



# The Producer

*Maine Sheep Breeders Quarterly Newsletter*

FALL 2015

## Message from the MSBA President

Fellow sheep breeders of Maine,

It's been a whirlwind of activity not only here on the farm but for all members across the state. Local food and fiber is gaining national attention on all levels and with that comes more work, more revenue and less time to commit to our volunteer work. However we cannot forget how important the work we all put into the Maine Sheep Breeders Association is. Our commitment for not only today or this season but for tomorrow and every season beyond. Keep up all the incredible work you are all doing and do not hesitate to reach out to fellow members for help and support. Enjoy the incredible days of late summer and fall. Until later.... Many thanks to all and Enjoy!

*Lisa Webster  
North Star Sheep Farm  
Lisa's cell 207-838-9410  
Email [lisa@northstarsheepfarm.com](mailto:lisa@northstarsheepfarm.com)  
[www.northstarsheepfarm.com](http://www.northstarsheepfarm.com)*



Dear Sheep Breeders,

Welcome to the fall issue of our newsletter.

Sadly, we have to say good-bye to one of our longtime members, Gerald Rolfe (obituary on p. 4). We wish Joan and her family strength and comfort to get through this hard time.

Other articles include an update on UMaine's Icelandic sheep flock (p. 3), and ASI's Let's Grow initiative (p. 2-3). The September issue of ASI's Sheep Industry News outlines the grant application procedure for this initiative (submission deadline November 15, 2015).

Why do you have sheep or goats? What breed of sheep do you raise? Can you recommend a helpful magazine, website, internet forum? What do you feed? How do you house them? Do you use guard animals? Do you use working dogs? How do you keep track of your sheep records? What vaccinations, supplements, minerals do you give? Who is your trusted veterinarian? How do you sell your animals' meat, wool, fleeces, milk, etc.? What is your favorite lamb recipe, knitting pattern, felting motif, cheese recipe? What are the issues you are struggling with? I encourage you to contact me with your ideas and articles for publication in this newsletter, pictures of your farm or animals or products you'd like to share with other sheep breeders, as well as your feedback, comments, questions, and suggestions. This publication relies on your submissions.

By sheep people, for sheep people.

*Dorothee Grimm, editor*



## ASI's Grow Our Flock Initiative

By Richard Brzozowski and Dorothee Grimm

The goal of the Let's Grow initiative is to ensure that the U.S. sheep industry is sustainable for future producers of lamb and wool. Increasing production efficiencies at the farm gate will assist in the sustainability of the industry's infrastructure.

The American Sheep Industry Association is working with the industry - producer leaders, researchers, extension agents, company representatives and other industry organizations - to encourage sheep producers to improve production efficiencies in light of the high costs of feed, fuel and other costs of production.

A strategy to strengthen the lamb and wool industry's infrastructure by making progress in sheep management and production is vital for the long-term sustainability of the industry.

from the homepage [http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock\\_Home](http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock_Home)



On August 10, a few MSBA directors and UMaine and UMaine Extension representatives participated in a conference call with John Lemondes. John serves as the "Grow Our Flock" representative for the Northeast (including New England states, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey) and is ASI's acquisition consultant for the sale of wool to the military. John thinks that true growth of the national sheep flock will happen east of the Mississippi. While the east has its own challenges, it doesn't have to fight the battles the west is dealing with - water shortage, grazing rights, inter-species interactions, etc.).

John encourages sheep & wool growers to get familiar with and use the ASI "Grow Our Flock" website.  
[http://www.sheepusa.org/Growourflock\\_Home](http://www.sheepusa.org/Growourflock_Home)

The "Grow Our Flock" or "Let's Grow" initiative is a national initiative. Approximately \$1.5 million has been allocated for the 3 fiscal years 2015-2017 to support this effort among the states. About \$500,000.00 was awarded in 2015. John encourages state associations like MSBA to consider partnering with land grant institutions in applying for awards in the coming years. The next round of funding has been announced, and applications will be published on the website September 1, 2015.  
[http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock\\_Funding\\_Application](http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock_Funding_Application) The 3 years are seen as a pilot program; future programs depend on the progress during the pilot years.

Previously funded projects can be found here [http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock\\_Funding\\_FundedProjects](http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock_Funding_FundedProjects)

ASI's "Grow Our Flock" program represents only one source of funding. You can also apply for grant funds from alternative sources such as USDA, agencies, foundations, etc.

John encourages producers to use the ASI app for their smart phone. This app tracks market prices of lamb across the country as well as other useful information. See <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/asi-market-news/id671752526?mt=8>

He also invites producers to consider the following as a way to get connected with other sheep producers:

- Attend the ASI annual conference; next year in Scottsdale, Ariz., January 27-30, 2016
- Apply to attend the Sheep Industry Howard Wyman Leadership School, sponsored by the National Lamb Feeders Association (NLFA)

John's plan is to meet in each of his assigned states with the largest sheep producers, state veterinarians, and small ruminant academic programs. It was suggested that John also interact with the USDA Veterinarian in each state (Dr. Chip Ridky in Maine), and university extension veterinarians in each state. Small sheep producers, which present the majority of sheep producers in the Northeast compared to the Western US, are not to be forgotten, since they might need different resources than large producers.

John encouraged sheep producers from Maine to submit stories for the Sheep Industry News magazine (published monthly and accessible to MSBA members). Each MSBA member is invited to email or call John for making additional suggestions. John's email is [jlemondes@aol.com](mailto:jlemondes@aol.com) ; his phone number is 315-400-7977.

*Continued on p. 3*

*Let's Grow - continued from p.2*

John described an online chat room that Cornell University has established for New York sheep producers to ask questions and share needs. A similar website or email group could be established for Maine.

After the conference call John talked about this with Cornell University, and they allowed Maine sheep producers access:

The link to the NY Sheep & Goat Marketing website is: <http://sheepgoatmarketing.info/index.php>  
On that same page is information about getting on the list-server:

Cornell Small Ruminant Marketing Listserv - join by sending email to [srmarketing-L-request@cornell.edu](mailto:srmarketing-L-request@cornell.edu) with a subject line "JOIN". This listserv aims to assist in the marketing of sheep and goats and the discussion of marketing topics and events.

Goat producers face similar issues as sheep producers. ASI is working on integrating goat producers into their sheep programs.

Richard Brzozowski  
Extension Educator  
Small Ruminant & Poultry Specialist; Agriculturist  
University of Maine Cooperative Extension  
75 Clearwater Drive, Suite 104  
Falmouth, ME 04105

Dorothee Grimm, editor

## Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club Summer Update

*By: Shaunna Damboise*

This summer has been a busy one at Witter Farm! The lambs that were born to the ten mature ewes over the winter have been growing fast and were weaned from their mothers. The flocks are currently split into adult ewes, who are residing inside the Witter Center until a new grazing area is built, and premature ewe lambs who currently reside in the outdoor sheep pens. As always we welcome visitors to the Witter Farm to view our ewes during visiting hours (8AM-4PM weekdays).

Over the summer Ewe-Maine has been working on a large project dealing with an abomasal worm, *Haemonchus contortus*, or more commonly known as the Barber Pole Worm. Students have been actively engaging in the research which includes taking fecal samples, utilizing a FAMACHA test, and looking for any signs of sickness. Many students are involved in this research in a variety of way. Some are looking for natural alternatives to battle the prevalence of the worm while others are taking a look at the current medicines and treatments used and testing their effectiveness. Our hopes are to use this research in the reduction of the Barber Pole Worm in our flock and many others. This research will carry over into the Fall.

We are looking to downsize our flock to eighteen: nine mature ewes and nine lambs. We are sad to see these ewes go, but we are hopeful to find them good loving homes! If you are interested in purchasing one of the sheep that is for sale please feel free to contact Dr. Weber for a list of sheep and their characteristic traits. You can also visit the Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club on Facebook to see our day to day activity, pictures, and updates.

We would like to thank everyone for your support and we hope for another successful year here at Witter Farm!

Shaunna Damboise  
Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club  
UMaine, Orono

## Obituary



Gerald Howes "Gerry" Rolfe, 84, died at his home in Pownal on August 24, 2015, after a brief illness. His family was at his side, and hospice was in attendance. His passing was quiet and unassuming.

Gerry was born in New Haven, CT on November 28, 1930 to Dorothy (Fitzgerald) Rolfe and Arthur Willard Rolfe. Loving the mid-coast region of Maine, he summered with his family on Capitol and Southport Islands. Boothbay Harbor, quintessential coastal Maine, was a favorite of Gerry's in his youth. He took great delight in the natural world, and he enjoyed the annual running of the alewives with his wife of 53 years, Joan (Steeves) Rolfe, who he married in 1962.

Gerald worked in the financial sector, employed by Price Waterhouse, Oxford Paper, and Arthur Young & Company. In 1972, they moved their family to Maine and settled in to their 40-acre farm in Pownal. Gerry and his family immersed themselves in farm life, raising sheep, chickens and vegetables.

Gerald owned and operated the Dudley-Weed Pharmacies in Portland. He also worked for the City of Auburn, and he served the Town of Pownal as Selectman and as Town Treasurer, devoting himself to conservation and long-range planning for 26 years.

Gerald Rolfe leaves behind his wife of 53 years, Joan (Steeves) Rolfe, as well as his son Tom of Waterboro; son Chris and daughter-in-law Maribeth and their sons Evan and Alec of Morrill; son Jon and his partner Janelle LaVallee of Gray; daughter Katherine and her partner Tiffany Townsend of Yarmouth.

He will be sorely missed

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Gerald's name to:

Friends of Feral Felines  
643 Forest Avenue # A  
Portland, ME. 04101

*Louise Hessert  
Pleasant Valley View Farm  
Cumberland, ME*

*Photo: Portland Press Herald*

## Calendar of Events and MSBA Board of Directors (BOD) Meetings 2015

**September 9-13:** Fiber College of Maine, Searsport Shores Ocean Park and Campground, Searsport. For more information, visit [www.fibercollege.org](http://www.fibercollege.org)

**September 25-27:** 39th Common Ground Fair, MOFGA Fairgrounds, Unity.

On all three days: Fleece Tent, Goat and Sheep Barn, Maine Fiber Farms, Wednesday Spinners, Sheep Dog Demos, Halter Training Goats, Goat Milking, Hands-on Sheep Care, Goat Hoof Trimming.

Classes and talks include: Goat Nature, Draft Goats, I Bought A Fleece - What Next? Earth Loom Weaving, Spinning With Support Spindles, The Native American Wool Project, Weave It Like It's 1699, Fleece Show Judging, Needle Felting, Russia's Woolly Side, Choosing The Right Fleece, Indigo Dyeing, Making Felted Beads, Making Felted Trivets, Get Your Goats, Basics of Rotational Grazing, Goat Cheese & Yogurt, Felt-ing Fantastic, Plant Dyeing, Dye Garden Walk, Wool Combing, Natural Dye Extracts.

For more information and detailed schedules, visit [www.mofga.org](http://www.mofga.org)



**October 3-4:** 27th Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival, Tunbridge Fairgrounds, Tunbridge, VT. For more information, visit [vtsheepandwoolfest.org](http://vtsheepandwoolfest.org)

**October 17-18:** New York Sheep & Wool Festival, Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck, NY. For more information, visit [www.sheepandwool.com](http://www.sheepandwool.com)

**October 19:** Farmland Access Conference, Pineland Farms, New Gloucester.

Join us for a day-long conference on the challenges that farmers face in gaining access to farmland, as well as the tools and resource (both existing and imagined) to help improve access.

In-depth work sessions for:

- Retiring farmers interested in transferring land to next generation farmers
- Non-farming landowners that have an interest in making land available for farming
- Service providers, including land trusts, conservation commissions, town planners, lenders, etc., with an interest in fostering affordable farmland access
- Farmers seeking affordable farmland

Presented by MFT, with partners American Farmland Trust and Land For Good.

Register online. For more information, please call 207.338.6575.

**November 7-8:** New England Fiber Festival, Mallory Complex at Eastern States Exposition, Springfield, MA. For more information, visit [www.thebige.com/ese/fiber-festival](http://www.thebige.com/ese/fiber-festival)

For more fiber festivals, visit <http://fiddleheadfibers.com/festivals/FestivalRegion.html>

**November 14, 8am - 4pm:** Sheep and Goat Seminar, Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC), Fairfield. The theme for this year's seminar is "Marketing". Details on the schedule and registration forms will be available on the U Maine Extension website <http://umaine.edu/livestock/sheep/> later in September. As MSBA member, you will receive a direct communication (an email message or mailing) about the seminar.

**November 14, 5 - 8pm:** 2015 MSBA annual meeting and dinner, KVCC, Fairfield. All MSBA members are welcome and encouraged to attend. More details will be posted on the MSBA website and emailed to you when available.

Please check the MSBA website and Facebook page frequently for updates to the calendar [www.mainesheepbreeders.com](http://www.mainesheepbreeders.com)

### - Calling all MSBA members to consider serving on the Board of Directors -

Do you want to support the sheep industry in Maine? Do you want to work with sheep people for sheep people?

Do you have about an extra hour or two per month? Why not apply to be an MSBA board member for three years?

We will be voting in new board members at our meeting in November (date to be determined).

Please contact Donna Flint ([donna.flint@maine.edu](mailto:donna.flint@maine.edu) or 207-324-2814) or Lisa Webster ([msba@me.com](mailto:msba@me.com) or 207-838-9410) if you are interested.

**MSBA Board of Directors (BOD)**

Re-elected or confirmed at the BOD meeting on November 25, 2014.

**President:** Lisa Webster, North Star Sheep Farm, Windham, ME; MSBA@me.com

**Vice President:** Brant Miller, Bowdoinham, ME; bsmiller99@gmail.com

**Secretary:** Donna Flint, Oak Ridge Farm, Sanford, ME; donna.flint@maine.edu

**Treasurer:** Richard Brzozowski, Buckminster Farm, New Gloucester, ME; richard.brzozowski@maine.edu

Cindy Green, Houlton, ME; cindygreen98@gmail.com

Dorothee Grimm, Scarborough, ME; dorothee.grimm@web.de (appointed editor of The Producer)

Joe Miller, Rivercroft Farm, Starks, ME; rivercroft@dialmaine.com

Diane Schivera, Appleton, ME; dianes@mofga.org

Nancy Webster, Woolweb Farm, Brooks, ME; woolweb@aol.com

Philip Webster, North Star Sheep Farm, Windham, ME; northstarfarms@me.com

Cindy Kilgore, ME; Cindy.Kilgore@maine.gov (Maine Dept of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry; non-voting)

As a paid member of MSBA you receive this newsletter four times per year. Please make sure we have your correct email address/ mailing address on file. You are entitled to participate in the annual cooperative Wool Pool sale of fleece. You receive marketing and political representation at state, regional and national levels. You meet a great group of people who love to share information about their animals, their farm and their products, as well as information about breeding, management, and marketing techniques. Your MSBA membership automatically makes you a member of the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI), and you receive their monthly newsletter 'Sheepnews'.

The MSBA board of directors (BOD) meets 6-8 times per year. We encourage membership involvement at the board of directors meetings, as well as on committees, and volunteering for one of our events and educational programs. Everyone has something to contribute. Please contact Donna Flint or Richard Brzozowski and volunteer a few hours for the good of all.

Maine Sheep Breeders' Association - by sheep people for sheep people.

Join the Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/331285921205/>

**Maine Sheep Breeders Association****2015 Membership Application**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Farm Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **City, State, Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Website** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Breeds of Sheep** \_\_\_\_\_

**MSBA Membership Year is January 1 - December 31**

**2015 Membership Dues \$20 per Year/per Farm, Payable by January 31, 2015**



**Make check payable to: MSBA Treasurer**

**Mail to: Richard Brzozowski  
525 Cobb Bridge Rd  
New Gloucester, ME 04260**

## Sheep and Farm Bits

### Plow & Anchor Connect

Are you a looking for local produce or seafood to buy in bulk? Are you a farmer or fisherman looking for an outlet for your produce or seafood? Plow & Anchor Connect is a website designed to connect Maine food producers (farmers and fishermen) with bulk food consumers (restaurants, grocers, avid canners, and other bulk consumers) through a simple and flexible online bulletin board. [www.plowandanchorconnect.com](http://www.plowandanchorconnect.com)

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### Webinar: Dietary Supplements: A Necessity or Folly?

The Let's Grow Committee of the American Sheep Industry Association is sponsoring its last webinar of this fiscal year with registration now open for Dietary Supplements: A Necessity or Folly?

The session will be hosted by Jay Parsons, Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and presented by Robert Van Saun, Ph.D., Penn State University, on Tuesday, Sept. 22 at 7 p.m. CDT.

To register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/125169872000771074>.

This webinar will look more closely at forages in determining if they can meet essential nutrient requirements of sheep at different productive stages. Fiber content of a forage is a function of plant maturity and can potentially limit intake resulting in inadequate energy or protein intake. Forage mineral content is a complex interaction between plant, soil conditions and fertilization practices and that may result in inappropriate mineral content predisposing to disease conditions. The true wild card of forages is trace mineral status. Trace minerals are essential nutrients influencing productivity and immune response. Most forages are deficient in a number of critical trace minerals as well as having high concentrations of interfering minerals resulting in deficiency or toxicity conditions.

The goal of the webinar is to provide participants with a better perspective on how their forage may limit or promote their feeding program and the potential role for dietary supplements.

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### Documentary Addicted to Sheep Released in UK

First we had Shaun, wreaking havoc with his farmyard friends in the Big City, and now here comes a charming, warm documentary about the engaging Hutchinson family, tenant farmers high up in the northern Pennines in the United Kingdom, whose small herd of Swaledales is not only their livelihood but also their passion.

A strength of this film is seeing how this family really works as one unit and how they care about their stock and what they do. Farming was a choice for them, and one they really got behind. One thing becomes clear, farming is not for the faint, but farming can make you happy.

Addicted to Sheep will be released in UK cinemas on Aug. 28 August. The trailer is available at [www.addictedtosheep.com/trailer](http://www.addictedtosheep.com/trailer)

Source: ASI News.

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### New program supports farms when they need it most

Maine farms so often operate on the financial edge. When disaster strikes, farms frequently need outside support to weather the storm. Maine Farmland Trust has created a new disaster relief fund to help farms hit by fire or natural disaster. We have been considering creating such a fund for a while, but last month's severe microburst that hit Misty Brook Farm in Albion spurred us into action.

The fund will provide financial relief to Maine farms that meet certain eligibility requirements. Among other factors, the farms income must represent at least 25% of total household income and the damage caused by the fire or natural disaster must exceed \$5,000.

It's wonderful to see the resurgence of farming in Maine, but few farms are in a position to weather a major disaster without outside support. This new disaster relief fund provides a way to harness charitable contributions to support farms in need.

If you are a farm seeking assistance from the disaster relief fund, click here to review MFT's full policies and procedures, including application guidelines. If you have questions, contact [info@mainefarmlandtrust.org](mailto:info@mainefarmlandtrust.org)



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**Gotland sheep  
Leah Hoenen  
Windham, Maine**