



## THE RHODE ISLAND SHEEP COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXI, Issue 4

September 2010

Website: [www.risheep.org](http://www.risheep.org)

Telephone: (401) 578-2012

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### \*\* MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO JOIN US \*\*

**OCTOBER 10, 2010 at 10:00 A.M.**

**@ D&D Hopkins Farm**

**1125 Danielson Pike (Rte 6), Scituate, RI**

The Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative will hold its first *Fall Clinic* on Sunday, October 10, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the Hopkins Farm (owned by Deb & Don Hopkins), 1125 Danielson Pike, (also known as Route 6) Scituate, Rhode Island. The programs will include lambing practices (yes, there will be baby lambs to see!), lambing video to view, pregnancy scanning demonstration, shearing demonstration, and skirting demonstration. Attendees can also tour the Hopkins' (3) barns, which include a pole barn and a hoop barn. At approximately 1:00 a Pot Luck Lunch will be served. Some of the Board members will cook various lamb dishes for us to try. Drinks and paper goods will be supplied by the Cooperative, and dessert is donated by the Patti Family! The Clinic is free and open to anyone interested in sheep and/or wool. If you plan to stay for lunch please bring a dish to share. Questions?? Contact Deb at (401) 647-7281 or [cdcdorset@cox.net](mailto:cdcdorset@cox.net), or Polly (401) 949-4619 or [khop4811@aol.com](mailto:khop4811@aol.com).

**\*\* Please remember that the annual Scituate Art Festival going on the same weekend in the center of Scituate Village (near and around the intersection of Rte 116 and Rte 6). Keep this in mind when planning your route to the Hopkins Farm. \*\***

### **and AFTER LUNCH, CONTINUE YOUR DAY WITH...**

The Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative is happy to join the University of Rhode Island, USDA sustainable Agriculture Research & Education, and Virginia Tech University in sponsoring *the Goat and Sheep Parasite Control Workshop* in the afternoon. This will be held from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the South Foster Fire Station on Route 94 (near intersection of Route 94 and Route 6) in Foster. The Fire Station is just a short ride from the Hopkins Farm heading West on Rt. 6 (heading

towards Connecticut). We were thrilled when contacted about hosting this workshop, and hope you will continue this educational day with us:

2:00- 4:00 Integrated Parasite Control in Small Ruminants  
Dr. Anne Zajac, Parasitologist of  
Virginia/Maryland Regional College of Veterinary  
Medicine, Virginia Tech Tech

4:00 - 4:15 Break

4:15 - 4:45 Introduction to FAMACHA - Dr. Zajac

5:00 - 6:00 Detection of Anemia in sheep (live animals) –  
Dr. Zajac and Dr. Katherine Petersson  
of the University of Rhode Island

This workshop is free and open to anyone, however, if you would like to complete your course and receive a laminated FAMACHA card – the cost is \$11.00 - please RSVP to Dr. Petersson by October 6, 2010 to 401-874-2951 or [kpetersson@uri.edu](mailto:kpetersson@uri.edu) .

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### **RHODY WARM BLANKET PROJECT**

Hello! My name is Brenda Titus. I have recently become the Chairman of the Rhody Warm Blanket Committee. My family and I have a small farm in Greene, Rhode Island, where we raise Southdowns, Colored Border Leicesters, Shetlands, Finns and Olde English Baby Dolls. I am the leader of the Shamrock 4-H Club. Many of the kids from our club have participated in the 2009 and 2010 wool collection day. My business background includes over 25 years of bookkeeping and office management, I recently started my own company, New England Med Waste Services, Inc. I also serve on the Board of Directors for the Paine House Museum in Coventry. I feel that my business experience and community service involvement will be an asset to the Rhody Warm Project. I look forward to meeting all of you and working with you on this great project.

At a recent Blanket Meeting the committee decided on the pattern for our 2010 blankets. Our wool is now in Massachusetts at the S&D Spinnery - being processed, fabric will be made soon and blankets hopefully will be ready by the end of November.

If you have not placed your order yet this year or would like to order more, please contact me as soon as possible. October 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline so that we can tell the mill how many and what length of blankets to cut. This doesn't mean you can't order more later, but you, as the farmer, will be guaranteed to get what you ordered prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to all the members who give great exposure to our project at local Farmer's Markets and Fairs.

AND we need your help.....We are excited to report that we have signed up for a booth at Kenyon Grist Mill Harvest Festival in West Kingston, R.I. on October 23 and 24, 2010 from 10:00 to 5:00 ...AND... The (first) Fiber Festival of New England, to be held on November 6 & 7, 2010 at the Mallary Complex of the Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Massachusetts. We need volunteers to help with manning the booths at both these events. If you would like to attend either or both Festivals and give a couple hours to help out - please contact me to sign up for a time slot. Any questions: feel free to contact me on my cell: (401) 623-0682, email: [blynnt65@yahoo.com](mailto:blynnt65@yahoo.com) or call me on the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative phone (401) 578-2012.

I look forward to working with all of you.

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**EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION HOSTS**  
**NATIONAL SHEEP SHOWS THIS MONTH !**

The Big E, as it is known locally, runs from September 17 to October 3, 2010, and is home to 22 Wool and Meat Sheep Shows. This year the fair is hosting the National Cheviot Show, National Regional Border Leicester Show, National Eastern Regional Hampshire Show, Northeast Tunis Show, and District One Regional Romney Show in its state-of-the-art livestock facility. For more information go to [www.thebige.com](http://www.thebige.com) and click on 'Agriculture'.

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**RI SHEEP COOPERATIVE'S FALL MEETING**  
**AND POT LUCK DINNER**  
**OCTOBER 23, 2010**

The annual Fall Meeting and Pot Luck Supper of the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative will be held on October 23, 2010 at the South Foster Fire Station on Rte 94 (near the intersection of Rte 6) in Foster. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. to set up tables and chairs. Dinner will start at 6:00 followed by the meeting with reporting of the year's events on the agenda, along with the Treasurer's Report and various committee reports. Following the meeting, we will have a guest speaker (not confirmed as of this mailing).

This event to open to anyone interested in sheep and wool, there is not cost except to bring your favorite dish to share for the pot luck supper. Questions? Contact Deb Hopkins at 647-7281 or [cdcdorset@cox.net](mailto:cdcdorset@cox.net) , or Polly Hopkins at 949-4619 (evenings) or [khop4811@aol.com](mailto:khop4811@aol.com) .

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## **RHODE ISLAND RAISED LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION**

**Got Equipment, Animals or Hay to Sell? Services to Offer?** As part of its effort to become a true resource for farmers, RIRLA is looking to develop the classified section of the RIRLA website, but we can't do it without your help! We need listings for For Sale, Services and Wanted.

Listing is FREE!! Contact Kim at 401-575-3348 or

[RIRaisedLivestock@verizon.net](mailto:RIRaisedLivestock@verizon.net) to list your item, service or need.

**\$1.3 Million Available** - The RI Farm Service Agency has \$1,393,000 available to lend beginning farmers to purchase a farm or to make improvements to an existing farm. Call 1-800-551-5144 or 401-828-3120 for more information.

**Large Animal Veterinary Services** - Dr. Barbara Korry, DVM is available to provide rabies vaccinations for livestock. Appointments will be available on Monday and Tuesday mornings and Saturday afternoons, please call 401-732-4050 to schedule. Rabies certificates will be provided. Please note that if you are planning to show your animals the rabies vaccination must be administered at least 30 days before the show unless it is a booster.

**Dr. Dan Hochman, DVM** of New Canaan, CT is offering veterinary services for livestock. Please call 203-972-7387 for more information and availability.

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### **CALENDAR OF THINGS HAPPENING...**

**October 10, 2010 - Fall Clinic** at Hopkins Farm followed by **the Parasite Control Workshop**. Everyone is invited – information on page one of this newsletter.

**October 15 & 16, 2010 – New York Bred Ewe & Ewe Lamb Sale**, Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck, NY – information go to [www.bannersheepmagazine.com](http://www.bannersheepmagazine.com) and click on “sale catalogs”

**October 16 & 17, 2010 - New York Sheep & Wool Festival** at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck, New York

**October 23, 2010 - RI Sheep Co-op's Fall Meeting** - at South Foster Fire Station, Rt. 94, Foster, Rhode Island. Doors open at 5:00 p.m., serving of pot luck dinner to start at 6:00 p.m.

**October 23 & 24, 2010 – Kenyon Grist Mill Harvest Festival**, 21 Glen Rock Road, West Kingston, from 10:00 to 5:00 - over 40 local vendors; information contact Paul at 401-742-2778 or [karencooke@kenyongristmill.com](mailto:karencooke@kenyongristmill.com).

**November 6 & 7, 2010 - DON'T FORGET** - the first..... **Fiber Festival of New England**, at the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield. Almost 200 vendors, many of your friends will be there buying their fiber for winter projects .... don't miss out!

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### **3 ALTERNATIVE GUARD ANIMALS**

*When searching for information on guard animals on the internet, I found the following article at [www.familyhomesecurity.com](http://www.familyhomesecurity.com).*

Guard dogs can be a great way to protect your home or property from intruders. However, most people aren't aware that a guard dog is not the only choice when looking for an animal to help guard your home. There are several other animals that, when trained effectively, can help to prevent potential intruders from being able to enter your home and property. These animals are usually fairly easy to keep, requiring little to no maintenance. In addition to this, they also have a strong territorial instinct that will help motivate them to defend against any potential intruders. Here is some useful information about some of the most effective alternative guard animals for your home or property.

#### **GUARD LLAMAS**



The llama is an animal that is subject to a lot of misconceptions. Many people believe llamas to be docile, slow-learning, slightly eccentric animals that are able to projective vomit on command. However, as any llama owner will tell you, this is not the case. Llamas are curious, alert and have a natural desire to explore their

habitat. Llamas are also fairly territorial, and will defend their domain with aggressive behavior. Llamas, like donkeys, are often used by sheep herders in order to protect livestock from dangerous predators. As a guard animal for your home, it's possible to train a llama to defend your property from any potential intruders.

**Choosing a Guard Llama:** Depending on your needs, you will want to make the choice of your preferred guard llama carefully. It's important to remember that non-gelded male llamas may display aggressive behavior outside of their territory, and may even attack small animals that come onto their domain. In addition to this, you may want to consider purchasing a single llama to guard your property, instead of a group of llamas. En masse, llamas aren't said to be as effective at guarding against intruders or predators. You also want to avoid choosing a llama with an overly docile temperament, since this may mean that they will not able to be an effective guard llama.

**Cost of Guard Llamas:** In general, the llama is classified as a fairly low-maintenance animal. The diet of a llama varies with age, as younger llamas will require more high-energy, nutrient dense food. As a llama ages, it will require a food formula designed specifically for "adult"

llamas. However, these food formulas are usually fairly inexpensive when purchased in bulk. Depending on the specific breed of guard llama that you choose, you may have to shear their coat on a semi-regular basis. Many llamas also need their nails clipped often, as well as vaccinations and worming medication. If you have other large animals, you can combine the visits of a livestock veterinarian in order to save on expense.

**Llama Guard Behavior:** Llamas have many traits that help them to be effective guard animals. Like donkeys, llamas primarily attack by stomping, kicking and chasing their intended target.



## GUARD DONKEYS

Some people are already familiar with the concept of guard donkeys. Indeed, many donkeys will display wary or anxious behavior around strangers, even when they have not been trained to be guard animals. Due to problems with predators, shepherders were the first to begin training donkeys to guard their flocks. In terms

of success, it is said that over 70% of donkeys are able to effectively and completely protect a flock of sheep from dangerous predators.

**Why Donkeys Make Good Guard Animals:** A donkey relies primarily on its sense of hearing, as well as its visual input to detect when potentially dangerous intruders are nearby. Donkeys can be territorial, and may defend a set “domain” that has been established as their property. A donkey’s primary method of guarding involves a combination of kicking, stomping and chasing of intruders. This, in combination with the loud “braying” that a donkey emits when agitated, should be enough to deter even the most stubborn intruders.

**Choosing a Guard Donkey:** If you wish to purchase a donkey to help defend your property, the first consideration that you will have to make is size. There are generally four sizes for donkeys, each of which will stay within a height range. These sizes are generally within these guidelines (though may be adjusted for gender): Miniature—Under 36”; Small Standard—from 36” to 48”; Large Standard – from 48” to 56”; Large – Over 56”.

**Aggressive Donkey Behavior:** When they feel threatened, or when their territory is being “invaded”, a donkey will exhibit aggressive behavior. Donkeys will attack dogs, since they have an instinctual dislike for most types of predatory animals. This is one of the main reasons why guard donkeys are commonly used by sheep farms, since they are an effective defense against wild dogs, coyotes and wolves.

## GUARD GEESE



Many people aren't aware of the potential value of geese as effective guard animals. Though some people are familiar with the occasional aggressive behavior of certain geese, it is a generally accepted opinion that they do not have the capacity to understand the concept of "guarding". However, this is not the case. Geese are fairly territorial, and will act as they see fit to defend their domain. In addition to this,

geese are alert to any sign of danger. This danger could be intruders, potential burglars, or even predatory animals.

**Keeping Guard Geese:** Geese are most effectively used as a guard animal when they are kept in flocks. When searching for guard geese that are right for your home's [security](#), you may want to pick up a flock that consists of three to five females and one male. Try to keep only one male goose in your flock, since this will mean that you will not have to deal with hormone-induced fights between males in your flock during mating season. This will also help your flock to focus only on defending your property from intruders. In addition to this, you may want to use discretion when keeping other animals in addition to your geese. If your geese feel that their territory is being threatened, they will often attack. If you have dogs, cats or other small animals, be sure that they are kept in an area where they won't have a direct confrontation with your guard geese.

**Feeding Guard Geese:** Most guard geese will be able to live on a diet of scratch feed, as long as they are allowed to have sufficient time outdoors to forage for food. Try to keep your guard geese in the area of your property where you need protection. This can be accomplished by placing your bird's food in the same area each day. Eventually, your guard geese will remain in that area naturally. Scratch feed is fairly inexpensive, and can be purchased at most livestock supply stores. If you wish, you can also find highly nutritious and affordable scratch feed online.

**Territorial Behavior:** Geese are territorial animals, and may display aggressive behavior when they sense an intruder. As stated before, this behavior most often occurs when geese are kept in groups of two or more.

**Dangerous Geese:** Underestimating the potential value of geese as a guard animal can be a mistake. They are fairly inexpensive to keep, and will often alert you of any danger by giving an auditory "alarm" signal.

When geese feel that their territory is threatened, they will usually attack defending their domain against an intruder. If you are able to establish your property as the territory of your guard geese, you will have an effective (and quite loud) measure of security against any potential intruders.

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**Officers and Directors for 2010-2011:**

- President: Polly Hopkins
- Vice President: Ambrose Garvey
- Recording Secretary: Maryann Moulton
- Corresponding Secretary: Tony Patti
- Treasurer: Deb Hopkins
- Assistant Treasurer: Irene Nebiker
- Directors: Barbara Donnelly, Heather Place, and Artie Siegmund
- Youth Coordinator: Christine Sederback
- Blanket Chair: Brenda Titus
- Ag Council Reps.: Irene Nebiker, Fred Andrews, Christine Sederback
- Ex Officio: Robin Meek

Website: [www.risheep.org](http://www.risheep.org)

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**CROCK POT LAMB STEW WITH SPINACH**

- 2 pounds (1kg) Lamb stewing pieces - diced
- ½ cup all purpose flour (plain flour)
- 1 tblsp ground coriander seed
- ½ tblsp ground cumin seed
- 1 tblsp sweet paprika
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 cloves of garlic - minced
- 1 tblsp fresh ginger - minced
- 1 medium onion - finely diced
- 1 28 ounce (800g) can crushed tomatoes
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup packed spinach leaves

Place the flour in a plastic bag - add the lamb a few pieces at a time and coat well. Place the lamb in the Crock Pot. Mix the remaining ingredients together in a bowl - except the spinach leaves. Pour over the lamb. Cook on low for 8-10 hours. An hour before serving stir in the spinach leaves.

**Notes:** Serves 4-6. Serve with steamed veggies and rice or noodles.

*Recipe Courtesy of [www.a-crock-cook.com](http://www.a-crock-cook.com)*