MLWPA is proud to recognize Dale and Lila Schmidt of Grandview Polypay as the 2014 Silver Bell award winners. They have excelled in the production and promotion of sheep and are truly deserving of this honor.

The Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers’ Silver Bell Award is presented to Minnesota shepherds who have excelled in modern sheep, lamb, or wool production and for their contributions to the industry.

Grandview Polypay have excelled in production traits for years and their genetics can be found in most top Polypay flocks across the country. The Schmidts have been active in MLWPA and in the Pipestone Sheep Program. Congratulations on a well-deserved and long overdue honor!
MINNESOTANS EXCEL IN NATIONAL MIWW

The National “Make It With Wool” contest was held at the JA Nugget in Reno, NV on January 29-31, 2015 in conjunction with the American Sheep Industry’s Annual Conference. There were 63 entries from 33 states in two age divisions. Some 626 contestants nationwide entered competitions at the state level and utilized more than 2,022 yards of beautiful wool fabric and 230 skeins of yarn to create their garments.

The National contestants from Minnesota were:
Junior (age 13-16): Andrea Dunrud, Forest Lake, finished 2nd runner-up, winner of the creative machine embroidery award.
Senior (age 17-24): Jenna Legred, Briclyn, is the National senior winner, also winner of the mohair award.
Adult (age 25-over): Jean Olson, Woodbury, finished 1st Honorable mention in the Nation.

MLWPA congratulates Jenna, Jean and Andrea on their success!

Jean Olson, Jenna Legred, Andrea Dunrud

The purpose of the “Make It With Wool” contest is to focus attention on the beauty and versatility of wool, to encourage the use of wool fabric or yarn in sewing, knitting or crocheting fashionable garments. Contestants must use fabric or yarn of at least 60% wool. Beautiful wool prizes along with sewing machines, saving bonds and scholarship were awarded to each of the winning contestants. National director is Marie Lehfeldt of Montana and Minnesota’s director is Glenette Sperry of Center City, MN.
ASI HIRES CULHAM AS GROW OUR FLOCK COORDINATOR

ASI’s Grow Our Flock Program has filled its coordinator position. Alan Culham, of Michigan State University, is expected to begin Jan. 15. Culham accepted the offer to fill the 3-year project coordinator position following a nationwide search by the ASI Executive Board.

Culham will be responsible for coordinating with sheep producers and feeders to enhance efficient production and marketing of wool and lamb.

“The association is anxious to have Alan on board for the coordination of the ASI Grow Our Flock program,” said ASI Executive Director Peter Orwick. “With an annual budget of several hundred thousand dollars to support local groups of commercial producers, there is a lot of work to do in the coming years.”

Culham has been with Michigan State University since 2006 as an instructor in the department of animal science and manager of the research center. Through this program, he developed performance Suffolk and Dorset sheep flocks. He has utilized the components of the National Sheep Improvement Program both professionally and in his personal flock since 1988.

“When I first read the Lamb Industry Roadmap, I was truly inspired,” said Culham. “For years the sheep industry seemed to sweep the same problems under the rug and not address them head on. The Roadmap is certainly different in that regard. It candidly focused on areas where the sheep industry has lagged behind other livestock species in the adaptation of technology, standardization of product and production efficiency. The report stressed that the industry needs to change and change rapidly to maintain any future viability. I share that vision.”

MLWPA BOARD MEETING MINUTES - JEREMY GESKE

The MLWPA board meeting was held on Saturday, January 10, 2015 at the Pizza Ranch, Litchfield, MN. Present: President Melanie Pamp, Karen Stormo, John Dvorak, Don Adelmann, Steve Scheffert, Randy Kinney, Jeremy Geske, Steve Froehlich, Mike Haubrich, Mary Rademacher, Bob Padula, Travis Fowler; guests: Holly Neaton, Judy Lewman, Sherry Stirling, Amy Marquette, Jeanine Fowler.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 (after lunch) pm by President Melanie Pamp. Moved to approve the updated agenda as amended, seconded, motion carried.

Jeremy presented the Secretary’s report from the December meeting. Moved / seconded – approve as amended – motion carried.

Glennete sent the treasurer’s report. Total in all accounts: $75,782.37. Discussion on conference expenses – we were over budget – currently working on an agreement to ensure that doesn’t happen next year. Moved/seconded to approve – motion carried.

ASI Auction Item – Sherry Stirling presented an art piece (felted pelt) from Becky Utecht – John will take it to the ASI convention.

OPP trial update – Holly & Judy presented the results of the first year and start of 2nd year. Good discussion. Re-print an article in the next newsletter.

Mentor policies – Melanie brought copies of ASI mentoring guidelines.

Grant submissions: Mike – wool trust fund, John – Mentor grant, John – Scrapie grant, Sherry S -MN Grown, MN Corn Growers, AgStar & others – Jeremy

Annual Conference – Will be back at Oak Ridge – Dec. 4-6.

Spring Sheep Workshop – Jeremy will re-send as an e-newsletter. (March 28, Dan Persons’ farm, Kensington). John will work with Dan to make sure board members are helping with jobs. (add registration information)

Baa booth – John reported on meeting with State Fair – went well – they want our booth to be more attractive. Needs to be educational. Pack-a-rama – expecting MLWPA to provide fleeces – Steve will get from Bob Smith. John will follow up with state fair.

Reimbursement guidelines: Randy sent out draft guidelines ahead of meeting. Reviewed draft – template from state AG office – modified for MLWPA. Good discussion. Randy will make changes – we will vote at the next meeting.

Committee reports/assignments: good discussion on new assignments.

Request for funding: Caroline Scheffert – New Zealand Ag Experience. Discussion on funding request. Moved/2nd – approve $400 sponsorship pending presentation at Annual Conference. Carried.

4-H foundation event – Feb 21 – Melanie and Amy M will attend.

Newsletter deadline – Jan 28
Next mtg date – March 28– after spring workshop. 3pm. Email agenda items to Melanie.

Mtg adjourned – 4:03 pm
MLWPA thanks the many Shepherd’s Holiday Sponsors

The MLWPA Shepherd’s Holiday is an affordable, educational and fun event thanks in part to the generosity of many partners and sponsors. Please thank the following businesses, organizations and individuals for their support:

Platinum level sponsors:
- MN Corn Growers Association
- Superior Farms
- MN Lamb & Wool Producers

Gold level sponsors:
- MN Soybean Research & Promotion Council
- AgStar Financial Services
- Neaton Polypays
- ASI

Silver level sponsors:
- Shepherd’s Way Farms
- JMG Suffolks
- MN Turkey Growers Association
- Munson Lakes Nutrition
- MidCountry Bank
- Big Gain
- Pipestone Vet Clinic
- Alton & Kathy Munklewitz
- Fowler Family Farms
- Don Adelmann
- Rabi International
- Agco
- Elm Creek Agrotume/Pioneer Seeds
- Dekelb/Asgrow
- Martin County Implement
- WFS
- Yeager Implement
- Blue Earth Stock Yards
- Nite Guard
- BankMid West
- Heftey Seed Co
- Groenewald fur & wool
- UFC Farm Supply
- Lano Equipment
- Farm Bureau Financial Services
- Elm Creek Polypays
- Hendrix MGF
- Profinium
- MN Zoo,
- And many other Members and Friends of MLWP.

[Ed. Note: also thanks to Travis & Jeanine Fowler for coordinating the trade show, auction and door prizes, and a special thanks to John Goelz for being the auctioneer.]

Market Update – [these prices are from 1/16/15]


Slaughter Prices - Negotiated, wooled and shorn, 137-169 lbs. for 142-174 $/cwt. (wtd. ave. 151.95); wooled and shorn 171-195 lbs. for 133-164 $/cwt. (wtd. ave. 142.75).

Slaughter Prices - Formula1, 7,905 head at 287.66-329.52 $/cwt. for 80.6 ave. lbs.; 1,302 head at 302.10-320.51 $/cwt. for 87.5 ave. lbs.

Equity Electronic Auction, shorn 145 lbs. for $142.50/cwt.

Cutout Value/$341.34/cwt.

Carcass Price, Choice and Prime, YG 1-4, $/cwt., weighted averages, 767 head at 55-65 lbs. for 354.41, 1,674 head at 65-75 lbs. for 339.71, 1,860 head at 75-85 lbs. for 328.01, 1,099 head at 85 lbs. and up for 317.95.

Exported Adult Sheep, 0 head

Wool, Price ($/pound) Clean, Delivered, From 8 weeks ago: 18 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 19 micron (Grade 80s) NA, 20 micron (Grade 70s) NA, 21 micron (Grade 64-70s) NA, 22 micron (Grade 64s) NA, 23 micron (Grade 62s) 3.20, 24 micron (Grade 60-62s) 2.92, 25 micron (Grade 58s) NA, 26 micron (Grade 56-58s) NA, 27 micron (Grade 56s) 2.03 (from 3 weeks ago), 28 micron (Grade 54s) NA, 29 micron (Grade 50-54s) 1.60.


Twin Falls, ID Feeder Lambs $159 - $171/cwt, Slaughter lambs $150 - $157.50/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $ - $/cwt (none)

Zumbrota, MN Feeder Lambs $150 - $250/cwt, Slaughter lambs $125 - $140/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $60 - $85/cwt

Pipestone, MN Feeder Lambs $169-$217.50/cwt, Slaughter lambs $138.25 - $141cwt, Ewes & Bucks $20 - $80/cwt

Sioux Falls, SD Feeder Lambs $180 - $231/cwt, Slaughter lambs $131 - $157/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $71- $86/cwt

Mt Hope, OH Feeder Lambs $180 - $270/cwt, Slaughter lambs $155 - $185/cwt, Ewes & Bucks $77.50- $100cwt

Billings, MT Feeder Lambs $167.50 - $220/cwt, Slaughter lambs $ - $/cwt (none), Ewes & Bucks $81.50- $88cwt
February is Lamb Lovers Month

Hey Lamb Lovers! It’s almost February and that means it’s time for Lamb Lover's Month. This year we’re excited to announce the brand new, “What’s your lamb language of love” contest, which will be live for the whole month of February! In our new and improved app you’ll be able to discover new delicious American lamb recipes whether ewe’re a “Classic Romantic”, “Homebody Lover”, or even “Looking for Love”. All you have to do is answer a few fun questions and you’ll be entered to win a romantic getaway for two to New York City paid for by the American Lamb Board! - See more at: http://www.americanlamb.com/lamb-lovers-month/#sthash.y5SZ4C8Z.dpuf

The Fish, The Fowl & The Lamb Roast

The December issue of Bon Appétit magazine features an eight-page holiday dinners spread, including a Pomegranate and Fennel Glazed Rack of Lamb. The article encourages readers to “Be sure to ask for American Lamb rather than New Zealand. The delicate New Zealand breeds are much smaller than the meaty domestic varieties, so the cooking time (and yield) would change significantly.” The ALB met with the Bon Appétit staff in April and talked about the many benefits of American Lamb . . . glad they listened!

New Cooking Techniques Brochure Now Available

The American Lamb Board is developing a new series of “Curriculamb” recipe booklets. The first booklet of the series, “Cooking Techniques 101,” is now available to order at AmericanLamb.com.

Lamb Sliders with Tzatziki Sauce - Chef Virgil Emmert

2014 Celebrate Lamb Social recipe

Lamb Patty
- 2 lbs ground lamb
- Fresh garlic (to taste), finely chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 TBSP Oregano—finely chopped
- 2 TBSP Shallot—finely chopped
- 1 TBSP Panko
- Fresh cilantro (to taste), finely chopped
- 1 TBSP smoked paprika
- 1 TSP cumin seen
- 1 TSP fennel seed
- 2 cinnamon sticks (toasted then ground)
- 1 TSP mustard seed
- 1/2 TSP Allspice (toasted then ground)
- 2 TBSP coriander (toasted then ground)
- 1 TBSP salt
- 1 TSP pepper

Mix all ingredient together in large bowl. Make into patties and grill until 140°F.

Tzatziki Sauce
- 1 cup Greek Yogurt
- 1 English cucumber—brunoise (seeded, finely grated, drained)
- 2 cloves fresh garlic—minced
- 1 TSP fresh jalapeno—minced
- 1 TSP fresh dill—minced
- Salt (to taste)

Mix all ingredient for tzatziki in large bowl.

Serve patty on bun with sauce.
The state’s new chicken-coop law is hitting human beings hard

California has a way of living up to the worst regulatory expectations, as grocery shoppers across the country are discovering. The state’s latest animal-rights march is levying a punishing new food tax on the nation’s poor.

Egg prices are soaring in California, where the USDA says the average price for a dozen jumbo eggs is $3.16, up from $1.18 a dozen a year ago, and in some parts of the state it’s more than $5. The Iowa State University Egg Industry Center says retail egg prices in California are 66% higher than in other parts of the West. National wholesale egg prices also climbed nearly 35% over the 2014 holiday period, before retreating.

The cause of these price gyrations is an initiative passed by California voters in 2008 that required the state’s poultry farmers to house their hens in significantly larger cages. The state legislature realized this would put home-state farmers at a disadvantage, so in 2010 it compounded the problem by requiring that eggs imported from other states come from farms meeting the same cage standards, effective Jan. 1, 2015.

The new standards require cages almost twice the size of the industry norm, with estimated costs to comply of up to $40 a hen. That’s about $2 million for a farm with 50,000 chickens. Some farmers are passing the costs on to consumers, while others are culling their flocks by half for each cage.

Government statistics show that the number of egg-laying chickens in California has fallen 23% in two years. Many farmers outside the state are choosing not to sell eggs to California, leaving egg brokers scouring the country for cage-compliant eggs and paying top dollar to meet demand in a state that has imported more than four billion eggs a year.

This comes when egg demand is growing, in part because soaring meat prices have caused Americans to turn to other foods. Per capita consumption is expected to reach more than 260 eggs this year, the highest since 1983, according to the USDA. The poorest consumers have been hit hardest by the price spike because eggs have traditionally been a cheap source of protein.

California’s cage law is part of the nationwide animal-rights effort to raise the costs of animal food production in the name of more, well, humane treatment. Groups like the Humane Society of the United States failed to get Congress to pass national chicken-cage standards, so they turned to California to set what they hoped would be a de facto national standard because of the size of its market.

There’s a strong argument that this violates the Constitution’s Commerce Clause, which bars states from discriminating against interstate trade. The feds regulate egg safety, and California’s cage standards discriminate against out-of-state poultry producers. An analogy would be Pennsylvania imposing tariffs on steel made in Ohio. One reason Congress declined to adopt a national standard is that there is little evidence that larger cages make all that much difference to the life of chickens.

The attorneys general from several states, including Nebraska and Alabama, are suing California in federal court, but this will take time. Meanwhile, Republicans could revive legislation barring states from enacting restrictions on out-of-state agriculture producers. If California liberals want to pay a premium for local free-range chicken eggs, they have that right. They shouldn’t be able to raise food costs for millions of families in an attempt to protect the state’s economy from their own destructive laws.

Youth coordinators Sara & Amy Marquette

MLWPA’s youth coordinator, Kelly Froehlich has accepted a graduate school position at South Dakota State University in Brookings, and needed to step away from her MLWPA duties. A special thank you to Sara Marquette and her sister Amy for agreeing to take over the MLWPA youth coordinator position.

The Marquettes have been very involved in the youth sheep project in Wright county and raise Texel sheep. Amy is studying Veterinary Technology at Ridgewater College. Sara is a teacher at Watertown-Mayer schools.
FDA to Conduct Antiparasitic Drug and Resistance Survey

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Veterinary Medicine plans to survey members of veterinary professional organizations using an Internet-based survey instrument. The questions in the survey are designed to elicit professional opinions regarding the use of antiparasitic drugs and the awareness of antiparasitic drug resistance. The results will provide FDA information that can be used to make decisions about future approaches to antiparasitic drugs.

Genetically Engineered Cattle May Be Key to Ebola Cure

Genetically engineered cattle on a farm outside Sioux Falls, S.D., may help researchers cure the Ebola virus. Researchers hope the group of 50 genetically engineered, cloned cattle will create blood plasma that could be used to treat the Ebola virus, which has killed 8,500 of the more than 21,000 people that it has infected in West Africa. The group of cattle has been genetically engineered to contain human DNA and are able to produce human antibodies, instead of cattle antibodies, Meredith Engel reported for the New York Daily News.

The cattle receive vaccinations against serious diseases and then create large quantities of antibodies as a response to the disease. Using blood plasma from Ebola survivors in transfusions to Ebola patients may help the patients recover, because the blood from the survivors contains antibodies that fight Ebola. The plasma from the cattle might work in the same way, Engel reported. Cattle might be able to produce more plasma, which would make the project larger-scale.

Third PEDv Strain Identified

There's now a new strain of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) on the loose, recently confirmed by the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) announced the confirmation last month.

"Three naturally occurring U.S. PEDV strains have been identified: the original PEDv, the PEDV with changes in the spike gene (INDEL), and the PEDV strain (S2aadel)," the AASV reported in an article here. "The role of genetic changes in the US PEDV strains to clinical disease has yet to be reported. The clinical presentation of diarrhea in this case was reported as equally or more severe than such presentation in cases caused by the prototype PEDV Colorado/2013."

The CDC adds that though the North American PEDv variant–INDEL strain was only recently identified, it was first detected in June 2013 and reported in February 2014 by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. This suggests the original PEDV strain mutated or two different PEDV strains were introduced concurrently in the United States.

China Bans U.S. Poultry, Eggs Imports Amid Avian Flu Fears

China has banned all imports of U.S. poultry, poultry products and hatching eggs amid recent reports of highly pathogenic strains of avian influenza found in the Pacific Northwest, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Monday. All poultry and poultry related products shipped from the United States after Jan. 8 would be returned or destroyed, according to the agency and the U.S. trade group USA Poultry & Egg Export Council. The ban, effective as of Jan. 8, also applies to poultry breeding stock, which includes live chicks and hatching eggs.

From January through November last year, U.S. exports of poultry products sent to China reached nearly $272 million, said Toby Moore, spokesman for the trade group.

NIAA 2015 Annual Conference

Mark your calendar for the National Institute for Animal Agriculture 2015 Annual Conference, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Annual Conference begins Tuesday morning, March 24th and closes the afternoon of March 25th, 2015.

The theme of the Annual Conference is "Water and the Future of Animal Agriculture," which will focus the presentations and discussions of the Conference on the issues of sustainable water as well as species committee and issue council presentations and business meetings.

There will be a pre-conference event on March 23rd featuring an Indiana Agricultural Tour. Partnership opportunities are available. For more information, contact Katie Ambrose at 719.538.8843, extension 14.

Pork Producer Smithfield Foods Continues Phase-Out of Gestation Crates for Pregnant Pigs

Smithfield Foods says it is continuing to make progress on ending the practice of keeping female hogs in small metal crates while pregnant at its U.S. facilities. The world’s largest pork producer said Tuesday its Murphy–Brown subsidiary has moved more than 70 percent of its pregnant sows from the crates to group housing at its about 450 farms.
BIG CHANGES IN THE MN HOUSE

With the changing of the guard in the House, with Republicans gaining control, all committee chairs will be different than last year. Republicans have reinstated Agricultural Finance as a separate committee. Democrats, two years ago, had eliminated that appropriations division and combined it in a committee which had been dominated by metropolitan and environmental interests. In addition, a separate policy committee for agriculture has been established. A separate policy committee had existed during the past two years but prior to that time it had often been combined with other issue areas. The bottom line is that at least on paper, Agriculture has been given a larger "seat at the table than it has for a number of years. The new majority is much more rural dominated than past majorities. The following Chairs are all from rural Minnesota:

- Taxes Rep. Greg Davids (Preston)
- Agricultural Finance division Rep. Rod Hamilton (Mountain Lake)
- Agriculture policy Rep. Paul Anderson (Starbuck)
- Capital Investment Rep. Paul Torkelson (Hanska)
- Education Innovation policy Rep. Sondra Erickson (Princeton)
- Environment and Natural Resources policy and finance Rep. Denny McNamara (Hastings)
- Greater Minnesota Economic and Workforce Development Policy Rep. Bob Gunther (Fairmont)
- Higher Education Policy and Finance Rep. Bud Nornes (Fergus Falls)
- Transportation policy and finance Rep. Tim Kelly (Red Wing)

- Legacy Funding Finance Rep. Dean Urdahl (Grove City)
- Public Safety and Crime Prevention policy and finance Rep. Tony Cornish (Vernon Center)
- Property Tax and Local Government Finance Division Rep. Steve Drazkowski (Mazeppa)

**BILLS SEEK TO LIMIT AGRICULTURAL HOMESTEAD CLASSIFICATION**

A couple of bills which we are concerned about are SF 9 and HF 60. The two identical bills seek to limit the situations where an agricultural homestead tax credit would be available, deleting a number of agricultural property ownership conditions which now receive the agricultural homestead tax credit. The Senate Author for SF 9 is Senator Rod Skoe, chairman of the Senate Tax Committee and HF 60 is authored by Representative Greg Davids, chairman of the House Tax Committee.

If adopted into law, this will exclude 7,900 landowners who now are qualified to receive the state's agricultural homestead classification from continuing to be qualified. The goal of the legislation is to move back to the original intent for Agricultural Homestead Classification going to Minnesota farmers who physically live on their agricultural property. Background meetings suggest that the current matrix of determining eligibility is cumbersome and time-consuming.

Minnesota Farm Bureau and other farm groups are opposed and stress that taking away agricultural homestead classification status will make already very expensive agricultural property taxes even higher.

**GMO LABELING BILL INTRODUCED**

Senator John Marty, chairman of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and Senator Foung Hawj have introduced SF 335 to require labeling of products containing genetically engineered food. Much of the legislation is oriented to offer legislative "findings" and serve as the platform for putting down the production of plants and animals which use genetically engineered technology. The bill provides a definition section to establish the criteria for what will be included and the authority for the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Commerce to be responsible for rulemaking. [Ed. Note: Sen. Marty (D-Roseville) is the one who introduces bills to restrict or ban the use of antibiotics in livestock almost every year.]

An agricultural coalition is opposed to state-level legislation requiring the mandatory labeling of GMO products. Many groups support a national labeling program, which would not be required to contain information on production practices that do not affect nutrition or safety of the product.

**GOVERNOR DAYTON ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR 50-FOOT BUFFER REQUIREMENT**

In his opening remarks to launch the 2015 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) roundtable conference in Brooklyn Park on Friday, January 16, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton announced that he will be offering a legislative proposal to require a 50-foot buffer for all state water. Further, he also intends for the DNR to be responsible for enforcement, possibly through the assistance of aerial and other inspection methods.
Capitol Connection - cont.

Dayton addressed concerns private property owners might have with the state exerting this authority by stating, "The land may be yours, but the water belongs to all of us, and to all who will follow all of us."

Currently, the requirement for non-cropped buffers vary. For public drainage ditches having completed a re-determination of benefit process, a one-rod (16 ½-foot) buffer is required, with compensation going to the landowner. Other waters (lakes and streams) have a process for local government (counties and municipalities) to establish buffer ordinances. These local approaches provide for site specific conditions and, depending on the approaches taken by local governments, don’t result in the one-size-fits-all 50-foot buffer that the Governor is proposing.

MLWPA and Others Urge Appeal of Wolf Decision

MLWPA joined the Minnesota State Cattlemen’s Association (MSCA) in urging the Secretary of Interior, Secretary Sally Jewel, to immediately appeal the decision of US District Judge Beryl A. Howell that vacated the US Department of Interior’s action that delisted the wolves in Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The State of Minnesota, through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture, has developed and implemented a comprehensive and time proven wolf management plan. This successful plan has been the basis for previous delisting and the means of ensuring Minnesota’s wolves never again become threatened or endangered. MSCA plans to continue their support of Minnesota’s State agencies in controlling Minnesota’s wolf population.

Bill Would Remove Federal Protections for Wolves in 4 States

U.S. Rep. Reed Ribble (Wisc.) is leading the effort to remove federal court protections for wolves in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Wyoming. Co-sponsors of the bill include U.S. Reps. Collin Peterson (Minn.), Dan Benishek (Mich.) and Cynthia Lummis (Wyo.).

The legislation is in response to a ruling by a federal judge in Washington, D.C., last month that threw out an Obama administration decision to "delist" wolves in the western Great Lakes region, where the combined wolf population is estimated at around 3,700. That followed a similar decision by a different federal judge in September that stripped Wyoming of its wolf management authority and returned that state’s wolves to federal protections under the Endangered Species Act.

Ribble’s bill uses a strategy that succeeded in taking wolves in Idaho and Montana off the endangered list after court challenges by environmentalists blocked those efforts. Congress took matters into its own hands in 2011 and lifted the federal protections for wolves in those two states, which then allowed hunting and trapping to resume.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Deadline Approaching

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reminding livestock producers that the Jan. 30 deadline to request assistance for losses suffered from Oct. 1, 2011, through Dec. 31, 2014, is fast approaching.

Applications for the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, restored by the 2014 Farm Bill, resumed in April 2014 after having expired on Sept. 30, 2011. To date, more than 556,000 applications have been approved to assist farmers and ranchers in recovering from nearly three years of natural disasters.

Producers are encouraged to contact their county Farm Service Office (FSA) to schedule an appointment. To learn more about these FSA disaster programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Announces Beginning Farmer and Rancher Funding

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden this week announced the availability of more than $18 million in funding to help educate, mentor and enhance the sustainability of the next generation of farmers. This support is available through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) administered by USDA’s National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

The BFRDP awards grants to organizations implementing programs to train beginning farmers and ranchers, including workshops, educational teams, training and technical assistance throughout the United States.

Fiscal Year 2015 applications for BFRDP are due March 13. NIFA will host a webinar for interested applicants on Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. EST. No password or advance reservation is required. A recording will be posted on the NIFA website shortly after the event.

Funding for BFRDP program is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. Additional information is available at www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmersandranchers.cfm.
Shepherding in the Cold—Dr. Reid Redden, NDSU

Shepherds in the upper Midwest revolve their production systems around winter. Sheep farmers may have different methods of dealing with bitterly cold weather. One thing that all northern shepherds have in common, though, is that “lambing time” and “weather” dictate flock management practices.

Well-adapted sheep are quite tolerant to cold weather, given a few management factors are adequately addressed. Due to the insulative properties of wool, the lower critical temperature for a sheep with a full fleece is around 25°F, whereas the lower critical temperature of a freshly shorn sheep is around 77°F.

Sheep managed below their lower critical temperature will begin to use additional feed resources or bodily tissues to maintain body heat. A general rule of thumb is to add 1/4 pound of TDN (energy) for every 10 degrees the lower critical temperature is below zero.

Corn is around 90 percent TDN, whereas most hay is around 50 percent TDN. For example, when temperatures fall to minus 15°F (40 degrees below the lower critical temperature), supplement sheep with an additional 1 pound of corn per day to maintain body condition.

Newborn lambs are very susceptible to hypothermia, cold stress and frostbite. During cold weather, lambs are able to maintain normal body temperature for only a few hours after birth. Lambs must nurse shortly after birth to maintain body heat.

Moisture alters the level of cold stress on sheep. Newborn lambs are born covered in a liquid (amniotic fluid) that works against them. This fluid works as a conduit to exchange heat and cools their body temperature quickly. Ewes have a natural instinct to lick off this fluid and reduce the rate of heat loss. This behavior also stimulates the lambs to stand and nurse.

Similarly, lambs that are born outside in wet conditions (rain, sleet or wet snow) are more susceptible to hypothermia than lambs born outside in dry or below-freezing conditions. However, subzero ambient temperatures are detrimental to lamb survival, regardless of moisture.

Wind is also a factor that affects cold stress in sheep. Wind speeds above 5 mph can increase the risk of hypothermia drastically in newborn lambs and cold stress in all classes of sheep. Protection can be provided by strategically placing hay stacks, constructing wind fences or planting shelter belts.

Intuitively, shepherds whose flocks lamb in the winter have confined lambing barns that provide a clean, warm area for ewes to lamb. These sheep are shorn prior to lambing so they emit more body heat to keep the barn warm and dry. Shepherds whose flocks lamb in the spring or fall typically provide open-sided structures protected from wind and moisture, plus keep a full fleece on them so they can stay warm during the bitterly cold temperatures.

Felted Art Pelt at ASI Auction

A felted fleece sheep pelt hanging was one of the prized items at this year’s American Sheep Industry’s RAM PAC auction in January in Reno, NV. The pelt was created by local artist and sheep farmer Rebecca Utecht of Mora, MN. It is a full size raw fleece wet felted onto a silk backing and finished as a wall hanging very similar to the one that she did for last year’s Minnesota State Fair that was featured in a New York Times article on September 4, 2014.

Becky is passionate about felting and has studied with renowned feltmakers from Japan, Scotland, the Netherlands, Canada, and throughout the United States. Her felt work has won awards at the Minnesota State Fair, fine art shows, and wool festivals. Her work is included in Lark Books’ 500 Felt Objects (2011). She raises Bluefaced Leicester ewes which she paired with a Teeswater ram for her 2015 lamb crop.

“I spend all year anticipating shearing day when I’ll finally get the fleeces from my flock. I then use my best fleeces to make raw felted sheepskins. I find satisfaction in the renewable, sustainable, and ecologically-friendly aspects of wool and shepherding” Becky wrote recently.

Becky turns the skirted raw fleece into luxurious lap blankets, rugs and wall hangings using no harsh chemicals, just hot water, dish soap, and lots of elbow grease. It typically takes about six hours just to do one fleece not including the drying time. Becky does teach felt...
For as much as I hate to even utter the name "Chipotle," let alone spell it out in print, I feel compelled to tell you about what I feel is a good news story that has just developed.

The always deceitful marketers at Chipotle Mexican Grill have once again attempted, and for the most part gotten away with, yet another hijacked public relations campaign. However, when the dust settles on this one, I believe the farmer is going to emerge as the winner against this corporate behemoth.

It appears every newspaper ran a story last week about Chipotle pulling pork from one-third of its 1,700-plus stores because one of their pork suppliers did not pass an animal welfare audit. That is hardly the truth and only a very small portion of the "whole story."

When I first read the article in The Wall Street Journal, I could not believe that a reputable news organization would run such a non-story. I had serious doubts about the validity of Chipotle even having a single store without pork carnitas so I went to my friends on Facebook and asked them to check their local stores to see if it was true.

Within 24 hours I had reports on my Facebook page from numerous states, and it appeared at least a third of the stores that were visited had signs up saying "Sorry, no pig meat."

Don't be critical of my cynicism regarding the lies perpetuated by the marketing arm of this organization. For its 20th anniversary Chipotle claimed its Twitter account had been hacked and was posting tweets from "out in left field" only later to admit it had staged the whole thing to gain Twitter followers. Unfortunately, it worked.

So then I got phone calls from reporters at Bloomberg News and The Wall Street Journal wanting my take on the Chipotle situation. That sent me digging because I wanted to make sure there was actually a farm it had rejected. It took me less than three hours before I was able to speak to the pig farmer who was involved.

Here is the bad part of the story: I promised not to name him, and it is unfortunate because the world needs to hear from him, not just me, what I am about to tell you.

Chipotle does have a set of parameters in place that it requires of its suppliers. Those requirements include bedding for finishing pigs and access to outdoors. The accused pig farmer finally told Chipotle they would no longer be able to provide those two requirements to because it wasn't in the best interest of the pigs.

Despite their efforts to comply with the Chipotle standards, these producers felt it was best for their pigs to be in totally controlled environment. Despite subzero temperatures or 100 degree heat waves, the pig in a confined, completely climate controlled environment will be healthiest.

Despite the farmer being the expert in the care and welfare of his animals, Chipotle told him it would find another supplier if he didn't meet company requirements. The pig farmer was fine with that; however, apparently Chipotle was harboring some ill will toward the lost supplier. Chipotle decided to use the incident to garner some free publicity by suggesting the producer failed an audit, which he did not, and now customers wouldn't be able to get their carnitas. The implication was that Chipotle was taking the high road, albeit at the expense of the customer, just to prove that it was taking care of the animals. What a joke!

I find this to be a bit of fresh air that finally the farmer is standing up for what is best in animal care instead of caving to food marketers whose only care is selling another burrito. Honestly, the bottom line here is that a food company is placing demands on pork producers that are unrealistic and impossible to meet. To me, Chipotle has a choice to make: Listen to the real experts in animal welfare or stop selling pork.

I am not exactly sure how long it will take for the dust to settle on this issue because I continue to see news outlets printing the Chipotle marketing ploy that is masked as a farmer smear "only we care about animals" campaign, but I truly believe this is a great start toward getting the real experts in animal welfare to grab the bull by the horns and do what is right for the good of both the animals and consumers.

[Ed. Note: I personally stopped eating at Chipotle several years ago because of the propaganda on their website telling farmers how to raise their animals. I emailed the company asking for an explanation—they chose not to respond to me. Companies like Chipotle only support a very small segment of agriculture while vilifying the rest. We NEED farmers and ranchers of all types and sizes to provide consumers with choices - we do not need Chipotle (or anyone else) dictating how we produce all of our food, nor how we provide ethical care for our animals.]
PERSONS TO HOST SPRING SHEEP WORKSHOP

Rafter P Ranch:
Dan and Kay Persons started the Rafter P Ranch in the spring of 1997. Originally a stock cow operation sheep were added in 2002. Now the ranch runs 950-1100 ewes and finishes all of the lambs they produce. The ranch lambs multiple groups throughout the year and uses accelerated lambing to increase building utilization and improve cash flow. On March 28th they will be one week into lambing the third group of the year consisting of 60 aged ewes and 200+ ewe lambs. You can expect to see many new born lambs and the farm in full action. Dan and his wife, Kay, will lead attendees through their operation and share their flock management skills.

Dennis Leiser:
Dennis runs a large commercial farm flock and utilizes timed lambing, out of season breeding, self-feeding ewes in gestation and lactation and total confinement slat floor lambing facility. All lambs are finished to market weight and marketed through the Dakota Lamb Grower Co-op.

Bob Padula:
Bob is well known in the sheep industry for his work in wool classing and handling. Bob has used extensive record keeping to develop a flock with exceptional wool quality. We will have him evaluate wool on the sheep as a pre-shearing exercise for a quality wool clip.

Lunch and Virtual Tour:
We will enjoy a lunch of lamb sliders prepared hot off the grill at Messiah Lutheran Church in Hoffman just 4 miles from the ranch. The virtual tour will take place in the big screens in the church following lunch for all to enjoy.

March 28, 2015
Location:
Rafter P Ranch
Dan and Kay Persons
10169 110th Street
Kensington, MN 56343
320-760-4696 mobile

Agenda for the Day:
Registration starts 9:00 am
On-Farm Sessions begin 9:30 am
Lamb Lunch in town 1:00 pm
Virtual Tour - Dennis Lieser Farm 2:00 pm
Producer Questions 3:00pm
Evaluations and Wrap-up 3:30pm

On-Farm Sessions
We will split the attendance and rotate through on-farm sessions. Topics will include:
• Lambing Barn Management
• Baby lamb Processing
• Raising Bonus Lambs
• Pre-weaning Care/Creep Feeding
• Hoof Trimming/Scrapie Requirements/Wool Evaluation
• Lamb Mortality Postmortem Exams
• Vaccination Routines and Processes

Virtual Tour
We will take a virtual tour after lunch of the Dennis Lieser farm of Belgrade. Dennis will show and tell how he manages his ewe flock through a total confinement lambing facility with slatted floors and self-feeders. This facility is one of only a few in the nation of its type and is an interesting take on modern sheep production.

Cost:
$15.00 per person to help cover the cost of the noon lunch and speakers. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required. Pre-register by calling Dan and Kay at 320-986-2336 and leave a message.
As lambing season approaches, it is important to review a condition that can cause considerable economic loss. Pregnancy toxemia is also known as lambing sickness, twin-lamb disease, pregnancy disease and ketosis. This often fatal disease occurs during the last month of pregnancy and is the most commonly occurring metabolic disease of sheep and goats. The good news is, that with careful attention, pregnancy toxemia can be prevented.

Cause: Pregnancy toxemia most commonly occurs in ewes pregnant with twins or triplets. The underlying cause is hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Unlike other species, sheep and other ruminants do not absorb much glucose from their diet. The glucose they need for brain and muscle function must be made in the liver from other compounds. The growing fetuses also require large amounts of glucose, further stressing the ewe’s metabolism. If the ewe is under-conditioned and/or underfed, they are more at risk. If the ewe is of adequate condition, but becomes stressed or goes without feed for whatever reason, they are also at greater risk.

Symptoms: Early symptoms of pregnancy toxemia include isolation from the flock, going off feed, becoming unsteady, and having small fecal pellets and a dull appearance. As the disease progresses, symptoms include impaired vision, blindness, convulsions, teeth grinding and labored breathing. Severe cases progress to coma, and death occurs about 80% of the time.

Diagnosis: Most of the time, the above symptoms in a late pregnant ewe are enough to make a diagnosis and start treatment. Late pregnant ewes who go off feed can be tested for ketones in a urine sample. Test strips are available that will turn purple if ketones are present in the urine-indicating ketosis/pregnancy toxemia. If the ewe is down and unable to get up, the prognosis is grave.

Treatment: In mild cases where the ewe is still eating, feeding concentrates may be sufficient to reverse the condition. Oral propylene glycol or corn syrup can be used for quick sources of energy. The dose of propylene glycol is 60-200 ml given three times daily. An oral electrolyte solution can be added at a rate of three-four liters per day. In more severe cases, intravenous dextrose can be used to correct low blood sugar. Intravenous fluids may be necessary for treatment of severe dehydration. If it is suspected that the fetus may have died, antibiotics should be used.

If the ewe’s condition does not improve with medical management, induction of lambing or a caesarian section may be done in an attempt to save the ewe. If the animal is still responsive, and at least day 139 of pregnancy, lambing can be induced with 20-25 mg of dexamethasone. Induction will take approximately 48 hours, which is too long for the severely affected ewe. In those cases, caesarian is the only remaining option.

Prevention: Studies show that late-pregnant ewes require about 50% more feed with a single lamb and about 75% more feed if carrying twins. An appropriate amount of protein and energy needs to be supplied without causing grain overload. A high quality supply of forage should be supplemented with one pound of grain per ewe daily during the last four to six weeks of pregnancy. It is important to feed yearlings separately to minimize competition. Grain should be introduced gradually with ample space at the feeder.

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

Pipestone's Veterinary Guide to Sheep & Goats
By: Dr. G.F. Kennedy

Harnessing health information and production know-how from over 50 years of experience, the Pipestone Veterinary Guide to Sheep and Goats is a compilation of historical blogs by Dr. G.F. Kennedy conveniently at your finger tips! $20.00
making classes. Watch for a class by her at the Shepherd Harvest and Wool Festival in May at the Washington County fairgrounds.

This year’s national convention celebrated the organization’s 150th anniversary. ASI is a federation of state sheep associations which include the Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers. Each participating state organization pays .035 cents per stock sheep in its state and $8 per member each year to fund ASI’s legislative and membership work.

The roots of today’s ASI tree were planted by the National Wool Growers Association in 1865 as the Civil War was ending and makes it the first national livestock association in the United States. Proceeds from the RAM PAC auction went to the Sheep Heritage Foundation. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 charity dedicated to enhancing the value of the U.S. Sheep industry. Other items offered at the auction included a silver sheep-themed bracelet designed and created by retired US Senator and renowned artist Ben Nighthorse Campbell and a commemorative belt buckle designed by former Montana Wool Growers executive Bob Gilbert.

Redden to Leave NDSU for Texas A&M

I have accepted the Sheep and Goat Specialist position at Texas A&M. This has been the most difficult decision that I have ever had to make. I love my job because of the people that I have had the pleasure to worked with over the past 4.5 years. It has never felt like it was something “I had to do” but something that “I had the privilege to do.” To be honest, when I started at NDSU I felt that this was a great opportunity to advance my career but I had no intention of making it a permanent move. However, the people at NDSU and the North Dakota sheep community changed my perspective completely. NDSU and the state’s sheep industry have bright futures and it saddens me that I won’t be a part of that for much longer. As you all are most likely aware, Texas is where I grew up and where all our family lives. This was an opportunity to continue to do what I love and be closer to family.

I cannot express how thankful that I am for the way you all treated me and my family. My last day at NDSU will be March 31st.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015 Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. ?</td>
<td>Indianhead Sheep Shearing School</td>
<td>Augusta, WI</td>
<td>Duane Klindworth <a href="mailto:drklindworth@aol.com">drklindworth@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 14</td>
<td>Arlington Sheep Day</td>
<td>Arlington, WI</td>
<td>608-868-2505 or <a href="mailto:wisbc@centurytel.net">wisbc@centurytel.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 28</td>
<td>Spring Sheep Workshop</td>
<td>Kensington, MN</td>
<td>Dan Persons <a href="mailto:rafter@runestone.net">rafter@runestone.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 1</td>
<td>Application Deadline NLFA HW Leadership</td>
<td>(June 21-24) CO</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nlfa-sheep.org/leadership.html">http://www.nlfa-sheep.org/leadership.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 12</td>
<td>Indianhead SB Spring Sale</td>
<td>River Falls, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://www.indianheadsheep.com">www.indianheadsheep.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 25</td>
<td>Wisconsin Southdown Sale</td>
<td>Arlington, WI</td>
<td>wisconsinsouthdowns.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 27-28</td>
<td>Stars of the North online sale</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wlivestock.com">www.wlivestock.com</a></td>
<td>Jeremy Geske <a href="mailto:Jeremy.geske@gmail.com">Jeremy.geske@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May ?</td>
<td>UW River Falls Prospect Show</td>
<td>Ellsworth, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://site.uwrfbnb.com/">http://site.uwrfbnb.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7-9</td>
<td>Big Ohio Sale</td>
<td>Eaton, OH</td>
<td>309-785-5058</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15-17</td>
<td>Shepherd’s Harvest Festival</td>
<td>Lake Elmo, MN</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ShepherdsHarvestFestival.org">www.ShepherdsHarvestFestival.org</a></td>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>Jun. 22-27</td>
<td>MW Stud Ram Sale</td>
<td>Sedalia, MO</td>
<td>Bret Oelke <a href="mailto:boelke@innovusagra.com">boelke@innovusagra.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul. 2-5</td>
<td>UJSSA National Jr Suffolk Show</td>
<td>West Springfield, MA</td>
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<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>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.