

American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association Newsletter

Paonia, Colorado

January 2004

Hoof Trimming

Oogie McGuire

Desert Weyr

Black Welsh Mountain sheep are relatively easy to care for and they do not require constant attention to their hooves. However, even the best of them does require regular hoof trimming. In our flock in Colorado most of the sheep can get by with hoof trimming once or twice a year. I have constantly struggled with finding a suitable hoof trimmer for my sheep.

I have tiny hands so the larger Felco trimmers are too big for me to use. Also, BWMS hooves are tough and many smaller trimmers will not cut them. I have used the small hoof trimmers sold by Premier Supplies as well as the small goat hoof knives or even horse hoof knives. All of these have problems. The smaller trimmers have sharp points and the knives are hard to handle and hard to control — especially if the sheep struggle.

I have discovered a set of tools and techniques that make this necessary maintenance much easier on me. First, I never trim hooves until after a rain or the sheep have been on irrigated ground or it has snowed. I've given up trying to cut hard dry sheep hooves. Second, the best trimmer for me has been a Corona brand grape pruner with blunt ends and curved blades. The small size makes it easy for me to hold and the curved blade with rounded tips makes it less likely to cut or poke either myself or the sheep if they kick.

The next challenge has been how to contain the sheep. I cannot tip sheep onto their butts to trim hooves for more than 8-10 sheep. I have found that a mesh netting deck chair (like those sold by Premier) has some problems. Sheep ear tags get caught and it's hard to get our smaller sheep into it. However, this year I made some modifications to the chair that made it suitable for trimming ewe feet. I shortened the netting

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Association Update

Voting Members

To be a voting member of the association you must own registered sheep. Crossbreds will not count nor will sheep that were not accepted for registration.

Reminder on Rules

All the various flocks that were waiting for rulings on pedigree or lost and then found have been dealt with. So I wish to remind everyone of the rules of the organization which will be enforced.

Past Due Amounts and Bills

Anyone with a past due amount that is not cleared by the end of February will be removed from the association and their registrations and transfers will not be processed until the bill is paid. I have been processing registrations and transfers and sending an invoice but this will stop if they are not paid in a timely fashion.

Registration Fees

The board will be reviewing registration fees in 2004. Until this is done the 2003 fees are still in effect.

- Rams \$5
- Ewes \$10
- Transfer \$5

UK registered sheep are currently registered at no charge. There is a proposal to change this so that UK registered sheep are charged \$2.50. If this change is approved I will start the billing that way effective January 2004.

Secretary/Treasurer Notes

We currently have over \$1700.00 in the bank account. This will cover the cost of printing the flock books and is the result of a generous donation by Tom Wyman.

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from the bottom so that there was less of a hammock for the sheep to sit in. I also made it very narrow so they fit in it better. The biggest improvement was made by taking an old T-shirt and putting it on over the top of the chair. This prevents the ear tags from getting caught in the mesh. With this new system, I was able to trim a whole flock of ewes (75 animals) and do a full evaluation and inspection in only 7 hours by myself with no other help.

Rams are another story. Their horns make it impossible to use the deck chair. I have a fitting stand but the horns also interfere with strapping them into the stand. The latest attempt to contain rams for trimming is to use a head lock that is built in front of my fitting stand. The design is similar to cattle head gates. It still needs some work, but so far it looks promising. We are making more modifications to the head gate system and hope to have a final design that works well next year. ❖

Flock Book Update

Oogie McGuire
Desert Weyr

I am sure everyone is tired of hearing this but the flock book is really, really close to publication. I am waiting for pedigree information on 2 sheep. The entire database (over 5100 sheep) has been individually inspected by me three times now. Each sheep pedigree has been verified by at least two, and in some cases three, people and all discrepancies have been fixed. There are still pedigree holes from Canadian sheep, UK registered sheep and sheep where the Hoctor registrations did not match Tom Wyman's records. All cases of holes have been corrected or documented. Everyone who was a member in 2003 will get a copy of the initial volume of the Flock book and the 2003 yearly supplement. ❖

Sheep Reporting Requirements

All voting members are required to provide timely reports on their sheep flock. These consist of two annual reports. One report is due in January and is a census list and indicates the status of every sheep reported to be owned by that member. If you have sold sheep whose registrations were not transferred, you

still must report them and the new owner will be getting a listing of those animals.

The second is the lambing report, due as soon as lambing is finished for your flock but no later than August 1. This report should list every ewe that was bred, every lamb born (alive or dead) and the tag information on all lambs that you wish to register. This is a requirement of the Federal government and will be enforced starting this year. We've had a year of lax reporting that we can no longer accept.

Every sheep that is registered will have listed an official ID. This can be either the official Federal ID or a farm ID. The Federal ID must include the federal flock number of the flock of birth, the individual animal ID, which ear the tag is in and what color or if the tag is metal. A farm ID must include the individual animal ID, the ear and the color of the tag or whether the tag is metal.

ALL sheep that are transferred, MUST have an official FEDERAL ID listed on their registration papers. If you did not register the animal with a Federal ID, it must be provided before the sheep will be transferred. We were able to get our records approved as meeting the official Federal requirements but now we must enforce the use of those records.

If a sheep loses an ear tag, you must send documentation of what the replacement tag is as soon as you place a new tag. All sheep must be identified at all times. NO EXCEPTIONS!

AWARD WINNER

Suzanne Correira won the Aime Soulier Memorial Award for Promotion of Minor Breeds at the Fiber Festival of the Southwest in Farmington. The award is sponsored by the California Red Sheep Registry. She received a \$250 award and lovely plaque with her name inscribed on it for her work in promoting Black Welsh Mountain Sheep. She and her BWM sheep live in Elgin, Texas at Fire Ant Ranch. ❖

The purpose of the American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association is to advance the public's knowledge and use of the purebred Black Welsh Mountain sheep by promoting the identity and versatility of these animals, conserving and protecting this rare breed.

Officer and Board Nominations

The following individuals have been nominated for either officer or board positions within the ABWMSA:

President –

Tom Wyman

Vice President –

Ed Lutkewich

Secretary Treasurer –

Oogie McGuire: I would like to continue to serve as Secretary/Treasurer and will be running for that office.

Board of Directors (4 candidates) –

Suzanne Correira

Niki Sawyer

Claudia Pettis

Bill Truckner: My wife, Sandy, and I began farming in 1981 with cattle and built up a small quality herd of registered Black Angus. In the mid-nineties we decided that we wanted to shift our focus to heritage breeds to help ensure their survival. In 1997 we purchased six Shetland ewes and one ram and now have one of the largest mid-Atlantic registered Shetland flocks.

We found immediately that whereas the Angus had an established and developed market, heritage breeds required more active promotion and marketing. Buyers for our breeding stock now come from Pennsylvania and nearby states while our fleeces are marketed throughout the United States. This success has been achieved through selective advertising and an informative web site.

In 2002 we wanted to diversify our sheep operation towards the meat market but still have heritage sheep of a small and easily handled size. We considered several breeds but found BWM to fit our requirements best. We purchased six BWM ewes and a ram from Tom Wyman this past spring to begin a small flock.

I believe BWM sheep can be much more popular and can find a niche market similar to the Shetlands. They offer the livestock producer many positive characteristics such as small size (easy to handle), no tail docking, twinning, and grow well on a grass-based operation. Their black fleeces can be used to produce a sturdy pure black yarn as well as used in blends. But most importantly, the BWM can

capitalize on the ethnic meat market. This provides a great opportunity for the BWM organization to grow its membership.

I believe aggressive promotion by the organization and also providing our members with information on how they can promote their sheep is the most important topic for the board. Since retiring in 1999 as Technical Director of Alcoa Research Laboratories, I've continued to serve in the local cattlemen's association, Lions Club, and local children's clinic serving the needs of developmentally delayed children. Spare time allows for weaving and making furniture with hand tools.

If elected, I believe I can be a valuable asset to the board.

Voting Rules, Ballots Enclosed

(PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!)

If you were a current paid voting member of the association for 2003 then enclosed with this newsletter is a ballot and two envelopes. Please fill out your vote and place it in the smaller envelope marked "ballot." Take the sealed smaller envelope and place it in the larger envelope that is addressed to the association post office box. Please include your membership invoice, flock return and dues payment in this larger outside envelope. Only people who have sent in dues for 2004 will have their ballots count for this election.

As ballots come in Oogie will be checking the larger envelopes to verify that you have paid your dues for 2004. She will take the smaller unmarked envelopes out and save them for final counting to ensure that your votes will be anonymous. Oogie will take the unopened ballots to the local notary where they will be officially opened and counted. The notary will sign a witness statement on the results, which Oogie will send with the next newsletter. If you do not have a ballot enclosed — because you were not a member in 2003 — and still wish to become a member of the association and vote in this election, you must call or e-mail Oogie immediately. Her phone number in Colorado is (970) 527-3573 and her email address is oogiem@desertweyr.com. She will send a ballot and voting form to you and will verify it once she receives your membership dues.

Ballot requests must be received by February 15, 2004 and all valid ballots with membership renewals must be postmarked no later than February 28, 2004. Oogie will wait to count ballots until 14 March to account for mail delays. We've had a number of new people join this year and look forward to you all renewing for next year. ❖

Reserve Grand Champion Ram at Comox Valley Exhibition

ABWMSA

www.blackwelsh.org

Officers

President.....Tom Wyman

Vice President.....Ed Lutkewich

Sec'y/Treasurer...Oogie McGuire

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Please send all submissions

for newsletters to:

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QuickTime™ and a TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Graeme Bellerby showing ram lamb Hkusam Naelyn

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