



PENNSYLVANIA SHEEP & WOOL NEWS

PSWGA NEWSLETTER-February 2014

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

February 2014

President's Message

I am sitting here watching it snow right now. That comment could fit most any day since the first of the year! Today, most of the state is expecting large amounts of snow. The snow, ice and frigid cold have been the norm this year and have certainly made caring for sheep a challenge. I hope that if you are lambing in this weather, that things are going well.

PSWGA had a great week at the PA Farm Show and I think we provided a great service in telling the public about the great taste of lamb as well as how sheep producers care for their sheep. Many youth stopped by to visit with Maizy and Daizy, the Texel ewe lambs on display from Silvara Farm. We greatly appreciate all the time that volunteers gave to talk to the folks who stopped by the display. We also appreciated the 4-H and FFA members who volunteered their time.

Several members traveled down to Charleston, SC for the annual American Sheep Industry convention. This is a great opportunity for PSWGA members to get involved at the national level. There are numerous committees that meet at the convention and discuss the needs of sheep producers in the United States. If you have an interest in joining one of the committees, get in touch with me. Our association submits nominees for the committees each February.

Best wishes to you all and here's hoping for signs of spring to arrive very soon!

Melanie Barkley
PSWGA President

PSWGA Spring Meeting

The next PSWGA meeting will be held on Saturday, March 29 at the Livestock Evaluation Center in PA Furnace, PA. The meeting will begin at 10:00 AM and conclude in the afternoon. We will have lunch at the LEC. If you would like to bring something along to share, please let Melanie know. You can reach her at meh7@psu.edu or 814-979-2250.

Cache Valley Virus is a recent issue that has been occurring on many Ohio Sheep and Goat Farms. This virus has been seen in many other states extensively for a number of years, and is really raising its ugly head now in Ohio. The Cache Valley Virus is caused by a mosquito bite in certain stages of gestation, there is no known treatment! This is not a genetic issue as some of our sheep and goat producers might suspect! Hopefully this article will help our sheep and goat producers understand this virus and what it can do to your flock or herd!

Roger High

Executive Director, Ohio Sheep Improvement Association

Cache Valley Virus

Cache Valley virus is a virus that causes infertility, abortions and congenital abnormalities in sheep. Sheep producers during lambing season should be aware of the potential for Cache Valley virus, or CVV, to potentially affect their lambing crop. This year there has been an increase in the number of cases diagnosed and reported by sheep producers in Ohio.

The virus is spread by mosquitoes during early breeding season, generally August through September. The virus is not spread from ewe to ewe only through mosquitos. Abnormalities in lambs may include crooked joints, deformities of the skeleton, twisted necks or spines, weak muscles or an uncoordinated gait. Most lambs born with severe defects are usually stillborn, yet CVV can cause the birth of lambs that act drowsy, weak, or unsteady and typically all lambs within a set of twins or triplets are affected.

If the infection occurs at less than 28 days gestation, the embryos usually die and are reabsorbed. If it occurs between 28 and 45 days of gestation, the fetuses usually develop the "A_H syndrome" resulting in various congenital abnormalities affecting the central nervous system. Infections after 45 days of pregnancy usually produce no adverse effects. Ewes exposed to the virus that have developed immunity before the breeding season are protected from reinfection and fetal infections.

Sheep producers suspecting CVV should contact their veterinarian in order to rule out other causes of birth defects, miscarriages or infertility. Diagnosis is sometimes difficult because the virus is usually gone by the time of the abortion or birth however it can be made in the laboratory by submitting blood, body fluids or brain tissue from the lamb or blood from the ewe.

The virus is found throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. There is no vaccine and there is no known treatment available. The most effective method of protecting ewes from the Cache Valley virus is to minimize their exposure to mosquito-infested areas during and shortly after the breeding season.

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National Conference Report

American Sheep Industry/ National Lamb Feeders Annual Convention: "Weaving a Path to the Future"
Charleston, SC- January 22-25, 2014

The annual ASI Meeting was held in Charleston, South Carolina in late January. This is an annual meeting of business, scientific, policy and state representatives involved in the American Sheep Industry. The meetings are to move the industry forward and set a path for policy and research to assist producers in the business. The meeting was set in Charleston, SC to attract a portion of eastern sheep producers, especially those involved in direct marketing as well as to allow for participation and tours of the largest wool processing facility and the largest wool textile manufacturing facility in the United States.

Charguers Wool, USA is the largest wool processing facility in the United States, taking in raw wool, cleaning and making the wool into usable "wool top" for textile companies. Currently, through sheep industry investment, Charguers has implemented "Superwash" technology in which the wool is washed and coated to make the wool "machine washable." Washable wool has enhanced wool's market in sporting goods apparel and military needs. Burlington Industries is a textile company responsible for knitting and weaving many commercial and military garments. Burlington uses this "superwash wool" in many garments as well as weaving the traditional Military Uniforms for troops.

For the past three years, ASI has held an "Emerging Entrepreneur Program" for new producers interested in bettering their sheep businesses. Mr. Mike Harper from PSWGA attended the program and was able to meet a large group of producers. This has been a good program to increase participation in the industry from the next generation. ASI Board of Directors made up of representatives from state groups reviewed current policy on a number of items including lamb grading, National Scrapie Program, Livestock Risk Protection Program and upcoming Farm Bill and Trade talks. The Board of Directors also reviewed plans for the "Let's Grow" Campaign, a program that has been in place to increase sheep numbers in the US as well as discussed improvements to NSIP, a program to enhance sheep genetic improvement through breeding calculations.

The largest issue of discussion was a review and discussion on the Sheep Industry Roadmap, a report commissioned by the American Lamb Board to assess problems in the sheep industry and bring forward some solutions and views toward making the industry stable and profitable for future generations. This is a significant report which outlines some deficiencies in all sectors, as well as many opportunities. The "Roadmap" report outlines a framework for producers and producer groups to follow to improve the industry. A complete report can be found through the American Lamb Board website: lambcheckoff.com.

The meeting ended with the annual Make It with Wool banquet and fashion show. This program brings youth participants to a national stage to show off wool garments which they have made. Competing from Pennsylvania was Rachel Siegel of Lebanon, PA and Sombre Carleton of Darlington, PA. Both participants did an excellent job representing PSWGA.

2015 will mark the 150th Anniversary of the American Sheep Industries Association. The Annual meeting will be held in Reno, Nevada. The meetings are very informative and producers are encouraged to attend.

Greg Hubbard,

Pennsylvania State Director for 2014 Meeting

Sheep Convention Touts Record Attendance in South Carolina

American wool epitomized the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)/National Lamb Feeders Association annual convention held in Charleston, S.C., on Jan. 22-25. The conference theme, Weaving a Path to the Future, included tours of wool processing plants to offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for sheep producers to see the transformation of their raw wool into high-end finished products.

"Another reason for the record attendance at this year's convention was the up-beat attitude among farmers and ranchers due to the September turn around in feeder lamb prices and the much needed relief from the record-high feed prices," said Peter Orwick, ASI executive director.

America's only remaining wool scouring, combing and carding plant -- Chargeurs (USA) Inc. -- opened the doors of its Jamestown, S.C., facility to nearly 300 meeting attendees to provide an opportunity to view the process of converting greasy wool into top. The superwash line -- a continuous wool-top shrink-proofing treatment piece of equipment that alters the fiber in wool products, allowing them to be washed and dried without shrinking -- was viewed by tour participants. This process is the most reliable shrink-resistance treatment for wool available on the market. It not only helps fill domestic commercial-wool orders, but also maintains and expands the use of American wool in the valuable U.S. military market.

Top from Chargeurs is moved down the supply-chain to Burlington Industries in Raeford, N.C. The second stop on the fiber tour gave producers the occasion to hear the story of turning top into fabric. The detailed processes of dyeing, blending, yarn spinning and fabric weaving were all demonstrated.

Undersecretary Edward Avalos of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Marketing and Regulatory Program kicked off the board of directors (BOD) meeting by addressing his department's work with ASI, including the "\$5 million in lamb meat purchases designed to benefit sheep producers. The lamb market improved this fall and the purchases were considered helpful."

Avalos praised the Agriculture Marketing Service Market News division for its commitment to ensuring timely and accurate market reports. He also relayed the need for allocating appropriate funding for the livestock protection program of Wildlife Services.

Jeanne Carver of Imperial Stock Ranch in Oregon shared her heart-felt story about having her wool sourced by Ralph Lauren for use at the 2014 U.S. Winter Olympic in Sochi, Russia. Carver teamed up with Ralph Lauren to create a hand knit sweater for the athletes to wear for the opening ceremony.

A panel of four wool industry representatives shared with the BOD their concerns with the two sets of proposed trade agreements currently being negotiated by the United States-the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. They shared the impacts and opportunities the Asian and European agreements could have on the future of the textile industry in the United States and particularly the impact on wool, devastating the textile industry due to unauthorized goods coming from China thru TPP countries.

Jack Ewing, Crescent Hosiery Mill, a great proponent of wool in socks, praised the BOD by saying, "Bringing a superwash line to the United States was the best thing you could have done for the wool industry in this country. American made products is a reality we didn't have a couple years ago."

As the Let's Grow campaign moves into its third year, positive results were reported from the projects funded by this initiative. It was noted that the SheepSD of South Dakota Extension, the ASI webinar series conducted by Optimal Ag and the three-state series (Ohio, Maine and Maryland) have reached thousands of producers across the country. Diversified sessions ranged from parasite management and reducing labor to marketing options and feeding for fiber production. The new breeding-sheep loan program developed by the National Livestock Producers Association, with ASI support, was presented to the campaign committee.

Common presentations provided by Robert Ludwig, The Hale Group, were held across many organizational meetings to update attendees of the findings and recommendations presented in the final Lamb Industry Roadmap, an

industry-wide PLAN jointly funded by the American Lamb Board and the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center. The ASI board of directors approved plans to be actively involved in the sheep productivity improvement and the communication teams through its Let's Grow campaign and its research and educational functions of the Producer Education and Research Council.

Elected to the ASI executive board during the board of directors meeting on Jan. 25, were Ken Wixom (Idaho), Region 7, which is comprised of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, and Milt Ward (Idaho), filling the lamb feeder seat on the board. Larry Pilster (Mont.) and Don Gnos (Ore.) retired from the executive board.

A Note from the Lamb and Wool Queen

Hello my name is Stephanie Summits. I reside on a small farm in Somerset County and am currently a wildlife and fisheries management major at West Virginia University. As the start of the 2014 PA Farm show approaches, I am anxious to begin my reign as your 2014 PA Lamb and Wool Queen. I was so excited back in October to win this title. One of my interview questions was : "Why, at my age, did I want to do this?" I feel it is my way to stay involved with a project I loved so much.



L to R: PA Lamb and Wool Queen Stephanie Summits, PA Secretary of Agriculture George Greig, PA Lamb and Wool Princesses Brianna Kabina and Amanda Hall taken at the 2014 Farm Show.

Through my 4-H years, I looked forward to each spring when it was time to pick out my lambs and raise them for the fair. Each year I learned more and improved my lambs. After college, I hope to start my own flock of lambs. I look forward to traveling around the state in 2014, meeting and learning from the many people involved in the lamb and wool industry.

Farm Show Educational Display

Great recipes for many different lamb cuts; wool can be used for clothing, carpets and mulch; lambs are born with tails. These are all different bits of information that folks learned when they stopped by the Farm Show Educational Display. Many PSWGA members and some 4-H and FFA members volunteered their time to talk to the people who stopped by the display. Special thanks goes to Tammy Hemmerly for bringing Maizy and Daizy for the visitors to see and touch and to Tammy for managing the display this year. She made Farm Show her home away from home for the week and learned just how cold it can get when the doors are open during single digit temperatures! This is a great way to get involved with the association and help spread the word about the great things lamb and wool have to offer.

U. S. Wool Batting Introduced (taken from ASI Weekly)

RamTect wool batting is a new all-wool fiber batting product developed and launched at the Outdoor Retailers Winter Market (Jan. 2014) in Salt Lake City by Hobbs Bonded Fibers. The insulation was developed by Doug Hoeschek, co-inventor and marketer of Polarfleece in the early 1980s, and Carey Hobbs, owner of Hobbs Bonded Fibers.

The idea of wool insulation offers advantages. Made from American wool, RamTect, does not clump, migrate or require quilting or baffling, which means that the outer-shell fabric need not be down proof, and there will be fewer needle holes open to cold air. In addition, wool is non-static and offers good moisture management naturally.

The company is calling it 'the natural fiber solution,' designed as a soft and pliable wool insulation fabric using the company's patent-pending, no yarn compression technology. Hobbs uses American raised wool in RamTect due to its superior loft and resistance to compression, supported by a test done at Texas A&M for the American Sheep Industry Association.

USDA Working on Farm Bill Rules/Regulations (Reprinted in part from AgWeek)

Passing a new Farm Bill took more than two years. Working out details, particularly ones involving livestock disaster programs, won't take as long, said Aaron Krauter, the executive state director of the North Dakota Farm Service Agency. Still, farmers and ranchers will need patience, Krauter said.

Though President Obama has signed the Farm Bill into law, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) must work out details. That process has begun.

Among the livestock disaster programs Krauter cited as strong candidates for speedy approval are the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP). LIP compensates ranchers for weather-related livestock losses, LFP compensates ranchers for grazing losses and ELAP provides emergency assistance to cover losses from adverse weather, including blizzards.

The programs, which expired on Oct. 1, 2011, need to be updated. "But for the most part, those things are written already," which should boost their enactment, Krauter said.

Enactment of disaster livestock programs also could be accelerated because USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack has some flexibility in pushing them through to an earlier start date, Krauter concluded.

Apply Now for Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School (taken from ASI Weekly)

The 2014 National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA) Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School will be under the direction of Melissa Vanlaningham, Ph.D., director of food science at Superior Farms. The theme of this year's school is Lamb By-Products - Discovering the 5th Primal.

The goal of the leadership school will be to explore the many, less common products associated with processing lamb. The school will be held in Dixon, Calif., July 13-16. The agenda for the course is available at www.nlfa-sheep.org/pdf/NLFA%20Leadership%20School%202014%20Agenda.pdf.

There is no fee required when applying -- simply complete the on-line application (www.nlfa-sheep.org/pdf/NLFA%20Leadership%20School%20Registration.pdf) and submit it by May 3. For question or additional information, contact the NLFA office at 503-364-5462 or email info@nlfa-sheep.org. Funding from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center supports the continuation of this school.

Sheep Scam (taken from ASI Weekly)

It has been brought to the attention of the American Sheep Industry Association office that sheep producers may be targeted with an email scam to purchase sheep. According to those reporting the scam, upon providing your personal information, you are told that you will receive a certified check with directions to cash it immediately, with a portion of the money being sent to a third party. The cashier's check will appear valid but turns out to be fake.

Agriculture is not exempt from becoming a target for computer scams. This is just a reminder to be careful. PSWGA Editor's note: This is also occurring for goats. Related scams are looking like valid emails from interested people. They are just looking for replies and further communication to get information on your farm, not legitimate sales.

Is a Cow Eating My Lunch? (taken from ASI Weekly)

Consumers have increasing questions about animal agriculture and whether it's good or bad. Some are concerned that animal agriculture takes away human food supplies and wastes resources. To help answer related questions and help consumers learn about the role animals can have in a healthy diet, the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology has released a new video based on its Issue Paper Animal Feed vs. Human Food: Challenges and Opportunities in Sustaining Animal Agriculture Toward 2050.

The paper addresses the commonly heard argument that livestock compete with humans for food resources, thus providing support for the continued existence of livestock production. It also addresses the knowledge gap that currently exists as to the quantity of human feed and fiber by-products used within animal agriculture.

The paper and video are available at

www.cast-science.org/publications/?animal_feed_vs_human_food_challenges_and_opportunities_in_sustaining_animal_agriculture_toward_2050&show=product&productID=278268. (Contact Melanie if you don't have internet access and would like a copy of the paper.)

Managing Parasites with Good Nutrition

Written by Melanie Barkley, Penn State Extension Educator

We all know that if we eat better, we feel better. For many years, we have also known that protein nutrition can affect a sheep's resilience to gastrointestinal parasites and it can also reduce the consequences of parasite infections. Therefore, as sheep producers it is important to pay close attention to what our sheep are eating.

To better understand how nutrition can affect parasitism, we need to take a closer look at what happens within growing animals and reproducing animals. One of the first signs that we see is the reduction in feed intake. Research by Sykes et. Al., 1988 and and Coop et al., 1982 found that feed intake is often reduced by as much as 15 to 20%. Another problem that is occurring internally is the loss of protein and tissue damage within the digestive tract. This relates to decreased efficiency in the utilization of feeds. Both of these cause production losses through decreased growth, decreased milk production and to some extent decreased reproductive efficiency.

Numerous research studies have looked at how to improve production and growth without the use of anthelmintic (dewormer) treatments. These studies found that increasing the metabolizable protein in the diet during times of protein scarcity enables sheep to become more resilient to parasite infections and may also contribute to developing immunity to infections. Research looked at a number of different protein supplements including soybean meal, fish meal, cottonseed meal, urea and dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS). Many of these studies have also found a reduction in fecal egg counts over a long term period when dietary protein levels were increased.

As animals react to parasite infections and the scarcity of nutrients, they tend to allocate how they will use their feedstuffs. Coop and Kyriazakis, 1999, state a possible ordering of priorities to the animals. Young, growing animals will tend to focus on maintaining body protein, then acquiring immunity to parasites, followed by protein gain and then maintaining body lipids or body condition. For reproducing animals, they state that maintenance of body protein is the priority followed by pregnancy or lactation, then expression of immunity and body condition.

So, how can we as sheep producers use this information for our flocks? Certainly, looking at nutrition and protein in particular can be useful in an integrated approach to internal parasite management. Protein supplementation during times of the year when sheep consume lower quality feed would certainly help sheep to better manage parasites. Increasing metabolizable protein by as much as 20 to 25% was indicated in research by Datta et. al., 1998, Donaldson et. al., 2001 and Houdijk et. al., 2003.

The benefits of increasing protein levels are especially seen with ewes rearing multiple lambs when they are in relatively poor body condition and with young growing lambs that have the genetic potential for fast growth. Further research is needed to determine the best protocol for protein supplementation to develop immunity and resilience to gastrointestinal parasites. For now, producers should monitor protein levels in rations throughout the year to insure that feeds are meeting the national resource council's recommendations.

For more information on managing parasites in sheep, contact Melanie at the Penn State Extension office in Bedford County at 814.623.4800 or by email at meh7@psu.edu.

Upcoming Events And Important Dates: Please see also events listed on the website calendar.

<http://www.pasheep.com/events.htm>

The next PSWGA meeting will be held on Saturday, March 29 at the Livestock Evaluation Center in PA Furnace, PA. The meeting will begin at 10:00 AM and conclude in the afternoon. We will have lunch at the LEC. If you would like to bring something along to share, please let Melanie know. You can reach her at meh7@psu.edu or 814-979-2250.

Please send **wool pool** information to Linda at the contact below in time for the April Newsletter or when known.

Penn State Extension Sheep Field Days

More Details will be sent out in the next newsletter.

April 12 at Lauden Acres in Dalmatia, PA

April 26 at Baytree Farm in Emlenton, PA

May 10 at Maple Hollow Farm in Manns Choice, PA

May 17 at MacCauley Suffolks in Atglen, PA

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