Shepherd’s News

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Shepherd’s Holiday in Mankato

There is something for everyone at this year’s Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers annual conference and trade show. Plan to attend production and fiber arts seminars, updates from our national organizations, an MLWPA youth meeting and the annual business meeting. Don’t miss the Make It With Wool contest and fashion show, Silver Bell Luncheon, the trade show and the evening social, banquet and auction.

Dr. Jim Morgan from the National Sheep Improvement Program will discuss Genetic Improvement in our Flocks. Mike Caskey, Pipestone Sheep Program Instructor will share ideas for Managing High Feed Cost. The final seminar will be a panel discussion on Connecting With Consumers. Emily Zweber, Executive Director of the Ag Chat Foundation and Katie Winslow, former Minnesota Pork Ambassador will be among the panelists who will share their consumer conversation experiences. Check out www.mlwp.org for an updated schedule and a complete list of speakers and topics.

The Shepherd’s Holiday will be held Dec. 1, at the Country Inn and Suites in Mankato, MN. See you there!

2012 MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday
Dec. 1
Mankato, MN
See you there!

President Kirk Roe Resignation

Prior to the September board meeting, MLWPA President, Kirk Roe informed the Executive Board that he was stepping down. Citing personal reasons, Kirk offered his resignation from the board; which the board accepted.

For several years, Kirk has been a dedicated volunteer and leader for MLWPA, and his efforts will be missed. When the Baa booth was in danger of fading away, Kirk and family stepped up and brought new life to the project. Kirk has been an engaged leader since then. If you see Kirk, thank him for his dedication.

[Ed. Note: Thanks Kirk, I have enjoyed working with you. ALSO—1st V.P., John Dvorak will assume duties until the annual meeting.]
**Consider Serving on the Board**

The Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association will hold our annual business meeting on Saturday, Dec. 1, in Mankato. 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 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. With President Roe stepping down, our 1st and 2nd Vice-Presidents (John Dvorak and Melanie Pamp) are willing to move up a year ahead of the normal schedule.

This does create an opening for 2nd Vice-President. Any member is also welcome to run against a current board member. The nominating committee has been busy reaching out to new potential board members to fill openings.

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).

The Board is also seeking candidates for a “Youth Coordinator” position. This person would receive a small stipend for coordinating the schedule for MLWP youth leaders to participate at events such as the Shepherds Harvest Festival and Baa Booth. Interested parties should contact John Dvorak (bjdvorak81@hotmail.com).

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**Shepherds Holiday—cont.**

Mankato. Pre-registration is preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. To receive an agenda and registration form, go to www.mlwp.org or contact Jeremy Geske at jeremy.geske@gmail.com. MLWPA thanks our major sponsors: Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

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**Your conference registration include:**

Lunch, banquet, trade show, seminars, door prize drawings

Please note the following dates:

Nov. 1 for the best room rate; Nov. 16 for the pre-registration discount

(If you are unsure of your dues are current, contact Jeremy—612.756.1200)

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**MLWPA Annual Conference Registration Form**

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**Costs:**

**Early Bird Specials (before Nov 16th)**

MLWPA MEMBERS:  \( x $25/\text{adult} + x 15/\text{youth} = \)  
NON-MEMBERS:  \( x $40/\text{adult} + x 20/\text{youth} = \)

After Nov 16th or at the door

MLWPA MEMBERS:  \( x $35/\text{adult} + x 20/\text{youth} = \)  
NON-MEMBERS:  \( x $50/\text{adult} + x 25/\text{youth} = \)

If you’re not a member, join with your registration to receive the reduced rate.

(Family membership is only $40/yr for 2013, or $110 for 2013-15) dues enclosed $________

TOTAL ENCLOSED $_____

Completed registration forms and checks (payable to MLW) should be sent to Glenette Sperry, 31460 Quinlan Ave, Center City, MN 55012 before November 16th, 2012 to receive the early bird special price. To pay with credit card:

Visa/Mastercard (circle which) Number ___________________________ Expiration Date ___________ 3-digit code _____

Country Inn & Suites: Call 800-830-5222 & ask for the MN Lamb & Wool rate ($99.00 + tax).

Call by November 1 to guarantee that rate! Go to: www.mlwp.org for an updated agenda.
Silver Bell Nominees Sought

The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers are currently seeking nominations for the 2012 Junior and Senior Silver Bell Awards. The Silver Bell Awards will be presented at the Shepherds Conference and Trade Show, December 1, in Mankato, MN.

“Nominations are due by November 15.”

MLWPA annually recognizes an adult producer whom excels in one or more the following areas: raising sheep, promoting lamb and wool, supporting the sheep industry and helping other producers. [Ed. Note: The MLWPA board, led by Randy Kinney, is currently updated the Silver Bell award criteria and information on our website.]

MLWPA also offers a youth Silver Bell award for those junior members who excel in the promotion of lamb and wool as well as assisting other members in starting a sheep project.

You can only win the Silver Bell award once. The list of past winners can be found at www.mlwp.org (just click on the “Silver Bell” tab.)

If you know deserving producers or youth, please nominate them by sending in their name and contact information along with a brief explanation as to why they are deserving. Nominees who are not selected may be retained for consideration the following year.

Nominations should be sent to Don Adelmann (10980 Little Ave, Cologne, MN 55322 or sadelmann@att.net) by Nov. 15, 2012.

[Ed. Note: Last year’s winners: Dan & Mike Lippert and Kelly Froehlich (youth) will be giving a presentation at this year’s Shepherd’s Holiday. Join us in congratulating them as well as for the announcement of this year’s winners.]

MLWPA Board Meeting Minutes - Jeremy Geske

The meeting was called to order by 1st V.P. John Dvorak. Jeremy G. moved to approve the updated agenda, seconded by Don A., motion carried.

Jeremy distributed and read highlights from the minutes of the June meeting. Minutes were approved as submitted.

The treasurer's report was distributed and discussed by Gienette S. The current total in checking and savings is $74,081.67. Actual income/expenses are in-line with the budget. The newsletter is running a bit over budget. We did see lower sales in the state fair commercial booth, but also had lower expenses. The treasurer’s report was approved as submitted.

Membership report – not much change since the June meeting – just under 280 memberships in all classes. A couple memberships were turned in at the state fair and will be credited to 2013.

Kelly F. gave a report on the youth program, including recommendations for moving forward. The general consensus was for the “youth coordinator” to be a more structured position with more accountability for the youth activities. In addition, the board discussed ways to incentivize interested youth members to participate in the state fair Baa booth, at the Shepherd’s Harvest Festival and other MLWPA activities. Steve F. moved, seconded by Don A. to provide a $500 stipend for the youth coordinator, motion carried.

Jeremy G. gave an update from ASI. John D. mentioned that our ASI regional Director, Bob Benson would be retiring from the ASI board. Bob has made a point to attend all of our MLWPA Shepherd’s Holidays during his term. Moved by Jeremy G., seconded by Randy K. to recognize Bob with a plaque for service to the industry at the Shepherd’s Holiday. Motion carried.

Randy K. gave a report on the National Lamb Feeders Sheep Industry Leadership school that was held in PA. The tours were very good.

Commercial Booth Report – Loretta Pederson was not able to attend, but submitted a written report, indicating a willingness to provide leadership to the booth again next year (the board agreed by unanimous consent). Total sales were just over $42,000 (down from last year, but similar to the previous years). Mary Radermacher has provided leadership to the commercial booth for the Shepherd’s Harvest Festival and assisted Loretta with planning for the state fair. MLWPA’s share from the 8 private vendors that sold product in our booth was just over $4,200. Moved by Jeremy G., seconded by Don A. to provide Mary R. with a $500 stipend for her efforts – motion carried. Note: the commercial booth coordinator stipend of $2000 that was approved for Loretta had been reduced from the prior year stipend of $2500 because she could not attend the Shepherd’s Harvest or Shepherd’s Holiday. Don A. will work with Melanie P. on getting the new logos on the trailer. The MLWPA table cloths need to go back to

Melanie P. to have the website added.

Dan P. was unable to attend the meeting but e-mailed in a report on the Baa Booth. Overall it went OK, but it was a challenge finding volunteers for the booth, especially during the second 4-day period of the fair. Dan offered a number of suggestions for next year. Bret Oelke did the work of set-up and take down of the booth.

2012 Shepherd’s Holiday – Jeremy distributed a draft agenda. Speakers and topics were discussed. The MN Corn Growers Association and the MN Soybean Research & Promotion Council have each agreed to continue their sponsorship of the Silver Bell Luncheon and Annual Banquet. Jeremy G. will send a postcard to members for registration. Gienette discussed the MIWW contest and the silent auction.

MLWPA President Kirk Roe, citing personal reasons, submitted a letter of resignation from the board. Moved and seconded to accept Kirk’s resignation – motion carried.

Fall grazing workshop – at the request of the host farm, this will be moved to a spring workshop.

Randy K. moved, seconded by Jeremy G. to appoint Dan Persons and Don Adelmann to the nominating committee. Motion carried. Jeremy will put an article in the newsletter asking for those interested in serving on the board to come forward.

The next meeting will be Nov. 30 in Mankato. Meeting adjourned.
Dan Lippert Re-appointed to the American Lamb Board

The Secretary of Agriculture recently announced four appointments to the 2013 American Lamb Board. The newly appointed board member is Angelo "Butch" Theos, of Meeker, CO, representing producers. Butch is a third-generation sheep rancher who runs over 4,000 head of sheep with his son Tony Theos, owners and operators of Theo’s Swallow Fork Ranch.

Reappointed to the board are the following three members: Betty Sampsel, Stanford, MT, representing producers; Daniel Lippert, Blomkest, MN, representing feeders; and William "Reed" Anderson, Brownsville, OR, representing first handlers.

ALB Announces Changes to FY 2013 Coop Funding Programs

The American Lamb Board's Industry Matching Grant Program has been replaced by an Annual Sponsorship Program. $20,000 will be available annually to support local lamb events, fairs and festivals to help offset the cost of lamb for sampling and demonstrations, event advertising and publicity, promotional materials, etc. Applications will be due in January 2013.

ALB has also approved an increase to the Supplier Co-op program budget from $60,000 to $80,000 to help American Lamb suppliers and direct marketers develop and implement branded retail, foodservice or consumer promotions. The funding cycle will remain the same for this program with applications due for the first round on October 31, 2012 ($40,000 available), and the second round on April 30, 2013 ($40,000 available). This program requires a dollar for dollar match.

2012 Lamb Jam Finale

The American Lamb Board ended Sunset Magazine’s Savor the Central Coast Festival with a bang. The Lamb Jam Finale wrapped up the three day food and wine festival outside San Luis Obispo with the second annual Lamb Jam Masters Finale. The event was hosted by TV Celebrity Ted Allen of Food Network Chopped and judged by Margo True, Sunset Food Editor, Kathy Marks Hardesty, The New Times local food and wine writer, Sandra Duerr, Executive Editor of the Tribune, Eddie Lin of Deep End Dining and Laura McIntosh of the Bringing it Home TV show. The judges crowned Chef John Critchley of Urbana in Washington D.C the Lamb Jam Master for the 2011-2012 Lamb Jam Tour for his American Lamb Pupusa. Chef Brian Alberh of the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, MA won the People’s Choice Award for bringing in the most votes for his American Lamb meatballs in ALB’s online Lamb Jam Masters promotion. The online results, recipes and chef photos are still available at fansoflamb.com.

ASI Convention Reminder - Save the Date!

The initial preparation for the American Sheep Industry Association’s (ASI) 2013 convention being held in San Antonio, Texas, from Jan. 23-26, is underway. The information to reserve your sleeping room is now available by going online to www.sheepusa.org and clicking on the 2012 ASI Convention story link. Reservations can be made online or by calling the reservations phone number. Room rates are $149 plus taxes for single or double occupancy.
Some students are having a tough time swallowing the new “healthier” school lunches. Across the U.S., students are protesting the new federal guidelines that have calorie caps; more fruits, vegetables and whole grains; and less carbohydrates and proteins. [Ed. Note: School lunches for younger kids are now only required to have 1 oz of meat, and for older kids, the requirement is 2 oz.]

About 120 students from Jordan, MN boycotted their school lunch to show their displeasure (as did students from WI, NJ & MI).

“The federal government is trying to solve a problem that every kid doesn’t have,” said Jacob Taxdahl, an eighth-grader who plays football. Jacob started the three-day boycott via Facebook. “They’re trying to solve obesity in America, but not every kid is obese.”

A music video spoof, “We are Hungry” filmed by students in Sharon Springs, KS garnered nearly a million views on YouTube. The video shows the students mocking the new guidelines by pretending to collapse from starvation.

While the video sums up the feelings of many across rural American, proponents say its an over-reaction to a “small” change. High-school students now receive 750 calories compared to 850. [Ed. Note: By my math, that is a 12% reduction—wonder if these “experts” would consider a 12% reduction in their salary to be a small change? ]

“That’s not enough to fill them up,” Craig Idacavage, a Kansas Principal said in an interview. “They are hungry at 2 p.m. Even the teachers are noticing kids saying they’re hungry and can’t concentrate.”

The Obama administration, urged on by Michelle Obama, have argued that the school lunches kids were accustomed to were not as healthy as they should be; especially with over one-third of children being “overweight or obese”. [Ed. Note: ...OK, so what about the 2/3 of kids who don’t fall into that category?]

The reaction has some schools re-evaluating their programs, some politicians calling for a repeal of the new guidelines, and parents at a loss. From the beginning, there was a concern that some students—especially athletes [or hard-working farm kids]—would not get enough to eat, and that other kids would not eat the healthier foods, leading to more cafeteria waste. Supporters of the new guidelines say students will get used to the new diet and if they eat what is offered, they will get plenty of calories. [Ed. Note: The new guidelines caused quite a buzz on social media as well. Concerned parents have directed harsh words towards USDA, and many parents have simply started sending cold lunch.]

Another discovery that surprised us – school lunches are cool to little kids. I have bad cafeteria memories of greasy slop and green goop called peas that I wouldn’t even feed my cows...

Healthy food has always been a very high priority in our household (minus the cheetos that show up on vacation); protein, fruit, vegetable, some form of grains and milk make up most of our meals. So the new USDA nutrition standards sounded O.K...

My dietitian friends and then moms of high schoolers started talking about their kids being hungry. What?...The government is regulating how much protein kids were allowed to eat. Since when should government dictate what our kids eat in the U.S.? And they’re going to limit flavored milk so the kids could turn to soda?...

...athletes with headaches and students who can’t focus due to hunger from not getting enough protein. If healthy eating habits is the goal of USDA, let’s teach smart nutritional choices – not limit a vital component of the diet...

I also have to ask – is it really the government’s job to be mandating nutrition? ...

[Ed. Note: Comments can be sent to: Undersecretary of Food & Nutrition Serv., Kevin Concannon, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250 ]
A new genetic test to determine risk level for infection with OPP Virus is now available from GeneSeek.

The test requires a sample of whole blood (1-2 cc in a lavender topped EDTA tube) or on a FTA blood spot card. The test was developed by a USDA scientist at the Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, NE, with GeneSeek and is based on results validated in collaboration with USDA colleagues at the Animal Disease Research unit in Pullman, WA and the US Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, ID. The discovery of the TMEM154 gene affects the susceptibility to OPP infection. There are three major variants of the gene called haplotypes 1, 2, and 3. Of the more than 8000 sheep tested 97 percent had some combination of these three haplotypes.

This test is somewhat confusing, because haplotypes 2 and 3 were strongly associated with OPP infection and are considered to be susceptibility haplotypes. One copy of either haplotype 2 or 3 was needed to increase susceptibility to OPP infection. Sheep with two copies of haplotype 1 were many times less likely to be infected compared to sheep with one copy of either 2 or 3.

Sheep coding 1,1 can still become infected but are at far lower risk than animals that code as 2,2-2,3 or 3,3. The USMARC also identified a very small number of animals that coded as 4,4 which had a rare deletion-mutant variant that may confer resistance to OPP infection.

Current recommendations from the researchers is to increase the number of 1’s in the herd and work to reduce the number of 2’s and 3’s. The development of this test is great news for the flocks that want to work towards OPP resistance in their flocks. I would think a resistant flock would be more desirable than an OPP free flock, due to the fact that the free flock is highly susceptible to the disease. As the number of resistant haplotypes increase from selection it will become easier and more likely to see an increase in the number of free flocks.

Purebred producers may be the first to adapt the new technology, but large range flocks will be the winners long term. The scrapie program using codon testing has been a huge success for the sheep industry and it appears that GeneSeek will help producers have a great tool for managing a disease that has been wide spread across the industry.

Cost of the test is $12.00. It appears that a lot of the samples have coded 1,1. Breeds may play a large role in how your flock tests.

Straight Talk - Dr. GF Kennedy

Finally somebody has come up with a tool to fight this disease. I am a hard liner of course and will continue to believe Dr. Norm Gates’ philosophy that the disease has no economic significance in the sheep industry. But for those that think it does should perhaps consider eliminating the 2,2-2,3 or 3,3 sheep in their flocks. Finding a 4,4 ram could be a home run. The whole testing OPP free flock thing is not practical and is not successful in commercial operations of any size and scale.

For sheep health questions and supplies, visit their website at:

www.pipevet.com

Or call:

800-658-2523

RAISING SHEEP WITH $8.00 CORN - DR. J.D. BOBB

Sheep are very adaptable to alternative feedstuffs and to forage based diets. When considering using available feedstuffs, learn as much as possible about the product. The best way is to send a sample of the feedstuff to the laboratory and have a nutrient profile done to determine, the energy, the protein, and mineral composition of the feed.

Hay prices due to drought and lack of supply have also increased dramatically. Good alfalfa is an ideal sheep feed, but at $300. a ton producers will need to be creative in feeding the ewe flock.

The drought stressed corn that will not be good enough to combine can fit into the rations and used to help control feed costs. Caution needs to be used to avoid high nitrate corn silage. As the corn becomes stressed it pulls the nitrogen and water down into the core of the stock. The bulk of the nitrates will be found at the base, and you should work with an agronomist to determine the cutting height to help minimize the nitrate levels. Feeding silage requires an advanced mineral program also.

Often the calcium is inadequate for even ewes in mid gestation and can be critical to ewes in late gestation. Protein is also a concern with drought corn rations and will need to be supplemented as the ewe advances in gestation.

Work with your local feed supplier and nutritionist to control your feed costs.

Feed will cost more this coming year, and sales income from lambs will be reduced, the producers that aggressively find alternative feedstuffs will be the survivors.
Fighting HSUS’ Ballot Initiative in North Dakota

Missouri Farmers Care, a consortium of agricultural groups which successfully beat back two initiatives in the state supported by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), is supporting similar efforts in North Dakota.

Missouri Farmers Care has been assisting the North Dakota Animal Stewards, a broad-based coalition that is opposing a misleading ballot initiative in North Dakota.

Measure 5 applies only to dogs, cats and horses, but would limit North Dakota’s ability to shape its own animal care laws, according to North Dakota Animal Stewards.

North Dakota Animal Stewards is an impressive coalition of agricultural, veterinary, pet owner, sportsmen and animal-shelter groups that are opposed to Measure 5, while also working on comprehensive animal welfare legislation that has received input from many North Dakota stakeholders.


Management key to ensuring animal welfare

Following a pair of videos depicting alleged animal abuses, animal welfare at dairy farms and processing facilities is again in the media spotlight. Two recent undercover videos, an October video targeting an Idaho dairy and August video filmed at a California cull-cow beef plant, underscore the importance of strong management throughout an animal production operation to maintaining good animal welfare.

“It is clear that the workers in the [Idaho] video, who were shown beating, dragging and kicking healthy and non-ambulatory cattle, did not have the proper attitude, training or supervision to do the jobs for which they were employed,” said Candace Croney, associate professor of animal behavior and well-being at Purdue University. “It is also clear that the design of the facilities contributed to animals repeatedly getting hung up or slipping and falling.”

In a recent Feedstuffs commentary, Croney said proactive dairy farmers and owner/operators can avoid similar problems by adopting a few key strategies, including improved hiring and training practices, better supervision of workers, and participating in voluntary animal care and welfare assurance programs.

HSUS criticizes Tyson’s animal well-being audits

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is not impressed with Tyson Foods’ launch of a new animal well-being auditing program for its suppliers, but that should not come as a surprise.

“Audits are valuable if farm inspectors ask the right set of questions. We’ve not suggested that Tyson contractors are denying food to animals or intentionally abusing them, but that they are denying them enough space to even turn around,” says Wayne Pacelle, HSUS president and CEO. At issue is gestation-sow stalls. “Tyson’s announcement would mean more if the company was getting its pork from farmers who do not confine sows in crates that immobilize the animals.”

HSUS has attempted to pressure Tyson into eliminating gestation-sow stalls from its supply chain, as it has with 34 other food companies (at last count). Last winter, HSUS submitted a shareholder resolution to attempt to force the meat and poultry processor to embrace group-sow housing. The effort failed.

Canada Stops Accepting U.S. Horses For Slaughter

The United States market for slaughter horses was thrown into confusion Friday after slaughterhouses in Canada appeared to have closed their doors abruptly to U.S. horses, according to slaughter buyers, lower-market horse dealers, and the auctions they frequent. U.S. horse auction officials said that the situation remained unclear, but it appeared the sudden closure might also apply to Mexico and could be related to European Union concerns over U.S. slaughter horses’ medication histories and veterinary documentation. [Ed. Note: The stoppage was lifted prior to this issue going to press.]

Animal Review Panel controversial, but needed

Undercover video recording on livestock operations is fraught with controversy in and of itself, but nevertheless, these videos are making their way into the public eye and influencing public opinion on animal agriculture.

That’s why the Center for Food Integrity, www.foodintegrity.org, formed the Animal Care Review Panel, a program whose purpose is to provide a balanced analysis of undercover video investigations from outside organizations claiming to have captured animal cruelty in the act on various U.S. farms.
**Waxman to introduce bill to curb antibiotic use in livestock**

A top House Democrat is pushing a bill to create reporting requirements on antibiotics given to U.S. livestock. The new measure from Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) seeks to combat the widespread use of certain drugs in animal feed, a practice studies have shown increase antibiotic-resistant infections in humans. [Ed Note: interesting that they don’t mention the studies that show the overwhelming cause of antibiotic resistance in humans is caused by over-use of antibiotics by humans.]

Waxman’s bill would mandate disclosure from drug makers and feed mills about the types, purposes and quantities of antibiotics fed to farm animals. The disclosure requirement for feed mills would be the first of its kind, according to Waxman’s office.

"We need reliable information about the use of antibiotics in agricultural operations," Waxman, the top Democrat on the Energy and Commerce Committee, said in a statement Tuesday.

"The more we learn, the graver the threat becomes from overuse of antibiotics by industrial-scale farms. We need this information so scientists and Congress can stop the spread of drug-resistant infections from farm animals to humans," Waxman continued.

The measure comes amid some criticism of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for “dereliction of duty” on antibiotic resistance, in the words of another House Democrat. Rep. Louise Slaughter (N.Y.), a microbiologist and leading voice on the issue in Congress, slammed the FDA this summer after it appealed an order to ban three drugs in animal feed.

"I suppose it’s not much of a surprise," Slaughter said of the FDA in June. "They’ve buried their heads in the sand and ignored the threat of antibiotic resistance for well over 30 years. But avoiding this problem ... only increases the threat to our public health."

Slaughter is the author of a bill to prevent the overuse of seven classes of antibiotics in livestock feed.

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**Thune (R-SD)/Baucus (D-MT) Letter to USDA on Lamb Price Spread**

Senators Thune (R-SD) and Baucus (D-MT) sent a letter to USDA Secretary Vilsak urging an investigation into the price spread between what packers are paying producers for labs and the carcass price they are receiving under the GIPSA rules. Senator Conrad (D-ND) and the other Senators from MT, SD and WY are among those signed on. [Ed. Note: MLWPA urged Senators Klobuchar (D-MN) and Franken (D-MN) to sign on. We did receive positive feedback from Senator Klobuchar’s office.]

The Letter talks about the drastic change in lamb prices from 2011—2012 as well as the impact the drought is having on lamb prices. More importantly, the letter highlights the price disparity between what producers are receiving and what the packers are receiving.

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**EPA nears ethanol decision**

The Environmental Protection Agency will decide by early next month whether to reduce the amount of corn-based ethanol used in the nation’s 240 million gas tanks because of this summer’s drought.

The governors of eight states and nearly 200 members of Congress asked the EPA to waive requirements of the Renewable Fuel Standard signed into law in 2007 by President Bush that mandate the production of a certain quantity annually of the alternative fuel.

The Corn Growers and some groups such the Farm Bureau oppose the waiver, believing that it would have little effect on corn price. On the other hand, many livestock groups who depend on corn have argued that the RFS standard creates an unfair playing field as they compete for corn.

The governors of Maryland and Delaware, also home to poultry producers, told the EPA that without a waiver they would face "the loss of thousands jobs."

In August, a top United Nations official urged the Obama administration to suspend ethanol requirements under the 2007 Renewable Fuel Standard as fears of food shortages grow around the world. [Ed. Note: Governor Dayton does not support the waiver.]

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**Minnesota Court of Appeals Rules on Wolf Hunt**

On October 10, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled the planned wolf hunt in Minnesota can proceed as outlined by the Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources. The Court ruled the two groups filing the suit, The Center for Biological Diversity and Howling for Wolves, did not provide adequate evidence they will suffer irreparable harm from the hunt.

While the court did not grant an injunction to stop the wolf hunt, the case will continue to be heard regarding whether or not the Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources provided the public an
adequate amount of time for public input. However, the court if not expected to offer a ruling on that matter until sometime in 2013.

Important information on wolf hunt:

- Hunters who entered the lottery for the wolf hunt recently received notice if they have been chosen to purchase a license (6,000 licenses will be issued). Those individuals need to purchase their license by October 24. If those individuals do not purchase a license, additional individuals will be chosen via lottery. License fee is $30 for in-state and $250 for out of state.
- Targeted number of wolves to be taken is: 18 in East Central Zone, 117 in Northeast Zone, and 265 in Northwest Zone.
- All wolves taken are required to be registered by 10 p.m. the day they are harvested. Each wolf hunter and trapper is responsible for tracking season progress and season/zone closure notification by: Calling 1-888-706-6367; or Checking the DNR wolf season harvest web site: https://jc.activeoutdoorsolutions.com/mn_customer/app/goHome.do and selecting the wolf season status tab at the bottom of the page. Harvest targets will be updated daily during the season for each zone.
- Early season hunting is November 3-18 in series 100 permit areas and November 3-11 in series 200 permit areas. Last season hunting and trapping is November 24-January 31.
- License holders are eligible to take one wolf, and are required to wear blaze orange. Hunting is allowed ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. For licensed wolf trappers, trap setting and tending is allowed from 5:00 AM until 10:00 PM.
- Party hunting is NOT allowed, nor is the use of dogs or horses. Baiting and calling is allowed.

[Ed. Note: MLWPA was contacted by a “pro-wolf” group offering their assistance in helping sheep producers adopt non-lethal methods of wolf control. Our response reminded the individual that MN farmers have been forced to use non-lethal methods for many years, and the result was a wolf population that was more than double the recovery goal, and wolf depredation losses that continue to increase. Farmers need other options in addition to the non-lethal methods to protect their livestock. This individual was asked to provide any expertise (such as a background in wildlife biology or livestock farming experience in wolf territory) that members of her group might have to offer farmers - she did not respond.]

Presidential Campaigns Weigh in on Agriculture and Rural Issues

As the race for President approaches, both campaigns have released information on their plans for agriculture and rural issues.


EPA Flyover Ban Bill

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that a bill to bar EPA aerial surveillance of animal feeding operations to detect Clean Water Act (CWA) violations would cost $1 million over five years, as EPA would have to use more resource-intensive alternative inspection methods. The bill has been approved by the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and awaits a vote by the full House. Senator Johanns (R-NE) offered the measure as an amendment to the Senate Farm Bill, but the amendment failed.
WOOL UNCOVERED was a gigantic success by all measures. As you may be aware, the Campaign for Wool celebrated wool New York style last week with the launch of its American interiors program and hosted a wool installation in Bryant Park - right in the center of Manhattan.

Extensive video of the event is available at www.epklink.com/campaignforwoolus.

"The whole point of wool week was to raise awareness and to tell the world that here is a wonderful fiber that is produced naturally, is endlessly renewable, totally sustainable and comes off the back of sheep that graze the most difficult areas you can find. Sheep put fertility into the soil and provide meat and fiber," said John Thorley, chairman of the Campaign for Wool.

"The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) has supported the Campaign for Wool for a number of years and continues to contribute to this world-wide wool promotion," said Rita Kourlis Samuelson, ASI wool marketing director. "We were pleased to bring the major attraction - live sheep - to the Campaign for Wool debut in NCY. As you can imagine, working through the details of delivering live sheep into the heart of Manhattan presented its own set of unique challenges. The huge success of the event made it all worthwhile."

New York sheep producers, Jeff Traver and T.J. Baright from Dutchess County, rose to the challenge and delivered the stars of the show -- the flock of 30 sheep. The animals grazed on the spacious lawn of the park and were the centerpiece of innumerable photos.

"All of us from the United States that participated in this event have been involved in many different approaches to bring the message about where wool comes from and the types of products made from wool to the end user," said Tom Colyer, vice chair of ASI's American Wool Council. "However, I have never been involved in one of these events that has had as much of an impact as this event. We had thousands of people make their way through the displays and view the sheep. We were interviewed 30 or 40 times by the different New York media outlets. It was well, well worth the effort."

Media outlets from the New York Times, Fox News, CBS, NBC, Taxi TV and the Wall Street Journal all featured articles and photos of this outstanding event in Bryant Park.

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

**Feeder Prices**, San Angelo, 40-60 lbs. for 98-108 $/cwt.; 60-70 lbs. for 90-112 $/cwt.; 70-80 lbs. for 92-100 $/cwt.

**Slaughter Prices - Negotiated**, Live, woolled and shorn 105-180 lbs. for 90-112 $/cwt. (wtd. ave. 102.78).

**Slaughter Prices - Formula1**, 3,105 head at 185.42-254.86 $/cwt. for 70.30 ave. lbs.; 3,854 head at 187.72-222.77 $/cwt. for 120.6 ave. lbs.

**Equity Electronic Auction**, No sales.

**Cutout value/Net carcass value2**, $278.06/cwt.

**Carcass Price**, Choice and Prime, YG 1-4, weighted averages. 1,091 head at 55-65 lbs. for $282.12/cwt., 1,816 head at 65-75 lbs. for $258.04/cwt., 1,710 head at 75-85 lbs. for $240.05/cwt., 1,238 head at 85 lbs. and up for $210.76/cwt.

**Boxed Lamb**, weighted average prices ($/cwt.), Trimmed 4" Loins $517.59, Rack, roast-ready, frenched $1,158.12, Leg, trotter-off, partial boneless $489.03, Ground lamb $549.54, Shoulder, square-cut $240.87.

**Imported Boxed Lamb**, weighted average prices ($/cwt), AUS Rack (fresh, frenched, cap-off, 24-28 oz & 28 oz/up) $896.26, AUS Shoulder (fresh, square-cut) $175.22, AUS Rack (frozen, frenched, cap-off, 20-24 oz to 28 oz/up) $826.88, NZ Rack (frozen, frenched, cap-off, 12-16 oz & 20 oz/up) $1,144.21.

**Exported Adult Sheep**, 0.

**Wool, Price ($/pound)** Clean, Delivered, 13-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.

[Ed. Note: these prices are from 10/17/12 - to receive weekly email price updates—please be sure that ASI has your current email address and that your membership dues are current.]
NEWELL, S.D. - On a day when about 16,000 sheep were sold, ranchers who gathered Thursday at the St. Onge Livestock sale barn in Newell just shook their heads at the prices they were getting for ewes and lambs.

"Last year, for the same condition and weight lambs, I got $2.38 per pound, Keith Franke said. "This year, they sold for 94 cents." 

Franke and others who were selling livestock Thursday were commiserating about the factors that have contributed to the plunge in prices. It was a different story for the buyers, however.

"It was just too high" last year, said Doug Farnsworth of Rigby, Idaho, who bought four loads of lambs Thursday morning and was looking to buy ewes during the afternoon session.

Farnsworth, who makes purchases for 15 different operators in Idaho and at least one feedlot in Colorado, said he did not expect to pick up four loads in the morning, but the low prices changed his thinking.

"This area has really good replacement stock, so I buy them and take them back to Idaho," he said.

Franke, who has been a producer in the Newell, Vale, Nisland area for 44 years, said he has never seen the market look like it does now.

"I don't know if the industry will survive it," said Franke, citing the drought and an industry that has fewer producers as current ranchers get older and the packing industry develops relationships with foreign producers.

Franke also laments the fact that Congress has failed to pass another Farm Bill, which is set to expire at the end of the month. In addition, U.S. producers are facing increasing competition from Australia and New Zealand.

Many who gathered for the free barbecue lunch at the sale barn agreed that packers are a big part of the problem. They said lambs were so expensive a year ago that many feeders would not buy them, so packers bought them and paid feeders to fatten them.

Local producers said the packers paid too much, wouldn't lower the price of the meat and wouldn't butcher anybody's lambs but their own.

Gary Babb, a sheep producer who works six months out of the year for the Center of the Nation Wool Warehouse, said the packers had freezers full of lamb and then ended up filling their contracts with foreign producers while local producers' products were left on the sidelines.

Franke said the government bought millions of dollars worth of products were left on the sidelines.

Ross Reichert of Herford said he was told it would be best to sell his heavier lambs and take the loss while keeping the lighter-weight ones, which might provide some relief after the first of the year.

"If you've got 50- to 60-pounders to put on feed that will be ready after the first of the year, you might make it," he said. "Those who borrowed money last year are broke today."

Franke said it is difficult to be optimistic about the future given the current conditions.

"Most of those down times, sheep always made a little money or at least broke even," he said. "This year is a different story. With $4 gas, $300 hay and $400 cake, we're going to be hungry some day here. Then what will people think?"

[Ed. Note: I was at this sale, and at the ram sale the following day. Like most sales, the top end of the breeding stock sold well, but if you weren't one of those few, prices dropped to rock bottom in a hurry.]
The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) has opened the nomination period for submissions to its annual awards program, according to Glen Fisher (Texas), awards chairman and past president of the association.

There are four award categories available for nomination:
- The McClure Silver Ram Award is dedicated to volunteer commitment and service and is presented to a sheep producer who has made substantial contributions to the sheep industry and its organizations in his/her state, region and/or nation.
- The Camptender Award recognizes industry contributions from a professional in a position or field related to sheep production.
- The Environmental Stewardship Award recognizes an individual actively involved in sheep production that has shown an extraordinary commitment to caring for natural resources and thereby enhancing the environment.
- The Shepherd's Award for Media recognizes outstanding year-long coverage of the sheep industry in either print or broadcast.

Nominations must be postmarked by Nov. 16 (Please note that past award recipients are not eligible). To receive a nomination application, call or email ASI: (303) 771-3500; info@sheepusa.org. The one-page nomination form can also be downloaded from ASI's website, www.sheepusa.org, by clicking on the 2013 Awards Program link located on the home page.

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program is accepting registrations for five distance-delivered courses.

The most popular course being offered is Introduction to Sheep Management (LWMP 1001) and is offered through the mail or as an online course. The curriculum provides an overview of year-long sheep management as well as the philosophy of sheep management and its relationship to business goals. Introduction to Sheep Management is a one-credit course with 14 self-paced lessons. No text book is required.

Other online courses include Equipment and Facilities, Introduction to Sheep Health, Ewe Ration Formulation and Wool Characteristics and Properties.

For more information, visit the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program at www.pipestonesheep.com.

The continuous drum beat of multistate foodborne illness outbreaks has not done much to shake consumer confidence in the U.S. food supply, according to a new study released this week.

The NPD Group, a market research firm, reports that 60 percent of U.S. consumers are only somewhat or slightly concerned about the safety of the food supply. A quarter of people report being extremely or very concerned and 15 percent said they were not concerned at all.

The survey, known as the NPD Group Food Safety Monitor, contacts 500 adults on a biweekly basis and asks about a variety of food safety issues, including Salmonella, E. coli, Listeria, mad cow disease and mercury in fish. Responses to one simple question: “How concerned are you about the safety of the U.S. food supply?” have remained relatively the same since 2010.

So why aren’t headlines about illnesses and deaths linked to cantaloupe, peanut butter, tuna, cheese and mangoes (just to name some of the outbreaks of the last six months) causing more worry?

Well, the survey results show that these outbreaks do cause spikes in concern, usually regarding a specific food product, but then as the news subsides the concern levels off. The percentage of adults who reported being concerned about Listeria, for example, more than doubled during the deadly Colorado cantaloupe outbreak in late Summer 2011, but by the end of the year that worry leveled off.

“The impact of a food recall on consumer attitudes and perceptions often depends on the amount of news coverage received, or the severity of the situation in terms of numbers sickened or dead as a result,” says Darren Seifer, NPD food and beverage industry analyst.

“Recalls, unfortunately, have become more commonplace, but consumers are creatures of habit. It takes a lot for us to change what we eat.”

Reprinted from the Food Safety News
Drought worsens in some key Midwest farming states

The nation’s worst drought in decades is showing no sign of letting up in several key Midwest farming states, worrying farmers harvesting the summer’s withered corn crop in record time that their winter crops may also be at risk.

Overall drought conditions in the lower 48 states held steady over the seven-day period ending Tuesday, with about one-fifth of the total land area in extreme or exceptional drought, the two worst classifications, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor’s weekly update of its drought map released Thursday. Conditions worsened, though, in Kansas and Iowa, the nation’s biggest corn producer, and nearly 98 percent of Nebraska was still deemed to be in one of the two worst categories.

The unrelenting dryness won’t have much effect on the region’s corn and soybean crops, which are already being plucked from the fields. But it could hurt other crops, such as winter wheat.

According to the map, which is put out by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, 75 percent of Iowa is enduring extreme or exceptional drought. That’s up roughly 10 percentage points from the previous week.

Just over 93.25 percent of Kansas was in the same predicament, which was an increase of roughly 5 percentage points.

As of early October, 54 percent of the corn crop had been brought in from the fields — the fastest pace in at least 17 years due to early planting and nearly three times the previous five-year average of 20 percent by this time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported. Some 56 percent of the corn crop in Iowa has been harvested, while Illinois has brought in 71 percent and Missouri 88 percent.

Half of the U.S. corn crop is classified as being in poor or very poor shape, essentially unchanged from a week earlier, the USDA said. A year ago, 20 percent of corn in the fields was listed that way.

Forty-one percent of the U.S. soybean crops have been harvested — double the pace of the average of the previous half decade — with one-third considered poor or very poor, the USDA said.

The USDA reported that emergence of winter wheat was lagging, given the extremely dry conditions that could keep that rotational crop from properly germinating. Just five percent of that crop had emerged in South Dakota, down sharply from 32 percent over the previous five years. Similar issues were reported in Nebraska, Colorado, Montana and Oregon.

Drought leads restaurants to raise prices, cut portions

Scorching weather this summer left crops parched and livestock famished. Restaurants, already struggling with high fuel costs and a sluggish economy, are starting to feel the pinch of higher food costs.

Now fast-food giants, fancy eateries and even corner coffee shops are scrambling to adjust. The cost of food rivals labor as the top expense for most restaurants.

Restaurateurs are revamping menus, reducing portion sizes and even considering staff cuts. In the months to come, watch for smaller steaks, fewer tortillas per entree and maybe even menu-wide price increases.

Customers are already seeing a change. Gina Grad, a radio network content producer, said she’s noticing smaller servings, steeper bills and thinner crowds at the trendy restaurants in her Los Feliz neighborhood, where organic and locally grown ingredients reign.

Restaurant prices have been rising for more than a year. Wholesale food costs rocketed 8.1% last year, the largest jump in more than three decades. The Olive Garden’s Never-Ending Pasta Bowl, offered at $8.95 for the last five years, jumped to $9.95, partly because of higher food costs.

And this summer, a Big Mac cost $4.33 on average in the U.S., up from $4.20 in January and $4.07 a year earlier, according to the Big Mac index compiled by the Economist.

The price of corn — a key component in livestock feed and an ingredient in powdered sugar, salad dressing, soda and more — catapulted 60% in early summer.

Analysts expect overall food costs to rise 5% to 20% by the end of the year — a painful squeeze for businesses that, even in the most prosperous times, operate on tight margins with little room to maneuver.

"If the cost of the food goes up that much, it can pretty much wipe out their profit," said John Davie, chief executive of food service partnership Dining Alliance.

"Restaurants will be forced to look at everything from the phone bill to payroll to food costs to how they negotiate with vendors." [Ed. Note: Read this article in its entirety at: http://keepfoodaffordable.com/]
Bizarre Sheep Sparks Controversy

Video of a sheep that appears to have a head that is upside-down has surfaced in the U.K. and is making the rounds on the Internet with skeptics calling it a fake, despite the video owner insisting on its authenticity.

"I couldn't believe it," Allan McNamara of North Yorkshire told the U.K. Daily Mail. "I'm friends with a girl who has a horse on the farm and she was like, 'Aww Allan, come and have a look at this sheep.' After a little walk we came across the sheep, its head is properly upside-down. It looks like it has been twisted 180 degrees."

"Its spine is curved as far as I can tell. I don't think it's in any pain. It certainly seemed as normal and docile as sheep normally are. It's crazy."

"He lives happily and has been checked by a vet to ensure he is in no pain. He can eat, sleep and do everything other sheep can."

The beginning of the video does seem to show the sheep's head is upside-down, or perpetually twisted. The skeptics aren't buying it, though.

One commenter wrote, "a disabled sheep would have been culled after birth, this isn't a deformity or disability, the sheep is probably just [being] stupid and turning his neck like that for some weird reason. It's not like that by default."

Another wrote: "C'mon, look the angle where it is shot. It just turns it head to right and it looks like it is twisted."

Andres Jauregui of the Huffington Post wrote that "McNamara reportedly responded to critics by going back to the farm to snap more pictures," but added that those photos and the original YouTube video hosted on the website Imgur had been removed.

Science says this oddity is possible. If it's a hoax, it's a pretty good one. And if it's real, one might question whether the sheep is pain free. Poor thing could probably use a chiropractor.
# Calendar of Events

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2012 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 9-16</td>
<td>NAILE sheep show</td>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td><a href="http://www.livestockexpo.org/">www.livestockexpo.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 9-11</td>
<td>ID/WY Lamb &amp; Wool Growers Annual mtg</td>
<td>Jackson Hole, WY</td>
<td>Stan Boyd <a href="mailto:stanboyd@earthlink.net">stanboyd@earthlink.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 13-15</td>
<td>NIAA Symposium on Antibiotic Use</td>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td><a href="http://www.animalagriculture.org/">www.animalagriculture.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Early Bird Discount on Shepherd’s Holiday Registration</td>
<td>Mankato</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mlwp.org">www.mlwp.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>ND Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Hettinger, ND</td>
<td>Christopher Schauer 701-567-4323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>MN Bred Ewe Sale</td>
<td>Rochester, MN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 29-Dec. 1</td>
<td>MN Farm Bureau annual meeting</td>
<td>Bloomington, MN</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fbmn.org">www.fbmn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 30/Dec. 1</td>
<td>Montana Wool Growers Annual mtg</td>
<td>Billings, MT</td>
<td>Brent Roeder 406-442-1330</td>
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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1-2</td>
<td>Beginner Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Arlington, WI</td>
<td>Todd Taylor 608 846-5858</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Missouri Livestock Symposium</td>
<td>Kirksville, MO</td>
<td>Bruce Lane 660-665-9866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 8-9</td>
<td>ND Lamb &amp; Wool Growers Annual mtg</td>
<td>Mandan, ND</td>
<td>Wyman Scheetz <a href="mailto:wscheetz@westriv.com">wscheetz@westriv.com</a></td>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. ?</td>
<td>SEMPSPA annual meeting</td>
<td>Lansing, MI</td>
<td>Gene Christians 507-477-2160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 6-8</td>
<td>Michigan Sheep Breeders Annual mtg</td>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nationalwestern.com">www.nationalwestern.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23-26</td>
<td>ASI Annual Convention</td>
<td>San Antonio, TX</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sheepusa.org">www.sheepusa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Indianhead Sheep Breeders Clinic</td>
<td>Rice Lake, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.indianheadsheep.com">www.indianheadsheep.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Spring Sheep Workshop &amp; Farm Tour</td>
<td>Kasota, MN</td>
<td>John Dvorak <a href="mailto:bjdvorak81@hotmail.com">bjdvorak81@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 30 / May 1</td>
<td>Stars of the North Suffolk, Hamp, Dorset, Southdown on-line sale</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:Jeremy.geske@gmail.com">Jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11-12</td>
<td>Shepherd’s Harvest Festival</td>
<td>Lake Elmo, MN</td>
<td><a href="http://www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org">www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org</a></td>
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*Have an item for the calendar—email it to Jeremy.*

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