**Shepherd’s News**

**Make it With Wool Fashion Show Highlights the Shepherd’s Holiday**

The Minnesota “Make It With Wool” contest was held at Thumper Pond and Resort, Ottertail, MN on November 16, 2013 in conjunction with the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Annual Conference. There were 30 entries in four age divisions along with Made for Others, Quilt/Afghan and Novelty categories using more than 150 yards of beautiful wool fabric or yarn to create their garments and other wool item.

Advancing on to the National Competition on January 23-25 in Charleston SC:

- **Junior (age 13-16):** Andrea Dunrud of Forest Lake.
- **Senior (age 17-24):** Sarah Thelen of Oakdale.
- **Adult: (age 25-over):** Mary Ann Thelen of Oakdale.

Participates in the preteen honor group for ages 12 and

**President’s Message - John Dvorak**

I hope everybody had a blessed and wonderful holiday. The year 2013 is behind us. It was a year of ups and downs. Winter stayed longer than we wanted, prolonging spring planting and continued to stay cold. Then the weather dried up and stayed dry, finally ending with somewhat of a normal fall. I hope everybody had a good harvest and enough feed to last till next harvest.

With all the challenges that faced us last year; the high price of corn, shortage of hay, and weather conditions, and our industry once again thankfully prevailed.

By now winter lambing should be in full swing. I always like this time of the year with new lambs coming in. It is a fresh start to a new year of lambs. Hopefully the new addition to our flocks whether being a ram or replacement ewes will be successful and help to improve our flocks.

Last November the Minnesota Lamb and Wool held its annual convention.

Cont. on p. 2
**President’s Message—cont.**

Attendance was down some but those who attended enjoyed a good time. The event started with our first ever “Celebrate Lamb Social” where a chef prepared lamb cuts several different ways and then served it to all those in attendance. We also had sheep cheese from Shepherd’s Way Farm and wine from a local winery. All proved to be very tasty. Saturday held some very informative sessions followed by an annual meeting. Election of officers were held and all officers were voted in again for another year.

One can expect this year to be full of challenges. We still do not have a farm bill in place. They keep promising that we will have one soon but we also were told that two years ago. Hopefully lamb prices will keep rising making for a profitable year.

I want to thank those who voted for me look forward to serve as president of the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers.

I hope everyone has good luck with their lambing.

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**Make It With Wool Winners—cont.**

under were Ceceilia Voss of Apple Valley, Heidi Imker of Lamberton and Kyerra Carter of Starbuck.

Exemplary Construction Awarded to Sarah Thelen of Oakdale.

Quilt/Afghan category was won by Traci Lafrentz of St. Joseph

Novelty item the overall winner was Adult - Sara Weckman of Shakopee and Youth - Amy Marquette of Buffalo.

The purpose of the “Make It With Wool” contest is to focus attention on the beauty and versatility of wool, to encourage the use of wool fabric or yarn in sewing, knitting or crocheting fashionable garments. Contestants must use fabric or yarn of at least 60% wool. Beautiful wool prizes were awarded to each contestant. Glenette Sperry served as State Director for the contest.

Sponsors for the Contest were: Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers; American Sheep Industry Women; Pendleton Woollen Mills, Portland OR; Treadle Yard Goods, St. Paul, MN; St. Peter Woolen Mills, St. Peter, MN; Hagedorn Farm, Granada, MN; Tanika Bender, Center City, MN; Don Adelmann, Cologne.
MN PRODUCTS WANTED FOR STATE FAIR

Each year, MLWPA has a commercial booth at the Minnesota State Fair. The commercial booth is located in the Dairy Building near the Princess Kay butter sculptures. Its purpose is to showcase Minnesota grown and/or produced wool, rovings, yarns, sheepskins and other sheep related items. It also serves as the major fundraiser for MLWPA.

Producers set the prices on their merchandise. MLWPA retains a percentage of the retail sales from each item (consignment fee). Last year, that fee was 45%. MLWPA covers the cost of the booth, provides the fixtures and cash register. MLWPA collects and pays the state sales tax on applicable items. After the fair, contributors get a check for the items that sold, less the consignment fee.

Producers must deliver the items to the State Fair booth on set up day (Aug. 19) and pick up their items on the last day of the fair (Sept. 1).

Consignors to the State Fair booth can significantly reduce the consignment fee by working at the booth during the fair (contact Loretta Pedersen for details: blackberryhills@yahoo.com). Tickets for entry to the fair are provided by MLWPA for workers.

If you have Minnesota grown or produced merchandise that you are interested in selling at the State Fair, please email a description to Loretta before the end of April. Getting on the list of potential contributors does not obligate you to participate; it just helps the booth organizers know what is out there. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Loretta directly. As the spring progress, there will be a meeting of potential contributors to discuss additional details.

Note that MLWP will have a booth at the Shepherds Harvest Festival at the Washington County Fairgrounds on May 17 and 18. Stop by and ask if you have additional questions about this program.

MLWPA BOARD MEETING MINUTES - JEREMY GESKE

The MLWPA Board meeting was held 1/11/14 at the Pizza Ranch in Litchfield, MN. Present: John Dvorak - President, Melanie Pamp, Karen Stormo, Steve & Eric Froehlich, Steve Scheffert, Mike Haubrich, Don Adelmann, Jeremy Geske, Glenette Sperry, Mary Radermacher, Travis & Jeanine Fowler

President Dvorak called the meeting to order at 12:45
Moved/2nd to approve updated agenda – passed.

Jeremy Geske distributed the minutes from the last meeting – moved & 2nded to approve the minutes as amended – passed.

Glenette Sperry distributed the treasurer’s report. The total was $66, 489.88 in all accounts. Discussion on MN grown grant. Moved & 2nd to approve the treasurer’s report subject to audit – motion carried.

Jeremy gave the membership report (65+ members), invoices to go out soon. Newsletter to go to printer next 2 weeks. Plan to do e-mail newsletters in the off months.

Directory has not really begun yet – target due date is May 1. Discussion on website traffic and putting the directory on-line.

Commercial booth discussion – Sherry S – emailed Glenette. Sherry now has the trailer w/ inventory. $19,000+ in inventory. Stipends for 2014 retail operations were discussed. Much discussion on direction for future. It was moved/2nded to form a commercial booth sub-committee chaired by Mary to determine the direction of the booth and report back to the board at our next meeting - passed.

Old Business – Shepherd’s Holiday recap – and discussion on 2014. Glenette gave a recap on MIWW. Locations for 2014/15 discussed. Attendance down because of date conflicts. Mostly facilities worked great. Lots of discussion on ways to add value for participants. Moved /2nd to have Shepherd’s Holiday on 1st weekend in December – passed. Jeremy will convene a planning committee. 2014 location will be determined ASAP. Jeremy applied for an ALB grant for $3000 for the Celebrate Lamb Social.

Spring workshop will be held at Holly Neaton’s farm. John is coordinating with Holly.

Shepherd’s Harvest Festival – we have the booth rented – week after Mother’s Day.

Baa booth – need a person to be in charge. Discuss more at next meeting.

ASI convention – John will be voting delegate. Glenette will be going for MIWW.

ASI to DC trip – no dates yet. Melanie and John possibly interested.

Lamb Feeders school – California this year.

OPP project update – Judy/Holly could not attend. Some discussion on how it’s going.

Next meeting date: – March 22 – same as Spring Sheep Workshop, Watertown area.

Meeting adjourned
American sheep ranchers appear poised to modestly expand their herds, enticed by favorable weather and improved grazing throughout much of the nation in 2013. Strong prices are helping, too—$160-$180/cwt. for a range of lamb weights in major markets, for example. Such prices are up sharply from a year ago, and they are likely to stay strong because imports from New Zealand and Australia, which supply more than half of the U.S. lamb meat, are expected to slip a little this year. Also, the recently slow slaughter pace suggests this month's U.S. Department of Agriculture sheep inventory will show more ewes than a year ago, pointing to an uptick in lamb births for 2014.

**Feeder Prices**, San Angelo: 61 lbs $206/cwt.; 70-90 lbs 190.00-210.00 $/cwt.; 107 lbs $181/cwt.
**Slaughter Prices - Negotiated**, wooled and shorn, 109-169 lbs. for 139-174 $/cwt. (wtd. ave. 159.24)
**Slaughter Prices - Formula1**, 5,837 head at 288.02-319.81 $/cwt. for 80 ave. lbs.; 2,146 head at 270-296 $/cwt. for 87.20 ave. lbs.
**Equity Electronic Auction**, No sale.

**Carcass Price**
Choice and Prime, YG 1-4, $/cwt., weighted averages, 620 head at 55-65 lbs. for 326.21, 1,671 head at 65-75 lbs. for 306.72, 2,389 head at 75-85 lbs. for 294.46, 1,203 head at 85 lbs. and up for 288.55.

**Exported Adult Sheep**
648 shipped the week of 1/2/2014
**Wool**
Price ($/pound) Clean, Delivered, From 4 weeks ago: 18 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 19 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 20 micron (Grade 70s) NA, 21 micron (Grade 64-70s) 3.97, 22 micron (Grade 64s) 3.85-3.93, 23 micron (Grade 62s) 3.66, 24 micron (Grade 60-62s) 3.44, 25 micron (Grade 58s) NA, 26 micron (Grade 56-58s) NA, 27 micron (Grade 56s) NA, 28 micron (Grade 54s) NA, 29 micron (Grade 50-54s) NA, 30-34 micron (Grade 44-50s) 1.49-1.54.

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Kalona IA  Feeder Lambs $245 - $255/cwt, Slaughter lambs $159 - $161/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $32.50 - $90/cwt
Mt Hope OH  Feeder Lambs $157.50 - $325/cwt, Slaughter lambs $160 - $182.50/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $60- $85/cwt
Ft Collins CO  Feeder Lambs $202.50 - $245/cwt, Slaughter lambs $172 - $215/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $59 - $140/cwt
Twin Falls ID  Feeder Lambs $166 - $186/cwt, Slaughter lambs $145 - $165/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $32 - $85/cwt
Zumbrota, MN  Feeder Lambs $150 - $200/cwt, Slaughter lambs $150 - $160/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $40 - $70/cwt
Pipestone, MN  Feeder Lambs $177/cwt, Slaughter lambs $155.50 - $158.50/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $50 - $66/cwt
Jackson, MN  Feeder Lambs $169 - $225/cwt, Slaughter lambs $160/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $46 - $57/cwt
Sioux Falls, SD  Feeder Lambs $182 - $207/cwt, Slaughter lambs $155 - $168/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $57- $140/cwt
St. Onge, SD  Feeder Lambs $230 - $255/cwt, Slaughter lambs $197 - $214/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $55.50 - $65.50/cwt
AMERICAN LAMB BOARD NEWS

Have you Read the Industry Roadmap Report?

The Industry Roadmap Report covers an in-depth analysis of The American Lamb Industry; including a look at past and present consumer behavior, industry-wide goals and a comprehensive guide of our responsibilities and a guideline of how we can work together to achieve our objectives. This is an inclusive document that will be used by all of us to take The American Lamb Industry to future success.

The Industry Roadmap Report was a collaborative effort from everyone in our industry, and is only the first step in the process of our development. We’re excited to share this report with you in detail. Please take the time to look at the Industry Roadmap Report to learn about American Lamb’s exciting future.

You can find the full report on www.lambcheckoff.com.

Telling Lamb’s Nutrition Story

"When it comes to healthy entertaining, it's important to serve a diverse array of foods," says Janice Bissex, a nutritionist that advocates for American Lamb, "and flavorful, tender lamb is a nutrient-rich protein source that's as easy to prepare as other meats."

The Tri Lamb Group focuses on educating the public about lamb's health benefits through multiple different channels. Healthy Home Entertaining with Lamb, a mat release containing recipes and healthy tips from our experts was distributed to newspapers and online sites in August, 2013. This release reached a print audience of 1 million and an online audience of 12 million.

The TLG also partnered with the National Mango Board to co-host an exclusive event in New York City launching a new health-focused cookbook, Eating in Color. The launch was attended by over 25 top tier food and nutrition editors and writers from publications including: Shape, Women's Health, Good Housekeeping, Every Day with Rachel Ray, Huffington Post, Everyday Health, Epicurious, Family Circle, Weight Watchers Magazine, Bon Appetite, and Glamour. Attendees were able to sample lamb recipes and now have the opportunity to learn nourishing and creative ways to use lamb from ideas in the cookbook.

PESTO GRILLED RACK OF LAMB WITH AGED BALSAMIC SYRUP BY CHEF BEN MCCALLUM (2013 CELEBRATE LAMB SOCIAL)

Pesto Crusted Rack of Lamb

3 racks Petite rack of lamb, cleaned
1 cup Basil-pistachio pesto
1/2 cup Extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper

Place racks of lamb onto a baking sheet and season with salt and pepper. Coat the meat of the racks with prepared pesto and oil. Let rest for 10 minutes.

Preheat grill on high. Grill rack of lamb for 5 to 7 minutes on each side, giving a half turn of the rack half way through the time. Remove from grill and let rest for 5 minutes. Using a sharp knife, cut between each of the bones to create individual chops.

Basil-Pistachio Pesto

1/2 lb Fresh basil, cleaned/stem removed
1/2 cup Pistachios, hulled
2 cloves Garlic, fresh
2 Tbsp Romano cheese, grated
1/2 Cup Extra virgin olive oil

Place pistachios in food processor and pulse until they break down into small pieces. Add basil, garlic and romano to processor and process for all ingredients to combine, adding oil as processing to allow all ingredients to blend smoothly. Remove from processor and store covered in refrigerator until ready to use.

Aged Balsamic Syrup

1 cup Aged balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup Red onion, diced
2 cloves Garlic, crushed
2 tbsp Extra virgin olive oil

Preheat small sauce pot over medium heat. Add oil and let come up to temperature. Saute onions and garlic until translucent. Add vinegar to pan and let everything reduce by half its volume. Strain out onions and garlic and reserve balsamic syrup for later use.

www.threesonssignature.com
Finding the Last Cases of Scrapie: How You Can Help

A nationwide effort is underway to complete the job of eradicating scrapie from the United States. Since the slaughter surveillance program began in 2003, the prevalence of scrapie has decreased by 94 percent. We need your help to find the last cases of scrapie and complete the job!

Sheep and goats not slaughtered in commercial channels are not routinely tested for scrapie. To completely eradicate scrapie, we need to test as many of these adult sheep and goats as possible.

How can you help?
Submit samples from sheep and goats over 18 months of age that are euthanized or die on the farm. Samples can be collected by you or your veterinarian. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) will pay to have up to 30 animals per flock tested per year. Instructions on how to collect samples along with pre-paid shipping boxes and labels can be obtained by sending an email to Remington.Locker@aphis.usda.gov. If email is not available then boxes and labels can be ordered by contacting the Indiana Veterinary Services Office at (317) 347-3100.

Diane Sutton, National Scrapie Program Coordinator with USDA-APHIS emphasizes the importance of scrapie eradication for the sheep and goat industry. “The sooner we eradicate scrapie, the sooner we can open export markets which will increase the value of sheep and goats and their products.”

Further information can be obtained at: http://tinyurl.com/eradicatescrapie or by sending an email to Remington.Locker@aphis.usda.gov.

In addition, if any of your sheep or goats over 12 months of age exhibit clinical signs of scrapie such as behavioral changes, incoordination, weight loss despite retention of appetite or severe persistent rubbing, please contact your veterinarian or call the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at (651) 296-2942. Testing clinical suspects is the most cost-effective way to find scrapie-infected animals. To see videos of scrapie affected sheep and goats go to http://tinyurl.com/scrapievideos.

OPP Eradication Trial Update — Judy Lewman & Holly Neaton

Several years ago, under Dan Persons’ leadership, ovine progressive pneumonia (OPP) first surfaced as a lively discussion topic at a few MLWP board meetings. OPP is caused by a lentivirus which infects nearly half of all sheep flocks in Minnesota (USDA, 2003) and negatively impacts production. There is no treatment or cure, and standard methods of eradication are costly.

Fast forward to September of 2013. Following recent findings which suggest that OPP eradication is likely possible without severe culling or orphaning, MLWP accepted an invitation to collaborate with the MN Board of Animal Health, U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and College of Veterinary Medicine, and USDA Veterinary Services in a trial to test a new OPP eradication strategy.

MLWP is providing funds for this 3-year trial, sharing reduced ‘Elitest’ ELISA test fees with participating MLWP producers and also covering 100% of the cost to DNA test rams from each flock for OPP susceptibility. The primary goal will be to eradicate OPP as quickly as possible while retaining genetic diversity. Trial protocol and management recommendations can be found at http://mn.gov/bah/.

In spite of some brutal weather 12 flocks have already been sampled and more are scheduled, initial results are in on 9, and we’re finding lots of OPP (of 409 animals tested to date, 104 are positive). We’re very happy with the numbers (applicant flocks average 90+ adult ewes), genetic diversity (18 breeds are represented, both purebred and crosses), and range of management styles. All flocks that have received test results are infected to some degree.

We’re indebted to these MLWP members who have applied for the trial and agreed to be recognized: Dale/Nada Carter, John Dvorak, Eric/Kelly/Steve Froehlich, Robert Goerger, Dan Hammond, John King/Betsy Breaker, Doug Mathias, Jay Moses, Dean Olson, Bob Padula, Mark Schleski, and Karen Stormo. Flocks selected for the trial will be announced following the initial round of tests.

Outlook Upbeat for 2014

Peter Orwick, ASI executive director, noted that the lamb market is looking positive for producers. Around Labor Day, he said, the lamb market took a serious jump—up 80 cents a pound over the following eight weeks. The rise in prices came at a vital time because producers needed the increase to cover the cost of production.

Orwick noted that another driving factor helping producers with production costs is 2013’s excellent corn crop. During 2012-2013, due to the drought, there was a huge increase in feed costs, as well as inputs.

"What one was paying for hay and small grains were at market highs too," he said. Orwick added that in 2013 the market over-corrected. Orwick believes that without a turnaround in live market lamb prices this fall, the industry would have lost some of its producers.
How Animal Agriculture Will Thrive

How will Animal Agriculture balance the future and feed a population of 9.1 billion by 2050? The 2014 NIAA Annual Conference taking place in Omaha, NE will examine the policies and strategies that will dictate how innovative and competitive US agriculture will be in the global marketplace today, tomorrow and beyond.

The "Precautionary Principle" is being utilized as a stratagem to cope with possible risks where scientific understanding is yet incomplete and to make regulatory decisions. The effects of it will be one focus of the Annual Conference. Sometimes thought of as the most innovative, pervasive, and significant new environmental concept in the last 25 years, is it truly better to be safe than sorry or is it a politically charged over-simplification blocking innovation?

The Conference will feature expert speakers and leading edge presentations by researchers, scientists and animal agriculture leadership, as well as provide forums for national committee and council meetings and the annual membership business meeting.

Antibiotic Resistance is Misunderstood

Hot on the heels of the Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) decision to limit antibiotics in farm animals (including pigs), comes a white paper produced by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA). Titled "Bridging the Gap between Animal Health and Human Health," the paper offers good observations on the use of antibiotics, in humans as well as animals, including companion animals.

At 15 pages, it is worth the effort, especially the one-and-a-half-page executive summary. A couple of statements stand out. The first: "If you think you understand antimicrobial resistance, it hasn't been explained properly to you." This sets the tone for the paper, which is the result of an NIAA symposium, "Bridging the Gap between Animal Health and Human Health," conducted November 12–14, 2013, in Kansas City, MO.

The symposium provided a platform where animal-health and human-health scientists shared the most current science-based information. Adding a further dimension to the symposium were presentations by consumer advocates and grocery retailers, among others.

The second notable statement: "Significant efforts are being led by the public–health community to reduce inappropriate antibiotic prescribing in human health and reduce hospital–acquired infections. Agriculture needs to be open to change as well." According to the NIAA, change will happen, and if animal agriculture is not willing to work with the other stockholders, "change will be drastic and by statute and will not be a deliberative policy change."

Opportunities and Challenges in Local Meat, Poultry Markets

While the majority of consumers still rely on traditional avenues to make their meat and poultry purchases, the "buy local" trend is growing, including purchasing local meat products, which could provide a potentially valuable market for producers and processors. But what does "local" mean and what does it take to supply consumers with "locally-sourced" meat products? Recent case studies of seven meat and/or poultry processing facilities located across the United States conducted by USDA's Economic Research Service show business relationships that benefit both the producer (either individual producers or coordinated groups of producers) and the processor are often the most successful and local needs and market conditions will influence which business models work best for producers, processors, buyers and all involved in the process.

Through the case studies, USDA suggested three basic types of "local meat" -- very local, local-aggregated -- that vary by geographic scale, product format, market channel, regulatory requirements and supply chain structure. According to USDA, descriptions of the three types include:

- Very local: the farmer sells live animals directly to household buyers before slaughter. Buyers place cutting orders, pay the process directly and pick up frozen meat. In regard to poultry, the farmer is often the processor.

- Local--independent: the farmer arranges and pays for processing, picks up the meat and markets it through a variety of direct and local marketing channels, including farmers' markets and local retail outlets.

- Regional--aggregated: multiple farmers sell finished animals to a branded meat company, which arranges for processing and distribution, and handles marketing, largely to wholesale accounts.

Smithfield Asks Growers to Phase-Out Gestation Crates

The world's largest pork producer is asking the growers to move pregnant sows from gestation crates to group housing by 2022. Smithfield has been criticized for continuing to breed sows in the crates that restrict the animals' movement. The company previously announced that it was phasing out the practice at its U.S. facilities by 2017.
GIPSA Investigation Finds no Evidence of Price Manipulation

In December 2013, USDA’s Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration’s Packers and Stockyards Program (GIPSA) published their findings regarding the market volatility between 2010 and 2012. Their investigation concluded that “a combination of many market factors caused the increase and subsequent decrease in lamb prices in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The cost of imported lamb was likely the most important factor. GIPSA did not find evidence of price manipulation.”

The investigation of the lamb market was initiated in 2012 at the request of Senators, one Representative and the American Sheep Industry Association. The letters claimed that the price volatility between 2010 and 2012 was a result of market manipulation by the packers and feeders. Superior Farms, along with other packers and feeders, cooperated fully with GIPSA’s extensive and costly investigation.

P&SP reported that the dramatic price decline in 2011 was a result of consumers curtailing the amount of lamb they purchased due to the high price levels of lamb around Easter of 2011 and other factors, but there was no indication that prices were manipulated by packers by using published USDA mandatory reporting production information.

Farm Bill—A Slow & Painful Process

A formal conference meeting failed to materialize. Most had expected Congress to return and schedule a formal conference meeting to finalize any outstanding issues followed by floor consideration next week. Unfortunately, the four principals encountered more difficulties than they anticipated. Their difficulties appear to be quality vs. quantity. From all accounts, they are very close to a final agreement and there remain few outstanding issues. However, the outstanding issues are the thorniest to address. Ironically, although nutrition has been a major stumbling block in Farm Bill consideration, it now appears to be largely settled with agreed upon savings of approximately $9 billion. The remaining stumbling blocks are centered on the commodity title and what most are referring to as “regulatory issues.”

The regulatory issues include an amendment intended to stop states from imposing import restrictions on agricultural products based on production methods, country of origin labeling and the EPA and the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters.

The commodity issues are centered in two areas. Eligibility requirements involving payment limits, actively engaged, and adjusted gross income limits are under intense negotiations. However, the biggest hurdle appears to be dairy policy. The original House Agriculture Committee version (similar to the Senate version) was stripped from the bill during floor consideration with active support from Speaker Boehner. Boehner has stated that if the conference report includes a dairy “supply management” program similar to what was struck in the House bill, then the conference report will not be scheduled for floor consideration.

It is not unusual to have seemingly insurmountable obstacles crystallize in the last moments of conference negotiations. An objection from the Speaker of the House is a tough one to overcome. Most veteran Farm Bill observers believe that the conferees will be able to complete the path to final agreement. It does appear that this will occur later than expected, which complicates the expired status of the current Farm Bill.

Bill Giving Obama 'Fast-Track' Trade Authority Introduced

Leaders of the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees this week introduced legislation that would give the president "fast-track" authority to put trade deals before Congress for an up- or down-vote without amendments.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (Mont.), Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (Utah) and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (Mich.) introduced the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities Act (TPA) of 2014, which they said will also give Congress greater oversight over trade negotiations.

The bill comes as the Obama administration seeks to wrap up Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks with 11 Pacific Rim nations, as well as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the 28-member European Union. The treaties would create the world's biggest free-trade zones.

Still, TPA passage is far from certain, with much of the opposition coming from the president's own party, many of whom are concerned about labor and environmental protections. In the House, Democrats Rosa DeLauro (Conn.), Louise Slaughter (N.Y.) and George Miller (Calif.) released a statement blasting the legislation. They said TPA would enable the president "to ram through far-reaching, secretly negotiated trade deals like the TPP that extend well beyond traditional trade matters."
2014 MN Legislative Preview

The 2014 MN state legislative session convenes on Feb. 25. There are a number of factors to keep in mind:
- It’s a short session
- It’s an election year
- It’s a bonding bill year
- The DFL controls the Governor’s office, the House and the Senate
- Out-state districts are outnumbered by the metro and suburban districts
- Most of the committee chairs are from metro districts
- The February budget forecast will play a big role

The Governor and leaders of both parties have indicated they would like to see a repeal of the sales tax on farm equipment repair and perhaps the warehouse tax and business to business tax. That could have been done in special session, but politics got in the way.

Chairwoman Wagenius has held numerous hearings on a number of issues related to water quality and pesticide use. The Farm groups will be watching her committee closely.

As far as potential legislation that could impact sheep producers; there are a few things to keep an eye on. There is an organized group (Howing for Wolves) that will likely seek to stop or suspend the wolf hunting season. There are many potential environmental regulations that could impact the larger sheep producers directly and impact all producers indirectly by increasing the cost of grain, we could see bills that would attempt to further restrict the use of antibiotics in livestock production. It is unlikely that we would see much in the way of animal welfare legislation except for the dog and cat breeder licensing bill that has been in the works for the past decade.

COOL Repeal Vote Expected

U.S. lawmakers are expected to vote on a measure to repeal the country-of-origin labeling (COOL) system for meat in a public meeting of the farm bill conference, as opponents push to roll back the law even before the World Trade Organization issues a decision on whether new COOL regulations comply with an adverse ruling.

The four principals of the Farm Bill will leave several outstanding issues – including COOL – to be resolved through votes in a public meeting of the conference that could take place as early as Jan. 9. Leaving the COOL issue until the end is consistent with earlier comments made by House Agriculture Committee Chair Frank Lucas (R-OK).

Whether the measure to repeal the law is likely to be approved by the conference committee is unclear. While opponents of COOL express confidence that the House members of the conference will adopt the repeal, they acknowledge that they have fewer backers in the Senate.

Proponents of COOL say a repeal measure will certainly fail among the Senate conferees. They cite the fact that most Senate members have to respond to urban constituents that view COOL more favorably, whereas many of the House conferees represent strictly rural districts. In addition, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has been supportive of COOL.

It is not clear which member of the conference will introduce the measure to repeal COOL, although the amendment that served as a “marker” and allowed COOL to be brought up in the conference in the first place was introduced by Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX).

Other farm bill conference participants who oppose COOL are Rep. Michael Conaway (R-TX), whose district neighbors Neugebauer's; Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA); Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA); and Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS), the former ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

The COOL measure was successfully challenged in the WTO by Canada and Mexico, who claimed it is discriminatory to their cattle ranchers and hog farmers because it puts them at a competitive disadvantage. Because U.S. feed lot operators and meat processors must take on the burden of tracking foreign livestock throughout their supply chain in order to provide an accurate label to the consumer, the countries argue there is an incentive to buy only U.S. livestock and that their producers are thus often forced to sell at a lower price.

The WTO Appellate Body found that COOL, as formulated, was discriminatory because it imposed extra administrative burdens upon feedlot operators and meat packers who imported livestock without conveying a commensurate level of information to consumers.

In response, the USDA in April issued a new regulation that requires labels to be more explicit and removes the ability of meat packers to commingle livestock from different origins and apply a mixed label. Canada and Mexico have challenged the new rule as failing to comply with the WTO ruling.

Canada has also threatened to retaliate against a host of products, including in the agriculture sector, prompting calls from a wide range of industry stakeholders for a legislative amendment to COOL.
JUDY LEWMAN RECEIVES SILVER BELL AWARD

The MLWPA, at the Shepherd’s Holiday in November, honored long-time producer Judy Lewman as the 2013 Silver Bell Award winner. Judy has been one of the pioneers in the efforts to educate sheep producers about Ovine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP) and has helped lead efforts to improve testing methods.

Judy and others are partnering with MLWPA on a three-year OPP research project. The goal is to identify an improved testing method as well as explore DNA testing for reduced susceptibility to the disease.

Judy has been an active MLWPA member for many years.

Also honored at this year’s Shepherd’s Holiday was Amy Marquette, winner of the Junior Silver Bell award. Amy has promoted lamb and wool on numerous occasions and has also helped to get other youth involved in the sheep project. Amy enjoys showing her Texel sheep and competing in lamb lead. Congratulations Amy.

Amy Marquette accepts the Jr Silver Bell Award from President Dvorak

MLWPA THANKS THE FOLLOWING SHEPHERD’S HOLIDAY SPONSORS

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- Minnesota Corn Growers Association
- Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council
- Minnesota Grown Program (Sponsor of the “Celebrate Lamb Social”)

**Additional Sponsors**

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- TJF Ranch—Truman
- John Goelz Auctioneer—Franklin
- Carlos Creek Winery

Also thanks to all the auction buyers and the many other members and friends of MLWPA who make the conference a success.

[Ed. Note: also thanks to Travis and Jeanine Fowler for their work on the trade show and auction, and to the speakers who shared their knowledge with participants.]
Interesting news from Colorado: Taylor Radig, an animal rights activist who was a contractor of the vegan group Compassion Over Killing, has been charged with animal cruelty following the release of an undercover video that she filmed. Why? Because she waited too long to report the crime to police. Radig shot video from July through September, and yet the video wasn’t turned over to the local sheriff until November.

The Weld County Sheriff issued a formal statement, and also spoke to the media: “They could have put an end to the cruelty back in July, but they didn’t so that’s why she got charged, because she allowed the mistreatment to continue,” said Weld County Sheriff John Cooke. Concerning the most recent video, Cooke said there would have been enough evidence from July alone to make the animal cruelty charges, and more animals would have been spared. “Just imagine the number of calves that have gone through that place in the past four months and the number they could have protected if they truly cared about the calves,” he said.

The sheriff has a great point. The video was not turned over to law enforcement for months, and more animals could have been spared. That’s just morally unacceptable inaction (and possibly illegal under Colorado law), especially from an organization that claims to care about animals.

It’s a moral defect we’ve seen from the Humane Society of the United States, too. Laws were proposed in several states this year that would require mandatory reporting to authorities within 48 hours of recorded evidence of animal cruelty. These laws do not prohibit activists from recording or continuing to record—it just requires that they keep police in the loop. Yet these laws faced heavy opposition from HSUS, which claimed that they were an attempt to cover up cruelty.

If you think that makes sense, we have some beachfront property in North Dakota to sell you.

For a little history, COK was founded by Paul Shapiro, who is now an HSUS vice president. Miyun Park, a past HSUS vice president, previously worked for COK, as did Josh Balk, HSUS food policy director. COK is a radical organization. In the 90’s, COK distributed a publication called The Abolitionist, referring to the group’s animal liberation agenda. In one essay for The Abolitionist, Mike Markarian, now the chief policy officer at HSUS, wrote that a raid on a laboratory by the Animal Liberation Front, a terrorist group, was “a perfect example of effective rebellion.”

COK may have grown up a little, but its tactics are still hypocritical for a group claiming the moral high ground. It’s similar to how HSUS sat on an undercover investigation for months in late 2007—and then had the gall to claim that the investigation had implications for food safety. If it did, why did HSUS sit on the footage for so long? New York Times columnist Joe Nocera scolded HSUS for its handling of this matter, writing, “It’s [HSUS CEO Wayne] Pacelle who’s playing Russian roulette with the truth.”

Activists have too long treated undercover investigations as an opportunity for self-serving media campaigns. The arrest of the COK activist for animal cruelty should send a strong message to HSUS and its allies: It’s time to hold yourselves to higher moral standards.

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**Debunking UGG® boots & Their “UGGly” Reputation**

By Amanda Radke—BEEF Magazine

As cattle producers, I believe it’s important to band together when a segment of the livestock industry is under attack. A few weeks ago, I came across an article that appeared on Yahoo! entitled, “UGG® and Their ‘UGGly’ Reputation.” Written by Zac Johnson, the piece described the “horrors” of how the popular UGG boots are made.

The article has been removed because of the false information presented, but reading through the comments section, it is clear there are some misconceptions among the public regarding animal hides.

In his article, Johnson describes how sheep are skinned alive to make the expensive, trendy boot that many people wear during the winter months. The boots were made popular when Pamela Anderson wore them on the show, “Baywatch.”

In 2007, Pamela Anderson apparently finally realized that her UGG boots were made of sheepskin. You may recognize Anderson as a spokesperson for PETA, one of those celebrity gals who pose naked to campaign against wearing fur. Anyway, she posted this statement on her website: "I thought they [sheep] were shaved kindly? People like to tell me all the time that I started that trend – yikes! Well, let’s start a new one – do NOT buy Uggs!"

According to Wikipedia, “In February 2008, the Princeton Animal Welfare Society staged a campus protest against the fur industry,
The first ever “Celebrate Lamb Social” kicked off the 2013 Shepherd’s Holiday at Thumper Pond. Producers and special guests were treated to lamb cooking (& sampling) demonstrations by Chef Ben McCallum of Three Sons Signature Catering. Participants enjoyed sheep cheese samples provided by Shepherd’s Way Farm, and wine samples from Carlos Creek Winery (of Alexandria).

In addition to several MLWPA members, the “Celebrate Lamb Social” was attended by sheep producers from South Dakota and Ohio, state legislators, an Agri-News reporter, Chairman of the American Lamb Board, NDSU Sheep Specialist, and others. One of the highlights for me was meeting a nice local couple of long-time sheep producers who read about the event and decided to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with us.

Chef Ben did a super job, and you’ll see one of his recipes in this issue and the other two in future issues. We could not have had this event with the generous support of the Minnesota Grown Program, the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council and the Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

MLWPA is committed to making the “Celebrate Lamb Social” an annual part of the Shepherd’s Holiday. Our goal is to secure enough sponsorship that we can make this free for all MLWPA members. We also hope to expand the list of special guests to further promote Minnesota Lamb.

Don’t miss the 2014 “Celebrate Lamb Social”, Friday, December 5 at 7pm (location TBD).

The photos below are courtesy of Carol Stender, Agri-News.
Feeding Silage to Sheep—by Dr. JD Bobb, Pipestone

Feeding silage to sheep is an excellent way to economically mechanize and help reduce the manual labor involved in feeding a large flock. Most producers have three concerns when first thinking about switching their rations to a silage base. It takes a specialized set of equipment to plant, cultivate, and harvest the silage. Second, the ewe needs to be handled properly in late gestation to prevent pregnancy toxemia. Third, the threat of listeriosis from moldy silage.

Silage is the term used for the feed produced by controlled fermentation of high moisture herbage. When silage is stored under anaerobic conditions (in the absence of oxygen) lactic acid is produced and will halt the fermentation process. If silage is undisturbed it will keep for extended periods. There are now many products on the market that are added to the silage at the time of putting in the silo that will increase the quality of the silage by reducing fermentation, and some products such as urea (0.5-1%) or anhydrous ammonia will actually increase protein. High quality silage is very palatable, and excellent results can be achieved with ewes in their maintenance period or in early and mid gestation.

Corn silage is the most popular in the midwest regions, but sorghum is used in drier climates with success. Silage contains a moderate to high level of digestible energy, but is low to moderate in digestible protein. As the corn matures the fiber content decreases and the energy content increases, this is directly due to the increase grain content. As a rule, sorghum silage has a somewhat lower nutritive value than corn silage. Corn silage is low in calcium and trace minerals and contains fair levels of phosphorus. Additional calcium and trace minerals must be supplied. Crude protein of corn silage is 7-9% on a dry matter basis.

Listeriosis is caused by a bacteria (Listeria monocytogenes) in sheep it usually causes brain related clinical signs. Listeria can also cause abortion, diarrhea and septicemia. It is commonly referred to as “Circling disease” and silage is often the source of the listeria, but it can also be found in hay, or even on sheep grazing pastures. The most common clinical signs are a sheep that walks in circles and has one half of the face paralyzed. The affected ear and lips on one side of the face will hang, often the sheep is drooling and the eyelid on the affected side will droop and the eye will also water causing the cheek to be wet. Finally, after only one or two days the sheep will be found down and be paddling and unable to rise on its feet. Treatment is dismal at best. Very early treatment with high doses of penicillin will save some animals. Listeria organisms are commonly found in the soil which has been contaminated with manure of apparently normal carrier animals. When making silage it is very difficult to complete the job without some soil contamination. If the silage is not properly packed tight to exclude oxygen, or the pH of the silage is not low enough the Listeria will multiply in these small pockets. Sheep that are cutting teeth such as newborn lambs, yearlings and mature ewes will have the greatest incidence via the bacteria getting in the tooth socket and following the facial nerve to the brain. This will take 2-4 weeks after eating the affected silage. Listeria is also a human pathogen.

Rules to help reduce Listeria in silage:
1. Reduce pocket gopher mounds in the field.
2. Do not cut silage too close to the ground.
3. Use a silage additive to lower the pH.
4. Pack tightly and seal air tight.
5. Test the pH, if greater than 4.5 do not feed to the sheep.
6. Do not feed moldy or suspect silage to the sheep.

Silage should be considered for any producer feeding large groups of ewes that is looking to control feed costs and labor. It takes increased management to handle, but the rewards will be well worth the extra effort. Now, with silage bags a producer can hire some custom labor to chop and fill several silage bags for a smaller or medium sized flock.

[Ed. Note: I’ve gotten a few calls about feeding silage to sheep and I’ve notices some similar questions on the Pipestone Vet Clinic Facebook page—the article can be found on their website.]

Learn more at www.pipevet.com
(800) 658-2523
TARGHEE STARTER FLOCK

The U.S. Targhee Sheep Association (USTSA) will again be offering a free registered Targhee starter flock to a deserving youth at the 2014 USTSA National Show and Sale in Brookings, S.D., July 17-19.

The winner must be present to receive the flock and will be awarded one ewe lamb, one yearling ewe and one brood ewe donated by members of the USTSA. Each animal will be a USTSA registered animal and at least QR in scrapie codon 171 genotype.

The winner will also receive a $150 credit for use toward the purchase of additional animals at the 2014 sale.

More information and the application is available at www.ustargheesheep.org.

DEBUNKING UGG® BOOTS—CONT.

particularly attacking the UGG boot industry.

"Students lay in the newly fallen snow on the Frist Campus Center's North Front Lawn, feigning death, wearing coats covered with fake blood and sporting signs that read, 'What if you were killed for your coat?""

It is important for shoppers to understand that sheepskin is the same as any other kind of leather. It is a by-product of processing sheep for human consumption. The animal is not skinned alive in the process, and sheep are not killed for their skins. Every inch of the animal is used for meat and by-products that can enrich human lives.

It is interesting to note, however, that the rise in popularity of UGG boots has been the driving force in recent shortages of sheepskins, with a resulting 80% rise in sheepskin prices between 2010 and 2012.

Please help spread the word that UGG boots are made humanely procured by respectfully harvesting the sheep, and using the animal hide as a by-product to make boots and other sheepskin and wool-based items.

[Ed. Note: Thanks Amanda (& others) for standing up for sheep producers.]
## Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 15</td>
<td>Arlington Sheep Day</td>
<td>Arlington, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wisbc.com">www.wisbc.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 15</td>
<td>Indianhead Shearing School</td>
<td>Augusta, WI</td>
<td>Duane klindworth 715-286-4157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 22</td>
<td>Spring Sheep Workshop</td>
<td>Watertown, MN</td>
<td>John Dvorak <a href="mailto:bjedorak81@hotmail.com">bjedorak81@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Indianhead Spring Sheep Sale</td>
<td>River Falls, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.indianheadsheep.com">www.indianheadsheep.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18-20</td>
<td>MN Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Hutchinson, MN</td>
<td>Doug Rathke <a href="mailto:lambshop@hutchtel.net">lambshop@hutchtel.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25-26</td>
<td>Black Hills Fiber Arts Fair</td>
<td>Rapid City, SD</td>
<td><a href="http://www.blackhillsfiberartsfair.org">www.blackhillsfiberartsfair.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28-29</td>
<td>Stars of the North on-line Stud Ram &amp; Ewe Sale</td>
<td>On-line</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:Jeremy.geske@gmail.com">Jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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Open to all breeds—must be a member of MLWPA, MN Suffolk Sheep Assoc or MN Hampshire Sheep Assoc.

| May 8-10  | Big Ohio Sale weekend                       | Eaton, OH    | www.bannersheepmagazine.com                 |
| May 16-18 | Shepherd’s Harvest Festival                | Lake Elmo, MN| Julie McKenzie 612 961-9625                 |
| May __    | Nugget All-American Show & Sale            | Reno, NV     |                                              |
| Jun. 14   | Midwest Jr Preview Show                    | Sedalia, MO  | www.midwestjuniorpreviewshow.com            |
| Jun. __   | Midwest Stud Ram Sale                      | Sedalia, MO  | www.midwestramsale.com                      |
| Jul. 3-6  | National Jr. Suffolk Sheep Show            | Hutchinson, KS| www.u-s-s-a.org                             |
| Jul. 3-6  | All-American Junior Show                   | Hutchinson, KS|                                              |
| Jul. 17-19| National Targhee Show & Sale               | Brookings, SD| www.ustargheesheep.org                      |
| Jul. 19   | MN State Suffolk Show                      | Faribault, MN| Jeremy Geske 612-756-1200                   |
| Jul. 20   | MN Jr Suffolk Show                         | Faribault, MN| Jeremy Geske 612-756-1200                   |
| Dec. 5    | Celebrate Lamb Social                      | TBD          | Jeremy Geske 612-756-1200                   |
| Dec. 5-7  | Shepherd’s Holiday                         | TBD          | Jeremy Geske 612-756-1200                   |

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

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