Dick Boniface, Oak Grove, MN received the Art Pope Award at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Cooperative Association held recently in Arlington, WI. This award recognizes an individual for outstanding service and dedication to the American Sheep Industry. The award was established in 1995 to honor Dr. A. L. Pope, an Animal Science professor, University of Wisconsin, for his leadership and service to the sheep industry.

Boniface enjoyed a 40 year wool-marketing career at North Central Wool Marketing Corporation, a regional co-op based in Minneapolis. He started working on a grading crew in the warehouse, became a wool buyer, supervisor of field staff, Director of Field Service and Director of Public Relations. During his time there, he originated the grade and yield method of marketing wool. In addition, he implemented and helped operate the wool-testing lab. He traveled and spoke to grower meetings and events in many states, organized and led buyer-training sessions throughout the U.S. fleece wool states. As Public Relations Director he arranged annual meetings, and edited the company paper “THE WOOL SACK.” This publication had at one time, a circulation of 20,000 including woolgrowers, industry personnel and agriculture libraries.

He worked with the Universities of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, State, North Dakota State, and South Dakota State.

2015 MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday
December 4-6
Oak Ridge Conf. Ctr
Chaska, MN
Mark your calendar!

It’s spring and it’s nice to get rain, not snow. Planting continues with a brief respite due to the rain and apparently more to come. However, in SW Minnesota, we need it so no complaining.

Lambing is over for some and in the middle for others. Shepherding at our farm is a family affair, as it seems to be at most sheep operations. Soon we’ll be sending our ewes out to pasture to gain weight and get some well deserved rest. Our lambs are growing, some of us will be sending the last ones to market in a couple of weeks, others will be ready later in the summer.

Once we’ve weaned our ewes, thoughts turn to pasture management, available feedstuffs, percentage of forage winter kill, what supplementation if any will be needed, ewe worming, vaccination and predator management. Predator management you say?? Yup, with the wolf back on the endangered list, you folks up north will have to really watch your flocks.
teaching livestock classes the basics of wool grades and proper wool preparation. He was also a popular wool show judge including over 20 years at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Boniface helped organize the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Association (MLWP) and continues to support the organization’s events at the Minnesota State Fair. He is a donor of 4-H State Fair awards in Lamb Lead and the wool show. Dick and Juanita have been long time buyers at the Minnesota 4-H Livestock Auction. The Dick Boniface and Juanita Reed-Boniface 4-H Endowment was established to assure support of these awards for the future. Dick and Juanita also sponsor awards for several categories of hand constructed wool items at the Minnesota State Fair.

Dick and his wife Juanita formed an agriculture education consulting firm, JRB Associates, Inc. in 1992. From 1997-2008 they were program Coordinators for Minnesota Foundation for Responsible Animal Care. They gave leadership to developing Minnesota’s Livestock Quality Assurance and Ethics Program for young producers, a program which now reaches 50,000 youth in the Minnesota 4-H program. He has provided resources on sheep and wool and taught hands-on activities to hundreds of students for Ag-In-The Classroom, Ag Adventures Day Camps, 4-H Family Farm Fests and County and State Fair educational exhibits.

Dick and Juanita are both Anoka County Farm Bureau officers and help to conduct award winning educational programs in agriculture literacy. In 2004 they were inducted into the Minnesota Livestock Hall of Fame. In 2010 Dick received the American Sheep Industry Camptender award for his commitment and long-lasting contributions to the wool industry.

Boniface said while accepting his award, “It’s been a privilege to spend my career working in this industry. It’s not a job that has made me a millionaire, but I am rich in another way. Getting to know and work with hundreds of the greatest people in the world—the farmers and ranchers in the North Central and Western parts of the United States...has been truly rewarding. The friends I gained through my work are among my life’s prized possessions.”
Shepherd's News

MLWPA Board Meeting Minutes - Jeremy Geske

The MLWPA board meeting was held on Saturday, March 28. Present: President Melanie Pamp, Karen Stormo, John Dvorak, Steve Scheffert, Randy Kinney, Jeremy Geske, Mary Rademacher, Bob Padula, guests: Amy Marquette, Dan Persons.

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Grant submissions: Mentoring grant – (Melanie), MN Grown – (Sherry) [BAA Booth / Commercial booth – Jeremy work with Sherry]. Let’s Grow funding discussion.

Spring Sheep Workshop – very positive – good information – 90+ people attended. Maybe have something in the waiting area to talk to potential new members. Virtual tour was good. Karen reported on sheep workshop in Fosston (88 people) – needs more brochures.


4-H foundation event - Amy & Sara Marquette went on behalf of MLWPA.

Ag Ambassador Institute: Moved/second to sponsor at $300 level – carried.


Youth report – Ag Awareness event - Lisa Marquette, Jeremy – Another ag day in St Paul – May 13.

Website – discussion on directory on web – no motion made, discussion – move member links to bottom of list; include committee list, directors take turn blogging.

MLBA – sheep nominees for Livestock Hall of Fame

Wolf depredation – members need to get info in to us.

Conference – Jeremy will email people about speakers

Next mtg date – 6/20 noon Litchfield

Mtg adjourned – 6:05 pm

Sheep For Profit School July 15-18

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool program is excited to offer a Sheep for Profit School July 15-18, 2015 in Pipestone, Minnesota. This will be the 8th course offering with 127 past participants from 23 different states completing the course.

The Sheep for Profit School is a professional management and business school for the sheep industry. The purpose of the school is to help producers improve their sheep management skills; increase the profitability of their sheep operation and form business relationships. The school will be intense and combine lecture, group discussion and visit two outstanding Pipestone area sheep operations. Expert instructors with diverse and practical sheep experience will help you define your vision and build a practical plan to achieve your goals. This is a three and a half day investment that will change your sheep operation and how you view the sheep industry.

Enrollment in the school is limited to create an ideal learning environment and allow for one-on-one advising. Visit our website www.pipestonesheep.com for registration information and a course schedule. For more information, contact the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Management Program, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, PO Box 250, Pipestone, MN 56164, 1-800-658-2330 or e-mail: jodi.christensen@mnwest.edu

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**STARS OF THE NORTH ON-LINE SALE RESULTS**

The Stars of the North on-line sale (open to members of MLWPA, MN Suffolk and MN Hampshire) was held last month. 17 of 24 hd sold for an average of $603 to buyers from 8 states (MN, IA, ND, WI, IL, NJ, OR, CA). Thanks to all bidders and buyers! [To consign next year, contact Jeremy at Jeremy.geske@gmail.com]

- **High-selling Suffolk Ram—Dombek Family** – $900 to ND
- **High-selling Hampshire—U of MN**—$800 to IA
- **High-selling Dorset—Dew Drop Farms**—$550 to MN
- **Suffolk ewe—JMG Suffolks**—$900 to CA

**California Ram Sale Results**

304 Yearling Suffolk rams sold for an average of $729. Prices ranged from $525 to $1000. Ten Hampshire rams sold for an average of $622. Forty-four white-faced range rams averaged $591; ranging from $450-$875. 138 crossbred range rams averaged $665.

**Big Ohio Sale Highlights**

- Hampshire: Coss (MN), Reserve Champion, Jr Champion ram, 1st Feb. ewe lamb; Herrig (MN) 2nd Fall ewe, 2nd Yrlg ram.
- Suffolk: Quam (MN), Jr Champion ewe, 1st fall ewe, 2nd fall ram.
- Shropshire: Woelber (MN) 5th early January ewe lamb. [more results at championsdrive.com]

**MARKET UPDATE — [THESE PRICES ARE FROM 5/2/15]**

**Feeder Prices.** San Angelo: new crop 45-60 lbs. for 194-208, 60-70 lbs. for 190-202, 70-80 lbs. for 186-196, 80-90 lbs. for 180-188, 90-105 lbs. for 178-186; old crop 70-80 lbs. for 166-175, 80-100 lbs. for 150-164.

**Slaughter Prices - Negotiated,** wooled and shorn 136-167 lbs. for 125-148 (wtd avg 137.61); wooled and shorn 173-191 lbs. for 113.80-134 (wtd avg 126.55).

**Slaughter Prices - Formula 1,** 2,107 head at 270-315.20 $/cwt. for 79.30 lbs.; 4,209 head at 239-295.70 $/cwt. for 90.2 lbs.

**Equity Electronic Auction, no sales**

**Cutout Value/ $321.02/cwt.**

**Carcass Price,** Choice and Prime, YG 1-4, $/cwt., weighted averages, 593 head at 55-65 lbs. for 349.18, 1,026 head at 65-75 lbs. for 321.75, 1,418 head at 75-85 lbs. for 304.89, 2,731 head at 85 lbs. and up for 289.57.

**Exported Adult Sheep.** 0 head

**Wool, Price ($/pound)**

- Price ($/pound) Clean, Delivered, 18 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 19 micron (Grade 80s) 3.71-4.00, 20 micron (Grade 70s) 3.54-3.63, 21 micron (Grade 64-70s) 3.42-3.63, 22 micron (Grade 64s) 3.30-3.59, 23 micron (Grade 62s) 3.11-3.39, 24 micron (Grade 60-62s) 3.10, 25 micron (Grade 58s) 2.77-2.88, 26 micron (Grade 56-58s) 2.73-2.83, 27 micron (Grade 56s) 2.66-2.91, 28 micron (Grade 54s) 2.50, 29 micron (Grade 50-54s) NA, 30-34 micron (Grade 44-50s) NA.

**Spring 2015**

- **Ft. Collins, CO** Feeder Lambs $190 - $222/cwt, Slaughter lambs $144 - $200/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $50 - $89/cwt
- **Twin Falls, ID** Feeder Lambs $144 - $182/cwt, Slaughter lambs $131 - $150/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $40 - $90/cwt
- **Zumbrota, MN** Feeder Lambs $150 - $220/cwt, Slaughter lambs $125 - $135/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $50 - $75/cwt
- **Pipestone, MN** Feeder Lambs $215-$270/cwt, Slaughter lambs $148 - $151.50/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $15 - $87.50/cwt
- **Sioux Falls, SD** Feeder Lambs $136 - $270/cwt, Slaughter lambs $80 - $163/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $40 - $82.50/cwt
- **Mt Hope, OH** Feeder Lambs $170 - $265/cwt, Slaughter lambs $150 - $202.50/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $57.50 - $87.50/cwt
- **Manchester, MI** Feeder Lambs $150 - $280/cwt, Slaughter lambs $150 - $250/cwt (none), Ewes & Bucks $40 - $85/cwt
- **Escalon, CA** Feeder Lambs $170 - $210/cwt, Slaughter lambs $150 - $170/cwt (none), Ewes & Bucks $40 - $110/cwt
The American Lamb Board has received the results of a comprehensive study entitled “Preferences and Complaints Associated with American Lamb Quality in Retail & Foodservice Markets.” This study was conducted and compiled by the Center for Meat Safety and Quality, Department of Animal Sciences, Colorado State University, and by the Department of Animal Sciences, The Ohio State University.

The study’s objective was to determine U.S. lamb retail and foodservice rank, definition and relative preference for the following seven qualities: Origin; Sheep Raising Practices; Eating Satisfaction; Weight/Size; Product Appearance/Composition; Product Convenience/Form; Nutrition/Wholesomeness. Interviews were conducted from May 2014 to March 2015 with 120 protein purchaser reps in the lamb supply chain: 60 retail; 45 foodservice; 15 purveyors (lamb suppliers). Their responses were ranked using a sophisticated quantification process that included a willingness-to-pay assessment as well as “must-have” quality attributes and their impact on the increased value of lamb.

First, the seven qualities ranked in this order: 1) Eating Satisfaction (most commonly defined as flavor/taste), 2) Origin (locally raised), 3) Sheep Raising Practices (grass fed), 4) Product Appearance/Composition (of greater importance to purveyors), 5) Weight/Size (again of greater importance to purveyors), 6) Nutrition/Wholesomeness, 7) Product Convenience/Form

Of these qualities, Origin and Sheep Raising Practices had the greatest likelihood of being a non-negotiable requirement for lamb purchasers. Eating Satisfaction was most likely to return a premium, and product assurance of Eating Satisfaction generated the greatest average willingness-to-pay premium.

It’s no surprise that quality ranks high — but defining “quality” is a slippery endeavor. While quality may be defined as customer satisfaction, several other factors play a role in achieving quality. Since consumers are the ultimate judges of what

Grilled Lamb Loin Chops with Orange & Olive

**Ingredients**
- 1-1/2 pounds lamb loin chops, 1 to 1-1/2 inches thick
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons plain yogurt, low fat or whole milk
- Juice and zest of one orange, divided
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped and divided
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 3/4 cup finely chopped green olives
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped flat leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for the grill

**Directions**
Marinating these chops overnight with yogurt and citrus tenderizes the meat and adds bright flavor that complements the smoky char from the grill. A quick, fresh sauce is all you need to complete the chops, plus a bottle of wine. The day before serving, pat the chops dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Lay the chops in a shallow non-reactive pan such as an 8-inch square baking dish. Combine the yogurt, half of the orange juice and zest, and half of the garlic in a small bowl. Whisk the ingredients together and pour over the chops, turning them once to coat both sides with the marinade. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Remove the chops from the marinade and pour over the chops, turning them once to coat both sides with the marinade. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Remove the chops from the refrigerator 30 to 45 minutes prior to grilling to allow the meat to come to room temperature. Heat a gas or charcoal grill to medium-high, or preheat a grill pan over medium high heat. Remove the chops from the marinade and allow most of it to drip off. Lightly oil the grill or grill pan, and arrange the chops over the heat. Grill 3 minutes, turn each chop 90 degrees, and cook for another 3 minutes or until the chops are nicely charred. Flip the chops and cook on the other side for about 6 more minutes, turning halfway through. They should still be pink inside. Remove the chops from the grill and place on a warm plate to rest while you make the sauce. Combine the remaining orange juice and zest, and chopped garlic with the onion, olives, parsley and olive oil in a small bowl. Stir well to combine, spoon some sauce over each chop and serve immediately.
A ruling on the U.S. country-of-origin labeling (COOL) rule for meat is expected from the World Trade Organization (WTO) by May 18, and agriculture's top lawmakers on Capitol Hill have different ideas on what could come next.

The U.S. is appealing a WTO decision that found the rule requiring muscle cuts of meat to be labeled with where an animal was born, raised and slaughtered accorded unfair treatment to Canadian and Mexican livestock in U.S. markets. If data from the Canadian government is to be believed, potential retaliatory tariffs could be in the billions.

In Congressionally mandated correspondence to some of agriculture's leading lawmakers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) said that while there is consumer interest in COOL, it has provided little economic benefit. A potential option to COOL that has been considered by USDA and others is a generic mandatory label indicating if the meat is a product of North America, but after receiving the economic analysis from USDA, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (Texas) said a generic label "does nothing to help producers, provides no useful information to consumers, and worse, it does nothing to mitigate the threat of retaliation since the idea has already been rejected by our trading partners."

If the WTO rules COOL non-compliant with global commerce regulations, the path forward is uncertain. Leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture committees recently spoke with National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) members, and there doesn't appear to be a consistent position among the chairmen and ranking members in the two chambers. Conaway has been a persistent advocate for COOL repeal and said he was confident repeal could get through his committee and move to the House floor.

Rep. Collin Peterson (Minn.), the House Agriculture Committee's ranking member, said based on conversations he's had with Conaway, his potential repeal bill would address issues only with cattle, hogs and chickens and leave the other items covered under the current COOL statute in effect. Peterson added that he prefers a legislative fix and would oppose full repeal.

Agriculture leaders in the Senate share many of Peterson's views and are unsure if repeal could get through their chamber. In an email to Agri-Pulse, a spokeswoman for the Senate Agriculture Committee said chair Pat Roberts (Kan.), "would consider any option, including repeal that would allow the United States to be WTO-compliant and avoid retaliation from Canada and Mexico."

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (Mich.), the Senate committee's ranking member, said like many others in Congress, she wanted to see the WTO decision before considering legislative adjustments to bring the law into compliance.

"COOL enjoys bipartisan support in Congress," Stabenow noted in a statement to Agri-Pulse. "If we need to make adjustments, we should work in a bipartisan way to find a solution that encourages international trade while preserving the right of consumers to know where their food comes from."

Once a regular dining option, a mix of cultural and economic factors pushed lamb off the American dinner table. To put the meat back on the menu, ranchers and retailers are being encouraged to reach out to a more diverse set of consumers, specifically American Muslims and Latinos. Colorado is one of the top states in the country for lamb production and those sheep ranchers, feedlot owners, and processors are banking on America becoming a more diverse place. Without more Muslim and Latino communities embracing local lamb, the industry fears this niche meat could slip even further off the dinner plate, or be completely usurped by foreign producers like Australia or New Zealand.
U.S. Bird Flu Emergency Funds

The U.S. government approved the use of an additional $330 million in emergency funds to help contain the worst avian influenza outbreak in U.S. history, as infected bird cases soared and hundreds of Minnesota poultry workers learned they would lose their jobs. The funds became available after the federal Office of Management and Budget granted U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's request for additional emergency funds, USDA sources confirmed to Reuters on Tuesday.

Virulent H5 avian influenza strains have spread to 14 states in five months and affected about 24 million birds so far, mostly egg-laying hens and turkeys, according to USDA.

UVM Receives Grant to Study Livestock Biosecurity

A recently announced $7.4 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will place the University of Vermont (UVM) at the forefront of a national effort to reduce the impact of catastrophic disease outbreaks within the U.S. livestock industry. The end-product will be a variety of research-based messaging strategies, educational programs, Web modules and other initiatives designed to protect food-producing livestock from new, emerging or foreign diseases and pests.

Collaborating research and extension faculty are based at the University of Kentucky, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Montana State University and Washington State University. Representatives of many agricultural stakeholder groups will serve in an advisory role to the project.

USDA: Little Economic Benefit from COOL

In a report required in the 2014 farm bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has said there is "no measurable benefit" to consumers as a result of the mandatory country-of-origin-labeling (COOL) law. The report, completed by a team of agricultural economists from Kansas State University and the University of Missouri, comes just weeks before the World Trade Organization (WTO) is expected to issue its final ruling on the matter.

"Based on a review of academic research, we found no evidence that consumer demand for beef or pork has increased because of MCOOL. Thus, our economic analysis finds no measureable benefits to consumers as a result of the MCOOL rules," according to the report.

It goes on to say, "This report demonstrates substantial economic damage to producers, packers, retailers, and consumers from implementation of MCOOL in 2009 and losses which further increased with modifications contained in the 2013 rule. There is no evidence of offsetting benefits associated with consumer demand increases from MCOOL implementation. On the contrary, consumers lost because they now face higher retail beef and pork prices and reduced supply because of the 2009 and 2013 MCOOL rules."

The study estimated that implementation of the 2009 COOL law resulted in $405 million in economic welfare losses in the first year in the U.S. beef industry.

Two New Lamb Industry Studies Available

Two new studies that came out of the Lamb Industry Roadmap project have been completed and are now available.

Lamb Demand Analysis: Understanding and measuring demand is key to the development of sound pricing strategies, which lead to profitability and to the development and targeting of effective advertising campaigns, promotional activities and educational efforts. Understanding demand also helps gauge the success and effectiveness of the Roadmap Demand Creation committee goals as well as lamb checkoff dollars invested.

Lamb Quality Audit: Assessing Perceptions Regarding American Lamb Quality in Foodservice and Retail Markets. This study, conducted by Colorado State University and Ohio State University, was designed to quantify and benchmark perceptions regarding American lamb quality at the retail and foodservice sectors. Perceptions have been ranked and willingness-to-pay estimates for lamb quality attributes have been established.

Domino's Says "No" to PETA

U.S. vegans will have to wait longer for vegan-friendly options at Domino's. According to the Detroit Free Press, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) proposed Domino's add vegan cheese and meat to its topping options. Despite their request, Domino's shareholders overwhelmingly rejected the proposal by an estimated 43.2 million votes. Less than one percent of shareholders supported the idea. It should be noted PETA owns 39 of the company's shares.

"Like any prudent restaurant operation, we only add new items to our menu when there is meaningful consumer demand for that product," the board told MLive in a report here. "We have yet to see clear indication of that demand, which would suggest that we add it to the menu of our more than 5,000 U.S. stores and, therefore, the Board cannot and does not support this proposal."

[Ed. Note: Now if only other businesses would stand up to the food terrorists who do not represent the majority of consumers...]

Shepherd's News
Ag Finance bill passes final committee

House republicans continue putting their efforts behind tax considerations rather than spending measures. Interestingly, both the Senate majority leader and the Senate Tax chair have made public comments that there is no need to have a Tax bill pass. Unlike spending measures which allocate for two years, tax law is permanent. The versions of the House and Senate Tax bills have very little in common. There are reasonable scenarios which could result in no Tax bill being passed in the session finale. That could change things a great deal.

The House Ways and Means committee heard the Ag Finance bill last week. Rep. Hamilton, author of the bill, amended it in several ways. The budget target set by House republican leadership was increased by almost $11 million for the bill.

The bill, as presented to the House Ag Finance committee contained a collective total of $10 million for three priority items requested by the "Ag Coalition". This compares to the request which was $39 million covering research, Farm Business Management, and Rapid Response for crop and livestock disease.

During the Ag Finance committee hearing, Rep. Hamilton yielded to 2 amendments by DFL lead Rep. Rick Hansen. The amendments reduced the coalition funding request even further to under $8 million. Rep. Hansen has been a strong opponent to the funding and the Producer board that governed the distribution of the funding. The Land Stewardship Project has also been in strong opposition to the board even after Rep. Hamilton agreed to add two seats representing organic farmers and environmentalists to the producer board. None of the olive branches to the opposition seemed to bare fruit as several DFL members continued to oppose the bill.

A Minneapolis Tribune editorial, appeared a few days after the Ag Finance hearing, also opposing the producer board. The governing board, as introduced, was comprised of representation from each Commodity group and a representative from MN Farm Bureau and MN Farmers Union. The board was designed to set priorities for the fund distribution.

The next hearing was held in the Ways and Means committee. During the Ways and Means hearing Rep. Hamilton amended the bill to eliminate the Producer board which would have made the prioritization of fund expenditures. Instead, the amended version gives the responsibility for the distribution of the funds to the Commissioner of Agriculture. The commissioner would be required to convene a non binding advisory board to make recommendations. During the Ways and Means committee hearing the funding allocation was restored to the $10 million figure identified prior to the Hansen cut that had been agreed to by Rep. Hamilton. The rest of the $11 million target increase was used to restore other cuts in the bill including AURI funding and Agri Fund funding.

The Agriculture Bill recently passed on the floor of the House of Representatives. New inclusions to the bill were $7.5 million for Avian Influenza including producer payments for birds lost but not reimbursed by USDA. An additional $2.5 million was also approved for the U of M Veterinary Diagnostic lab for Avian Influenza. The Senate version does not have the same language so the next step is a conference committee.

Property Tax Update

The House and Senate Tax conference committee working on HF 848 and SF 826 includes: Representatives Greg Davids (R-Preston), Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa), Bob Barrett (R-Lindstrom), Chris Swedzinski (R-Ghent) and Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington). Senators serving on the conference committee include Senators Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook), Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), Kari Dziedzic (DFL-Minneapolis), Lyle Koenen (DFL-Clara City) and Paul Gazelka (R-Nisswa). Senator Skoe and Representative Davids share chairmanship of the conference.

The House version offers a number of key provisions important to farmers, including a program for relief of agricultural property taxes associated with school debt bonds. The Senate version provides some relief for agricultural property taxes in instances when changes from one year to the next increase by 8 percent or more, or increase by more than $200. Also included in the Senate bill is the direction for the Department of Revenue to carry out a study of the system used for determining agricultural property values, possibly following alternative methods than the current system of using market values set by sales. The House bill works to reduce state tax revenue by $2.4 billion. The Senate bill seeks $1.6 million in tax revenue reductions.

Conference Committee for Environment and Natural Resources Finance Bill

Working through the differences
CAPITOL CONNECTION - cont.

of HF 846 and SF 1764 will rest in the hands of Representatives Denny McNamara (R-Hastings), Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake), Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), Dan Fabian (R-Roseau) and David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake). Senate members include Senators David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), Dan Sparks (DFL-Austin), John Hoffman (DFL-Champlin), John Marty (DFL-Roseville) and Bill Weber (R-Luverne). Senator Tomassoni and Representative McNamara share conference committee chairmanship.

While the two legislative proposals have a variety of details of significance, the most closely watched potential for this group will be whether details expand from present status to include arrangements pertaining to the Governor's sought after buffer strips adjacent to Minnesota waterways. Entering the conference committee discussion, the only remnant of anything relating to the contentious buffer issue within the legislative proposals involves financial support for funding Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

Agricultural Legislation Conference Committee

With the committee structure for the Minnesota House and Senate being so different, the omnibus agriculture, environment, natural resources, jobs and economic development appropriations bill takes on a wider variety of details than specifics regarding agriculture alone. Conference committee members from the House include Representatives Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington), Joe Hoppe (R-Chaska), Jim Newberger (R-Becker), Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) and Representative Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls). Senate members include Senators David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), Richard Cohen (DFL-St. Paul), Dan Sparks (DFL-Austin), Vicki Jensen (DFL-Owatonna) and David Osmek (R-Mound). Representative Garofalo and Senator Tomassoni share the conference committee chairmanship.

Farm groups are closely monitoring legislation on the funding for the state's adult farm management program, funding for agricultural research and the overall funding associated with addressing the avian influenza emergency.

H-2A Comment Period Extended to June 1

The Department of Labor (DOL) this week provided a 15-day extension to the comment period for its proposed rule to revise the H-2A special procedures program for sheepherding, goat herding and open range livestock. Comments are now due June 1.

"The sheep industry appreciates our leaders in Congress for pushing the request for an extension of the comment period," said Peter Orwick, executive director for the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI).

This week, ASI shared the news on the comment-period extension and new economic analysis with producers nationwide. The analysis, as posted to the Legislative Action Center on www.sheepusa.org, shows 38 percent of the breeding-sheep inventory in America is under the care of an H-2A herder!

Additionally, under the wage formula proposed in the rule, the typical sheep operation with a herder does not show profitability. Orwick added, "Not surprisingly, annual salaries of $28,000 to $39,000 plus the cost of providing all food and board leave no margin for the ranch."

"The sheep industry is responding by filing comments as well as reaching out to the businesses in the local communities that are supported by these ranches - from grocery stores to feed companies and banks - to encourage them to also offer comments," concluded Orwick. "It will be critical for personal comments to be submitted by as many entities as possible, from sheep producers and lamb and wool companies to local and state governments."

Personalized comments can be submitted online at www.regulations.gov/#/document Detail;D=ETA_FRDOC_0001-0195. To view comments already posted, go to www.regulations.gov/#/docketBrowser;rp=25;po=0;dct=PS;D=ETA-2015-0004;refD=ETA-2015-0004-0001.

U of I Sheep will Not Graze Station this Summer

The University of Idaho (U of I) will forgo sheep grazing at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station (USSES) this summer due to an ongoing lawsuit. The University's general counsel has stated that the school will "await further guidance through the outcome of the litigation and from the federal agencies over the use of the allotments." This is the second consecutive year that sheep have not grazed in the Centennial Mountains.

"The activist groups cite the same conclusions that have been repeated and are expected from so called environmental groups and the media that report for them," said Paul Rodgers, deputy director of policy for the American Sheep Industry Association. "It was not unusual or unexpected that the U of I would decide to hold off on grazing its sheep on the allotments in question until the courts decide on the pending litigation, giving them the ability to make decisions that are consistent with the courts decision."
**Australian Wool Prices Pushed Higher Sixth Consecutive Week**

The Australian wool market recorded its sixth consecutive week of price increases. The Australian Wool Exchange Eastern Market Indicator (AWEX-EMI) rose a total of 23 c/kg (2.0 percent) this week with a clearance rate of 98.1 percent.

Sales were characterized by a strong demand for Merino fleece across all microns resulting in increases of approximately 25 cents including types of lesser specification. Merino skirtings recorded similar percentage increases to that of fleece particularly in lower vegetable matter levels. Crossbreds recorded modest gains of approximately 5 cents.

In recent weeks, one noticeable trend was the increase in the price spread between the 18 and 22 AWEX Micron Price Guides to (now) between 160 and 170 cents. A range of this order was last observed in February 2013. This range has been steadily increasing since July 2014 from a narrow range of 20 to 30 cents.

The exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the Australian dollar remained relatively static around the 77.5 cent level this week putting the EMI in US dollar terms at 894 cents, up 18 cents.

Australian Wool Innovation trade consultant Scott Carmody said fresh sales, continued enquiry, diminishing volumes, strong local auctions and a relatively stale foreign exchange all point to a likely strong market scenario.

"Although the general 80 c/kg clean rise in Merino fleece and the 50 cent rise in other areas may see those sectors slow somewhat as buyers adjust to the new levels," continued Carmody.

**Australian Wool Prices Reach Highest Level in Three Years**

Australian wool prices reached their highest level in three years this week, despite a higher Australian-U.S. dollar exchange rate.

Australian Wool Exchange senior market analyst Lionel Plunkett said the Australian Wool Exchange-Eastern Market Indicator rose 19 cents to 1172c/kg clean, representing a 78-cent lift above its early April level.

"Although prices are rising in Australia, this is not as evident in U.S. dollar terms due to the exchange rates," said Rita Kourlis Samuelson, director of wool marketing with the American Sheep Industry Association. "There is positive upward movement, however."

**Lamb Quality Survey—cont from p. 5**

constitutes a quality lamb product that they are willing to pay a higher price for than other meat products, listening to what elements they most highly value is integral to developing industry standards that consistently delivers a premier, in-demand product.

When asked to define “quality,” over a third of the survey respondents identified lamb flavor and/or taste as part of their definition (although few chose to describe that flavor). American lamb ranked higher than imported lamb, both for its taste/flavor and size. While the flavor of American lamb was mentioned by 34 respondents as a strength, 14 participants deemed it a weakness, 21 identified it as an opportunity and 11 believe it to be a threat to the industry. Clearly, there is room for improvement and, again, consistency is key.

Contrary to what many sheep producers believe, this study suggests that color, attractiveness and freshness were more important than product composition to those who display lamb in retail settings. Product safety is of far less concern in the lamb industry than in the beef industry. In addition, nearly one third of the respondents indicated that a Certified American Lamb program would not be a good idea for a variety of reasons — there was little agreement on what traits, if any, would be preferred or required.

Developing a strategy around an industry-wide commitment to production standards to ensure that eating satisfaction and lamb flavor are optimized for American lamb is key to increasing demand and creating lamb-loyal consumers. Those consumers are already willing to pay more for meat that is locally raised. Providing them with a consistently high quality product will do much to help them choose lamb over other lower-priced meat options.
Faribault Woolen Mill’s 150th Anniversary Celebration

Faribault Woolen Mill is planning their 150th Anniversary Celebration on August 15th, at 1:00 p.m. with the “Running of The Sheep”. They need about 25-30 sheep for the running. The route will be about 4-5 blocks long and snow fencing will be used to direct the sheep and people from the park to the back of the mill. A small group of people, consisting of some celebrities and the mill partners will be running with the sheep.

A fashion show, concert, food, demonstrations, presentations, games etc. will be available for the public to take part in. We’re looking for spinners and other fiber artists to participate and bring their woolen wares. If you’re interested, please contact me, Melanie Pamp (pamp@westtechwb.com) and I’ll put you in touch with the people organizing the celebration.

If you have a blanket made by the Faribault Woolen Mill in your family, you’re invited to register your blanket and tell its story. This is to be a celebration of the mill and taking joy in the art, craft and the sheep behind the wool used at the mill. All are invited who love wool, the mill and wish to celebrate the history and future of this amazing place.
LRP-LAMB SALES RESUME

The sale of the industries Livestock Risk Protection-Lamb insurance resumed on Monday, May 4. Producers are reminded to contact an approved insurance agent to purchase this coverage that is designed to protect against unexpected declines in market prices. A list of agents is available at www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html.

The American Sheep Industry Association created an online educational course to market the product when it was first launched in 2006. This course - available at www.sheepusa.org/ResearchEducation_OnlineEducation_Lrplamb - has been updated to reflect the 2015 program changes.

Preliminary rates will be available after 3 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time Friday afternoon at www.sheepusa.org/IssuesPrograms_Programs_Lrplamb.

SHEARING: KEEPING SHEEP HEALTHY AND HARVESTING A HIGH PERFORMANCE FIBER

Wool - one of nature's most versatile fibers. Through the process of shearing, wool is removed from the sheep. While we enjoy the many benefits of wool products, the first and foremost purpose of shearing is to ensure the good health of the sheep.

Colorado Woolgrowers Association's executive director, Bonnie Brown, put together a 12-minute video describing the shearing process and the importance of performing this annual service to sheep. The attributes of wool and its uses are examined along with showcasing the environmental benefits of sheep grazing.

"With the continued efforts of animal activist groups to drive consumers and processors away from using wool, there was a need to explain why sheep are shorn," said Brown. "The video is meant to provide the industry with an easily accessible, social media tool that provides accurate information about shearing.

"American sheep producers have a great story to tell, and this was an exciting way to use Colorado's American Sheep Industry Association's Wool Outreach funds," concluded Brown.

The video is available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYd-ObeIEck&feature=youtu.be or it can be ordered by going to www.coloradosheep.org/shearing-video.html.

MLWPA YOUTH REPORT

MLWPA had a booth at 3 recent events located in the twin cities. In April, MLWPA participated in the Ag Awareness Days conducted by the U of M Ag Ed club—targeting students at the Minneapolis Campus. Later that month, MLWPA had a booth at the Minnesota state FFA convention. In May, MLWPA participated in Urban Ag day at the state fairgrounds where leaders had a chance to talk sheep with over 600 third graders from metro schools.

[Photos from the Ag Awareness and Urban Ag Day events below.]
Show and sale season will soon be here and to create a more pleasant experience there are numerous things that should be considered. If you are participating in numerous shows with shorn sheep you certainly need to take steps to prevent becoming infected. Sharing blankets and fitting equipment is off limits. An anti-fungal bath and isolation from other sheep when returning home is certainly a priority.

When attending numerous shows, sore mouth certainly can be a problem and it will get your animals dismissed from shows and sales. It’s endemic in the general sheep population and quite often after the judge has mouthed every sheep in the show ring, he has also inadvertently exposed the whole group. Much more appropriate for the judge to request the exhibitor to display the mouth. Some exhibitors that plan to attend numerous shows vaccinate prior to the show season. When the disease does appear WD40 topical application may reduce recovery time.

Don’t forget your health certificate because you will need one and every show and sale can be different. You need to plan ahead because some of the tests may not be run daily and do take time. There may also be a window of opportunity to ship interstate after the test, so timing is important.

I have always had a concern about foot rot. Purchased animals and show animals returning home need to be isolated, feet bathed in formaldehyde and held in quarantine for a couple weeks and reexamined and possibly bathed again before releasing them into flock. If you have active foot rot in your flock you should not be showing or selling sheep other than for slaughter.

If exhibiting animals that are entered in carcass contests or that will be slaughtered immediately after the exhibition be sure you observe slaughter withdrawal times for drugs. If drug is used off label or at more than recommended dosage, slaughter time well may be extended. Penicillin for example when used at what has become a standard recommended dosage which exceeds label recommendations may have detectable levels of 60 days or longer. Drugs not approved for use in food animals should not be tolerated or used.

When participating in events, practice and exhibit positive animal welfare practices. Treat animals with kindness and care. Be certain they are fed regularly and always have water available. Muzzles are not acceptable. You are in the eye of the public and need to do it with pride and care.

All animals need to be identified by scrapie tags.

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

Rare Polypay Lamb Octuplets Born on Minnesota Farm

It was no April Fool’s joke. And Travis Fowler is still getting used to the idea that he witnessed an unusual event at his Minnesota farm.

A ewe gave birth to eight live lambs – two males and six females. “I called my wife and children, and said, ‘You’re going to have to come out and help me with this,’” said Travis, who farms fulltime in south central Minnesota.

In past years, the Polypay ewe – number 0171 – had delivered one set of twins and four sets of triplets. But this was extraordinary. Travis was completing evening chores when he saw the ewe was getting ready to lamb. He put her in a small lambing pen designed to keep mother and babies together.

“I left to do something, and she had four lambs on her own when I got back,” he said. “They were a little small, so I thought that was odd for the size of ewe that she was.”

Two lambs were standing and moving toward the udder for their first meal. The other two were slower to get moving, so Travis dried them off. Checking the ewe’s udder, he found that her milk had not let down yet. He thought that was a little odd, but he collected some extra colostrum from another ewe and “tubed” all four new lambs.

He had gone into the house, and when he came back out to the sheep barn, the ewe was getting up and down and acting like she was in labor again. Putting on an OB sleeve, he checked her and discovered four more lambs to be delivered.

He made the decision to guide each lamb through the birth canal. Lambs are best born with their two front feet just ahead of their head, so he got each in the correct position to be born.

“I was more worried about Cont. on p.15
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)

HOW TO CARE FOR BLADES, COMBS AND CUTTERS

Reprinted from Premier 1: Proper care of blades, combs and cutters extends the life and usability of these tools.

- Oil! We can't stress enough the importance of proper lubrication. Frequent oiling while clipping and shearing reduces the amount of wear and tear on blades, combs and cutters.
- Proper tension:
  1. Overtensioning reduces the longevity of blades/combs/cutters.
  2. Undertensioning will reduce cutting ability.
- Clean equipment after use and coat with oil to prevent rust.
- Do your best to not "air-shear". This happens when an operating clipper or shear is held outside of the fiber (usually happens when someone is thinking about the next cut to make). The extra friction creates heat and dulls cutting equipment.
## Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 23-24</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>May 28-30</td>
<td>Nugget All-American Sale</td>
<td>Reno, NV</td>
<td>Willoughby Sale  <a href="http://www.wlivestock.com">www.wlivestock.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 5-6</td>
<td>MW Junior Preview Show</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.midwestjuniorpreviewshow.com">www.midwestjuniorpreviewshow.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 8-13</td>
<td>National Columbia Show &amp; Sale</td>
<td>Fairmont, MN</td>
<td>Wayne Busch  <a href="mailto:wayneb1000@gmail.com">wayneb1000@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 13-14</td>
<td>Iowa Sheep &amp; Wool Festival</td>
<td>Colfax, IA</td>
<td><a href="http://iowasheepandwoolfestival.com">http://iowasheepandwoolfestival.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul. 2-5</td>
<td>UJSSA National Jr Suffolk Show</td>
<td>West Springfield, MA</td>
<td>http:// <a href="http://www.ujssa.org/calendar.html">www.ujssa.org/calendar.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 2-5</td>
<td>All American Jr Sheep Show</td>
<td>West Springfield, MA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@allamericanjuniorshow.com">info@allamericanjuniorshow.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 25</td>
<td>MN State Suffolk Show</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske  <a href="mailto:Jeremy.geske@gmail.com">Jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 26</td>
<td>MN State Jr Suffolk Show</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td>Sara Saul  <a href="mailto:saramsaul@gmail.com">saramsaul@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 15</td>
<td>Faribault Woolen Mill 150th Anniversary</td>
<td>Faribault, MN</td>
<td>Melanie Pamp  <a href="mailto:pamp@westtechwb.com">pamp@westtechwb.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27—Sep. 7</td>
<td>MN State Fair</td>
<td>St Paul, MN</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mnstatefair.org/">http://www.mnstatefair.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4-6</td>
<td>MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday</td>
<td>Chaska, MN</td>
<td>Jeremy Geske  <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 .

### Rare Polypay Lamb Octuplets –cont.

getting the lambs out of her than what they were doing,” he said. “I didn’t know if they would live.”

Turned out, the lambs were alive and had some spunk. Travis scooped them up, brought them to the heated barn office, and called his family to come out quickly.

His wife, Jeanine, and their children, Jed, 13, Tessa, 12, and Tyne, 3, towel dried the newborn lambs while Travis went back to the house to thaw some frozen colostrum.

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