

American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association Newsletter August 2001

Run-Off Election Voting Results

We received 15 ballots back. This does constitute a quorum of the members who could vote in this election. Voting results are as follows:

Board Member – Vote for One

Ed Lutkewich	7
Sheri McMullen	6
Lee Morgan-Davie	2

Ed Lutkewich is elected to the remaining board seat. He will finish this year.

Board Meeting Report

We have created a Board of Directors e-mail list and board members are actively working to address registration questions. This new list is for BOD members only and will allow us to conduct Association business in a timely fashion whether or not we can meet in person or on the phone.

How to Register Your Sheep

Please start sending in new and replacement registrations. Do make sure that each new or replacement application includes the ear tag or tattoo information for your sheep.

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

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

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.

I have found a number of items that are missing or incorrect in papers people have already sent me. The most common missing items include flock prefix (not on any papers I have received), birth type (often missing or incorrect) and birth date.

For sheep which were bred by Tom Wyman the records he has are considered the only correct source. In a few cases the pedigree listed on the Huctor papers does not match the Wyman records. These cases are being referred to the board for action.

A final request, if your sheep are not direct descendents of Tom Wyman's sheep it is really helpful if you have the papers for the intervening generations. Other wise we are left with holes in the pedigree that must be referred to the board for action. I won't be creating new papers for sheep who are dead but seeing their papers helps me create a complete and accurate registry database. Again, I will return all originals.

If you require papers for a show please let me know when you send in the request, as with a backlog of papers to re-issue I must prioritize the requests. If you can wait a bit for your registration papers please let me know that as well.

Flock Prefixes

In addition to the flock prefixes that current members have sent in I have been adding the flock prefix for sheep bred by others who are in the backgrounds of sheep whose registrations are being transferred. Where I can find the person or get a flock prefix I use that. If I cannot find or contact the person then the prefix is their last name. Our bylaws provide for the assignment of prefixes if one is not selected. A full list of flock prefixes will be printed in the flock book.

Sheep Census

As of August 25, 2001 I have processed registrations for 189 sheep. This figure does not include the registrations for sheep who are in the backgrounds of the sheep being registered. I

have a backlog of 1 flock that I am currently working on.

We currently have 4463 sheep registered. The majority of these represent the history of Wyman sheep, many of whom have since died.

The board is ruling on registration applications where original papers are not available, those with missing information between the current sheep and the Wyman records and where the records as documented on those papers do not match Wyman records. Each special case is being given separate treatment by the board.

Member Lists

Enclosed is a now outdated membership list and list of flock prefixes and membership numbers. We have added several new members since I printed and copied this list. As you can see we have a number of people who are not current members. These are typically people who had sheep in the past and needed to have prefixes and flock numbers so that the descendents of their sheep could be registered. If you have any questions about this list please contact me.

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.

Tom Wyman \$1,075.00

Jerry Jones \$25.00

Claudia Pettis \$50.00

Ed Lutkewich \$240.00

Niki Sawyer \$15.00

Connie Whan \$10.00 for expedited mailing of her registration papers.

Oogie McGuire \$50.00

These youth members included an extra donation in their registration fees for this years

show lambs. A special thanks to them for their generosity.

Jacob Hutton \$1.00

Hannah Cassilly \$4.00

Luke Cassilly \$2.00

Oogie McGuire has paid the Association \$950.00 so we can purchase the software now. This payment is an advance against the cost of her sheep registrations and transfers. As she registers sheep the credit will be used.

Pedigree Data and Database Re-creation

The registry software has been received and all the existing data were entered. I have been in daily contact with the developer and we have ironed out a few issues with procedures and printing problems. I am currently using that software to process all re-registrations and new registrations.

Current plans call for publication of the first flockbook, listing all registered sheep from importation to the present sometime in the next year. It is likely that this flock book will be available for separate purchase as it is going to be large and expensive to produce. The goal of the Association is to provide a flock book each year to all members with the latest registrations and perhaps also documentation of transfers. Final flock book format is being discussed. If there is something you want to see let your board members know.

New US Sheep and Goat Scrapie Rules

The new rule has been passed. It takes effect September 20, 2001. For details of the new ruling see the APHIS website. The ruling as published was over 40 pages long. I have a copy on my computer that I can e-mail to anyone interested. If it is really necessary please contact me and I can make a hard copy for you. I'd like to limit that if I can, as it is a large document.

Highlights of the ruling are that all sheep sold for breeding, or who are over 18 months even when sold direct to slaughter or are transported between states will require a federal premises ID tag. The tags and applicator are free from the USDA. If you choose to join the scrapie program, you will have individual animal ID not just premises ID and you must still buy your tags. You must keep records of the disposition (sold

and to whom, slaughter and date of death and date) for all sheep you own for at least 5 years. Inspections can be made to verify the records. The fines are large if you fail to comply. All sheep transported between states shall have a valid veterinary certificate of health.

Since all sheep owners will eventually have a federal ID, as soon as you get yours please let me know as that is then printed on the registration certificates for all animals you own or breed.

While some folks will feel this is an invasion of privacy, I choose to look at this as a proactive way for our industry to continue to work to eliminate scrapie. With the public concern over TSE's this is a needed step in maintaining consumer confidence in our sheep and meat products.

How I promote the BWM Breed and Market Sheep

by Oogie McGuire

I tend to go a rather different route for marketing my sheep and wool products than most of the other BWMS breeders.

One key factor for me is to avoid the "pet" or "exotic" label. Instead I promote them as niche or rare breeds. In my area if you are raising exotics you are not a serious farmer. And if you are raising pets you are also not a farmer. Since many support services, pasture management, help with marketing your stock, seminars on farm management, weed identification services and government help programs like the 201 wool payments and the Lamb Meat program are only available for farmers it is critical for me to never be seen as a hobby.

There is also a significant local bias against any animal marketed as an exotic due to an unfortunate instance where an exotic alpaca was killed by predators, and the payment for that animal used up 2 years worth of money that typically had been used to help offset losses by livestock producers for predator damage in the county. There is now a law that limits the amount that can be paid under predator damage for any single animal killed but the bad feelings cause by that incident linger on. So in my area I can have unusual livestock but I studiously avoid using the words exotic or pet.

I find that locally I market my animals best by word of mouth and samples. Anyone who expresses an interest is given a package of

chops or leg steaks or some other cut of their choice. I tell them to try it and let me know what they think. A few have not called back, but most have said they want to be on the list for when I next have lambs for sale. That is when I tell them that the meat they were eating was ram mutton. I find that the goodwill by giving away an old cull ram, butchered as mutton, is the best advertising I can do.

The carcass size of the BWMS works to their disadvantage but everyone here talks knowledgeably about carcass yield so having a smaller carcass that gives more usable meat than the average is a good marketing tool. There are several local butchers who do on-farm slaughter and several places to take animals to for off farm custom slaughter. We even have one USDA certified butcher that I plan to talk to this fall.

Wool sales have been slow except for the internet sales which go steadily on. The wool is too high priced for most local people. However, our county fair is coming up and I will be showing sheep in the open classes. There is a whole section for hand spun and hand woven items so I expect to attract more attention to the fleeces at the fair with my yarn, knitted and woven items. Our county fair is open to people from other areas and there is an active spinning and weaving group about 75 miles away that will be holding a spinning demo during the fair. I hope to be able to show them the lovely wool from these sheep.

Member News

Oogie McGuire reports that the second generation UK bloodline lambs look great. This is her first year to do entirely pasture lambing with no barn or any jugs. While there have been a few problems, so far apparently caused by ewes who are too fat, overall the lambing went well. The season finished with 54 live lambs born out of 41 ewes, 2 stillborn lambs, no early deaths (first 24 hours) and 51 lambs weaned. We lost 1 to starvation, didn't pull him in time from mom, and lost 2 to clostridia infection. We do vaccinate and the lost lambs were fully vaccinated but we seem to have a new strain in the area so will be changing vaccines this year. We had 6 ewes who failed to conceive this year. Overall we had a successful lambing especially considering our move and the switch to pasture lambing only. The bad mother who didn't feed her twins will be butchered this fall.

Secretary/Treasurer Notes

Club bank balance is currently at \$371.81 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. I have not paid all those bills yet.

Editors Notes

Please send articles, we need them.

Send info to oogiem@desertweyr.com