

Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Club Newsletter May 2001

Voting Results

We received 19 ballots back. This does constitute a quorum of the members who could vote in this election. Voting results are as follows:

President Tom Wyman 19 votes

Vice President Luke Vaughn 19 votes

Secretary/Treasurer Eugenie McGuire 19 votes

Board Members

Sue Goetz 17 votes

Stanley Ward 17 votes

Mark Whitaker 15 votes

Decline to vote 2 votes

We also had three write-in candidates for the fourth vacant Board seat. Each of these candidates received a single vote. According to our bylaws we will be holding a run-off election for this seat. Your ballots are included with this newsletter.

Ed Lutkewich
Sheri McMullen
Lee Morgan-Davie

Bylaws Changes

For the Changes 16 votes

Against the Changes 1 vote

Decline to Vote 2 votes

The bylaws changes have been approved. See below on details of how to send in paperwork to get your sheep re-registered in the new association.

There are more members now than there were when we initially sent out ballots. Our bylaws do not address this so I have decided to send the run-off ballots to each and every current member, whether or not they voted in the initial election. If there are any problems with that, please contact a board member and propose a change to the bylaws that will address this problem. I felt it only fair to include as many viewpoints as possible.

Board Meeting Report

We held a board meeting via conference call. Board members attending included:

Tom Wyman
Luke Vaughn
Eugenie McGuire
Sandie McDonald
Niki Sawyer
Stanley Ward
Mark Whitaker

Excused was Sue Goetz.

Guest Ed Lutkewich

This initial meeting was to introduce people to each other and discuss the registry issues. The major action was the selection of the software to operate the registry. The package selected is produced by Grassroots Ltd. in the UK and is currently being used to operate 23 breed registries of rare breeds. The package is somewhat expensive and will cost the Association approximately \$2,150.00.

Mr. Wyman will be providing \$1075.00 to purchase the new software system. Ed Lutkewich will donate \$200.00. Ken and Oogie McGuire will provide \$50.00. The donation from Stanley Ward for shearing Luke's sheep is also being applied to the purchase price of the package.

Therefore the board is asking for additional donations to cover this necessary expense. If you cannot donate the funds please consider a short loan to the Association to be paid back once we start receiving registration fees so we can purchase this software and register sheep.

Ongoing updates and support for this package will cost the Association \$250.00 per year. This cost should be easily covered by the registration fees paid by members to register new lambs.

How to Register Your Sheep

Included in this package is a blank form to fill out to re-register sheep which have previously been registered with either the UK or Hoctor's Association or to register new lambs.

Mandatory fields are farm permanent ID type, location, color and number, sex, date of birth,

type of birth, sheep name, sire name and registration number, dam name and registration number and owner information. If you did not breed the sheep please also include breeder information for each sheep you wish to register.

Optionally you can include death dates (for sheep you need to register so descendants can be registered), the genetic status at Codon 171 and Codon 136, any Federal assigned premise or individual ID numbers, birth, 60 day, 90 day or 120 day weights and fleece micron testing. Remember, these data fields are OPTIONAL and are not required at this time. If the Federal rules change to require premises or individual ID or scrapie genotype then those items will become required when the law takes effect.

Please include the original pedigree paper and registration paper for sheep that have previously been registered with the Hक्टर's. If you have not received these papers or there are errors please explain them when you send in your information.

For UK registered animals please include copies of your flock report and any ram registration data.

Upon verification of pedigree your sheep will be assigned a unique registration number in the new registry and you will be issued new papers for each sheep. The flock prefix will be assigned based on the breeder of the sheep. Your originals will be returned to you.

My goal is to first concentrate on providing papers for the youth members who require papers to show their sheep. We already have received several registration or transfer requests that fall into this category. Second priority is producing new or transfer papers for anyone else who is showing their sheep. If you need paperwork in time for a show please indicate this on your application so I can prioritize the work. Next in line will be registering sheep that are being sold or new lambs. The lowest priority will be replacing papers of registered sheep that are not showing and are staying in the flock where they live now. We have a huge backlog of animals to enter, verify and reissue papers on. I hope that these priorities will not cause anyone any undue hardship. If you have a special request or need please let me know and I will do my utmost to accommodate you.

To register new lambs born out of registered sheep fill out a registration application and return it along with the registration fee. For 2001 the fees are:

Rams \$5.00
Ewes \$10.00

The goal is by the end of the year to be returning all new registrations within 30 days or less.

Flock Prefixes

These are the prefixes that people have sent in for their flocks. In cases where "farm" is part of the name only the descriptive part is used as the prefix. If I have indicated your prefix in error or no prefix is included but you wish to use one please contact me ASAP via e-mail if possible as I am going to be entering all the flock prefixes based on the breeder of a sheep into the new registry software. Prefixes must be unique, no one else can use your prefix.

The prefix will be applied in front of the name of every sheep you breed and register. For example, a ram I bred last year will have the name Desert Weyr Merfyn.

Sarah Cassily –
Barbara Childs – Indian Rock
Elise Earl – Laughing Lion
Sue Goetz – Stone Crest
Jenny Jones – Rockbridge
Lorna Kearney – WE
Victoria Kotrotsios – Tamarack Mountain
Joanie Livermore –
Ed Lutkewich – Windy Hill
Sandra McDonald –
Ken & Oogie McGuire – Desert Weyr
Sherrie McMullen –
Richard Mead –
Jodi Milske – White Dog
Lee Morgan-Davie – Mieriwerdd Greenbriar
Shari Nees – Autumn Haus
Claudia Pettis – Mutiny Bay
Niki Sawyer – Hound Heaven
Sally Smith –
Luke Vaughn – Perigord
Vera Videnovich –
Jo Wallace – Rose Hill
Stanley Ward – Tilden
Lorena Waselinko –
Connie Whan – Petite Pet
Mark Whitaker –
Bill Wilczynski –
Marian Williams – Beni T's
Tom Wyman – Wye Heights

In addition the following people once owned Black Welsh Mountain Sheep and animals of their breeding will carry their prefix.

William Bennett – Black Sheep
Gene Craighead – Mountain View

Mary Mondello – Mondello's
Patty Spor – High Desert
James Warren – Brindle Hill

Sheep Census

With only 15 members turning in census data for 2001 the numbers are still interesting. These 15 members own:

Ewes and Ewe Lambs Hoctor Registered 127
Rams and Ram Lambs Hoctor Registered 27

Ewes and Ewe Lambs UK Registered 200
Rams and Ram Lambs UK Registered 39

Ewes and Ewe Lambs Double Registered in both
UK and Hoctor Registry 12
Rams and Ram Lambs Double Registered in
both UK and Hoctor Registry 1

Ewes and Ewe Lambs Purebred but
Unregistered 41
Rams and Ram Lambs Purebred but
Unregistered 25

These last include animals whose registrations
are pending but have not yet be received from
the Hoctors.

Crossbreds or other breeds

Ewes and Ewe Lambs 64
Rams and Ram Lambs 24

Our total purebred population consists of

Ewes and Ewe Lambs 380
Rams and Ram Lambs 92

Obviously with only about half the members
sending in census data these figures are
inaccurate but they do provide some useful
information. We have far more UK only
registered animals than I ever thought!

Club Donors

I keep an ongoing list of members who have
graciously donated extra to help the club. If you
have donated money or fleece to one of the wool
pools **thanks**, your support is allowing us to put
additional ads in various sheep and farming
magazines and is generating interest in the
breed. Donations received recently are currently
earmarked to purchase the registry software. As
soon as we have the required funds we will be
purchasing the package.

Stanley Ward \$60.00 Stanley sheared some
sheep for Luke Vaughn and asked that instead
of taking payment that Luke donate money to the
club. Thanks to both for this valuable donation.

Sandra McDonald \$40.00

Joanie Livermore \$40.00

Pedigree Data and Database Re-creation

Tom Wyman has provided me with his entire
pedigree record from initial importation to
present. I have finished entering 4087 individual
sheep representing his entire flock record from
importation until 2000. There are a number of
questions where I was unable to read the original
records and I am gathering all my questions for
clarification at once. In addition, I am sending
both the computer files I created and the original
records off to 2 other people for verification. This
task is expected to be complete by the end of
June at the latest.

These data form the basis for the new registry.
All of the data entered so far will be entered into
our new system before we receive it so no time
or effort has been wasted.

New US Sheep and Goat Scrapie Rules

There is a new Scrapie Erradication Uniform
Methods and Rules out for public comment. The
new rules will be open for comments until June
19. The document is huge, over 150 pages but
will apply to all sheep and goats in the US if
adopted as written. This is a revised draft and
has already incorporated a number of industry
requested changes. You can find the Adobe
Acrobat PDF file that contains the draft
regulations on the Internet at

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/scrapie/umr/umr4-19-01a.pdf>

A few key highlights of the plan:

Anyone who sells any sheep or goats for
breeding purposes, or who sells sheep or goats
to slaughter that are over 18 months of age or
who sells any sheep or goats at any age across
state lines will be required to use premises ID on
all animals. Valid ID includes Federal scrapie
program eartags, other Federal approved
eartags, microchips, approved registration
tatoos, approved premises tatoos, and in states

with a brand inspection requirement and ear notching system that applies to sheep a valid registered brand or ear notch pattern. It is suggested that producers implement individual animal ID as well as premises ID but the individual animal requirement was dropped from this version of the UMR. For animals going directly to slaughter there will be an option for a federal approved backtag to serve as the premises ID. The identification requirement is effective for all sheep and goats born or sold after 1/1/2002.

All records of the identification of all animals, the type and location of the ID, the person to whom the animal was sold or the date slaughtered must be kept for 5 years and such records must be made available for inspection upon request to the Federal, State or other designated individuals to determine compliance.

Sections, zones and states may be declared scrapie free. Such areas must not have any source, infected or suspect flocks but must also comply with strict regulations concerning the genetic status of animals used for breeding. The US will be using both codon 171 and codon 136 in determining scrapie susceptibility. The genetic status of sheep is being used to set the level of the zone or state. In the event of a diagnosis of scrapie animals that are genetically resistant may be granted an exemption from the mandatory slaughter that currently takes place in such flocks.

Flocks which are depopulated or animals which are slaughtered because of being high risk will be paid for by the Federal government at market rates.

Major changes that are included in this version from the original draft are the inclusion of brands or ear notches as official ID and the entire section indicating that genetic susceptibility will be used to determine high-risk animals.

I have been telling folks that these types of changes were being proposed and with the full support of the major sheep industry organizations to this version of the draft I fully expect that it will take effect as written. So, if you are not already keeping this data you had better work on it now as by next year it will be required!

As an aside, the new registry software will allow for the inclusion of genotype data for each animal so that you can see what you have and what is likely from any given breeding. We are also implementing both a Federal ISD and Farm or flock ID section so both types of ID's will be available for any given animal.

How I promote the BWM Breed and Market Sheep

by Sandie McDonald

My dad has had a saying all my life: "He who has a thing to sell, and goes and whispers down a well, is not as apt to get a dollar as he who stands on a stump and hollers." More succinctly, blow your own horn. Blow it loud, blow it frequently. Think of reasons to take your sheep places where hundreds of people will see them. Festivals, parades, county fairs, extension office demonstrations, 4H gatherings, picnics, celebrations, you name it. Even if the particular function is not at all sheep oriented, you can get a lot of attention leading a jet black sheep around. If you are worried about disease or animal stress, pick an animal or animals that are destined for your freezer anyway. Don't ever tell the public that, though. They want to believe the sheep you have with you is a beloved pet. Even staunch old farmers want to believe that.

I stress temperament when I am talking to people about BWM. The lambs are born tame, they are gentle, they are easy to work with. Their small size makes them ideal for hobby farmers who just want a few sheep to be picturesque and eat a little extra grass in the back acre. Stress that sheep are as long lived as dogs (my last ram died at 15), and that wethers make the best "pets" and the best "fiber animals" (which they DO!) Also stress that sheep like sheepish company unless they were bottle raised, and try to sell them in pairs, for the sheep's sake.

Offer deep discounts to senior citizens and 4H kids, and also offer full support over the phone and/or hands on if you can, for first time sheep owners. I always offer to let them have their animals sheared with mine, wormed with mine, and offer ram service (for a fee) if they buy ewes. Most people never take me up on the offers, but they really like knowing I'm there if they need me.

Advertise these sheep under "exotic pets", not "livestock" if you can. People love to purchase rare animals for some reason, stress the fact that we have very few of these in the US, and can't get more from the UK due to diseases, quarantines, etc. Rare equals valuable.

If the people seem amenable to thinking of this as a meat animal, (most don't!) then you can emphasize the extra-lean meat of the BWM breed, the more delicate flavor (due to lack of fat!) and the better meat-to-bone ratio compared

to larger breeds. These animals are also “easy keepers”, they don't eat nearly as much as other sheep of similar size, preferring to forage. Stress that these sheep will get fat on what other breeds would die on. They will eat almost anything, similar to a goat, including tough woody shrubs and the coarser grasses most sheep turn their noses up at. They are ideal for clearing and maintaining grassy meadows, will actively seek out brambles and blackberries and eliminate them. (Although they'll do the same to your rose bushes...)

As for wool, seeing is believing. This is the blackest sheep on earth, no doubt about it. They have a very strong color gene (I've only had 3 of my 1/2 BWM's silver out on me in 6 years!) and although their wool is coarse and crimped, it is still suitable for handspinning, and is excellent, actually SUPERLATIVE for quilt batts and rugs. The crimp keeps the wool from compacting, it is a very resilient fiber. Sweaters and outerwear made from this wool retain their shape beautifully. The black color is wonderful for darker colored quilts, it doesn't “beard” the way white fiber does. Only a quilter will know what that means!

Can you tell I really like this breed of sheep? I'm coming from a background where I've had over 20 breeds of sheep in 20 years, and I'm really impressed with this one.

Member News

Lambing has started for many members, let me know what is happening with your flock.

Beef Quality Assurance and How it Applies to Sheep Producers

We attended the local Extension Service BQA program. This is a voluntary program administered in each state to educate producers in how to improve the quality of the beef through management changes. While voluntary now it was proposed to be a mandatory program for all beef producers and if the measurements of beef quality do not continue to improve the Federal Government has indicated they may consider a mandatory program.

What does this have to do with sheep? Well most of us sell sheep for meat and many of the items required by the BQA program make a lot of sense when applied to sheep meat producers as well. As the extension agent said the BQA program is a way for producers, fighting public opinions on unsafe meat, to cover their behinds. With the issue of scrapie potentially being the

cause of BSE (Mad Cow Disease) and that causing vCJD in humans it behooves very sheep producer to become aware of public perceptions about meat quality and safety.

The most important thing we learned is to never give any injection in any usable muscle. That means no more shots of any type in the rear leg. All vaccinations, antibiotics or any injection of any type should be in front of the shoulder on cattle. This is very different from what I was taught. In the past we were told to spread the shots etc. on the corners of the animal and that given enough time to recover any tissue damage from the shot would be repaired. New research indicates that the scarring and in some cases abscesses surrounding even an injection of saline into a muscle remain with the animal for life! There were graphic pictures of what LA-200 does in muscle, even years after injection! Vaccinations too can cause problems and for cattle now the recommended vaccination site is behind the ear. I asked about sheep and was told that for now the armpit site for subQ injections is still ok for sheep but no longer acceptable for cattle.

Recordkeeping is a bit intensive for the BQA program. For every treatment a location chart is filled out showing the exact item given, including lot number and expiration date, the location of the shot and the slaughter withdrawal time. Extra label drug use requires the vet's signature and prescription as well. These records are sent with the animal as it goes along the marketing chain right up to the feedlot and slaughterhouse. All feed is documented with a lot or date of manufacture, where obtained and verification no ruminant byproducts were used to make it. All pesticide use on the premises is documented with chemical used, lot, withdrawal time and detailed reason for application. All syringes and needles are counted and checked in and out and the record sheets must be signed off by the person giving the shot.

No animals can be stressed and the way you move stock is carefully defined to minimize bruising of the carcass.

As a producer we are only certified to level 1 of the BQA program. There are 3 levels in the program with the top level requiring a manual written for the specific operation and training of all people who have any occasion to handle or treat animals. The whole school took several hours and was well worth the time. Some of the requirements are current federal laws, documentation of all treatments with slaughter withdrawal time and so on but some are new.

Right now in our county you cannot sell sheep, goats or cattle at our local auction without a certificate from your feed supplier indicating that you bought feed that was safe to give to ruminant animals.

If your state has a BQA program I encourage you to attend it. The information will most certainly change how you handle your slaughter sheep as well.

Secretary/Treasurer Notes

Club bank balance is currently at \$338.90 before taking out the costs of publication for this newsletter.

I have purchased certificate paper for the new registrations, and gold foil seals and an embosser to validate registration papers.

Editors Notes

Please send articles, we need them.

Send info to oogiem@desertweyr.com