and New York. Eran Wajswol explained to the group that sales of sheep cheese is “not a problem” as they are currently sold out of their top five sheep cheeses. The farm even has a waiting list for New York chefs that would like to purchase sheep cheese from them. In order to increase milk production, the farm also milks cows and goats. Milk from these animals is mixed with the sheep milk to produce a number of different products. Although Valley Shepherd sells a variety of items in its retail stores to compliment the cheeses, Wajswol says, “The success of the business has been based on the sheep milk.”

The last stop of the tour was at the farm of Jake and Mary Stoltzfus of Myerstown, Pa., who opened their home for a family style dinner and a brief look into the Amish lifestyle. The Stoltzfus’ construct wooden silo doors and raise pigeons for New York City markets.

“I enjoyed the Leadership School and would encourage others to consider attending future schools,” said Kinney.
The ordinary public often views celebrities as unreachable. Movie star sightings occur by chance, and the only time we converse with politicians is during parades when candidates shake our hands in hopes of securing votes. These encounters lack substance and value.

Yet, G.F. Kennedy, affectionately known as “Doc Kennedy” or “Doctor Kennedy” is a celebrity in his own right. One who touches the lives of ordinary people in very substantial ways. One who has garnered recognition despite never asking for a vote.

Kennedy’s 2012 Camptender Award is the product of passion, compassion and influence. Recognized for his service and commitment to the sheep industry, Kennedy received one of four awards granted by the American Sheep Industry Association during their annual meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The Camptender Award is presented to a professional who significantly impacts the sheep industry in a positive and long-lasting way. By definition, a camp tender is one who watches over and supervises those who care for sheep on a ranch or farm. Kennedy has taken this one step further and acts as a sounding board for sheep producers all across America.

Kennedy’s first commitment to the sheep industry began with a simple choice to pursue veterinary science over ag education. Along the way, his formal education and his own challenges and triumphs as a sheep producer merged, making Kennedy a nationally recognized expert in sheep health and production.

But Kennedy hasn’t settled into his role nonchalantly. Over the years, he has mentored veterinary students, developed nutritional products for lambs and sheep and has led the way in issues regarding overall sheep health care. Additionally, he has grown alongside the changing needs of the industry. And, this, perhaps, is one of his most significant contributions.

More recently, he took on the social net-working arena of Facebook where he has over 1,100 friends who turn to him for advice on sheep production, lamb care, nutrition and veterinarian care. By his own admission, Kennedy wants to help others by correlating what he knows in a way that helps others better their production. His own goal defines him and his actions. Without his willingness to pass down his knowledge and experience, many sheep tenders—and their sheep—would struggle. This makes Kennedy the ultimate sheep tender, and well-deserving of the prestigious Camptender Award.

For sheep health questions and supplies, visit their website at: www.pipevet.com
Or call: 800-658-2523
Consumers Need More Information on Antibiotic Use

Along with consumers’ increased interest in how their food is grown, the question of how antibiotics are used on the farm also is being asked more frequently. However, there is misunderstanding among consumers about how livestock and poultry producers use antibiotics, according to Jeff Bender, DVM, associate professor, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine. The comments were made in an interview with Mike Adams, host of AgriTalk, at the annual meeting of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) held this week in San Diego, Calif. Pork Network, 8/8/2012


The American Meat Institute Foundation (AMIF) today unveiled the 2012 Recommended Animal Care & Handling Guidelines & Audit Guide, now in its 15th year. Authored by leading animal welfare expert Temple Grandin, Ph.D., the audit guide has revolutionized the way the meat packing industry handles animals and measures animal welfare based upon simple core criteria.

The audit grew out of a report that Grandin did for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1996, in which she hypothesized that animal welfare did not have to be subjective, but rather could be evaluated objectively using numeric criteria. AMIF asked Dr. Grandin to author an audit based upon this concept, and the original version was released in 1997. By 1999, major restaurant chains began requiring audits as a condition of doing business and other customers soon followed.
PR Newswire, 8/13/2012

Consumer Perceptions Will Determine Agricultural Practices

Last week, I spoke at the second annual Animal Welfare Symposium, held at the University of Arkansas. The event focused on animal husbandry topics such as state laws regarding animal welfare, consumer perceptions, educating the public and improving modern agriculture practices. One of the featured speakers was Candace Croney, Purdue University associate professor of animal sciences, who spoke about the factors impacting public perceptions of animal welfare and animal rights. "What we are seeing is that more and more people are concerned about animal welfare issues," says Croney, who shared a roundup of statistics to prove her point. Beef Magazine, 8/14/2012

First cases of new influenza strain reported in Minnesota

Minnesota has recorded its first confirmed case and a second probable case of a new influenza strain that people acquire through contact with pigs.

The two cases were reported in a pre-school-age child and an older sibling from a family living in the Twin Cities metro area. Both children developed symptoms of the illness two days after the family visited a live animal market in Dakota County on Aug. 10. Neither child required hospitalization, and both are recovering.

Officials at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) believe both children were most likely exposed to the new flu strain from pigs while they were at the animal market.

People usually get the new strain of flu – known as variant H3N2 (H3N2v) – from pigs rather than other people. A few cases have been reported where an individual got the illness from another person, but there was no further spread of the illness to additional people.

In addition to the Minnesota case, over 200 cases of the illness have been reported in eight states since the beginning of the year. Most have occurred in children who were exhibiting pigs at state or county fairs, or people who visited swine exhibits at fairs.

MDH officials emphasized that H3N2v does not pose any food safety risk – there is no evidence that you can get it by eating pork. The illness also tends to be relatively mild – similar in severity to recent strains of regular, seasonal flu. Hospitalization rates for H3N2v have been relatively low. They did note, however, that this year’s regular seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against H3N2v.

Health officials stressed that there is no reason to discourage people from patronizing live animal markets – or visiting the upcoming State Fair, local county fairs or other venues where pigs may be present – because of concerns about H3N2v.

MDH has joined fair officials in discouraging fairgoers or exhibitors from eating, drinking or placing anything in their mouths while in animal exhibit areas, and emphasizing the importance of washing their hands with soap and running water after any exposure to animals.

People who are running a fever or have other flu symptoms are being advised to avoid contact with pigs, since H3N2v can be passed from humans to pigs, as well as from pigs to humans.

Health officials say there is no reason to forgo a trip to the fair. However, they do suggest taking a prudent approach if you are at high risk for complications of the flu.
ASI Applauds USDA for Additional Lamb Purchase

"The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) greatly appreciates the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) announcement of a $10 million supplemental lamb purchase," said Association President Margaret Soulen Hinson. "The drought assistance package for livestock producers, including this provision for lamb, is welcome news to help strengthen feeder and slaughter lamb prices."

"This is significant funding to move surplus product out of the way for the new crop lambs and represents the most efficient way for our industry to get current on supply," added Peter Orwick, ASI executive director. "The bottom line of the USDA program is to strengthen the farm-gate price for lambs, which are currently less than half of the 2011 record highs.

USDA announced its intent to purchase up to $170 million of lamb, pork, chicken and catfish for federal food nutrition programs, including food banks. The purchase will help relieve pressure on American livestock producers during the drought, while helping to bring the nation's meat supply in line with demand and providing high quality, nutritious food to recipients of USDA's nutrition programs. Up to $10 million will be used to purchase lamb products, up to $100 million for pork products, up to $10 million for catfish products and up to $50 million for chicken products.

Orwick concluded, "This funding shows USDA is as aggressive in providing drought aid as they can be while the agriculture industry seeks re-authorization of disaster provisions via Congress, such as the Livestock Forage Program."

Lamb Checkoff Comments Posted

More than 100 comments were filed over the last 60 days by lamb producers, feeders and processing companies in response to a proposed change to the assessment rate for the American lamb checkoff.

A vast majority of the comments were supportive of the increase in the rate, the first since the board was instituted 10 years ago as an industry-wide board for lamb businesses. The promotion program has completed two nationwide referendums since 2002 and, similar to the ratio of positive comments on this proposal, those votes were also supported by a super majority of participants.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will consider the comments and provide a formal response, which is anticipated this fall or early winter.

"The lamb program is the sole livestock checkoff in the United States, and likely worldwide, that assesses producers, feeders, exporters and packing companies to share the financial and budgeting responsibilities of the activities of the American Lamb Board," stated Peter Orwick, executive director of the American Sheep Industry Association.

[Ed. Note: several MLWPA members submitted comments to USDA.]

Growing Chorus Calling for RFS Waiver

Govs. Mike Beebe (Ark.) and Beverly Perdue (N.C.) have become the third and fourth governors to urge Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson to use her existing waiver authority as soon as possible to adjust the corn-ethanol mandate for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). Last week, Govs. Martin O'Malley (Md.) and Jack Markell (Del.) issued similar appeals to the EPA.

The governors' letters join appeals by 156 U.S. House members, 34 U.S. senators, a large coalition of livestock, poultry, meat, dairy and feed organizations and the United Nations in favor of granting the RFS waiver.

Last week's crop report released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows U.S. corn supplies for 2012-2013 will hit a nine-year low due to the nation's record-breaking drought and other factors, which will drive record corn prices even higher. Corn is projected at a record $7.50 to $8.90 per bushel, up sharply from the $5.40 to $6.40 per bushel projected in July.

Farmers unite to limit EPA regulations

One little word can mean so much. In relation to the Clean Water Act, that word is “navigable,” and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers are trying to get rid of it. If they succeed, EPA will have the authority to regulate nearly every drop of water, and some dry land, too. With this additional authority for EPA comes a likely deluge of regulations and permitting requirements for farmers, ranchers and other landowners. This is why the American Farm Bureau Federation has launched the “Stop the Flood of Regulation” campaign.

Farm Bill Extension Path Possible

As the week progressed, it appeared there was growing support for a one-year extension of the 2008 Farm Bill including disaster provisions for livestock producers.
House Republican leaders are reading a one-year extension of farm and nutrition programs that includes disaster aid for drought-affected farmers and ranchers, lawmakers said Thursday. The short-term extension is attracting bipartisan support and could reach the House floor.

In his weekly press conference on Thursday, House Speaker John Boehner (Ohio) said he believed the House would address the livestock disaster situation before going home in August and a vote may come as early as Wednesday.

A spokeswoman for House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas (Okl.) said, "There are a variety of considerations regarding the path forward for the Farm Bill. And, there's concern about the impact of the drought and the best way to address it, but no decisions have been made at present."

The Senate's version of the Farm Bill and the House Ag Committee's bill both include major livestock disaster programs and allows them to pay retroactively in 2012.

The move could have hindered chances of a five-year reauthorization but Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) indicated that, upon House passage, she will immediately seek to move the bill to conference committee, according to House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson (Minn.). It will then be up to the House to appoint conferees.

Such House action could enable Congress to conference the Farm Bill legislation between the House and Senate and pass a new Farm Bill before the current one expires on Sept. 30.

**Senate Ag Committee Debates Egg Bill**

The Senate Agriculture Committee heard arguments for and against a bill that would set uniform standards for the treatment of egg-laying hens and egg labeling. The bill is based on a compromise between the United Egg Producers (UEP), which represents 90 percent of the industry by volume, and the Humane Society of the United States.

The provisions include phasing in larger cages for hens over the next 18 years. The bill would also regulate the labeling of egg cartons to give consumers more information about the animals that produced their eggs.

Farmers in favor of the bill described it as vital to the future stability of the industry, while a witness opposed to the measure said it would force many smaller egg farmers to leave the business. Sheep, beef and pork producers are also opposed to the bill as they are concerned that it will set a precedent that will ultimately affect them.

[Ed. Note: the farmers in favor of this bill live in states that have already passed legislation forcing them to switch to enhanced colony cages.]

**MN Wolf Permit Deadline, Sept 6**

You can now apply for a wolf hunting and trapping permit. 6,000 licenses will be offered through a lottery drawing. The lottery will award 3,600 licenses during the early season and 2,400 during the late season, at least 600 of which will be for trapping. Deadline to apply is Thursday, Sept. 6. Application can be made online, by telephone at 1-888-665-4236 or at any DNR license agent. A $4 application fee will be charged. Lottery winners will be notified and licenses will go on sale by Monday, Oct. 15.

Since January 1, USDA-Wildlife Services has responded to 95 wolf complaints (81 livestock, 13 pets, and 1 human safety). Of the 95 complaints, 63 were verified. Since April 1, 2012, Wildlife Services staff have conducted wolf removal at 62 sites and taken 130 wolves. 101 private wolf controllers have trapped over 35 sites and removed over 36 wolves. 13 wolves have been taken by private landowners.

**The Elections are near**

It seems like we have been inundated with campaign ads for months, but as the November elections draw near, expect those ads to continue to ramp up. In addition to the President, you will be voting for a US Senator, and for your US Congressional Representative, as well as your state Representative and Senator, and a number of local positions. Study the candidates and how they stand on issues that are important to you and your farm.

Agriculture is represented by an ever dwindling number of legislators, which is why it is critical that we as farmers get out and support those candidates who support farms and ranches. It is more than just voting—consider getting involved in campaigns, putting up yard signs, talking to your friends and neighbors, and even making campaign contributions to help your candidates be successful.

At the state level, experts are predicting as many as 60 brand new legislators this year. Get to know these new officials.

MLWPA does not have a PAC, so you will not see any list of “endorsed” candidates. ASI does have a PAC—so if you are unsure how supporting Senator Klobuchar or any of our Congressmen/women have been, please contact Peter Orwick at ASI. John Dvorak, Dan Persons and Jeremy Geske have served on ASI’s Legislative Action Committee and may also be able to provide you some insight on how well our congressional delegation has voted on issues important to the lamb and wool industry.
**Lamb Price Update from Kent Gwilliam**

Lamb prices reported firm or stronger in most markets this past week. There is quite a difference between regional results.

**Aug 18, Twin Falls, ID**
- Feeder Lambs 60-85 lbs—$.75 - $1.08/lb
- Slaughter Lambs 94-139 lbs—$ .79 - .95
- Good Ewes 135 - 258 lbs—$.21 - $.40
- Bucks pkg 300 lbs—$.40

**Willard UT Aug 14**
- Feeder Lambs 64-95 lbs—$.84 - $.98/lb
- Slaughter Lambs 112-145 lbs—$.80 - $1.01
- Good Ewes scarce
- Old Ewes 150-170 lbs—$.15 - $.21
- Bucks 185-270 lbs—$.20 - $.28

**New Holland PA Aug 13**
- Slaughter Lambs Choice Prime
  - 40-60 lbs 177.00-220.00
  - 60-80 lbs 152.00-195.00
  - 80-90 lbs 142.00-160.00
  - 90-110 lbs 125.00-150.00
  - 110-130 lbs 130.00-147.00
  - 130-150 lbs 146.00
  - 150-200 lbs 130.00-136.00
  - Choice 2-3

**Billings Montana August 13**
- Feeder Lambs 60-88 lbs—$1.02 - $1.23/lb
- Slaughter Lambs 91-116 lbs—$.91 - $1.09

**New Holland PA Aug 13**
- Slaughter Lambs Choice Prime
  - 40-60 lbs 177.00-220.00
  - 60-80 lbs 152.00-195.00
  - 80-90 lbs 142.00-160.00
  - 90-110 lbs 125.00-150.00
  - 110-130 lbs 130.00-147.00
  - 130-150 lbs 146.00
  - 150-200 lbs 130.00-136.00
  - Choice 2-3

**Weekly National Market Prices for Wool & Lamb**

**Market Summary, Week ending August 10, 2012**
- Feeder Prices, San Angelo, 50-55 lbs. for 100-101 $/cwt.; 60-80 lbs. for 90-99 $/cwt.
- Slaughter Prices - Negotiated, Live, woolled and shorn 100-155 lbs. for 95-130 $/cwt. (wtd. ave. 113.39).
- Slaughter Prices - Formula 1, 2,388 head at 270.03-295.64 $/cwt. for 67.60 ave. lbs.; 4,801 head at 216.31-265.96 $/cwt. for 109 ave. lbs.
- Equity Electronic Auction, Woolled 145 lbs. for $110.50/cwt.
- Cutout value/Net carcass value2, $291.81/cwt.
- Carcass Price, Choice and Prime, YG 1-4, weighted averages, 1,148 head at 55-65 lbs. for $320.58/cwt., 2,020 head at 65-75 lbs. for $300.26/cwt., 1,693 head at 75-85 lbs. for $285.15/cwt., 998 head at 85 lbs. and up for $237.72/cwt.
- Exported Adult Sheep, 0.
- Wool, Price ($/pound) Clean, Delivered, 4-Week Old Price Denoted with *: 18 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 19 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 20 micron (Grade 70s) 3.73*, 21 micron (Grade 64-70s) 4.36, 22 micron (Grade 64s) 3.99, 23 micron (Grade 62s) 3.78, 24 micron (Grade 60-62s) 3.63, 25 micron (Grade 58s) 3.28, 26 micron (Grade 56-58s) 2.90, 27 micron (Grade 56s) 2.51, 28 micron (Grade 54s) NA, 29 micron (Grade 50-54s) NA, 30-34 micron (Grade 44-50s) NA.

(Source: USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service)

[Ed. Note: Kent Gwilliam is a sheep producer who started sharing weekly lamb prices and sheep sale results that he gathers from producers across the US. While MLWPBA does not endorse Kent’s efforts to share price information, we wanted to make others aware of this free email service as another option to gather information on sheep and lamb prices.]

[Ed. Note: these prices are from 8/10/12 - to receive weekly email price updates—please be sure that ASI has your current email address and that your membership dues are current.]
MDA OFFERS LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Minneapolis Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson has announced that $1 million in grant funding is being made available to livestock producers in the state for on-farm improvements. Qualifying producers would be reimbursed ten percent of the first $500,000 of investment, with a minimum investment of $4,000.

Qualifying expenditures include the purchase, construction, or improvement of buildings or facilities for the production of livestock, and the purchase of fencing as well as feeding and waste management equipment. Producers who suffered a loss due to a natural disaster or unintended consequence may also apply. The grant will not pay for livestock or land purchases or for the cost of debt refinancing.

The deadline to apply for the grant program is January 14, 2013. More information on the Minnesota Livestock Investment Program can be found on the MDA website at www.mda.state.mn.us/livestockinvestmentgrant.

NRCS DROUGHT GRANTS TO HELP RANCHERS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the availability of up to $5 million in grants to evaluate and demonstrate agricultural practices that help farmers and ranchers adapt to drought. NRCS is taking applications for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to help producers build resiliency into their production systems so they can adapt to climatic extremes, such as the historic drought impacting the nation.

Grant applications are due Oct. 15. Private individuals, tribes, local and state governments and non-governmental organizations can apply.

For additional information, go to www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig.

USDA VALUE-ADDED GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development is making up to $14 million for the Value Added Producer Grant program available for projects that help farmers and ranchers increase the value of their products. The grants, which are competitively awarded, are available for planning activities or for working capital expenses, but not for both. The maximum grant amount is $100,000 for planning grants and $300,000 for working capital grants. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities and increasing producer income are the goals of the VAPG program.

Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to apply. Grants are available for projects up to 36 months in duration.

Additional information is available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-08-15/pdf/2012-20082.pdf.

NEW MN STATE FAIR FOODS - LAMB FRIES, ETC.

Lamb Fries
Traditional Middle Eastern dish of lamb testicles marinated with Holy Land spices. Served grilled with sauteed onions or deep fried in a crumb coating and served with traditional dill sauce. At Holy Land Deli, Located in the International Bazaar, southeast corner.

Lamb Chop on a stick
100% grassfed specially seasoned lamb loin chops served on-a-stick. At Lamb Shoppe.

Bacon Ice Cream
Real cooked and candied bacon in ice cream with a hint of maple flavor. At Rainbow Ice Cream, Five different locations including Carousel Park, Underwood Street north of Dan Patch Avenue, Underwood Street south of Dan Patch Avenue, Carnes Avenue at Liggett Street, and the Agriculture Horticulture Building.

This is just 3 examples of the 40 new foods at the 2012 MN State Fair. How many will you try?
As the U.S. sheep industry strives to build numbers, producers are pointing out that sheep can work well on smaller land parcels. Not every flock has to be big. Minnesota has about 3,000 sheep farms that raise 130,000 sheep. That’s an average of just 43-44 sheep per farm.

“From a personal standpoint, there was some decent money to be made on them last year. It definitely gives you a little incentive to push a few more through,” said Randy Kinney, who raises Polypay sheep near Glenwood.

Randy and his wife, Cathy, and their sons, Andrew, 16, and Riley, 14, lambed out 86 ewes in 2012, three more ewes than in 2011.

The Kinneys purchased and moved to their Pope County farm of 83 acres in 2002. Randy was raised on a dairy farm, but has a Mechanical Engineering degree and works as an engineer in Alexandria.

“To me, the sheep operation is a great secondary income and livelihood,” he said. “Not a lot of our land is tillable, some is ponds and swamp land, and the rest is pasture. We ended up bumping into some people that had sheep, and decided to go that route to utilize the pasture.”

They started with a flock of 20 ewes that were a Polypay-type, but with closer to a 3/8 Finnish Landrace-cross mix. They gradually increased the size of the operation as they gained experience with raising sheep. They decided to back off on the Finn breeding as these ewes can produce four to six lambs that are generally smaller and require significant management.

Soon the Kinneys settled on a breeding program to transition their ewes closer to the Polypay breed mix of 25 percent Finn (reproduction), 25 percent Rambouillet (adaptation and good fleece), 25 percent Dorset (carcass qualities) and 25 percent Targhee (wool). In 2012, they intend to breed about 20 ewes to Polypay rams for the replacement flock, and breed the rest to Hampshire rams for fast growing and well-muscled terminal lambs.

“Our goal is to maintain an average birthrate per ewe of two lambs,” Randy said. “This year, we just barley accomplished that goal.”

Even when farmers strive to do everything right with the ewe flock, lambing can be challenging. Starvation, hypothermia, disease and predators are all concerns when raising lambs. The Kinneys have found that every lambing is unique.

They converted a tie-stall dairy barn into a multipurpose sheep/lambing barn. The barn can hold up to 65 ewes for lambing in early March. The ewes and lambs go outside once they can hold their own. Another 20 ewes are lambed in the barn during the second week of April.

If the weather is challenging in March, it can be difficult to move ewes and lambs out to make room for newborns.

In 2012, the weather during lambing was beautiful. The lambing season started out very successfully, with the first 12 ewes coming in with five sets of triplets and no singles.

Then, when the number of ewes that had lambed reached between 30-40, there were a couple of single lambs born, and another ewe had mummified triplets.

“You start having a single lamb born here and there, and it brought our average down quick to about 200 percent,” Randy said. “Usually, if you are going to have these issues, it comes at the beginning of lambing. We still aren’t exactly sure what caused these issues.”

Like many sheep producers in the upper Midwest, the Kinneys rely on the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic and the Minnesota West Pipestone Campus Lamb & Wool Program. He also serves as the West Central Minnesota director of the Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers (MLWP), the state organization of the American Sheep Industry Association. He wants to encourage sheep producers and those who are interested in sheep production to join the MLWP, with the application available at www.mlwp.org.

“One of the things we did this year is to keep a handle on feed costs by getting the lambs weaned at six to eight weeks of age,” he said.

Feeding nursing ewes was expensive with this year’s higher cost of alfalfa. With early weaning, the Kinneys were able to get the ewes dried off and back out on grass. The lambs are fed a corn/pellet ration through finishing.

The Kinneys are members of the Dakota Lamb Growers that has finished lamb buying agreements with Chicago and Colorado processors, intending to sell them as natural lamb.
Sheep shearsers like cutting it close
By Bruce Falk—Editor, Tri-State Neighbor

Alex Moser yanks the next sheep into position with powerful arms strengthened during 17 years of plying his trade. He grabs his shears and starts peeling a thick coat of wool off the startled animal.

Moments later, he releases the shorn sheep and reaches for the next recipient of his specialty cut - real short, all around. Then he grabs another animal, and another, until a fine May morning has passed at Dave DeGroot's farm near Tripp, S.D.

Such is the life of a sheep shearer - rising early, traveling far and wide, spending long hours at the physically demanding task of wresting large animals into position for a grooming session they're not eager to receive.

In some ways, it's a hard life, but it has its attractions, and each member of the four-man crew working at DeGroot's farm this day is carrying himself with an upbeat demeanor.

"It's kind of addictive," Moser said. "I don't see myself hanging the shears up anytime soon."

The 31-year-old from Lester, Iowa, is fresh off a trip in February and early March to Masterton, New Zealand, where he represented the United States in the 52nd annual Golden Shears international competition. He participated in the machine-shearing portion of the event, which often is described as the Wimbledon of sheep shearing. The competition drew 500 shearers and woolhandlers from 25 nations.

Moser qualified to be a U.S. representative based on his cumulative scores at a series of domestic competitions. Such contests are based on shearers' speed and accuracy, including such factors as how many pieces make up the shaved wool and how many cuts the sheep incur.

But Moser is only one of several highly talented shearers on today's crew working in Tripp. Standing beside him in the shearing line is Mark Hoogendoorn, also of Lester, the current U.S. champion. Hoogendoorn, 24, took first prize in the professional category Jan. 29 at the National Sheep Shearing Championships at the Black Hills Stock Show in Rapid City, S.D., finishing one spot ahead of Moser.

Working a little farther down the line is Hoogendoorn's younger brother, Kyle, a student at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa; and Ryan Ullom, 27, of Shell Lake, Wis. Both were matching their crewmates sheep for sheep as the animals funneled ahead from their holding pens toward a sharp-bladed reception.

Ullom sharpened his skills in New Zealand, which generally is recognized as the global capital of shearing, after he decided to pursue the profession. He figured he would be able to learn from the best. Later on, he said with a laugh, "I decided I wanted to come back to the U.S. to work more hours for less pay."

For Kyle Hoogendoorn, shearing is a great way to defray college expenses. The pay is good - he estimated that he could make $60,000 if he went at it full time - and he gets to see a lot of the countryside on his way to jobs.

But such an extensive itinerary pales next to that of his brother, who does extended shearing stints in Montana. The shearers chortled when asked about being married; the travel, they said, can be hard on relationships.

But the men all agreed about feeling satisfaction in working with people they enjoy, with handling animals, with the variety afforded by a different workplace each day. They talked of a continuing passion to improve at their trade, and they cited that aspect as one of the most important benefits of taking part in competitions.

"You can always pick up some little thing that makes your technique better," Mark Hoogendoorn said.

Often, improvement involves something that sounds minor, such as a slight adjustment in the placement of a foot to control the animal better. But the little things can mean a sharp increase in efficiency in handling each sheep, which saves a lot of energy for high-quality shearers who run through hundreds of animals a day.

Moser sighed with his memory of the fatigue he felt after setting his personal record of 423 sheep in a day; Mark Hoogendoorn said 301 was his high-wool mark.

"It's mostly all in your legs," he said. Good legwork helps a shearer control each animal with less effort, keeping the hands and arms free to let the shears do their work.

The shearers get about all the work they want because of a shortage of them. DeGroot, a longtime sheep dealer, said of the difficulties in securing shearers, "It's enough to keep some producers from getting into the sheep trade."

Next would be a drive back home to northwest Iowa for a night of rest before the cycle of travel and toil began anew on another workday filled with shear delights.

[Ed. Note: This article was edited for space—to see the full article—contact Bruce Falk at the Tri-State Neighbor at bfalk@tristateneighbor.com]
especially when we are being outspent by our competitors.

We want to be able to continue the strong efforts we have made to differentiate and promote American Lamb. People are interested in local foods and we want to be able to tell the story of American Lamb. Here are just a few of the ways we have been investing your assessment dollars:

- Spreading American Lamb messages through media relations. In FY2011, we reached more than 1 billion home cooks and chefs with messages about American Lamb in newspaper, magazine and electronic placements.
- Building year round use through seasonal campaigns. American Lamb has moved beyond spring holidays with seasonal retail campaigns helping consumers to "get their grill on" in the summer and "become a lamb lover" in February. In 2011, Kroger and Walmart committed to domestic lamb programs.
- Linking shepherds with chefs. Our target market campaigns in Boston, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington DC have partnered local shepherds and chefs to spread the American Lamb message. More than 72 chefs participated in sold-out Lamb Jam events last year.
- Expanding social media efforts. The American Lamb efforts have moved beyond traditional media to food bloggers, YouTube videos, Facebook messages, Twitter parties and more. American Lamb Board websites were revamped this year so make sure to check them out!
- Educating chefs, retailers and home cooks about lamb cut diversity. We are teaching about cut diversity (beyond the rack), ease of use and benefits of American Lamb.
- Sharing funds with suppliers and local partners. Matching funds programs led to more than 15 cooperative efforts last year - from retail supplier promotions to chef demonstrations at state fairs.

This assessment increase will not happen unless the majority of the industry agrees it is the right thing to do. The American Lamb Board does not want to move forward without industry backing. That’s why I ask you to take the time to review and submit comments to this proposed amendment which can be found at https://www.federalregister.gov.

This is an industry-funded and industry-managed program. We are here to help support the marketplace for the American sheep industry. Make sure to share your thoughts.

Sincerely,
Nick Forrest
Chairperson
American Lamb Board

Plan to attend the 2012 Shepherd’s Holiday
Dec. 1—Country Inn & Suites, Mankato, MN
## Calendar of Events

### 2012 Date | Title | Location | Contact
--- | --- | --- | ---
Sept. 7-9 | Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival | Jefferson, WI |  
Sept. 15 | ISBA Shearing School | Augusta, WI | 715 286-4157  
Sept. 19 | Hettinger Ram Sale | Hettinger, ND | Julie Mangnall (701) 678-2168  
Sept. 20-21 | Newell Ram Sale | Newell, SD |  
Sept. 22-23 | SD Wool Growers Annual Meeting | Lead, SD | Steve Clements spranch@gwtc.net  
Sept. 23 | Badger Production Sale | Arlington, WI | Todd Taylor toddtaylor@wisc.edu  
Sept. 28 | Michigan Shearing School | Ogenaw County Fairgrounds | Jim Bristol  
Oct. 6/7 | MN Sheep Fiber Farm Tour | Houston County | Jean Mueller muellers@acegroup.cc  
Oct. 11 | Utah Ram Sale | Spanish Fork, UT |  
Oct. 27 | North Star Bred Ewe Sale | Pipestone, MN |  
Nov. 3-16 | NAILE | Louisville, KY |  
Nov. 13-15 | NIAA Symposium on Antibiotic Use | Columbus, OH | www.animalagriculture.org  
Nov. 24 | MN Bred Ewe Sale | Rochester, MN |  
Nov. 30/Dec. 1 | Montana Wool Growers Annual mtg | Billings, MT | Brent Roeder 406-442-1330  
Dec. 1 | MLWP Shepherd’s Holiday | Mankato, MN | Jeremy Geske jeremy.geske@gmail.com  
Jan. 23-26 | ASI Annual Convention | San Antonio, TX | www.sheepusa.org  
TBD | Spring Sheep Workshop & Farm Tour | Kasota, MN | John Dvorak bjdvorak81@hotmail.com  
May 1 (tent.) | MN Suffolk, Hamp, Dorset & Southdown On-line Sale |  | Jeremy Geske jeremy.geske@gmail.com

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Have an item for the calendar—email it to Jeremy.