MINNESOTA LAMB & WOOL PRODUCERS

Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers

Shepherd’s News

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2013 MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday November 15-16
Thumper Pond Ottertail, MN
See you there!

GEORGE WARRANT TO HOST SPRING SHEEP WORKSHOP NEAR KASOTA

MLWPA would like to thank George Warrant for agreeing to host the Spring Sheep Workshop on his farm near Kasota, MN. George has done a lot of work with rotational grazing. Participants will get to see how it works on this farm (assuming the snow is melted by then).

The 2013 Spring Sheep Workshop will be held Saturday, May 18. Registration starts at 8:30 and the program will conclude by 3:30.

Topics for the day include: NRCS funding opportunities for fencing/grazing; veterinarian—health considerations during the grazing season; Sheep pasture seed mix, grazing roundtable discussion, and a tour of the pasture/fencing project.

The cost for the Spring Sheep Workshop is $10 for youth (21 & under) and $15 for adults (includes lunch and refreshments). Send your check, payable to MLWPA, to: John Dvorak, 4325 Farwell Ave, Webster, MN 55088.

Walk-ins are welcome, by pre-registration is preferred in order to plan for the lunch. Hope to see you all there.

[See directions to the Warrant farm on p. 2.]

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE - JOHN DVORAK

I hope 2013 is going well for all of you. By now most of the winter lambing is over, and for others, the lambing is just starting. I hope that all of you have had a huge success with the lambs born. As with every year, Spring is the start of a new season, whether it’s getting sheep ready for upcoming sales, field work, or getting lambs ready for market. It is always exciting to see what the new year has in store for all of us. Now if we can just get the weather to cooperate.

I would like to bring forth one item of the sheep industry that I feel is very important and that is the youth in your organization. I firmly believe that for any industry to survive we need to have a strong presence with our youth. We have to not only encourage them but also have to help and support them.

Over the past years The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producer’s as an organization has been doing just that. I want to

CONT. ON P. 2
President’s Message—Cont

thank the many people that have been involved in getting the youth program up and running.

At this time I would like to introduce Kelly Froehlich the new MLWP Youth Coordinator. Kelly not only brings a new interest to the group but also brings a great new energy and ideas to the group. I would like you all to not only congratulate Kelly on her position but also to thank her for taking on this important position. The board and I are looking forward to working with Kelly. THANK YOU KELLY!

As we look ahead, there are always many obstacles that we as producers need to face and take on.

Let’s try to keep a positive attitude for a successful year.

Have a great spring and summer and please remember safety first.

Spring Sheep –Cont

Directions to the Warrant Farm (34116 480th ST, Kasota, MN 56050) -

From Mankato: North on 22 a little over 8 miles to 480th St. Right on 480th St (0.3 miles) and the farm is on your left.

From St Peter: South on 22 about 6 miles to 480th St. Left on 480th St (0.3 miles) and the farm is on your left.

We will be outside so dress appropriately.

Sponsored by MLWPA

Spring 2013

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Sponsored by MLWPA

Register for the Spring Sheep Workshop Today!

MLWPA Lamb Recipe Book

The MLWPA board is looking at developing an MLWPA lamb cookbook. Please submit your favorite lamb recipes to: Jeanine Fowler by email to: TJFRanch@frontiernet.net by June 15, 2013. Include your name so we can give you credit for your submissions. The goal would be to have the MLWPA lamb cookbook available at future events. Feel free to email a photo of the finished dish as well.

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Kencove Farm Fence Supplies

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General Manager
Grassland_solutions@yahoo.com
205 Broadway Avenue North, Cokato, MN 55321
(888)593-9535 (320)286-2196
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**Shepherd’s Harvest Festival—May 11-12**

There’s a movement afoot reclaiming the land, our health and our heritage. These days, many consider a new life of farming, wish to reconnect with the natural ways of working with wool, and have the timeless secrets of the textile arts revealed.

The Minnesota Shepherd’s Harvest Festival is at the heart of this renaissance. Held in May just as the fleeces are freshly shorn, this weekend event brings the annual wool harvest together with local artisans to spin forward traditional crafts now welcomed as ecofriendly ways of reconnecting buyers back to the source.

Families can enjoy a hands on exploration of sheep breeds, try out classes in simple and extraordinary textile arts and shop the richly colored, useful goods crafted by these artists and farmers. Learn how to grow your own socks, spin your own sweater and turn the fleece of one sheep into self made heirlooms for your whole family.

Beginning farmers can learn the basics of shepherding, select your own starter flock and find the mentors and community that can help you build you own hard working farm lifestyle.

Self proclaimed fiber fanatics can meet the shepherds who work all year to bring you the freshest, finest, locally grown wool. Build your skills in fleece preparation, hand spinning, natural dyes, felting, weaving, rug Hooking and more. Enter your own handiwork in the handspun and felting competitions and soak up this annual gathering of tools, trade and tradition.

There’s fresh coffee, kettle corn, and a wide variety of food and music and a spectacular array of vendors. It hosts the only fleece competition in the state as well as showcasing local authors, guilds and even a photo class and competition to help capture the magic.

The festival began in 1997 and is run entirely by volunteers. Llama Magic is held on the fairgrounds the same weekend as Shepherd’s Harvest.

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

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**MLWPA Board Meeting Minutes - Jeremy Geske**

The MLWPA board meeting was held on Feb. 2, 2013 at the Pizza Ranch in Litchfield. Present: John Dvorak, Dan Persons, Don Adelmann, Steve Scheffert, Mike Haubrich, Karen Stormo, Jeremy Geske, Steve Froehlich Mary Radermacher, Travis & Jeanine Fowler, guests: Dan Lippert & Kelly Froehlich.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30pm by President John Dvorak. The minutes from the Nov, 2012 meeting were presented by Jeremy- approved as read. Glenette sent the treasurer’s report to Jeremy to pass out. Total checking and savings $70,783.84 - approved subject to audit.

**Old business**

John D – Spring Sheep Workshop will be at the George Warrant farm on May 18. Focus on rotational grazing. Other ideas for speakers - talk to John.

Shepherd’s Holiday – positive comments on speakers and turnout. Travis – no real feedback on 1-day trade show. Make sure we do a better job on publicity prior to event.

**New business**

ASI Convention Report – Dan P - well attended. New region 3 director is Susan Schultz from OH. Big topic was increase in wage rate for H2A sheepherders. Bighorn sheep are still an issue in western states – research on monitoring. MIWW – MN’s adult winner, Jean Olson was 2nd overall.

ASI Councils and committees: Need to be nominated by Feb 15 – John will send in nominations. Doc Kennedy wants to be nominated for Animal Health Committee. Kelly Froehlich is interested in the emerging entrepreneurs. IkeHaubrich will consider being nominated for the Wool Council.

2013 Shepherd’s Holiday location: proposals were discussed from Chase on the Lake and Thumper Pond. Pros and cons were discussed. Moved by Dan P., seconded by Mike H to have the conference at Thumper Pond (Nov. 15-16). Motion Carried. Jeremy and Dan will follow up with details. Possible tour for Sunday morning.

Jeremy updated Sherry Stirling’s MN Grown grant idea for lamb cooking projects and/or BBQ boot camp – work with grape growers. Mike moved Travis seconded to proceed with grant proposal – motion carried.

Wolf damage, livestock insurance. Jeremy updated group on possibility that wolf damage payments may be phased out.

Youth report – Kelly gave a presentation on plan for youth activities and the incentive program. Open for any youth to participate. Jeremy moved, Steve seconded to officially name Kelly as the Youth Coordinator for 2013—carried.

Dan Lippert gave an update from the American Lamb Board and encouraged MLWPA to host a Lamb Jam event.

Next meeting—6/15—Litchfield.
Then lamb prices varied greatly across the nation again this past week. Colorado was sharply higher.

**Ft Collins CO April 17**

- **Lite Lambs** 60-96lbs  
  $170.00 - $215.00/cwt  
- **Slaughter Lambs** 105-143lbs  
  $155.00 - $180.00/cwt  
- **Good Ewes** 115 - 252lbs  
  $45.00 - $85.50/cwt

**Mt Hope OH April 17**

- **Bucks & Ewes** $30.00 - $47.50/cwt
- **Lambs** 40 - 60lbs  
  $122.50 - $215.00/cwt  
- **60 - 80lbs**  
  $120.00 - $157.50/cwt  
- **80 - 100lbs**  
  $120.00 - $157.50/cwt  
- **100 - 130lbs**  
  $115.00 - $142.50/cwt  
- **130 & Up**  
  $100.00 - $137.50/cwt

**Willard UT April 16**

- **Feeder Lambs** 79-98lbs  
  $115.00 - $169.00/cwt  
- **Slaughter Lambs** 121-135lbs  
  $103.00 - $131.00/cwt  
- **Good Ewes** 105-201lbs  
  $15.00 - $38.00/cwt  
- **Old Ewes** 105-201lbs  
  $15.00 - $38.00/cwt  
- **Bucks** 130-185lbs  
  $55.00 - $60.00/cwt

**Waverly IA April 15**

- **Fat Lambs** 110 - 140lbs  
  $95.00 to $107.00/cwt  
- **Feeder Lambs** 45 to 100lbs  
  $110.00 to $158.00/cwt  
- **Market Ewes**  
  $22.00  
- **Market Bucks**  
  $22.00 to $29.00/cwt

**California Ram Sale (unofficial)**

- **Suffolk Yearling Range Rams**  
  $350 - $1,075  
- **BF X range rams**  
  — $350 - $700  
- **WF X range rams**  
  — $400 - $450  
- **WF Yearling Range Rams**  
  $300 - $1,200

**Ed. Note: Congratulations to Herrig’s Hampshires, of MN on your Supreme Champion ewe at the 2013 Corn Belt Sale.**
**American Lamb Board News**

**B.L.D. American Lamb Media Crawl**

Last month, the American Lamb Board hosted a B.L.D. (breakfast, lunch and dinner) American Lamb media "crawl" – taking a group of food writers and bloggers on a bus tour of four DC restaurants. Each restaurant featured different lamb dishes for breakfast, lunch, appetizers and dinner. The last stop on the tour was at Border Springs Farm's new all-lamb restaurant and retail shop at Union Market. Each of the media guests got a leg of lamb from Border Springs Farm to take home for their Easter or Passover celebration. The tour was designed to showcase the versatility of lamb and to inspire the media to help us promote the great attributes of American Lamb and the DC Lamb Jam.

**ALB Cooperative Funding Programs**

Don't forget: Cooperative funding applications for the American Lamb Board's second round of funding are due April 30, 2013.

The Supplier Cooperative Funding Program is designed for suppliers to help fund branded retail or foodservice promotions. The Board established the programs to expand projects and activities that promote American Lamb and further the goals and objectives of the American Lamb Board's Strategic Plan. Visit LambCheckoff.com to download the application, or please contact Rae Maestas if you have questions or need additional information: 866-327-5262.

**DIY Lamb Jam Kit Now Available!**

ALB is now offering a new DIY (Do It Yourself) "How to Throw a Local Lamb Jam Kit" that includes step-by-step instructions for the whole event, from securing chef participants, sponsors and media judges to promoting and selling tickets, creating signage and on-site lamb activities, and more! ALB also has rentable items to help support your local lamb promotion. Rentables include: pop-up 10 x 10 tent, branded tablecloth, 10 x 10 hanging banner. For more information contact Rae Maestas at 866-327-5262.

**New Report Now Available**

The 2012 Annual Sheep Industry Market Analysis Report is now available. Please contact Rae at rae@americanlambboard.org for a copy of the report.

**Boston's American Lamb Pro-Am**

It's time for the second annual American Lamb Pro-Am coming to Boston on May 19, hosted by the American Lamb Board. From luscious lambanadas to killer kebabs, bloggers from Boston, Providence and Portland, Maine, have posted their favorite way to cook up American leg of lamb. The top bloggers with the most votes will win a spot at the American Lamb Pro-Am and be paired with an acclaimed chef to help with preparing their succulent dish at the May 19 event.

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**Stuffed Leg of Lamb — allrecipes.com**

**Ingredients:**

- 4 large potatoes, peeled & cubed
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup half-and-half cream
- 1/2 lb ground elk meat
- 1/4 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 parsnip, peeled & diced
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

**Directions**

Open up the roast on a cutting board. Place the boned side of the roast up. Cut away any excess fat. Cut 1/2-inch deep slits in the meat about 2 inches apart, to help the meat lie flat. Cover the meat with a sturdy piece of plastic wrap and pound the meat with a mallet until the roast is about 3/4 inch thick everywhere, and 10 to 14 inches square.

Preheat an oven to 400 degrees F.

Sprinkle the upper side of the meat with salt and pepper, and then spread spinach leaves over the top of the roast to within 1/2 inch of the edges. Break up the goat cheese and sprinkle it evenly over the spinach, then sprinkle the pine nuts over the cheese.

Roll the roast up into a tight cylinder, and tie the roast together with kitchen twine at 2 inch intervals.

Mix together the flour, 1 tablespoon of salt, 1 tablespoon of pepper, the thyme, and the fennel seeds, and press the tied roast firmly into the flour mixture to coat all sides.

Heat the sesame oil in a heavy oven-proof or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers, and sear all sides of the roast to a golden brown color. Lay the roast into the skillet, place into the preheated oven, and roast to your desired degree of doneness, or an internal temperature of 145 degrees F (for medium, about 40 minutes). Remove from the oven, cover with a doubled sheet of aluminum foil, and allow to rest in a warm area 10 to 15 minutes before slicing.
**SprinG Pasture Problems - Dr. J.L. Goelz, Pipestone**

**Bloat**

Bloat is simply an over distention of the rumen by gas. It can occur as either free gas bloat or as frothy bloat. Frothy bloat generally occurs when sheep are grazed on lush legume pasture such as alfalfa or clover. These plants produce a substance that will cause foaming in the rumen and the animal is unable to eructate or relieve this gas. Bloat is diagnosed when there is severe distention of the abdomen on the left side behind the last rib. To relieve free gas bloat you can either pass a stomach tube into the rumen or stick a 16 gauge by 1 1/2 inch needle into the rumen behind the last rib. To treat frothy bloat you need to administer 50ml of vegetable oil orally or injected into the rumen. This will break up the foam and allow the animal to eructate. Commercial anti-foaming agents such as Therabloat are also effective.

**Grass Tetany**

Grass Tetany occurs when sheep are grazing lush or heavily fertilized pasture. Fast growing plants have low levels of magnesium and since ruminants store very little magnesium they can become deficient, affected sheep will show a stiff gait, abnormal coordination, convulsions when stimulated, and may be found dead. Successful treatment for grass tetany is to administer subcutaneously 50-100ml of a magnesium containing solutions such as calcium boroglucanate (CMPK). Magnesium enemas are also rapidly absorbed and successful. Feeding magnesium in mineral free-choice mineral mixes for 30 days prior to pasture turnout is helpful as is allowing sheep to fill up on dry hay immediately prior to pasture turnout. Limiting grazing for the first few days is also beneficial. Up to 20% of affected animals may die even with therapy. Grass tetany is most prevalent in the southern U.S.

**Weaning Time—Dr. J.D. Bobb, Pipestone**

Successful weaning of your lamb crop requires planning that starts several weeks ahead of the expected wean date. We recommend lambs be weaned at 60-70 days of age. The lambs should be well adjusted to eating creep and drinking water by this age. The creep ration should be a 16% protein ration at this age.

The producer should not feed the ewe flock any corn the last week prior to weaning and the ewes should be on coarse grass hay. The reduction of energy will signal the ewe to reduce her milk production, and result in less mastitis and ruined udders. I know many people restrict water at time of weaning, but I do not. If you have done a good job in reducing the quality of forage intake the ewes will dry off correctly. You should walk the weaned ewe pen multiple times a day for the first week watching for signs of mastitis. If you see a ewe with a full, reddened, swollen painful udder, that maybe reluctant to move freely, you should treat her immediately and aggressively. Nuflor and Flunixin work very good in most cases. The higher the milk production, the higher the chance for mastitis. Poor milking ewes rarely have mastitis following weaning.

Lambs wean best if they stay in familiar surroundings. So if you can move the ewes to a distant area and leave the lambs in a pen that they know the location of feed and water that is advisable. Makes sure that there is a source or multiple sources of clean, fresh water available.

Adding a source of water soluble Vitamin E and electrolytes to the water sources is recommended. The Vitamin E will help boost immune function and reduce cases of White Muscle Disease. The electrolytes balance the lambs body needs and requirements. Lambs like long stem hay at weaning time and many prefer the hay over a grain source. Add 100ml of a magnesium containing solutions such as calcium boroglucanate (CMPK) Magnesium enemas are also rapidly absorbed and successful. Western lambs that have been on grass often are much older when weaned. These lambs should be started with a grass base diet and slowly worked to a concentrate diet over a three week period. The western lambs definitely should also be started with Vitamin E and electrolytes in their water. If you have questions about handling the ewes or lambs at weaning please give us a call.

Lambs should be gaining a pound a day during this phase, and some lambs will gain over a pound and a half. We think most lambs should be marketed by five months of age, the best doing lambs will be ready by four months of age.

Keep weaned lambs in an area that has plenty of fresh air avoiding stale high ammonia barns. The high ammonia levels lead to barn cough and rectal prolapsing.

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USDA Starts Program to Track Farm Animals in Cases of Disease

The federal government has launched a new livestock identification program to help agriculture officials to quickly track livestock in cases of disease.

It is the U.S.D.A.'s second attempt at implementing such a system, which officials say is critical to maintaining the security of the nation's food supply. An earlier, voluntary program failed because of widespread opposition among farmers and ranchers who described it as a costly hassle that didn't help control disease.

Group Distorts Resistance Data To Blame Farmers

Days after the release of a Center for Disease Control report showing that medical doctors annually are prescribing enough antibiotics to give them to 80 percent of Americans, a group is set to issue its own report, claiming that antibiotic use in food animals is the main cause for people developing antibiotic-resistant diseases.

The Environmental Working Group is using selective and incomplete 2011 government data on retail meat samples to blame livestock and poultry farmers for the growing problem of antibiotic-resistant illnesses in people.

In fact, 2000 to 2010 data from the federal National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System show a very low incidence of pathogenic bacteria on meat and stable to declining rates of those bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics.

The report was set to be released today ahead of congressional action on reauthorizing the Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA). Many groups who support legislation to ban the use in food animals of antibiotics that prevent or control diseases and of ones that improve nutritional efficiency are weighing in on ADUFA, urging Congress to limit the animal health products available to farmers.

But, points out the National Pork Producers Council, numerous peer-reviewed risk assessments, including at least one from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, have shown a "negligible" risk to human health of antibiotics use in livestock.

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Veterinary Medicine issued a statement cautioning the interpretation of antimicrobial resistance data.

Building Trust in What We Eat

FoodThink, a research-based initiative from Sullivan Higdon and Sink, was developed to uncover insights about food in America that can help agri-marketers craft effective communications to advance industry knowledge and confidence.

The newest FoodThink white paper, Building Trust in What We Eat, explores what consumers know (or think they know) about where their food comes from before it reaches their plates.

Valuable insights include:

- Americans crave more information about food production: 69 percent of consumers think it's important to understand how their food is produced.
- When you can't bring consumers to the farm, bring the farm to consumers: 19 percent of people who visit farms feel better about the safety and quality of the food they eat.
- The agriculture community can gain more consumer confidence: More consumers trust the agriculture community than food manufacturers, though there is room to improve their confidence with transparency and education.

Interestingly, consumers are more trusting of farmers and ranchers than of the academic community or media.

The report can be downloaded at http://shsfoodthink.com/white-papers.

Animal Rights Groups Sue FDA, USDA Over Egg Cartons

Striving to protect the living conditions of hens, animals lovers have sued federal agencies, demanding the government take action to revise labeling requirements for egg cartons.

A lawsuit filed in a California federal court contends labels are misleading because they mischaracterize the treatment animals are receiving. Plaintiffs include Compassion over Killing and Animal Legal Defense Fund, two nonprofit advocacy groups, and several members of the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Straight Talk Dr. G.F. Kennedy

Our friends in Europe are at it again. The Dutch have recalled 50 tons of beef because it may contain horse meat. These folks that have been unknowingly eating horse meat are the same people that banned individual maternity pens for sows and disallowed chickens to be caged. Egg prices went through the roof and last report they were killing 40,000 illegal pigs per hour in their slaughtering plants because production hadn't complied with regulation other than in the UK where the pig business has been virtually destroyed. Why is this important? The American Farmer needs to make his stand now, not tomorrow, not next month, not next year but now. No one cares more about livestock than the person that provides their daily care and as a group sheep and goat people are the best in the business of animal care.
**Agriculture Homestead Exemption**

SF 1499 authored by Sen. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook) would make changes to which farm property qualifies for the agriculture homestead classification for property tax purposes. The purpose of the legislation is to simplify and add clarity to our current system of determining agriculture property homestead classification. Similar legislation has not been introduced in the House at this time.

SF 1499 would:

- Preserve agricultural homestead or anyone living on their farm, including all other farmland within four cities or townships of the home.
- Preserve agricultural homestead for entity-owned land that is occupied by a member of the entity.
- Preserve agricultural homestead for trust-owned land that is occupied.
- Preserve relative agricultural homesteads.

The bill removes agricultural homesteads for farms that are not occupied by an owner or qualifying relative of the owner. Unoccupied farms, like unoccupied houses, would no longer receive agricultural homestead. Anyone currently receiving agricultural homestead on a property they occupy (or that is occupied by a relative) would continue to receive agricultural homestead.

**Motor Fuels Gross Receipts Tax**

The Senate Transportation Finance Bill, SF 1173, was heard in the Senate Taxes Committee on April 22. The bill creates a new Motor Fuels Gross Receipts Tax imposed on the "wholesale business of selling the means or substance used for propelling vehicles on the highways of the state" commonly referred to as transportation fuel. The tax would be imposed at a rate of 5.5% of gross receipts derived by a distributor from the first sale at wholesale.

SF 1173 reduces the current fuel tax from 25 cents per gallon to 19 cents per gallon. The 5.5% tax rate works out to about 15.5 cents per gallon at today's prices. The net effect is a 9.5 cent per gallon increase in fuel taxes.

It was stated during the committee hearing that farm use of gasoline would be exempt from the new tax, but farm use of diesel would not be exempt from the new tax. There is no similar provision in the House.

**Agriculture Policy bills and Agriculture Finance bills move from House and Senate Floors toward Conference**

The House and Senate both worked throughout the day on Friday and Saturday to advance the omnibus Environment and Agriculture bills. Bills in both bodies cover a very wide range of subject area beyond agriculture including sanitary districts, economic development, DNR and MPCA allocations, labor law, energy policies and many other areas. Therefore we are now in a hurry up and wait scenario as the House and Senate leadership determines how to conferree this giant bill. *Agriculture has become a minor part of the focus after Januaries’ decision by leadership to join Environment, Economic Development and Agriculture committees in to one committee. Issues to be resolved in conference will include water fees and the fate of the Water Certification program.*

**Senate takes up Immigration Reform**

SB 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act was introduced this week as the first major proposed overhaul of the immigration policy in two decades.

The 800 plus pages of legislation addresses border security and availability of foreign labor, including agriculture workers.

For the agriculture sector, the bill would create a new "blue card" program for experienced farm workers and a new version of the current agricultural worker-visa program. Additionally, two work options would be established – a portable, at-will employment-based visa and a contract-based visa program. Two "W" visas would be established and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) would have a prominent role in creating the rules and regulations of the agriculture work programs. The new program, administered by the USDA, would provide multi-year contracts, which is a long-standing provision of today’s H-2A sheepherder program.

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) notes a section is included that specifies special procedures applying to sheepherding, open-range livestock and animal shearing. Sen. Orrin Hatch (Utah) was key in establishing the language recognizing the provisions that have been a long-standing practice of the current H-2A visa by agriculture such as the sheep industry. Language requires the secretary of agriculture to adopt procedures relating to housing, pay and visa applications for special procedure industries.

The Agricultural Workers Coalition, a sponsor of the agriculture section, characterizes the special procedures section as transferring today’s H-2A...
procedures, which are used by a number of industries, into the new programs and codified. The H-2A program would sunset one year after the new visa program is enacted. Therefore, ASI believes it is critical that codification of the key provisions of the H-2A shepherder program, including wage, housing, multi-year contract and job description, are accomplished.

The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee is conducting hearings on the immigration bill.

**Tax Reform Comments**

The American Sheep Industry Association joined more than 20 other national agriculture groups in sending a letter to the Ways and Means Committee Small Business Working Group offering comments on tax reform issues of concern to farmers and ranchers.

For many farmers and ranchers, the appraised value of rural land is inflated when compared to its agricultural value. Many operations are able to utilize the Special Use Valuation (Section 2032A) giving owners the ability to reduce their estate taxes by allowing a limited amount of business property to be valued for its actual use rather than for its highest value use (up to $1 million) for estate tax purposes. The letter recommended that there be no limitation on the amount that property values can be reduced.

The committee’s draft proposes setting the Section 179 Small Business Expensing limit at $250,000, which would be reduced dollar-for-dollar when expenses exceed $800,000 indexed for inflation. The signatories to the letter support maintaining the current $500,000 Section 179 small business expensing limitation reduced dollar-for-dollar by the amount that expenses exceed $2 million.

A complete report on the proposals to reform small business is available at http://waysandmeans.house.gov/taxreform.

**Canada Threatens Sanctions over U.S. Meat Labeling**

Canada is considering imposing sanctions of up to $980 million a year against the United States unless it complies with a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling requiring changes in how it labels meat, according to media reports.

Canadian Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said on Tuesday the country would consider "extensive retaliatory measures" against the United States over country-of-origin labels (COOL) introduced in 2009.

Talking to reporters after meeting with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Ritz said the rules are costing Canadian beef and pork producers C$1 billion ($980 million) a year in lost sales, and Canada would look to recoup that amount.

Mexico and Canada successfully argued before the World Trade Organization last year that the labels are discriminatory, and the WTO gave the United States until May 23 to change them.

The new labels, which identify where beef, pork, chicken and lamb sold in the United States come from, sharply reduced U.S. imports of foreign-raised pigs and cattle because they required U.S. packers to segregate imported animals from U.S.-grown livestock.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on March 12 proposed a rule to alter country-of-origin labeling in an attempt to bring the United States into compliance with its obligations under the WTO. The American Sheep Industry Association filed comments in support of these changes in an effort to keep labeling mandatory for American lamb.

**Proposal to Eliminate Biofuels Mandate**

Legislation was proposed Wednesday by four U.S. Congressmen that would ease what they believe are the impacts of the ethanol mandate "and protect consumers, energy producers, livestock producers, food manufacturers, retailers and the U.S. economy."

The Renewable Fuel Standard Reform Act, introduced by Reps. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), Jim Costa (D-Calif.), Steve Womack (R-Ark.) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.), would eliminate the biofuels mandate, beginning in 2014, and rescind the requirements of blending up to 15-percent ethanol into the fuel supply. The proposal would prohibit corn-based ethanol from being used to meet the RFS, and reduce the total size of the RFS by 42% over the next nine years.

A coalition of 13 food groups expressed support for the proposed legislation which they believe will protect food makers and consumers from unnecessary price increases.

The RFS last year required 13.2 billion gallons of corn-based ethanol to be blended into gasoline; it mandates that 13.9 billion gallons be blended in 2013, an amount that will use about 4.9 billion bushels of corn, or about 40% of the nation’s crop.

National cattle and pork groups last fall called on lawmakers to make changes to the RFS, following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) refusal to use the safety valve built into it to waive the biofuels mandate in the wake of a severe drought that drastically cut the corn crop.

NCBA and NPPC want a reform bill that ensures market stability, feed availability and the long-term sustainability of rural American economies.

MLWP Leaders Head to DC

John Dvorak, Randy Kinney and Steve Scheffert will participate in the ASI spring trip to DC.
SIX THINGS MOMS GET WRONG AT THE GROCERY STORE

Moms aren’t always right when it comes to the grocery store, according to a new survey of more than 1,000 mothers. Instead, the survey found that moms are often misinformed, especially when buying “all-natural” and “hormone-free” products. Among the misconceptions, the survey found that many moms:

1. Are willing to spend more for hormone-free poultry and pork: More than half of moms agree that it’s important to feed their families hormone-free poultry and pork. However, the USDA prohibits farmers from using hormones to raise these species.

2. Reach for “all natural” products: Fifty-three percent of moms surveyed say it’s important to purchase food labeled “all natural.” An “all natural” label does not include standards regarding farm practices and only applies to processing of meat and egg products. It doesn’t connote nutritional benefits.

3. Think that family farms are dying: Seven out of 10 moms in the survey think that family farms are dying. Seventy percent also believe that farmers should be a key resource for those seeking information related to food and/or farming, but four out of five moms don’t seek information from farmers. Ninety-eight percent of the 2.2 million farms in the US are family farms.

4. Incorrectly defined organic production: Eighty-four percent think that the organic food is farmed without the use of any pesticides, fertilizers or herbicides. Half of the moms believe that organic is nutritionally better than non-organic foods. American Academy of Pediatrics points that “current evidence does not support any meaningful nutritional benefits or deficits from eating organic compared with conventionally grown foods, and there are not well-powered human studies that directly demonstrate health benefits or disease protection as a result of consuming an organic diet.”

5. Fear GMOs: Three-quarters of the moms surveyed questioned the safety of GMO foods, while nearly half of the survey participants consider GMOS foods has nutritionally and chemically different than non-GMO food. Modern biotech crops have been commercially grown for more than 12 years, and there has not been a single documented case of an ecosystem disrupted or a person made ill. Earlier this year one of the founders of the anti-GMO movement announced that he was wrong about GMOs.

6. Believe that local is better: More than half of the moms say locally-produced foods are always better for the environment. In some situations can take more energy to grow and harvest local food than it does it grow it far away and have it shipped. The U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance offers advice for when buying local is and is not the best choice.

Reprinted from Drovers

The Center for Consumer Freedom began taking on PETA in 2005 and the Humane Society of the United States in 2010. We have seen significant successes on both fronts including more than seven million visitors to our PETAKillsAnimals website, a 25 percent drop in PETA’s public approval ratings and a 6.5 percent drop in public donations to HSUS from 2010 to 2011 (while overall charitable giving in the U.S. rose 7.5 percent -- a 14 point gap). Additionally, the amount of time and effort these groups spend attacking CCF serves as a good indication of the threat they feel. Cher’s messages (below) have been re-tweeted by more than 1,000 people.
FOOD STAMP MOM BREAKS HER SILENCE - KATIE PINKE

I didn't look like a food stamp mom, but for two critical years I was. You might have a preconceived idea of what a mom on food stamps looks like, where she lives, the mistakes she has made to get to this point in her life. But you don't really know her until you know her story.

I have been silent about food stamps for more than a decade. Only a few close friends have known I was ever on them. But hearing political candidates, politicians, commentators, colleagues, and friends comment about food stamps gets my blood boiling at times. Today I break my silence.

I am from a Christian family, a family that prays before every meal and a family that goes to church every Sunday. Growing up, no one in my family had been divorced. My family all fit somewhere into America’s middle class. We were never rich. We lived comfortably with disposable income. We were never poor. And we certainly didn’t know anyone on food stamps.

Then along came my story. I was a teenager with a track scholarship to a major university. I was the first in my family to have a child outside of marriage. I was supported and loved, but I was in need.

As a single mother and college student trying to get child support for my son, my attorney advised me to apply for childcare assistance and food stamps. By becoming a "ward of the state," the government would fight for me to get child support.

I would become one of them. I didn’t accept the welfare check. I could have. But instead my parents helped me with expenses, I took out student loans, and I worked different jobs to pay bills. But for a time in my life, I did accept food stamps and childcare assistance. It allowed me to complete my education while raising my young son.

Was I living in the slums? No. I was living in a beautiful home that my parents owned. I lived there with my son and three roommates who split the bills with us.

Could my parents have just paid my bills? Yes. I could have lived on our family farm with them, 60 miles from my university. But at the time, my parents were dealing with their own financial losses from a flood.

I needed to be responsible for my own circumstances. Was I "lazy" and not working, living off the government "paycheck?" Absolutely not. I worked for $10 an hour in an internship. I worked every other weekend and one night a week at a grocery store bakery. I waitressed at the only local smoke-free bar and grill on the weekends when my parents could watch my son at their farm or on weeknights when my roommates would babysit.

I was a full-time student, taking classes around my work commitments. Most importantly, I was a mother of a toddler trying to make time daily to spend with him. I had a support network of my family, loyal friends, neighbors, and church.

But I also had a sense of urgency. I needed to get my degree. I needed to provide. I needed to build a life for my son. I did not want him to be a statistic. I wanted him to be in the most loving, supportive environment possible.

Food stamps were a part of my solution to create a future for my son and me. Food stamps helped me for two years and childcare assistance just six months longer.

Because I was in the "system" the state worked to first get me $56 a month of child support. A few years later, $266 of child support came through monthly. Did the child support pay my rent? No. But it paid electricity. Then when I graduated from college, I earned a salary of

$24,000. I had health insurance. My son was four years old. I called my caseworker and told her I no longer needed to receive benefits. I was breaking free!

Did she congratulate me? Hardly. She expressed her concern that I would not be in need anymore. She assured me I could still probably qualify for some services. The truth is, I never wanted to go back to social services. I never wanted to slide that food stamps card at the grocery store again. I felt shame. I felt guilt. I felt eyes staring at me. I wanted more for my son. I wanted freedom and ability to provide on my own.

Until recently, I worked in agriculture in state government. I know the "Farm" Bill is truly the "Food" Bill. You might not be impacted by the food stamp program, but you might be surprised to know all the people around you who are. We are often silent.

Should the USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) be subject to cuts? Yes. My answer might have surprised you. However, if our government is going to live within its means, we have to make cuts in all programs.

In 1970, 1 in 50 Americans received food stamps. Today 1 in 7

Cont. on p. 14
**SCRAPIE NEWS**

The monthly report for the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) - March 2013 - has been posted to www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/downloads/monthly_scrapie_rpt.pdf.

Published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the report reviews the current progress of scrapie eradication in the United States. March highlights include:

- At the end of FY 2012, the percent of cull sheep found positive at slaughter and adjusted for face color was 0.006 percent. This measure of prevalence has decreased by 96 percent since slaughter surveillance started in FY 2003. As of March 31, 2013, this measure of prevalence remained consistent.
- As of March 31, two source flocks and one infected flock have been designated in FY 2013.
- Also announced this week, the NSEP has determined that radio frequency identification device (RFID) implants that do not conform to International Organization for Standardization standards may continue to be used in goats for official identification until March 11, 2014.

For further information about this decision, and for RFID requirements that come into force after March 11, 2015, review the "Addendum to the Goat Identification, Visual and Electronic Power Point Regarding Electronic Implantable Devices" available at http://eradicatescrapie.org/Educational%20Resources/ID%20Requirements%20for%20Sheep%20&%20Goats.html.

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**MLWP YOUTH UPDATE—KELLY FROEHLICH**

The MLWP junior committee has been off to a busy spring! On April 16th the MLWP juniors hosted a booth at the University of Minnesota Agricultural Awareness on the Minneapolis campus. It brought many preschool kids, as well as college staff and students. We also had the opportunity to host an a booth at the MN state FFA convention on April 29th bringing more than 3,000 high school students from all over MN. Both events gave a great opportunity to promote the lamb & wool industry.

Educational material from the American Lamb Board, American Sheep Industry, and MLWP was given away.

Coming up, we are planning setting up a promotional booth at Shepherd’s Harvest at Lake Elmo May 11&12. We also, have been invited by an FFA chapter to set up a booth May 17th at a career fair hosted at a Richmond elementary school. MLWP board members are also looking for youth members to help with registration at the spring workshop May 18th in Kasota, MN.

If you want or know anybody who would be willing to help out with any of the upcoming events send me an email at kellyssheep@gmail.com
Sheep are widely regarded as some of the most dim-witted creatures in the animal kingdom, but new research has revealed they are far more intelligent than they have previously been given credit for. They are an animal so apparently dim-witted that they have become a byword for stupidity and mindlessly following the crowd. New research, however, reveals that sheep are far more intelligent than they have been given credit for.

Scientists at the University of Cambridge have found that the creatures have the brainpower to equal rodents, monkeys and, in some tests, even humans. [Ed. Note: I know some of these humans] The results suggest that sheep have relatively advanced learning capabilities, are adaptable, can map out their surroundings mentally and may even be able to plan ahead.

The animals' tendency to blindly follow the flock has led to sheep becoming enshrined in the English language as a description for unquestioningly doing what others are doing.

But professor Jenny Morton, a neuroscientist at University of Cambridge, said sheep had been greatly undervalued for their intelligence.

She said "They have a reputation for being extremely dim and their flock behavior backs that up as they are very silly animals when in a group – if there is a hole they will fall into it, if there is something to knock over, then they will knock it over. So I didn't expect them to be so amenable to testing and certainly didn't expect them to be so smart. In our tests they performed at a level very similar to monkeys and humans in the initial learning tasks."

"When we then changed the rules they still performed as well as monkeys and better than rodents. "They are quite intelligent animals – they seem to be able to recognize people and even respond when you call their name."

Professor Morton was studying sheep intelligence in the hope that they may be useful as an animal model of Huntington's Disease, a neurodegenerative disorder that leads to dementia and affects muscle control.

Researchers in Australia have created a genetically-modified sheep that displays symptoms similar to Huntington's Disease in humans, but it is unclear whether the animals would undergo the same cognitive decline that would make them useful for testing potential treatments.

Professor Morton put a flock of seven normal Welsh Mountain sheep through a series of tests to examine their learning ability as a mark of their intelligence.

In one test she used yellow and blue colored buckets to see how long it would take the animals to learn that they could find food in the same colored bucket each time. The sheep learned this in about the same space of time as monkeys and rodents typically do.

In a more complex task where the sheep had to learn where the food was according to colored shapes, the animals picked up the new rules within 32 attempts.

Professor Morton said: "The sheep learned that color was irrelevant and that shape was what mattered. "This is a really sophisticated rule change and is generally something that humans take some time to learn. Mice and rats can't do it at all. Marmosets take longer than the sheep did to learn while Rhesus monkeys are quicker. "So we can probably classify sheep as being a bit like a slow monkey in terms of intelligence."

Professor Morton has also conducted trials to test the spatial memory of sheep and found they are able to navigate by forming memories of their surrounding environments. She is also now conducting tests to see whether sheep are able to plan ahead.

Previous research at the Babraham Institute in Cambridge has also shown that sheep have the ability to recognize faces and react to different facial expressions.

Farmers in West Yorkshire have also reported flocks of sheep with apparent problem solving skills after the animals found they could overcome cattle grids by rolling on their backs.

"Sheep can perform executive cognitive tasks that have never been shown to exist in any other large animals apart from monkeys."

"This means they have great potential for studying cognitive function as well as being a model of Huntington's Disease." [Ed. Note: People who say "sheep are stupid" have usually just been outsmarted by them.]
do. Not every one of those people is going to do what I did or have the support network and circumstances I was given. But I believe food stamp recipients need to feel a sense of urgency. They need to be encouraged to find a solution that does not require continuous government assistance.

They need to be empowered to use food stamps as a temporary step to a long-term solution; a solution that includes breaking free of social services.

I am a farm girl, a former single mom on food stamps, who wants our government to live within its means and provide temporary assistance to empower people to build and grow their destiny.

I feel the same urgency today that I felt when I wanted to provide for my son to get off food stamps, only for our country. We cannot wait. We must make the call and break free.

A special thanks to my son, Hunter, for making me the mom I am today.

About the Author: Katie Pinke is from a 5th generation family farm and resides in Wishek, North Dakota with her husband and three children. She works as a consultant and speaker across North America to the food and agriculture industry. She originally published this piece on her personal blog The Pinke Post: thepinkepost.com. You can stay connected with her on Facebook: www.facebook.com/PinkePost or Twitter: www.twitter.com/katpinke

Spring Sheep Workshop—May 18, Kasota MN—see you there!
# Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 6-8</td>
<td>ASI Spring Legislative Trip</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>John Dvorak <a href="mailto:bjdvorak81@hotmail.com">bjdvorak81@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9-11</td>
<td>Big Ohio Sale / Ohio Suffolk Sale</td>
<td>Eaton Ohio</td>
<td>Greg Deakin 309-785-5058</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 11-12</td>
<td>Shepherd’s Harvest Festival</td>
<td>Lake Elmo, MN</td>
<td>Julie Mackenzie (612) 961-9625</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Spring Sheep Workshop</td>
<td>Kasota, MN</td>
<td>John Dvorak <a href="mailto:bjdvorak81@hotmail.com">bjdvorak81@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30-Jun 1</td>
<td>Nugget All American Sheep Sale</td>
<td>Sparks, NV</td>
<td>Greg Deakin 309-785-5058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>MLWPA Starter Flock application deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td>John Dvorak <a href="mailto:bjdvorak81@hotmail.com">bjdvorak81@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8-9</td>
<td>Iowa Sheep &amp; Wool Festival</td>
<td>Adel, IA</td>
<td>Mickey Burch <a href="mailto:info@iowasheep.com">info@iowasheep.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>Midwest Jr Preview Show</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
<td>Kate Lambert <a href="http://www.midwestjuniorpreviewshow.com">www.midwestjuniorpreviewshow.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24-29</td>
<td>Midwest Stud Ram Sale/Nat. Suffolk Sale</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 4-7</td>
<td>UJSSA National Junior Suffolk Show</td>
<td>East Lansing, MI</td>
<td>Tayler Wolff <a href="mailto:wolff.tayler@gmail.com">wolff.tayler@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 4-7</td>
<td>All American Junior Sheep Show</td>
<td>East Lansing, MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 14-17</td>
<td>NLFA Howard Wymann Leadership School</td>
<td>San Angelo, TX 503.364.5462</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>National Rambouillet Show &amp; Sale</td>
<td>Herber, UT</td>
<td>Greg Deakin 309/785-5058</td>
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<td>July 20</td>
<td>MN Suffolk Sheep Assoc. State Show</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>MN Suffolk Sheep Assoc State Jr. Show</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td>Sara Saul <a href="mailto:saramsaul@gmail.com">saramsaul@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>July 26-27</td>
<td>Center of the Nation NSIP sale</td>
<td>Spencer, IA</td>
<td>Jerry Sorensen <a href="mailto:wclones@harlannet.com">wclones@harlannet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 31-Sep. 1</td>
<td>World Sheep &amp; Fiber Arts Festival</td>
<td>Bethel, MO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.worldsheepfest.com">www.worldsheepfest.com</a></td>
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<td>Sept. 6-8</td>
<td>Wisconsin Sheep &amp; Wool Festival</td>
<td>Jefferson, WI</td>
<td>Jill Alf <a href="mailto:wisbc@centurytel.net">wisbc@centurytel.net</a></td>
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<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Autumn Fare</td>
<td>Jordan, MN</td>
<td>Lori Pint <a href="mailto:lori54@bevcomm.net">lori54@bevcomm.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 19-20</td>
<td>Newell Ram Sale</td>
<td>Newell, SD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nov.15-16</strong></td>
<td>MLWP Shepherd’s Holiday</td>
<td>Thumper Pond - Ottertail, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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Have an item for the calendar—email it to Jeremy.

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