



THE RHODE ISLAND SHEEP COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXIII, Issue 1
Website: www.risheep.org

February 2012
Telephone: (401) 578-2012

ANNUAL MEETING AND POT LUCK SUPPER & PROGRAM

WHEN: Saturday March 24, 2012
WHERE: Richmond Grange
680 Usquepaugh Road, West Kingston, RI 02892
TIME: Doors open at 5:00p.m., visit with fellow members and friends
Pot Luck Dinner promptly at 6:00 pm (bring a large dish to share)
ANNUAL MEETING: Following the dinner,
PROGRAM: Guest Speaker - Patrick McNiff of Pat's Pastured, Jamestown, RI

Pat was named 2010 Farmer of the Year by *Edible Rhody* readers and Pat's Pastured was named 2010 Best Bacon and Eggs by *Rhode Island Monthly* readers. Pat's Pastured was founded in 2002 and provides high quality pasture-raised and grass fed meats. Their goal is to provide livestock with a life that allows them to express their natural instincts fully and a pasture environment. Pat's Pastured raises eggs, broilers, turkeys, pork, lamb, beef, and rabbit. They sell at farmers markets, CSA, restaurants and retail. Pat is Past President of Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association. We are delighted to have Pat speak to us on his farm and marketing.

So come early, doors open at 5:00 p.m., help set up, visit with friends, enjoy a good meal, attend the annual meeting and listen to a great speaker.

Questions? Contact Polly Hopkins 949-4619 (evenings) / email: khop4811@aol.com
or Deb Hopkins 647- 7281 /email: cdcdorset@cox.net

***** WORKSHOP IN JUNE *****

Deb and Don Hopkins of Hopkins Southdowns, Danielson Pike, Scituate, have offered to host another workshop this year to be held on June 9, 2012. Plans are still in the working stages, but some topics to be covered will be trimming and fitting a sheep for show – to include demonstrations on a wool breed, a meat breed, and a slick sheared lamb. Other ideas to be included is a skirting demo, selection of animals, possible guest speak and more. And of course there will be a pot luck luncheon !! More information will be included in the next newsletter, but mark your calendars now so you don't miss the date. ☺

WOOL COLLECTION for RHODY WARM BLANKETS

The Blanket Committee is just getting started on plans for this year's edition of the blankets. The Plan, as usual, will be for the collection day to be in early June. As soon as the date, time and place is confirmed, we will send out notices to the members. Remember to call your shearer now to book a date.

Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative - Essay Contest

The Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative's *Rhody Warm* Blanket Committee is running an essay contest to name the upcoming 2012 blanket. The essay, which can be written by any youth that is 18 years or younger, needs

to be about one of the 'Lost Villages' from Rhode Island's past. A contestant may choose to write about any 'Lost Village' from around the state that has not been previously used. The essay must include a history of the village, incorporating what the village was known for, and how it became a 'Lost Village'. According to the Cooperative, a 'Lost Village' is considered "to be a village that was abandoned, destroyed or is not known to most people today". The past Rhody Warm blankets have been named after the 'Lost Villages' of: South Scituate, Kent, Rockland, Ashland and Richmond. Guidelines for the contest are: that the essay must be no less than 250 words and no more than 500 words. The essay must be typed and double spaced. Contestants must include a resource page, including all information referenced or cited in their writing. Also, a cover page must be entered with the essay, giving the contestant's name, address, telephone number, age and email address. All essays entered in the contest will be judged by a committee appointed by the Rhody Warm Blanket Committee. The winner of the essay contest will be recognized in the 2012 blanket brochure and will also win a brand new Kindle Fire. The winner will receive notification by phone and will be announced -on the Cooperative's website, www.risheep.org, with the approval of parent. Essays must be post marked by June 30, 2012 to be entered in the contest – go to the website to find out more information. Mail entries to: Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative, Attn: Essay Contest, PO Box 88, Harmony, RI 02829.

RI Sheep Cooperative's news.....

⊗ The Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative is very sad to announce the passing of our Vice President this past December. Ambrose A. Garvey, of Foster, died Thursday, December 15, 2011. He was the husband of Maureen (Boyle) Garvey. Born in Oneco, CT, a son of the late Michael and Pearl (Gorenski) Garvey. Besides his wife, he leaves his children: Kathleen Mendes, Mary Newton, Jane Tetreault, Timothy Garvey and Thomas Garvey, and was the father of the late Nancy Garvey, grandfather of Devan Newton, Courtney Garvey and Bryce Garvey. He was the brother of the late Michael and John Garvey and Valorie Surprenant. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on the following Tuesday at St. Paul's Church, Danielson Pike, Foster. Burial was in All Hollows Cemetery, Moosup, CT. The calling hours were held at the Winfield & Sons Funeral Home, in Scituate, R.I. Donations may be made in his memory to Home & Hospice of RI, 1085 North Main Street, Providence, RI 02904.

⊗ The RI Sheep Cooperative also recently lost another long time member, Past President, and a former Sheep Show Superintendent at the Washington County Fair, Fred Andrews, of Cranston. Mr. Andrews past away on February 20, 2012 after a courageous and long battle with colon cancer. He was the wife of Barbara (Moriarty) Andrews and leaves six sons, David Andrews, Dennis Andrews, Douglas Andrews, Rev. Peter Andrews, all of Rhode Island, Matthew Andrews and Michael Andrews both of New Jersey, and their respective families. Fred was a man of varied interests (sheep, bees, 4-H, to name a few) and great talents (he was a self-employed contractor for many years, offering meticulous details to countless renovations, repair and building jobs). Fred was a member and delegate to the RI Ag. Council (Past President as well), was a Trustee of the Eastern States Exposition, and was formerly in charge of Big E livestock exhibitors' camping area for many years. A period of visitation was held February 24 followed by a celebration of Fred's life at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Cranston. Funeral arrangements were made thru Urquhart-Murphy Funeral Home in Warwick. Burial was in Woodland Cemetery in Coventry. Donations in Fred's memory may be made to the Hospice Services of Visiting Nurse Homecare, 6 Blackstone Valley Place, Suite 515, Lincoln, Rhode Island 02865.

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: At a recent Board of Directors meeting it was voted to create a memorial scholarship. A scholarship award was part of the marketing plan of the Rhody Warm Blanket Project, and the Board of Directors is pleased to have it finally come into being. With thanks to the insight of one of our Board members, it will also honor some active members who are no longer with us. The proposal is it to be in memory of Zeke Young, Ambrose Garvey, and Fred Andrews. As you may remember, Zeke was a long time Co-op member, Wool Pool Manager, held the office of President many, many times and was extremely generous in his support of our youth activities. Ambrose was an active member of the Cooperative in recent years, held the office Vice President numerous times, worked on the Rhody Warm Blanket Project from its inception, and encouraged and supported local youth in their sheep projects. Fred was also a long time Cooperative member, held the office of our President many, many times, worked closely with 4-H kids and their sheep projects, and was former sheep superintendent at the Washington County Fair for many years. This award will be a \$500.00 scholarship given once annually. The terms of this scholarship will be presented and voted on at the annual meeting and will be posted on our website upon approval of the members for availability to our high school and college members.

☺ The 2011 Rhode Warm Blanket Project was a success! The great article in the Providence Journal in November, gave a jump start for the sale of the latest edition of the Rhody Warm Blankets, the "Richmond" edition. There were 228 blankets and throws made this year. 124 orders went to the farmers and the rest was available for sale to the public. With the approximate 90-100 blankets and throws left in the Cooperative's inventory from previous years, along with inventory individual farmers had in stock, we were able to fill all orders received thru the beginning of December (and some after that time, depending of size requested) A big, big THANK YOU, goes out the Christopher Hopkins and Robin Meek. Chris (just happened to be unemployed at the time) stepped up to handle all phone calls, emails, arranging pick ups and deliveries, and worked with Robin shipping out the blankets. Robin offered her services of running to the post office (every other day at times) to send the blankets and used her credit card to get the job done. Now we begin thinking about our next round of Rhody Warm Blankets. The essay contest has been advertised (check out our website) and the Committee has begun planning for this year's collection day. There is an article elsewhere in this newsletter to refresh us all on skirting a fleece. We do have a few shawls left, a couple of kitty beds and a couple of scarves, if anyone is interested. We are also happy to report that reservation orders have been coming in for the next edition of the blanket, and we have 27 blankets/throws reserved so far, with quite a few of them being from buyers of this year's blanket. Remember each year is a different pattern and usually a different shade in color. It should be noted that with Riverpoint Lace Mill building being condemned and mostly demolished, there is a need to find another avenue for the finishing of the blankets. Strickland Wheelock is actively searching and working on this matter. He reports recently that he will be able to complete the lap and long throw size blankets, but is still working on finding a mill that can finish the larger size blankets. The Committee will meet next month and inform the members as to how the plan to proceed this year. In the mean time, we are collecting pre-order forms (should be on the web soon).

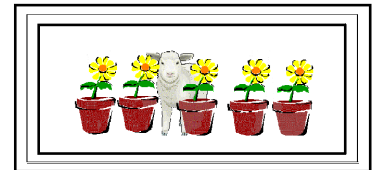
The Rhody Warm funds also covered the costs of bags and inserts to make Rhody Potting Paks. These items are available to all cooperative members. Contact Polly (949-4619 or khop4811@aol.com) if you would like to obtain bags and insert covers to make your own to sell or give away. Here are directions to make the Paks:

- Take 2 cups manure from compost pile – sift (to remove sticks, stones, and such) and then 'baked' in sun on cookie sheet all day to dry out, put in small plastic bag.
- Weigh 7/10 ounce of raw wool – soak in 120 degree water (no soap) and lay out to dry.
- Put small bag of manure and clump of wool into the larger bag.
- Tape, glue or staple your business card on the front side of insert (which has name of item on front and contains directions on use on the back).
- Slide directions into larger bag with business card side facing out.

Suggested sales price is \$5.00 per bag or 3 for \$12.00.

The goal is keep all paks the same size and price. Any questions, feel free to contact a Rhody Warm Committee member.

Bags and inserts (covers) will be available at the annual meeting.



North East Youth Sheep Show Collecting Sponsors

I hope everyone is enjoying this abnormally warm winter and are having successful lambing seasons. Thanks to those who supported the 2011 NEYSS T-Shirts we raised the cost of them once again!! Without the continued sponsorships the free t-shirts for the youth show exhibitors would not be possible. The NEYSS relies heavily on our supporters for the success of this great Northeast youth show and are again asking for support by way of a 2012 t-shirt sponsorship. Enclosed you will find a form to be a 2012 t-shirt sponsor. Please fill out and send in today with your \$25.00. The sooner You send it in, the higher you will be on the list - which appears on the back of the t-shirts! Also, please feel free to copy this form and hand out to your friends or anyone who you think would be interested. THANK-YOU!!!!



* North East Youth Sheep Show Committee *

******* SVF FOUNDATION NEWS *******

SVF 2012 Annual Visitors' Day

Saturday, June 2, 2012

9:00 am - 3:00 pm - FREE ADMISSION

SVF will be hosting our Annual Visitors Day on Saturday, June 2, 2012. We will have educational exhibits discussing the importance of conservation and agriculture. SVF is a non-profit organization situated on a beautiful historic farm in Newport, RI. The mission of SVF is to preserve endangered breeds of livestock used for food and fiber. In collaboration with Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, SVF collects germplasm – semen and embryos – from rare breeds of cattle, sheep and goats. Germplasm is cryogenically frozen and placed in long term storage using liquid nitrogen, where it may remain for hundreds of years before being thawed and used to reawaken an extinct breed. Though SVF is typically a closed site due to biosecurity, Visitors Day allows the public to see our livestock and speak directly with the SVF laboratory, veterinary and animal care staff. In addition to a self-guided tour through the historic property of Swiss Village, several endangered breeds will be on display, along with professional sheep-shearing and cryogenic demonstrations on-going throughout the day. This event is free to the public. Free parking and transportation will be provided from Fort Adams State Park [Fort Adams State Park](#) 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

For more information contact the SVF main office: Phone: 401-848-7229 , Email: info@svffoundation.org





SHEARING SCHOOL at the University of Connecticut

April 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. - in the sheep barn -

Free

Bring your own equipment

103rd Annual Connecticut Sheep, Wool & Fiber Festival



Saturday, April 28, 2012

Rain or Shine

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tolland Agricultural Center

Route 30, Vernon/Rockville, CT

GPS - 24 Hyde Avenue, Vernon, CT

For more information go to: www.ctsheep.com

and click “sheep and wool festival”



AMERICAN LAMB BOARD NEWS



Don't forget February is Lamb Lovers month, and the American Lamb Board is working to spread the word that February is National Lamb Lovers Month including a national radio release, Facebook campaign, a recipes for romance contest, and lamb lovers events nationwide. ALB is reminding consumers that there is no better, more delicious way to woo your loved ones than with American lamb. Whether melting hearts with a show stopping rack of lamb or tender loving loin chops, it's easy to show your love with fresh, local American Lamb. Throughout February, the American Lamb Board, in partnership with Sur La Table, will offer Lamb Lovers Month cooking classes in cities across the country, hosted by local chefs and shepherds.

Visit lambloversmonth.com for more details on the classes and other lamb lovers events in February.

The next stop on the Lamb Jam tour is Boston! The American Lamb Board is partnering with Boston Chefs once again to bring together dozens of top local chefs for the third annual American Lamb Boston on Sunday, February 19, from 3:00 - 6:00 pm, at The Charles Hotel in Cambridge. Lamb loving chefs will create luscious lamb dishes paired with local beers from area breweries and wineries, to compete for the ultimate title of Boston Lamb Master and an opportunity to battle other top lamb loving chefs at a master Lamb Jam this fall. Chefs who woo the crowds and win the hearts of attending media judges will take home awards for "Best in Show" and "People's Choice". Shaw's grocery stores is a sponsor of the event and will have American Lamb on special throughout the month of February. Participating chefs and sponsors are listed at www.fansoflambboston.com. ALB also hosted two additional Boston lamb events in January to gear up for Lamb Jam.



ALB's FY 2011 Annual Report Now Available. The American Lamb Board is working to build demand for American Lamb through a variety of marketing programs and activities including consumer events, media outreach, culinary education, foodservice and retail promotions, online advertising, social marketing, and more. Go to their website to view the annual report.

Try this great recipe -- many more on the ALB website www.americanlamb.com

Celebration Leg of Lamb

Servings: 12

1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1 whole bay leaf, crushed
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried sage
1/2 teaspoon dried marjoram
6 to 9 pounds American Lamb leg, bone-in
Preparation time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 2 to 3 hours



- In small bowl, mix together soy sauce, oil, garlic, pepper, ginger, bay leaf, thyme, sage and marjoram.
- Place lamb on rack in roasting pan. With sharp knife, make frequent slits in surface of lamb. Move knife from side to side to enlarge pockets. Rub herb mixture into each slit. Rub any remaining mixture over roast.
- Roast in 325°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes per pound or until meat thermometer registers 145°F for medium-rare, 160°F for medium or 170°F for well. Remove roast from oven, cover and let stand 10 minutes. Internal temperature will rise approximately 10 degrees. Pan drippings can be used in gravy or skimmed and served au jus.

LLAMAS ??

Editor's note: I recently received an email (as many of you probably did too) from Autumn Mountain Llamas. They have llamas for sale for those farmers who are looking for guard animals. The following is part of their email. I do not know them, but their website looked interesting. If you are interested - contact them to see what they have. -p-

At Autumn Mountain Llamas we have a wide selection of healthy, well adjusted, confident llamas for sale. We focus on conformation, fiber and temperament in our breeding program. For those interested in wool/fiber production, our llamas have excellent quality fiber including silky, suri, light, medium or heavy wool llamas in shades of brown, black, auburn, grey and white. Hand spinners have told us that our fiber is excellent quality and blends well with wool. **Our goal is that everyone who wants or needs a llama to protect their flock should have one.** We offer you many reasonably priced fine animals to choose from. We can be creative concerning payment and are willing to consider trade (farm equipment, products from your farm, etc...) or barter for services (carpentry, construction, masonry, etc...) **If you need a guard llama and money is tight, let's talk -- you may have something we would like to have in trade.** Please feel free to contact us with questions or to discuss your interests. Also, visit our website photo gallery at <http://autumnmountainfarm.com/> . We look forward to meeting you and hearing about your animals.

Autumn Mountain Farm

Don and Sue Mellen, 963 Raymond Road, Danby, VT 05739
802 293-5260 Farm/Home 802 375-3344 Cell autumnmtn@vermontel.net

News from ASI

Sheep Shearers Crown National Champion

Thirty-two people sheared about 2,250 pounds of wool from nearly 300 sheep in four hours at the Black Hills Stock Show National Sheep Shearing contest on Jan. 29. This was the first year the Black Hills Stock Show hosted the National Sheep Shearing Championship. A new national champion, Mark Hoogendoorn of Lester, Iowa, was crowned after besting a field of 18 professionals in Rapid City. Alex Moser, also of Lester, was runner-up and Darren Kennedy of Kaycee, Wyo., finished third while Hillary Gditzon of Minot, N.D., finished fourth. Hoogendoorn now qualifies to compete in the World Sheep Shearing Championship in 2014. Clint Hahn of Alzada, Mont., won the intermediate class. Lynette Frick of Bakersfield, Calif., was runner-up with Kyle Hoogendoorn of Lester, Iowa, placing third. In the learner class, Levi McTaggart of Spearfish, S.D., won the title while Jimmy Nickel of Mandan, N.D., finished second. Beau Collins of Harlowtown, Mont., and Logan Crisp of Sturgis, S.D., rounded out the class.

Scrapie ID Presentations Available

Efforts to eliminate scrapie in the sheep and goat populations in the United States are succeeding. To ensure complete and successful eradication of this fatal degenerative brain disease, it is necessary to address identification requirements for both sheep and goats. The "Goat Identification: Visual & Electronic" presentation and the "Identification Requirements of the National Scrapie Eradication Program for Sheep" presentation have been combined into one compact disk by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Scrapie Education Program (NSEP) with support from the National Institute for Animal Agriculture. The presentations cover basic information regarding which sheep/goats are required to be identified. The main focus of the presentation explores approved ear tags and tattoos and their proper placement. The presentations also have sections about the use of registry tattoos and other identification methods and record keeping. The presentation is also available at www.eradicatescrapie.org in PDF format for downloading. An order form to request your free copy of the presentation is also available at this web address.

Local Shearers:

Brittany Sederback (small flocks) (also farm sits): tel: 401-678-6915,

email: agiwanuku@gmail.com

Colin Siegmund (small flocks): tel: 860-315-7684,

email: woolyone@charter.net

Aaron Loux (large and small flocks): tel: 413-230-8607,

email: aaronshearing@gmail.com.

Things to Remember: call early to book a date for spring shearing; you should be there to meet your shearer and assist him/her when needed; keep your sheep dry; have your sheep penned and ready for the shearer; have a clean junk-free area for your shearer to work in.

If you miss the Rhody Warm Collection day and want to get rid of your wool, have no fear Aaron Loux has organized another wool pool this year to be held on June 30th at the Cummington Fairgrounds in Cummington, Massachusetts. This will be a graded pool, all fleeces accepted. Aaron does not want to compete with the Rhody Warm Project, but offers another way to sell your wool, if your sheep are sheared after the blanket project has started. For more information and to sign up - please contact Aaron directly at telephone number -413-230-8607, or by email: aaronshearing@gmail.com.



Editor's note:

If you search the Cornell University Website for information on sheep health and management, there are many interesting and informative articles. I found one informative Fact Sheet below, which I have reprinted with permission of the Queen's Printer for Ontario Publications. For more information, go to <http://www.sheep.cornell.edu/management/health/index.html> in the "Management" box, click "Health" and see other valuation information sheets available.

Assisting the Ewe at Lambing

FACTSHEET

ISSN 1198-712X ©Queen's Printer for Ontario

Agdex#: 433/22

Publication date: 01/99

Order#: 98-091

Last reviewed: 15 April 2010

Written by: Dr. S. John Martin - Veterinary Scientist, Sheep, Goat and Swine/OMAFRA

This Factsheet is one of a set of three concerning lamb survival: "Assisting the Ewe at Lambing", "Hypothermia in Newborn Lambs", and "Care of the Newborn Lamb". They should be read together.

Table of Contents

1. [Signs of Impending Lambing](#)
2. [Physiology of Parturition \(Lambing\)](#)
3. [Lambing](#)
4. [Signs of Abnormal Deliveries](#)
5. [Making the Internal Examination](#)
6. [Resolutions](#)
7. [Aftercare](#)
8. [Related Links](#)

The ewe's gestation period is from 144 to 151 days, with an average of 147 days. The date that the first lambing is to be expected can be calculated from the date of the first exposure of the ewes to a fertile ram. Before lambing starts, a kit of lambing aids should be prepared. The essentials of this kit are:

- soap
- disinfectant
- obstetrical lubricant
- sterile syringes - 10 ml and 1 ml
- hypodermic needles of sizes suitable for the ewe and the lamb
- antibiotics and Vitamin E/selenium injections
- lambing cords and lamb snare
- navel disinfectant - iodine based
- intra-uterine oblets
- clean towels or cloths
- clean pail for warm water.

Colostrum and milk replacer should also be available. The colostrum can be from ewe or cow, frozen in 500 ml units. If lambing is to be inside a building, sufficient individual pens are needed to allow each ewe in the group 2 - 3 days individual housing with her lamb(s).

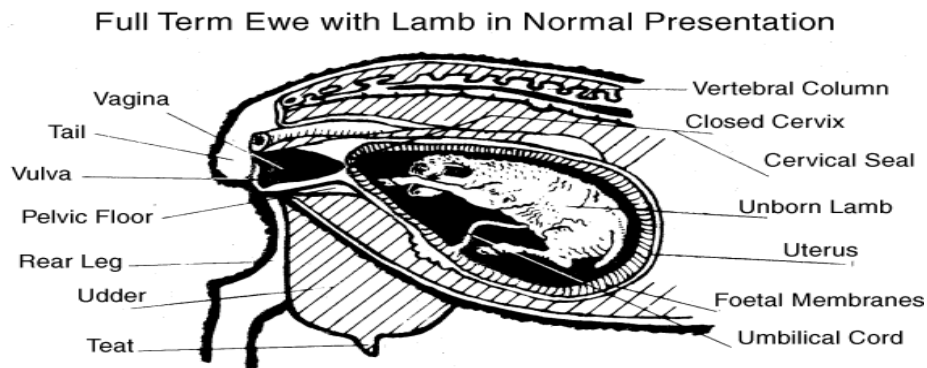
SIGNS OF IMPENDING LAMBING

Approximately 10 days before the ewe will lamb, the teats begin to feel firm and full of colostrum. Between then and lambing the lips of the vulva slacken and become slightly swollen. In the last hours before lambing, many ewes will separate from the flock. At this point they should be moved into a lambing pen.

At birth, the normal presentation of a lamb is spine upwards, forefeet with the head between them pointing toward the cervix. The cervix, itself, is still sealed by a mucous plug.

The lamb is surrounded by two fluid-filled sacs, the allantois and the chorion. These first and second waterbags acted as a cushion to prevent injury to the developing foetus. They form part of the placenta. The placenta is attached to the wall of the ewe's uterus by about 80 small buttons, the cotyledons. It is through these and the placenta that the developing lamb has received nutrients from the ewe's blood supply. The placenta with the cotyledons will be expelled as the afterbirth.

Figure 1. Anatomy of the Pregnant Ewe



PHYSIOLOGY OF PARTURITION (LAMBING)

The mechanism by which any mammal gives birth is stimulated by changes to the dam's hormone balance and the bulk of the uterine contents (the fetus and the placental fluids). These stimuli cause the uterus to contract, pushing the fetus into the dilating cervix and expel it.

LAMBING

In a normal lambing, there are three distinct stages:

1. Dilatation of the cervix

As the uterine contractions start, a thick creamy white mucus, the remains of the cervical seal, is passed from the vulva. This is often missed. Continued contractions of the uterus push the first waterbag into the cervix, stimulating its dilation. Eventually the cervix will be about the same diameter as the neck of the uterus.

At this time the ewe is uneasy, getting up and down, switching her tail and bleating frequently. There may be some straining. This stage can take 3 - 4 hours.

2. Expulsion of the lamb

As the uterine contractions become stronger and more frequent, the lamb and waterbags are pushed into the dilated cervix. The first waterbag bursts, releasing a watery fluid through the vulva. As the ewe continues to strain, the second waterbag is pushed through the vulva and ruptures, to release a thicker fluid.

The rupturing of these bags has established a smooth, well-lubricated passage through the vagina. The hooves and nose of the lamb can often be seen in the second waterbag before it bursts.

The ewe continues to strain, gradually expelling the lamb, forefeet first, followed by the head. There may be considerable effort to pass the head and shoulders of the lamb through her pelvis. Once this happened, final delivery is rapid.

The birth of a single lamb should take an hour or less from the rupture of the first waterbag. A ewe, lambing for the first time, or with a multiple birth could take longer.

3. Expulsion of the afterbirth

The placenta serves no further function once the lamb has been born, and is passed 2 to 3 hours after delivery has finished. Nothing will be passed until after the first lamb has been born. In multiple births, there will be separate afterbirths for each lamb.

SIGNS OF ABNORMAL DELIVERIES

Most ewes will lamb unaided and about 95% of lambs are born in the normal presentation, forefeet first. A normal delivery usually takes 5 hours from the start of cervical dilation to the delivery of the lamb, 4 hours for the dilation of the cervix and 1 hour for the actual delivery. The first 4 hours often go unnoticed.

If the ewe:

- continues to strain, but there is no sign of the waterbags, or
- continues to strain an hour after the rupture of the waterbags but there is no sign of a lamb, or
- if the lamb appears to be wedged in the birth canal, or
- if there is an abnormal presentation, a leg back, head back etc., assistance may be needed. Any delay in assistance could mean the difference between a live and dead lamb.

MAKING THE INTERNAL EXAMINATION

Cleanliness is important to prevent infection of the uterus. Wash the area round the ewe's vulva with soap and a mild disinfectant to remove any manure and other debris. Scrub hands and arms with soap and a mild disinfectant, and lubricate with soap or an obstetrical cream. The hand is carefully slid into the vagina to feel the lamb and assess the situation. Obviously a person with a small hand is best suited for this task.

In many cases the lamb will be presented normally, you will feel two forelegs with the head between them.

In others there will be a malpresentation:

- one or both forelegs back, or
- head back, or
- hindlegs instead of fore legs, or
- one or both hindlegs back, or
- a breach presentation, only the tail and rump felt.

RESOLUTIONS

Normal Presentation- Place the noose of a lambing cord over each leg above the fetlock joint and apply a firm steady pull synchronized with the ewe's straining. Lubricate the vagina around the lamb with obstetrical jelly to smooth the passage of the lamb. This is especially important if the waterbags have been ruptured for some time and the vagina has lost this natural lubrication.

Abnormal presentations must be corrected before attempting to pull the lamb. Do not attempt to convert a hind leg presentation to the normal delivery. Pull the lamb out hind legs first, straight back until the lamb's hind legs and pelvis are out of the vulva, then change the pull to downwards towards the ground behind the ewe. Pulling down before the lamb's pelvis is out will wedge the lamb in the pelvic canal of the ewe. Other malpresentations are possible.

Remember that multiple births are common. Two lambs may be presented with legs intertwined. Always ensure that the legs and head are part of the same lamb before attempting to pull it.

Occasionally, deformed lambs will be produced with enlarged heads, stiff joints or skeletal deformities. To successfully lamb, a ewe in these situations may require help from an experienced shepherd or veterinarian.

As ewes often have multiple births, the same sequence of the rupture of the waterbag and expulsion of the lamb will be repeated for the delivery of each lamb. After an assisted lambing always check the ewe internally that there is not another lamb to be delivered.

AFTERCARE

In all cases, whether the delivery was natural or assisted, check that the lamb is breathing; its nostrils are clear of mucous and are not covered by any uterine membrane. At this time the lamb's navel should be disinfected to prevent infection.

The ewe usually starts to lick the lamb; this is a natural process and should be allowed to continue. Some ewes will eat the afterbirth, but this should be prevented as it can lead to digestive disturbance.

A healthy lamb struggles to its feet soon after birth and starts to nurse its dam. Lambs, weak from a protracted delivery should be helped to nurse, or given up to 250 ml of colostrum by stomach tube. This first nursing is critical as the colostrum contains antibodies to give the lamb immediate protection against infectious agents common to the flock. All lambs should nurse or be tube fed colostrum within 6 - 8 hours of birth. In the first 24 hours of life, each lamb should receive about one litre of colostrum. After 36 hours the lamb is unable to absorb any more antibody from the colostrum.

After any assisted delivery the ewe should be given an antibiotic injection and have an antibiotic oblet put into the uterus.

Figure 2. Normal Presentation



Figure 3. Breech Presentation



Figure 4. One Leg Back



Figure 5. Hind Legs Only



Figure 6. Head Back



Figure 7. Both Forelegs Back



Figure 8. Elbow Lock



Figure 9. Twins - Front and Back



Figure 10. Four Legs - One Head



© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1999. Reproduced with permission.

Editor's note:

Many members are still pondering how to skirt a fleece. The following article was found on the internet a while ago (I am not sure of the sight, when I tried to find it again, I couldn't) but it gives you an idea to on what to do. I would suggest that to obtain clean fleeces you must start well before shearing day comes around – in the barn at feeding times.. Do not throw hay over the backs of sheep, feed had in tubs on but do not feed on the ground. You want to keep “vegetable matter” out of the fleeces. Don't use shavings for bedding when the fleeces are long.. shavings cling to the fleece and can not be removed by hand or in processing. Grassy fields keep the fleeces much cleaner than dirt paddocks - but how many of us have good grassy fields for sheep to run in all the time?? ☺ The main idea is to keep hay, hay chaffe, grain seeds and caked-mud out of the fleeces. Good barn management will accomplish that easily and save lots of time in skirting, resulting in more usable fleece..

How to Skirt A Fleece

After any fiber animal is sheared there will be vegetable matter, second cuts and other matter that you will want to remove before washing. This article explains how to do the most important first step in preparing fiber. Things You Will Need: Table (Preferably one with holes on it), Trash Container, Broom and a dust pan.

Step 1 First let me explain that “Skirting” is the term used to pick out all the unwanted and unspinnable parts of a fleece. This is done before a fleece is shown, after an animal is sheared, (if there is time right afterwards), and before washing. Sometimes when you order a fleece it isn't skirted and you would want to do this before washing. You will be working with the blanket fiber of the animal. This is the fiber that is from the shoulders down the back and sides to the stomach, with no actual belly, neck, or leg fiber. It will come off held together on its own.

Step 2 First you will want to open the fleece with the cut part open to you,(the part that was connected to the animals skin). Shake the fleece a little to get anything that is loose to fall off. That helps a great deal, especially if you have a table with holes in it for the matter to fall through, like a metal picnic table. This won't harm the fleece and the blanket should hold together pretty well. With the cut part open, you will want to pick out any second cuts, the second cuts look like little cotton balls. They are made when the shearer makes a second pass over an area that has already been cut. Next you will want flip the blanket over to take notice of the staple length of the fiber, (this is the overall length of the whole blanket-the length of the hair), and take out all of the shorter ends. They will be shorter than the hair and have tips. All the fiber have tips, but sometimes the shearer will shear to close to the belly or the neck and you make get these. The last step would be to take out any sticks, twigs, fecal matter that you may see in the blanket.

Step 3 If your not going to show your fiber you could pull it apart a little to help get what you can out, each step you take with the fiber will take out more matter so don't try to get everything out at once, You will be skirting forever. If you want to show a fleece you will want to get out everything before you shear to make it easier and quicker. You can pick the animal and blow off the vegetable matter with a shop vac before shearing making the job easier and quicker. Then all that is left is second cuts and ends. Then you will want to roll up the blanket with cut side inward to display.



***** News from the RHODE ISLAND RAISED LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION.... *****

The Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association will be held on **Monday, March 19, 2012** at the **Coventry-West Greenwich Elks Lodge**, 42 Nooseneck Road, West Greenwich, RI. Come join us when the **doors open for the Trade Show at 5 p.m.**, enjoy a light meal at 5:30 p.m., and the Business Meeting begins at 6:00 p.m. Hear how RIRLA has grown in 2011, and find out what RIRLA has to offer you and your farm in the coming year. For the latest information, check out the Annual Meeting page on the RIRLA Website.

2012 Annual Farm Supper Fundraiser Date is Set In just a few intense but very enjoyable meetings, our Farm Supper Planning committee has nailed down a menu and we are preparing to send out a request for member raised beef, pork, lamb and chicken. Keep an eye out for an email detailing what our menu will require and maybe **YOU** can help us out and showcase your farm's meat. B & M Catering is preparing a terrific menu with us and we want to make it **ALL** local!

Location: Addieville East Farm, Mapleville, RI.

Date: Saturday, May 12, 2012

Ticket Pricing and Event Time to be announced soon. Are you interested in being a **sponsor** for the Annual Farm Supper Fundraiser? We have **5 levels of sponsorship**, all of which provide listing as a sponsor in the Event Program and on the RIRLA Website Sponsor page until the next Farm Supper. Look for an upcoming mailing on becoming a sponsor! In order to make this event the best we can, it takes more than a couple of people. We already have a small committee doing a great job, but we welcome anyone with the desire to help! Are you good at fundraising? Do you have a personality that encourages businesses to donate to a worthy organization? Do you simply enjoy planning events? We can use people that can handle all of those things and more. If you are able to donate some time and ideas to help make this event terrific, please give me a call or email Heidi at RIRaised@gmail.com. We appreciate any time and help you can offer to make this a great event.

NEWS FROM THE STATE VET'S OFFICE

The USDA currently offers two programs related to scrapie control and eradication. One is voluntary the other is mandatory. The mandatory program is the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) and the voluntary program is the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP).

Most sheep flock owners are very aware of the SFCP and many of those aware are enrolled in the program. To those enrolled, the program offers certification that their animals are being monitored for the presence of scrapie and that their flocks are being managed in a way that is consistent with program goals. Currently, federal and/or state inspectors work with producers to verify records, animal identification, flock additions, and to provide educational outreach to those producers enrolled. In RI, enrollment into the program is done at no cost to the producer.

The NSEP may or may not be as familiar to sheep producers. This program, more-or-less, runs in the background. The cornerstone of this program is that it relies on passive surveillance for scrapie through the examination of slaughter specimens or specimens that have been submitted for testing through a necropsy service performed on flock mortalities. The NSEP is arguably the more important program for sheep producers collectively since it is the program that our trade partners look at to determine whether a state is considered a high risk or low risk for scrapie. If RI meets certain quota surveillance numbers, then the entire state enjoys classification as low-risk with the net result being a minimal amount of restriction on interstate and international movement of our sheep. However, the SFCP is arguably more beneficial to individual producers who attain certification that their flock is free from scrapie since that certification would be in place regardless of whether the rest of the state was considered high-risk. Also, certification may make animals originating from that flock more valuable since introduction of those animals into another flock will not result in a disease risk or status downgrade of the recipient flock.

Currently, the SFCP is under review by the USDA. The future of that program, at least as we currently know it, is very uncertain. One thing that is certain about the program is that it is very labor intensive for federal/state flock inspectors. At this point it is impossible to predict what the future of that program will look like, but it should be assumed that there will be some changes to it.

The NSEP will continue unchanged. RI will still need to submit a minimum number of animals for surveillance. RI has exceeded surveillance quotas for 2011 and we hope this trend will continue. One opportunity that you all should be aware of is that federal funds will be available in 2012 to support necropsy examination of flock mortalities that occur on your farm. Any adult sheep is eligible for submission. Federal funds will support paying for \$100/sheep submitted for necropsy at the University of Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostics Lab. Sheep producers are responsible for transportation of the sheep to the lab and for

any costs above the \$100 that the federal government will pay. (Typically, the producer will pay between \$25-\$75 depending on the size of the sheep.) The necropsy will consist of scrapie testing and a full post-mortem examination. It will also consist of at least one other test, usually determined by the pathologist conducting the necropsy. This service is a very good value to sheep producers since it will determine the cause of death in the sheep that is submitted and may give valuable insight into overall herd health. All producers are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Funding exists to support twenty animals being tested from RI. Please contact the state veterinarian if you would like to know more. (Scott Marshall can be reached at scott.marshall@DEM.RI.GOV)



University of Connecticut



Virginia Tech



YOU ARE INVITED

to

Goat and Sheep Parasite Control Workshops

Department of Extension

Windham County
Extension Center

Sunday, April 29, 2011

10:30-2:00 PM

Adamah Goat Dairy (follow main driveway to the end and look for yurt and workshop)

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center, 116 Johnson Rd, Falls Village, CT 06031

1-860-824-3003 Ext 3 (if lost)

Lunch \$12/ person (also, bring some cash for cheese and yoghurt purchases!)

<http://isabellafreedman.org/adamah/dairy>

Or

Sunday, May 6, 2011

1-3:30 PM

North Stonington Community Grange

21 Wyassup Rd

North Stonington, CT

4-5 PM

Kerlin's Morning Star Meadows Farm

307 Wyassup Rd. Park along driveway, on the left

N. Stonington, CT

Subjects To Be Covered:

INTEGRATED PARASITE CONTROL in SMALL RUMINANTS

r. Anne Zajec, Parasitologist, Virginia Tech

INTRODUCTION to FAMACHA

Joyce Meader, Dairy/ Livestock Educator, U. Connecticut

SARE grant: "IMPROVING SMALL RUMINANT PARASITE CONTROL"

Dr. Katherine Petersson, U. Rhode Island

\$11 for laminated card for determining level of anemia (optional)

Bring hay bales for forage sampling.

RSVP 1-860-774-9600 or Joyce.Meader@uconn.edu, Dairy/ Livestock Educator

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Program Provider

Sponsored by:

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center/ Kerlin's Morning Star Meadows Farm

UConn Cooperative Extension System;

USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education;

University of Rhode Island

Virginia Tech

139 Wolf Den Road

Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234

Telephone: (860) 774-9600

Facsimile: (860) 774-9480

web: www.extension.uconn.edu

RHODE ISLAND SHEEP COOPERATIVE

JOIN TODAY!!

2012 Membership Form

X Enclosed is my **\$10.00** check made payable to **RI Sheep Co-operative** for my 2012 dues.

NAME: _____

FARM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____ WEBSITE: _____

_____ Yes, please include me in the Membership List on the RI Sheep Cooperative's website.

_____ Yes, please include my farm's information in the Rhode Island Sheep Co-op's directory.

My information for the Directory:

BREED(S) OF SHEEP WE RAISE: _____

WE HAVE ARTICLES FOR SALE/ SERVICES OFFERED: _____

Mail to: **Treasurer**
RI Sheep Cooperative
P.O. Box 88
Harmony, RI 02829

**MEMBERSHIPS RECEIVED BY MAY 1, 2012
WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE 2012 DIRECTORY**

2012 NORTHEAST YOUTH SHEEP SHOW

T-SHIRT SPONSORSHIP FORM

Name (*as you want it to appear on the T-Shirt*):

Mailing Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

**Please make out your check or money order to: NESWGA/Youth Show
Send your \$25.00 sponsorship and completed form by May 1st to:**

**Debra Hopkins
1125 Danielson Pike
N. Scituate, RI 02857**

