Fleece, Fiber and Family
At the Shepherd’s Harvest Festival

The Washington County fairgrounds in Lake Elmo will be filled with music, food, artisans and animals.

Events include Minnesota’s largest fleece competition, sheep shearing, fleece skirting demos, book-signings and more. Plus, there are some spectacular classes for new and experienced shepherds. Class registration is open—learn more at http://shepherdsharvestfestival.org/

Families always enjoy the sheep and goats in the barn and this year there will be a new Farm Work Stock Dog Trial! There’s a lot of room to picnic—weather permitting! Bring your spinning wheel, your friends, and spin the day away.

Again this year—Llamapalooza! a full certified show sponsored by Midwest Llama Association!

Admission is $5 (8 & under-free).

- Friday, May 12th Classes only
- Saturday, May 13th 9:00 – 5:00
- Sunday, May 14th 10:00 – 4:00

The Washington County Fairgrounds are located just east of Lake Elmo, MN at the intersection of Washington County Rd 15 & Highway 5.
I am writing this as I am returning home from our ASI Fly-In to Washington DC. It was an interesting trip this year. Each Executive Director helped oversee various council committees and I was elected Co-Chairman of the Legislative Council Committee along with Jeff Ebert from Kansas, so this made my trip extra exciting.

This trip was well attended as we had 70 plus producers from 18 different states to carry forward the priorities of the American Sheep Industry Association to their congressional representatives and to hear from several key federal agencies.

When visiting with our senators and representatives, we began to lay out the groundwork for the upcoming Farm Bill, and set out industry’s appropriations priorities for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Top issues for the Farm Bill are to increase the risk management program through the Wool Marketing Assistance Loan, increase the Loan Deficiency Payment Program, establish a cross species foot-and-mouth disease vaccine bank and to support the Food and Drug Administration’s Minor Use Animal Drug Program.

Requests were also made to continue funding annual appropriations to USDA/AHPIS, Wildlife Services Predator management programs and to continue support for the U.S. Sheep Station, and the importance of using sound and accepted science with studies conducted concerning domestic sheep to wild life such as in the case with the big horn sheep issue.

On a positive note the sheep industry went a whole year without a new report of scrapie and I hope that will continue.

Something to keep an eye on is this administration is proposing a 21% cut in the Ag Budget. Also there is some talk of taking another 18 million dollars out of the Ag Budget to help build the wall on the US Mexican border should that project move forward.

Saturday will be jam-packed with educational sessions, industry updates, lamb lunch, annual meeting, and closing with a great Ag-advocate inspiring speaker. Mark these dates on your calendar now!

Have a good Spring, hopefully a nice Summer is on the way, and Farm Safe!

This year we had an excellent group of MLWP members that made the Trip to Washington DC Myself, Randy Kinney, Dan Lippert and Jeremy Geske. We did visit with all of our congressional offices.

I am sure by the time this goes to print as always other issues will come up. I will try to keep you all update with issues concerning ASI and the sheep industry.

Have a safe planting season.

John Dvorak
Sonny Perdue, who has promised to be a forceful advocate for farmers within the Trump administration, is set to take over as the 31st agriculture secretary on Tuesday after easily winning Senate confirmation, 87-11.

Perdue grew up the son of a farmer and a schoolteacher in Georgia and has a doctorate in veterinary medicine from the University of Georgia. He also served in the Air Force. He was a county zoning commissioner and then became a state representative and later a state senator, serving as a Democrat. He switched parties in 1998 and continued to win state Senate races as a Republican. In 2002, Perdue became the first Republican governor of Georgia since the Reconstruction era after the Civil War.

**ASI and MLWPA supported Perdue’s nomination**

**MLWPA Board Meeting Minutes - DRAFT JEREMY GESKE**


Meeting called to order shortly after 8 pm. Motion to approve agenda/closed held. Secretary’s Report – Jeremy emailed out and moved/2nd to approve as submitted carried.

Treasurer’s Report – discussion on ASI convention expenses, membership drive and other expenses moved/2nd to approve carried.

ASI Convention – Randy gave report. Good representation from MN. John D elected to ASI board as Reg 3 director, Susan Schultz elected Sec/Treas. ASI Committee assignments – Several from MN on various committees (will be in Membership Directory).

MNDOT Ditch Mowing – last Friday meeting called by Gov Dayton between MnDOT and Farm Groups to try to get agreement. MLWPA was invited.

Supporting letters with ASI: confirmation of Gov Perdue for Sec of Ag, Wildlife Services support, BLM.

4-H Celebration banquet – Don & Glenette attended on behalf of MLWPA.

Pipestone Lambing Time Seminar – Randy gave report (signed one new member).

Spring Workshop, April 1st at U of M – about 22 pre-registered. Judy & Holly lining things up. For future years, probably need on board member in charge. Need to add MN Grown logo to flyer.

2017 Conference w/ ND – Jeremy & Randy gave update on conference call. Dakota Lamb Growers Coop would like to piggy-back w/conference.


New brochures – Glenette developed a new one – Moved/2nd to order 1000 ($0.26) carried.

Baa Booth – John gave update, Jo Bernard has some ideas, state fair will work with us.

Wool Trust grant – Bob will work with Glenette.

ASI Mentor Program, due 5/1/17, $1000 max – Randy will apply for MLWPA

**Old Business**

- Website updates, Blogging schedule – Randy gave update.
- Face Book account/ activity – Don D gave update, looks like we will need to recreate a new page.

**New Business**

- ASI D.C. Legislative trip, March 27-30 – John, Randy, Jeremy and Dan Lippert; John is making the appointments.
- ASI Event Liability Insurance - $175 due.
- Newsletter date – articles due Apr. 24

Next meeting: April 1, after sheep health workshop (meeting was later re-scheduled as a conference call).


Meeting called to order at 8:30pm. Motion to approve Agenda 2nd carried.

Secretary’s Report – Jeremy read minutes from last conference call. Moved/2nd to approve – carried. Request to email printed minutes.


ASI DC trip follow-up – Randy, John, Jeremy & Dan Lippert attended. Issues: Farm Bill (wool LDP rates, FMD vaccine bank, minor species), BLM / Bighorn sheep, sage grouse, Wildlife services, Sheep Experiment Station. Discussion on wool LDP rate.


Spring Workshop, follow-up – John: over 80 people attended. Necropsy, Cindy’s presentation was excellent. A lot of positive feedback. Don added: topics drew a good crowd. Came in under budget. 5-6 leads with more expected, on new members (Randy will follow up).

2017 Conference w/ ND: Jeremy gave update on plans for convention. Tentative schedule: Friday late morning, optional tours: Busko feedlot, Dakota Fiber Mill, NDSU sheep unit (maybe meats lab). Friday evening: lamb cookoff at 6pm followed by social and auction. Saturday: full day of speakers (Keynote: Kate Lambert, Dr. Wolf, Dr. Schauer, producer panel on ewe lamb management, etc.) and trade show. Lamb chop luncheon, business meetings, adjourn at 5pm. Dakota Lamb Growers meeting to follow.

Membership / Membership Directory / new brochures (done) – Jeremy – currently 212 members, working on directory – target to get to printer by early May.

Commercial Booth – Sherry’s report - did get socks in SF coupon book again.

**Old Business**

- New Face Book account! Don – it’s up and running. Good way to promote our activities. Photo contest? For cover photo, Board only page? Don go ahead and set it up.
- Website updates, Blogging schedule: make sure website references our facebook account, Jeremy/Randy update blog posts.
- MLWP trailer insurance – Sherry, Jeremy, Glenette- Difficult to find a policy to cover.

**New Business**

- MLWPA sponsorship of MN Ag Royal Sheep showmanship contest – done.
- Karen Stormo – northern MN group – Satellite members/ Liability insurance? Discussion – we are not able to cover it.
- Newsletter date -April 24.

Next meeting: conference call in June Adjourned.
It was another successful on-line sale for members of MLWP, MN Suffolk and MN Hampshire Associations. 14 ewes sold to 14 different buyers from 6 states. The sale average was $675. A Hampshire ewe lamb from Mike Caskey topped the sale at $1900. It was a 4-way tie for 2nd high-seller with Suffolk ewe lambs from Randy Dombek and Jeremy Geske bringing $800 as well as a Dorset and a Rambouillet ewe lamb from Dew Drop Farms also bringing $800. Thanks to all the bidders and buyers for the sale!

**Market Update - [These prices are from 4/14/17]**

**Feeder Prices.** ($/cwt.), San Angelo 50-60 lbs. $230-$240; 70-95 lbs. $230-$238.
**Slaughter Prices - Negotiated** wooled and shorn 132-196 lbs. $157.27 per cwt.
**Slaughter Prices - Formula** 1, 91.0 lbs. carcass weight $283.19 per cwt.
**Slaughter Prices "Comprehensive Information"** – Formula & Negotiated, 87.28 lbs. carcass weight $289.21 per cwt.

**Equity Electronic Auction.** No sales.

**Cutout Value/Net Carcass Value.** $307.35 per cwt.

**Carcass Price.** Choice and Prime, YG 1-4, weighted average prices ($/cwt.), 594 head at 55-65 lbs. not reported; 1,358 head at 65-75 lbs. $298.20; 1,073 head at 75-85 lbs. not reported; 1,390 head at 85 lbs. & up not reported due to confidentiality.

**Exported Adult Sheep.** 0 head

**Wool,** ($/pound clean), delivered, ** denotes new prices. 18 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 19 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 20 micron (Grade 70s) NA, 21 micron (Grade 64-70s) 4.11, 22 micron (Grade 64s) 3.71**, 23 micron (Grade 62s) 3.28***, 24 micron (Grade 60-62s) 3.10**, 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) NA.

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**Ft. Collins, CO** Feeder Lambs $200 - $250/cwt, Slaughter lambs $200 - $223/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $53 - $200/cwt

**Twin Falls, ID** Feeder Lambs $185 - $202/cwt, Slaughter lambs $126 - $146/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $45 - $85/cwt

**Zumbrota, MN** Feeder Lambs $125 - $260/cwt, Slaughter lambs $135 - $170/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $10 - $75/cwt

**Pipestone, MN** Feeder Lambs $204-$241/cwt, Slaughter lambs $178 - $185/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $10 - $80/cwt

**Sioux Falls, SD** Feeder Lambs $205 - $340/cwt, Slaughter lambs no test$/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $51- $75/cwt

**Mt Hope, OH** Feeder Lambs $192.50 - $265/cwt, Slaughter lambs $185 - $250/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $60- $95cwt

**Manchester, MI** Feeder Lambs $160 - $250/cwt, Slaughter lambs $180 - $205/cwt; Ewes & Bucks $50- $90cwt

**Escalon, CA** Feeder Lambs $180 - $240/cwt, Slaughter lambs $150 - $210/cwt; Ewes & Bucks $25- $130cwt

**Billings, MT** Feeder Lambs $195 - $230/cwt, Slaughter lambs $171 - $202.50/cwt; Ewes & Bucks $71- $75cwt
Not Your Grandmas Lamb

From Easter to Passover to celebrations for the Kentucky Derby and Dad & Grads, there is a lamb dish for every spring occasion. While many traditions rely on lamb as a centerpiece, it doesn’t have to be prepared like grandma’s overcooked, tough and often tasteless roast. Today’s home cooks are forgoing the jar of mint jelly and using fresh mint in pesto and salsas, while serving their lamb medium-rare to preserve its tender juiciness. During the month of April, ALB is celebrating modern-spins on spring traditions! In addition to checking out our spring hub for recipes, cooking tips and more, we are encouraging consumers to create a #NotYourGrandmasLamb Pinterest board and participate in a spring celebrations Instagram giveaways for the chance to win fun prizes!

ALB Celebrates its 13th Year at the Taste of Vail’s Lamb Cookoff

Chef Christopher Schmidt of Sweet Basil took home top honors at the 13th Annual American Lamb Cook-Off at Taste of Vail for his Spring Reuben Sandwich with House Sauerkraut and Green Harissa Mayo. Second place went to Beano’s Cabin and third place went to La Tour Restaurant. Beano’s Cabin was also awarded the People’s Choice award.

The lamb cook-off, sponsored by the American Lamb Board and held throughout the streets of Vail Village, showcased 25 of the area’s finest chefs preparing diverse dishes featuring leg of lamb. The lamb bites were complimented by samples from participating wineries. ALB had a booth during the event distributing American Lamb information and offering attendees a fun contest “guess the number of lambs in a jar” for a chance to win an Easter leg of lamb.

Spreading the Word About Lamb’s Nutrition Profile

The Tri Lamb nutrition education program is hosting a series of events and seminars for nutrition influencers to educate them about lamb and inspire them to promote lamb to their clients as part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle. The first event was held in Dallas this week where local nutrition influencers were led through a lamb seminar and tasting including information on cuts, cooking techniques and nutrition benefits. The next event will be held in Los Angeles in May.

USDA Now Soliciting Applications for the American Lamb Board

USDA is seeking nominations for five vacancies for the 2018 American Lamb Board. The vacancies include one position for a producer with less than 100 lambs, one position for a producer with more than 500 lambs, one feeder with less than 5,000 lambs, one first handler position, and one seedstock producer. Candidates must be nominated by a USDA Certified Nominating Organizations and complete nomination forms. Deadline for nominations in May 30, 2017.

LAMB TACOS - CHEF VIRGIL - CELEBRATE LAMB SOCIAL

Ingredients
- 1 lb Boneless lamb shoulder
- 1/2 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 3 cloves garlic (whole)

Fixings
- Soft taco shells
- Your favorite salsa
- Shredded cheese
- Shredded lettuce
- Sour cream (with cilantro)

Directions
Season lamb and place on grill, mark all sides. Place in aluminum foil with whole garlic cloves, and more seasoning, double wrap lamb. Roast in 225° oven for 5 hours, check after 5 hours to see if meat falls apart, if is does remove and let cool until cool enough to handle, if does not fall part roast longer. When cool, pull apart meat and save the juices. Combine juices and meat, heat until 160 degrees. Serve with your favorite soft shell taco fixing’s.
**LRP-Lamb Sales Resumes April 24**

Sales of the LRP-Lamb plan of insurance resumed on Monday, April 24. Sales were suspended due to the lack of Livestock Mandatory Reporting price information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service in early 2016, and available only intermittently since then. LMR price data is integral to the LRP-Lamb ratings program.

"ASI has been working with USDA to find a way to get LRP-Lamb sales restarted during the past year," said ASI President Mike Corn. "This is the only price-risk tool available to sheep producers and feeders, and in the last 10 years it has returned about $60 million during market downturns to people who bought the insurance. We are pleased that it will finally be available for sale again."

Preliminary rates will be posted late this afternoon to the ASI website. Contact your authorized crop insurance sales representative if you are interested in purchasing lamb price insurance.

Visit [http://sheepusa.org/IssuesPrograms_Programs_Lrplamb](http://sheepusa.org/IssuesPrograms_Programs_Lrplamb) for more information on the program.

**Wool is Perfect for Summer Fun**

While you might want to pack away your wool sweaters for the summer, warmer months provide plenty of opportunities to wear the world’s most natural, sustainable fiber.

In fact, today’s American wool is ideal for summer fun. Fine wool is breathable, wicks away sweat and is naturally odor-resistant in any season. Outdoor apparel companies have long used wool in their fall/winter lines and have come to realize that it’s an optimal fabric for all seasons. They’ve added wool T-shirts, for example, that are ideal as a base layer on a cool morning or as a stand-alone shirt on a warm day. A breathable fabric, the air spaces in wool insulate, but allow moisture to easily pass through. This keeps skin dry and enhances your body’s ability to regulate temperature.

American wool’s natural crimp provides knitwear with softness and resilience and because wool naturally manages odors and stains, the garment won’t need to be washed as often as other fabrics.

Hikers have long understood the value of a great wool sock, which protects against cold, wet conditions. But wool’s moisture-wicking properties are great for keeping your feet dry on a warm day, as well. So go ahead, gear up for warm weather fun by adding a variety of American wool garments to your wardrobe.

In an effort to promote American wool among apparel companies and retailers, the American Sheep Industry Association is working with Farm to Feet Hosiery and Chargeurs to produce a five-part series in outdoor publication SNews about the industry, ranchers and the benefits of American wool.

**Meat and Livestock Australia Forecasts 2.7 Million Fewer Sheep and Lambs will be Processed**

Australian lamb slaughter is expected to contract even more than initially forecast for 2017, with a strong incentive from producers to retain ewe lambs for future breeding and Merino wether lambs for wool production. These factors exacerbate the already lower supplies on the back of lower lamb markings during the second half of 2016. The result is an expected 2017 lamb slaughter of 21.5 million head, down a further 500,000 head from what was originally forecast for 2017, and down 1.5 million head (6%) from the 2016 record.

In terms of availability throughout the year, on-the-ground reports suggest there will remain a reasonably steady lamb supply through until the end of April, before numbers are expected to become very tight until August/September, when the new season flush comes through. It should be noted that while a 6% decline in lamb slaughter is expected, the 2017 estimate is still very much in line with the longer term growth trend.

Looking at production, the expectation of relatively high lamb carcase weights will slightly offset the impact of lower slaughter. For 2017, expectations are for a 6% year-on-year fall in lamb production, to 481,600 tonnes cwt, before rebounding back above the 500,000 tonne mark in 2019.

*Source: Meat and Livestock Australia April Australian Sheep Update*
Humane Housing Top Consumer Concern

There is a shift toward ethical consumerism in the developed world with more people asking pointed questions about animal welfare and sustainable farming.

"Once people have food security, they can afford to think about how their food is produced and how animals are treated in the process of becoming food," said Candace Croney, director for the Centre for Animal Welfare Science at Purdue University.

Consumer demands about animal treatment on farms have challenged scientists and ethicists to think about how livestock production might be improved.

Animal Welfare Group Seeks Action Against Livestock Neglect

The Humane Farming Association (HFA) is asking the US Dept. of Agriculture to take action against livestock owners who don't protect their animals from severe weather.

HFA filed a petition with the agency to cease payments to producers under USDA Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), which compensates livestock producers who incur losses from inclement weather. Producers can receive compensation in the amount of 75 percent of the animals' market value up to $125,000 per year, HFA said.

A Freedom of Information Act request produced records showing that in the last three years, LIP issued payments of $134,140,346 to farmers and ranchers for animal deaths due primarily to weather-related issues. Total animal deaths included 202,445 livestock and 2,461,443 poultry, according to HFA.

"Instead of providing adequate shelter to vulnerable livestock, producers who do not assure protections from adverse weather are rewarded with a government check," HFA National Director Bradley Miller said in a statement.

"Compensating producers for dead livestock without ever requiring adequate shelter is actually a disincentive to farmers and ranchers to take the necessary steps to provide their animals with protections from inclement weather. Without this compensation, many producers would no doubt make an effort to provide for their animals. Instead, massive numbers of neglected livestock are dying painfully and needlessly and taxpayers are footing the bill."

[Ed. Note: Clearly these groups have no idea how much it hurts us as livestock producers who suffer these losses. At the same time, you can see how their argument can be challenging to refute to the non-farm audience.]

Use Written Plan to Handle Disease Outbreaks in Livestock

A written plan to respond to disease outbreaks for your livestock operation is like insurance. You hope you never need it. You may never need it. But if there is an outbreak, the economic survival of your livestock operation might depend on having that plan.

Planning and prevention are the best insurance against an outbreak, says University of Missouri Extension Economist Ray Massey. Disease in a livestock operation spreads quickly. Animal and economic losses can be catastrophic. The Iowa Farm Bureau Federation estimated losses in that state from a 2015 avian flu outbreak at $1.2 billion, including 8,400 lost jobs.

When viruses such as avian flu or PEDV strike, livestock operations lose productivity for about six months. "This means that the livestock operator might be without income. Animals have died or been quarantined," said Massey.

Worse yet, operators may incur extra expenses for veterinary bills, installation of new biosecurity systems, composting dead animals and carcass removal.

If you need a line of credit during this period, a written disease-outbreak plan helps present your case to the bank for a loan extension or new loan.

"Have a plan for the worst-case scenario," said Massey. "The plan tells your banker that you want to stay in business. The bank is more likely to see you as a wise businessman who has shown foresight."

Simplistic Anti-Meat Mantra Hurts Third World

Kenyan-based livestock research chief, Dr Jimmy Smith, says producing more meat and making it more available to international markets will be critical to helping the economic and nutritional health of developing countries and their small scale farmers.

While some in developed societies keenly promoted meat–reduced or meat–free lifestyles, he said it was unfair to impose such broad–brush views on countries where diets already lacked enough animal–sourced nutrition.

Dr Smith said some simplistic solutions for global sustainability and health which were frequently promoted in developed economies were misguided in targeting the livestock sector and livestock producers.

There was no moral equivalence between those making bad food choices and consuming too much meat, and the many hungry people who had no food choices at all and consumed far too little.

Livestock Grazing can benefit Sage Grouse

Late–season grazing leaves in place for longer the grasses and other vegetation that sage grouse nest in, increasing their breeding success, researchers concluded. It also can stimulate the growth of vegetation that sage grouse eat, according to a new study.
CAPITOL CONNECTION

NCTO Applauds Buy American Executive Order

The National Council of Textile Organizations applauded President Trump's April 18 Executive Order directing the federal government to maximize Buy American opportunities and to review compliance with existing Buy American laws and regulations.

"Thank you to President Trump for making Buy American a priority," said NCTO President & CEO Auggie Tantillo on behalf of the U.S. textile industry.

"Buying American is good for the country, good for American jobs, and good for the U.S. textile industry." Tantillo said, noting that DOD sourced roughly $1.5 billion in textiles and clothing last year under the Berry Amendment.

"Since 1941, a Buy American law applying to the Department of Defense known as the Berry Amendment has supported American troops, strengthened national security and incentivized U.S. textile industry investment and innovation. This is a concrete example of how Buy American laws benefit the U.S. economy and its workers," Tantillo said, noting that DOD sourced roughly $1.5 billion in textiles and clothing last year under the Berry Amendment.

ASI is a member of the National Council of Textile Organizations.

Reverse Trade Missions Planned for Spring 2017

Reverse Trade Missions by the international customers of American wool are a critical part of the American Sheep Industry Association's International Marketing Program.

The trips facilitate wool buyers who are, or potentially can be, major buyers of American Wool. They also provide an opportunity to visit the leading participants in the American wool trade and see first-hand the wide variety of wool types available in the United States, as well as the specific characteristics inherent in American wool. Most of American wool's international customers have visited the United States at one time or another under this program, which is strongly supported the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service Export Development Program.

Through the years, wool buyers from China, India, Europe, South America, South Africa and other Asian countries have visited under this program and purchased significant quantities of American wool both during and subsequent to these visits. All have praised the program as a significant support for their understanding of American wool and how to successfully utilize it in their manufacturing programs.

In spring 2017, the RTM program is continuing with buyers from China, India and Europe likely to participate. Visits to the major American wool exporters, wool warehouses (as appropriate) and wool sales are planned.

ASI Supports Appointment of Bangerter to USDA

The American Sheep Industry Association joined with 31 other groups in sending a letter to the House Ways and Means Committee urging permanent repeal of the Death Tax. In 2012, the American Tax Payer Relief Act permanently extended the estate tax exemption level to $5 million per person ($10 million per couple) indexed for inflation and maintained the stepped up basis. However, many family farms and ranches are still burdened by the Death Tax and are forced to sell off land and equipment or take out loans to cover tax liabilities in the event of a death in the family. ASI policy calls for elimination of, or significant reduction to, the burden America's family farms, ranches and small businesses face under the current estate tax.

ASI joined the Idaho Wool Growers Association in support of Layne Bangerter's appointment to the position of USDA Under Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources. ASI sent the following letter to Idaho Senators Crapo and Risch and USDA Secretary Nominee, Gov. Sonny Perdue in support of the:

Mr. Bangerter's work with ranchers across the State of Idaho has won him the support of ASI and our affiliate, the Idaho Wool Growers Association. Working in the Senate gave him direct experience with how Federal policies affect land, water and people. Moreover, his 32 years of federal service and his background as a wildlife biologist give him a unique understanding of land use issues and species management that are critical for our industry.

His efforts leading the Trump administration's campaign in Idaho and subsequent work on the "beachhead" team landing at the Environmental Protection Agency demonstrate the administration's recognition of his skills and background. Further, as a livestock producer himself, Mr. Bangerter understands the challenges and rewards of our industry and how hard America's producers work to ensure the American people have access to domestic food and fiber.

As the administration looks to fill vacancies within the federal government, we must ensure that offices like this, which affect the day-to-day lives of our nation's sheep producers, are carefully considered. America's sheep producers firmly
believe that Mr. Bangerter’s background, and his dedication to family, agriculture and private property rights make him the right choice for this position.

ASI proudly supports the appointment of Mr. Bangerter to USDA Under Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you for your consideration of his appointment to this critical post.

Buchholz Testifies on Sheep Industry’s Farm Bill Priorities

On March 21, ASI executive board member Bob Buchholz from Eldorado, TX, participated in the first of the House Agriculture Livestock Subcommittee’s Farm Bill hearings. Chairman Mike Conaway (Texas) of the full House Agriculture Committee introduced Buchholz, highlighting their long-standing friendship and the importance of the sheep industry in the chairman’s district.

The hearing gave ASI an opportunity to lay out the sheep industry’s priorities for the Farm Bill including risk management tools, funding for a foot and mouth disease vaccine bank and the much needed update to the marketing loan fund for wool. The current loan rate was established in 2002 and no longer reflects the market nor the rapidly increasing production costs of the industry.

Buchholz also stressed the importance of the livestock forage, indemnity and emergency conservation programs to livestock operators following disasters, such as the wildfires that recently occurred in Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma. This program has personal significance to Buchholz as he was burned out in 2011 and continues to rebuild his operation.

This hearing was part of a larger effort to set the foundation for upcoming listening sessions and work by both chambers of Congress in crafting the next Farm Bill.

OMNIBUS TAX BILL REPURPOSES SOME 2016 VETOED PROVISIONS

Many provisions in the Minnesota House and Senate versions of HF4/ SF2255, this year’s omnibus tax bill, sponsored by Representative Davids (R-Preston) and Senator Chamberlain (R-Lino), have been repurposed from previous years, including a tax credit on the portion of agricultural property taxes paid toward school debt bond levies. Currently Governor Dayton and the Senate have proposed a 40 percent credit similar to the 2016 policy that was ultimately vetoed. The House, however, has proposed a 50 percent credit.

BUFFER LAW, FEE INCREASES TO ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Fee increases at state parks and delays in the buffer law are just a few of the issues up for negotiation as the omnibus environment, natural resources policy and finance conference committee met for the first-time Wednesday. While the House delays implementation of the buffer law until 2018 for both public waters and public drainage systems, the Senate proposal delays implementation of buffers on public waters to 2019 and public drainage systems to 2020. Both the House and Senate versions of the bill address the issues with the DNR’s buffer map and classification of public waters.

SIX ALTERNATIVES FOR MN BUFFER LAW COMPLIANCE

1. MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program.
2. Filter Strips
3. Grass waterways
4. Negative slopes/concentrated inflow (public ditches)
5. Negative slopes/concentrated inflow (public waters)
6. Conservation tillage w/ cover crops

GOVERNOR SIGNS DITCH MOWING BILL

Legislation prohibiting the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) from enforcing certain highway ditch mowing regulations was signed by the Governor. This bill prevents MnDOT from requiring, issuing or enforcing permits to mow or bale in state highway rights of way until April 30, 2018.

In addition, the bill requires MnDOT to work with agricultural and environmental groups in the coming months to develop recommendations on a permit or notification system for mowing and baling in the highway rights of way. These recommendations, which will be required to include landowner priority and ease of application, must be presented to the legislature early next year.

MN HOUSE PASSES OMNIBUS AG POLICY AND AG FINANCE BILLS

Money for farmer-led councils that could prompt more buy-in to the state’s buffer program is included in the omnibus agriculture finance bill passed by the House 134-0. The bill also includes language that would formally establish a Farm Safety Working Group. The 16-member organization would consist of government, agriculture and citizen members who would advise the department and legislature on farm safety issues.

The financial threshold farmers must meet to participate in the state’s debt mediation program may increase for the first time in more than 30 years after the House passed the omnibus ag policy bill 109-25. Several amendments were adopted during bill debate. The most contentious was one that would expand nuisance liability protections for feedlots to include facilities of all sizes. Advocates said the measure is needed to guard against nuisance lawsuits that can hurt farmers.
February was National Lamb Month! And we took this annual opportunity to highlight the benefits that DDGS continue to provide within the sheep industry.

A reminder that DDGS or (dried distillers grains with solubles) are a high protein animal feed and one of the coproducts made during ethanol production. In Minnesota, every bushel of corn produces about 2.8 gallons of ethanol, 18 lbs of DDGS and 1.5 lbs or corn oil. In 2016, Minnesota produced 3.5 million tons of dried distiller’s grains.

The majority of the starch from corn is removed during the process of producing ethanol so the resulting DDGS coproduct are a high-energy feed source of concentrated protein and high fiber. According to Iowa State University’s Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, DDGS contain 10 percent to 15 percent more energy than corn grain.

The Purdue Extension stated that DDGS are a practical, cost-effective protein source as protein is the most expensive fraction of the sheep diet. Because of this nutrient makeup, studies have demonstrated not only health benefits, but economic benefits as well when incorporating DDGS into Sheep diets.

The US Grains Council found that ewes fed a DDGS supplemented diet produced 16.5 percent more milk fat per day. Their lactation study evaluating the use of DDGS to replace 2/3 of the corn resulted in a 12 percent improvement in reared lamb growth for ewes nursing triplets. They also discovered that ewes fed DDGS had greater body condition scores at parturition and at weaning, ewes fed DDGS had greater body condition scores than those fed corn or haylage rations.

Department of Animal Sciences in North Dakota State University confirmed that DDGS can be included in lamb finishing rations at concentrations up to 60 percent while the Department of Youth Development and Agricultural Education at Purdue University said that DDGS can be included in feedlot lamb diets at levels up to 50 percent.

The Depart of Animal and Poultry Science at Ridgetown Campus demonstrated that DDGS are financially beneficial per pound of gain in feeder lambs. Trials showed a lower feed intake in lambs fed with 30 percent DDGS yet they continued to maintain the same average daily gain as the control group. But the cost per pound of gain was 60 cents for DDGS and 77 cents for the control group indicating feed cost per pound of gain dropped with added DDGS.

This was also shown to be accurate at the Ohio State University Department of Animal Sciences where they found that control group lambs gained an average of 112g/d while lambs supplemented with DDGS gained an average of 232g/d. Double! In addition to overall body weight growth they saw that DDGS reduced the percentage of lambs requiring treatment for internal parasites. The University established that “supplementing grazing lambs with DDGS at 2.5 percent of their body weight increased growth, reduced anthelmintic treatment rate, and reduced risk of becoming anemic as a result of internal parasites.”

Yet another study by the Department of Food and Animal Sciences at the Alabama A & M University stated that the composition of DDGS is an ideal supplement for ruminants consuming low-to moderate-quality forages and that when DDGS are fed at levels of 6 to 15 percent of a diet, their primary purpose is to serve as a protein source, and when fed at greater levels, DDGS become a source of energy. They concluded with, “dry distillers grains with solubles like corn-based ethanol byproducts are an excellent protein and energy source.”

Recently, I got a pretty awesome notification from Facebook — they now allow you to report fake news...When in doubt, explore the other side of the issue and track down a real industry expert who devotes their entire life and career to the topic at hand. Sometimes a website can be reputable in one area but completely irresponsible in another. The New York times is a good example of this. They may be reputable for current events or local news, but they have received much scrutiny for their sloppy articles on agriculture written by Danny Hakim. Mr. Hakim has been absolutely slaughtered on Twitter.

Speaking of slaughter, have you heard ungodly awful stories about animal agriculture? Examine the source. HSUS, or the Humane Society of the United States, has lobbied over $172 million against animal agriculture last year alone while only donating 1 percent of "charitable" contributions to helping dogs and cats. They are essentially PETA in a business suit and have been caught lying on numerous occasions.

Source: Michelle Miller, Farm Babe Blog
"LIKE" OUR NEW & IMPROVED FACEBOOK PAGE

Welcome to the Minnesota Lamb & Wool Producers Association FB page. Yes, there is another one. However, we can’t remember who the admins are so, yes there are now two. (We’d like to let the old one wither and die.) This page will be expanded. Posts can be added, they of course will be reviewed and removed if we feel they are in poor taste or not in the best interests of MLWPs. The decision on this will be solely ours.

If you have not already done so, please like our page. It can be a great way to keep up to speed on current MLWPA events.

K-STATE HIRING SHEEP EXTENSION SPECIALIST

The Department of Animal Sciences & Industry and the College of Agriculture at Kansas State University invite applications for a tenure track, assistant professor position in the area of sheep and meat goats. This position is 30 percent teaching and 70 percent extension.

The successful candidate will have the ability to: develop and lead extension, applied research and teaching programs in sheep and meat goat production and management; develop multi-disciplinary extension collaborations to deliver technical/scientific information; oversee the K-State Sheep and Meat Goat Center; teach undergraduate sheep and meat goat science, advise undergraduate and graduate students and supervise collegiate wool judging team; secure extramural support for funding of both extension and applied research programs; serve as liaison between producers, youth operations, allied industry and Kansas State University; and work in a diverse and multicultural environment.

Minimum requirements include: a Ph.D. in animal science and/or DVM, or related area by the start date; trained and experienced in the production and management of sheep and/or meat goats; demonstrated evidence of being a successful team member and leader, including the ability to collaborate with a diverse team of colleagues, staff, students and sheep and meat goat stakeholders; documented oral and written communication skills, including the ability to write scholarly and industry-relevant publications/conduct workshops to effectively communicate with stakeholders; and established proficiency in the interpretation and translation of scientific/technical information into educational resources for extension and teaching programs.


MLWPA AT THE U OF M AG AWARENESS DAY

Each spring, the U of M, Ag Ed Club organizes an “Ag Awareness Day” on the Minneapolis Campus. MLWPA continues to participate with a booth. Jeremy Geske and U of M Ag Ed students (with a sheep background) visited with students about the sheep industry. [Ed. Note: Best/most disturbing comment heard about the lambs—"I don’t think they are carnivorous."]
We already know that livestock integration is critical to achieving soil health. It's one of the Five Principles of Soil Health and guides much of our programming at various SFA events and the Midwest Soil Health Summit. But what if you're a crop farmer working toward soil health but, for whatever reason, can't add the livestock piece?

After working in cooperation with SFA, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has launched the Cropland Grazing Exchange, an interactive website that seeks to connect crop farmers and livestock farmers to improve soil health.

CROP and/or livestock farmers register their location by township and provide basic information about their operation. An interactive map is then generated that shows available grazing sites and livestock herds; registered users may contact each other to initiate a conversation about grazing agreements.

The Cropland Grazing Exchange also includes information about writing a grazing lease, guidelines on herbicide restrictions, and other considerations for custom grazing.

For more information and to register your operation, visit www.mda.state.mn.us/cge or contact Kelly Anderson at 320.808.4424.

Hello MN Sheep Producers
Travis Hoffman, Extension Sheep Specialist
NDSU/UofM Travis.W.Hoffman@ndsu.edu

This is my first Spring as the MN Extension Sheep Specialist, but I am excited for the opportunity to meet with more MN sheep producers this Summer. Now that we have the 2017 lamb crop on the ground and growing, we can move on to the next chapter of sheep production. Let’s hope that ewes enjoy the green grass, and the lambs stay healthy this summer. Have you contemplated how best to market this year’s lamb crop? Will you sell your lambs as feeder lambs or will you grow those lambs go to harvest? Should we feed them to 135 lbs.? Will you take them to an auction market, contract them with a processing plant, or add value and direct market this year’s lambs? Prices have been relatively stable and, as profitable as any red meat protein sector. It is important to develop a plan based on your farm’s goals for marketing lambs.

USDA-NASS data determined the U.S. sheep and lamb inventory was down 2% to a total of 5.2 million head of sheep. Minnesota is ranked 11th with a total of 130,000 total sheep, and MN sheep producers reported a nation-wide leading 129 lambs saved per 100 ewes. While there is room for improvement, we will focus on that as we move into breeding for 2018. The average fleece shorn from a Minnesota ewe weighed 6.2 lbs. and was marketed at $0.62/lb. Our global competitors are still Australia and New Zealand. With Australian droughts hopefully American lamb can recapture some retail and foodservice market share and there is current strength for U.S. fine wools in the market.

Are you aware of an under-utilized opportunity for borrowing finances from the National Livestock Producers Association Sheep & Goat Fund, accessible at: www.sheepandgoatfund.com? The Sheep & Goat Fund assists sheep producers finance projects with low interest loans that inevitably will provide expansion and enhancement of sheep production. Loan dollars are available to producers that aspire to expand their flock and/or finance new breeding for 2018. The average lamb weighed 6.2 lbs. and was marketed at $0.62/lb. Our global competitors are still Australia and New Zealand. With Australian droughts hopefully American lamb can recapture some retail and foodservice market share and there is current strength for U.S. fine wools in the market.

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The USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) is again offering Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) for lambs beginning on April 24. The LRP-Lamb program is essentially an insurance option for producers to protect them from unfavorable declines in lamb prices. An RMA- licensed agent can be found at: www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html. Coverage prices and the policy premium will be available weekly on Mondays from 10 AM to 7 PM. The coverage prices can be projected for 13, 26, and 39 week periods in the future corresponding to the actual marketing date for the lambs. Risk protection ranging from 80% to 95% of the expected ending value can be purchased. If the marketed value for lambs is lower than the coverage price, producers can garner the indemnity payment. Learn more at www.sheepusa.org.

As our lamb crop grows, I challenge producers to establish a plan for future marketing. We have tools available for risk management, and building relationships with buyers is pertinent to capitalize on your hard work this Spring. Know your production goals, set benchmarks, and succeed in the market. Let me know if I can help.
I just read a report where according to the USDA only one half of sheep producers consult a veterinarian once a year and only a third of goat producers do. In this day and age, this a concerning fact. Animal welfare and profitability are at risk. I am puzzled as to how one can be successful without availability of prescription drugs and off label use via VFD to prevent, control and treat major problems such as abortion. I certainly could not in my own sheep flock. They see the veterinarian every day.

Often I hear the comment, our vets doesn’t know anything about sheep and goats and doesn’t particularly care. This may often be true because there may not be enough sheep and goat work in vet’s practice area to justify expertise. But let me assure you, all vets have an advantage when it comes to interpreting post mortem and lab results. If you establish a working relationship with them, at least you will be able to obtain certain key drugs such as Nuflor and Dexamethasone which quite frankly, in my flock, I couldn’t succeed without.

We field hundreds of calls and emails a week from producers and also from a number of veterinarians particularly since the VFD rule became effective. We have to find a way to fund these services. Reliance on sales to fund these services is a struggle but we are working hard to find a solution. Never in my practice years, that now number 57, have I ever received as many thanks for service than our group does for sheep and goats. Joining the Shepherd’s Club, which I perceive as a huge value to producers, will help the cause. We do not expect or can we provide you with all your sheep product needs but when we can we are happy to do so. Generally, the correct use and directions are more important than price. Correct use results in less use and less cost.

I made an effort recently to encourage some insights into sheep and goat veterinary practice that perhaps would be an aid to veterinarians wanting to become more knowledgeable in common practices of sheep and goat medicine. This could be done with webinars or as part of the ASI meeting. If Continued ed credits were made available, I think there is a number of veterinarians that could be interested. We did this, once perhaps, thirty years ago when the Lamb and Wool Program was developing with success. My efforts were directed to people in the animal health committee with little success. Perhaps if I had been interested in OPP or the Scarpie program I would have been more successful. I guess I don’t understand the Club mentality.

To switch subjects I want to revisit milk replacer. Abomasal bloat is certainly the major problem. Using milk replacers that are skim milk based vs whey helps. Feeding via machine or cold free choice in a bucket creates less problems than bottle feeding on a schedule. Don’t mix milk more concentrated than recommended, error on the side of less concentration. Be sure lambs have available choice hay, palatable creep and water. They may not eat a lot prior to wean but must be given the opportunity. Wean at thirty days. They may not like it but it is better than dying and they adapt quickly. Acidified products work better than non-acidified. There was some work done in 1975 that showed adding formaldehyde to milk was successful in preventing abomasal bloat. You would add 3cc per gal, no more, no less.

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

The Natural Fiber Alliance has received funding from the Minnesota Institute of Agriculture Endowed Chair program. Thank you to the University of Minnesota and everyone who has supported our efforts since 2011. Our goal is to grasp the opportunity to redevelop the midwest wool industry while taking advantage of the recent local buying national trend. Our objective is to obtain companies in Minnesota who will utilize Minnesota/Midwest wool in their products. We will be using the University of Minnesota resources, and a design agency to brand Minnesota wool. We also rely on our wool consultant, business consultant and other advisors.

For more information about our project, contact me at: muellerjean669@gmail.com
Do you have breeding stock, fleeces, guard dogs, used sheep equipment, or other sheep-related items to sell?
(place your classified ad here: $20/3 lines + $5/additional line)

**For Sale: Suffolk Rams and ewes**
NSIP tested, Nationally Competitive, RR. Improve your flock with genetics from JMG Suffolks. 612-756-1200
Jeremy.geske@gmail.com http://jmgsuffolks.webs.com

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**CLASSIFIED ADS**

**For Sale:** Suffolk Rams and ewes

NSIP tested, Nationally Competitive, RR. Improve your flock with genetics from JMG Suffolks. 612-756-1200
Jeremy.geske@gmail.com http://jmgsuffolks.webs.com
## Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 11-13</td>
<td>Big Ohio Sale</td>
<td>Eaton, OH</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bannersheepmagazine.com/salesportal.html">www.bannersheepmagazine.com/salesportal.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12-14</td>
<td>Shepherd's Harvest Festival</td>
<td>Lake Elmo, MN</td>
<td><a href="http://shepherdsharvestfestival.org/">http://shepherdsharvestfestival.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 27-28</td>
<td>Great Lakes Fiber Show</td>
<td>Wooster, OH</td>
<td><a href="http://www.greatlakesfibershow.com">www.greatlakesfibershow.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>MLWPA starter flock application deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:bjdvorak81@hotmail.com">bjdvorak81@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1-3</td>
<td>Nugget All-American Sale</td>
<td>Reno, NV</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wlivestock.com">www.wlivestock.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 5-7</td>
<td>Minnesota Shearing School/Intermediate</td>
<td>Hutchinson, MN</td>
<td>Doug Rathke at <a href="mailto:info@lambshoppe.com">info@lambshoppe.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 6-10</td>
<td>National Columbia Sheep Show &amp; Sale</td>
<td>Spencer, IA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.columbiasheep.org">www.columbiasheep.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11-18</td>
<td>Advanced Shearing School</td>
<td>Eastern SD</td>
<td>Loren Opstedahl at 605-484-3600</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 16-17</td>
<td>American Polypay Sheep Assoc. Nat. Sale</td>
<td>Bernien Springs, MI</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 17-18</td>
<td>Iowa Sheep and Wool Festival</td>
<td>Ames, IA</td>
<td>Claudia Putnam <a href="mailto:info@iowasheep.com">info@iowasheep.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 19-24</td>
<td>National Hampshire Sale</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
<td>Jeff Ebert 785-456-8500</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20-26</td>
<td>Midwest Stud Ram Sale</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bret@midwestsale.com">bret@midwestsale.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 29-Jul. 2</td>
<td>UJSSA National Jr Suffolk Show</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.u-s-s-a.org">www.u-s-s-a.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 29—Jul. 2</td>
<td>All American Junior Sheep Show</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.allamericanjuniorsheepshow.com">www.allamericanjuniorsheepshow.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 12-15</td>
<td>Sheep for Profit School</td>
<td>Pipeston, MN</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pipestonesheep.com">www.pipestonesheep.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 21</td>
<td>MN Suffolk Youth Scholarship deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 22</td>
<td>MN State Suffolk Show</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul. 23</td>
<td>MN State Jr Suffolk Show</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 29</td>
<td>Center of the Nation NSIP sale</td>
<td>Spencer, IA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:morrical@iastate.edu">morrical@iastate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>MN Hampshire Youth Scholarship deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:tom.pgc@svtv.com">tom.pgc@svtv.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1-2</td>
<td>MLWPA/NDLWPA Annual Convention</td>
<td>Fargo, ND</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jeremy.geske@gmail.com">jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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