



# The Producer

*Maine Sheep Breeders Quarterly Newsletter*

SUMMER 2015

## Message from the MSBA President

Greeting from the warmth of May sunshine!

Pastures are green, soil is warming and hopefully your lambs are growing like weeds in the summer sunshine. As the days turn warm and we all are increasing busy with our day to day farming chores please take time to slow down and enjoy the incredible farming landscape we have here in Maine. Fiber, youth and food events are plentiful during the summer months. Each of us have activities within the sheep industry to support and enjoy, many which are supported and/or funded by Maine Sheep Breeders Association which means I must make another request for membership dues. Our work has not slowed but the membership has. Please take a minute today and send in your \$20 for 2015.

*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 summer issue. There are articles about CL research (p. 2), the UMaine sheep flock (p. 3), marketing lamb to consumers (p. 4-5).

Once again, MSBA will host a Wool Pool at the Maine Fiber Frolic next weekend. See guidelines on p. 6. Please tell neighbors, friends, and shearers about this opportunity to sell wool - even single fleeces will be accepted and used by Bartlett Yarns to be turned into Maine grown yarn and other wool products.

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 their meat, wool, fleeces, milk, etc.? What is your favorite lamb recipe, knitting pattern, cheese recipe? What are the issues you have always struggled 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*



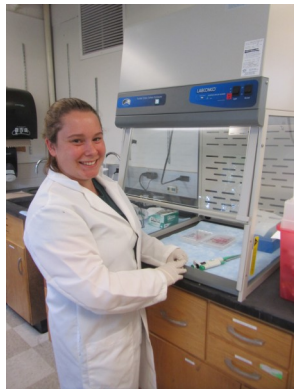
## Caseous lymphadenitis (CL) Research Update 2015

By Amy Fish, Rachel Chase, Ann Bryant, Anne Lichtenwalner

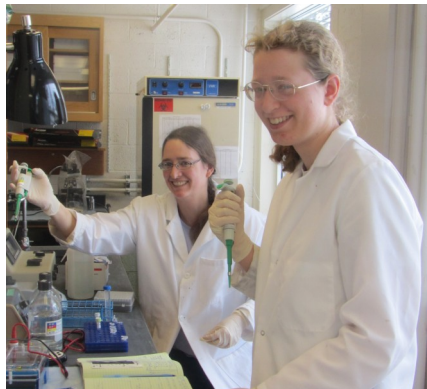
During 2014-5, the Lichtenwalner lab at the University of Maine worked on two projects related to Caseous Lymphadenitis (CL), a chronic disease that affects sheep and goats worldwide. CL causes a large economic loss to producers via milk and fiber losses, carcass condemnation, and chronic wasting of animals. *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* (*C. psTB*) causes CL, and infected animals produce abscesses, typically in lymph nodes, lungs, liver, and mammary tissues. Ruptured abscesses release *C. psTB*, and can contaminate the environment. The bacteria are extremely hardy and can survive in the external environment for over a year, infecting other animals through open wounds.

The macrophage is a blood cell type that engulfs *C. psTB* when it first enters the body. Normally, this would be followed by intracellular digestion of *C. psTB* (innate immunity), after which the macrophage would transport the degraded bacterial remnants to regional lymph nodes, thus “notifying” the immune system that an infection had occurred, and turning on protective antibody production (acquired immunity) against *C. psTB*. However, *C. psTB* is capable of avoiding digestion by the macrophage. Therefore, the lymph nodes receive a live pathogen, rather than just a signal, when the macrophages arrive. The outcome is that when live *C. psTB* reaches the lymph tissues, many other immune cells attack the bacteria, resulting in the lymph node abscesses that characterize CL.

Recent studies at the University of Maine suggested that, in chronically infected flocks, some individual sheep may be resistant to clinical CL. During 2014-5, we investigated possible methods by which sheep might be resistant, and possible genetic “markers” for resistance. Using cell culture and an ELISA approach, we developed methods to test macrophage cytokine (IL10) response to stimulation with *C. psTB* antigens. As well, we investigated a gene that encodes for a sheep protein, NOD2, that is important in innate immunity against many bacterial pathogens. Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the NOD2 gene have been linked to other diseases of chronic inflammation: Crohn’s Disease, Johne’s disease, and mastitis. We hypothesized that SNPs in NOD2 may increase CL risk in sheep. Therefore, a portion of the NOD2 exon 4, containing nine documented synonymous and missense SNPs, was sequenced from DNA extracted from blood samples of 8 CL seronegative and 10 CL seropositive Katahdin sheep. Although no significant differences were detected in this small study, CL seropositive sheep tended to be heterozygous for the SNPs studied, while seronegative individuals tended to be homozygous. The results suggested the possibility that mutations in the NOD2 gene may lead to increased resistance to CL. While neither study led to definitive results, both suggested that selection of resistant sheep may be one approach to controlling CL when the bacteria is known to be present in a flock or region. These approaches can be expanded to evaluate possible genetic “markers” for CL resistance.



Amy Fish



Rachel Chase and Ann Bryant

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<http://umaine.edu/veterinarylab/>



## Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club Update

By Kate Pouliot

The Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club was thrilled to have a great year at Witter Farm with our flock of Icelandic Sheep. In the fall, all ten of our mature ewes were successfully bred to our two rams, and with the help of Dr. Weber, we were able to confirm the pregnancies via ultrasound. It was a great learning experience for all of us! We also were fortunate enough to have a former UMaine student visit us in the fall and demonstrate how to shear the sheep quickly and efficiently. Elaine Clark, the original breeder of our sheep at Frelsi Farm Icelandics, continues to be an invaluable resource for the club and taught us how to clean the wool and prepare it for processing. When the wool returned to us in the spring as roving, we were amazed at the beautiful colors and variety of the Icelandic wool! We are currently in the process of selling the wool to local weavers and artisans, and we still have some gorgeous wool available if anyone is interested!



The most exciting part of the sheep club's year was the birth of the lambs this spring. In March we split our ten ewes up among approximately twenty dedicated members of the club, so that each pair of students was responsible for monitoring one ewe. As their due dates approached, we anxiously awaited the arrival of the lambs with frequent farm visits, late night checks on the video cameras, and numerous false alarms! The first ewe to lamb was Wasserbebe, who some of you may remember as the mother of Elska, our surprise September baby from the



fall. Under the watchful eyes of about fifteen eager students, Wasserbebe gave birth to healthy twin girls. One by one, successful lambings continued through the month of April and into early May. Some ewes were more considerate than others; we quickly learned to appreciate the ewes who chose to lamb at 2 PM on a Tuesday as opposed to those who decided that 2 AM on a Saturday morning would be the optimal time to go into labor! All together, we ended up with 22 healthy lambs, which included two sets of triplets. As shown in the pictures, the lambs had wonderful variety of colors and patterns, and this made naming them even more fun! We are planning on keeping approximately ten of the female ewe lambs to continue the breeding program, and the remaining twelve lambs will be sold for breeding or meat.



In addition, the research that was begun by several students in the fall continued through the spring. Several students completed senior projects and theses on a variety of topics focused on the sheep, including research on the prevalence of *Haemonchus contortus* on Maine and New England sheep farms, detecting *H. contortus* in white tailed deer, examining methods of controlling *H. contortus*, and developing a better assay for identifying *H. contortus* fecal eggs. Some of the research will be continued through the summer and into the fall, while other portions of research are currently being prepared for presentation to the general public.



Overall, it was a successful year for the Ewe-Maine Icelandic Sheep Club. Our club numbers have grown significantly, and the birth of the lambs has generated new interest in the club, especially

among the underclassmen and incoming students.

We are looking forward to a great summer with the sheep and another exciting year to come!

Please feel free to come by Witter Farm and visit the lambs and their mothers if you get a chance! You can visit the Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club on Facebook to see more of our day-to-day operations and for more pictures of the beautiful lambs. Thank you to everyone for your support!



Kate Pouliot  
Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club  
UMaine, Orono

## Considerations in Marketing Lamb & Mutton

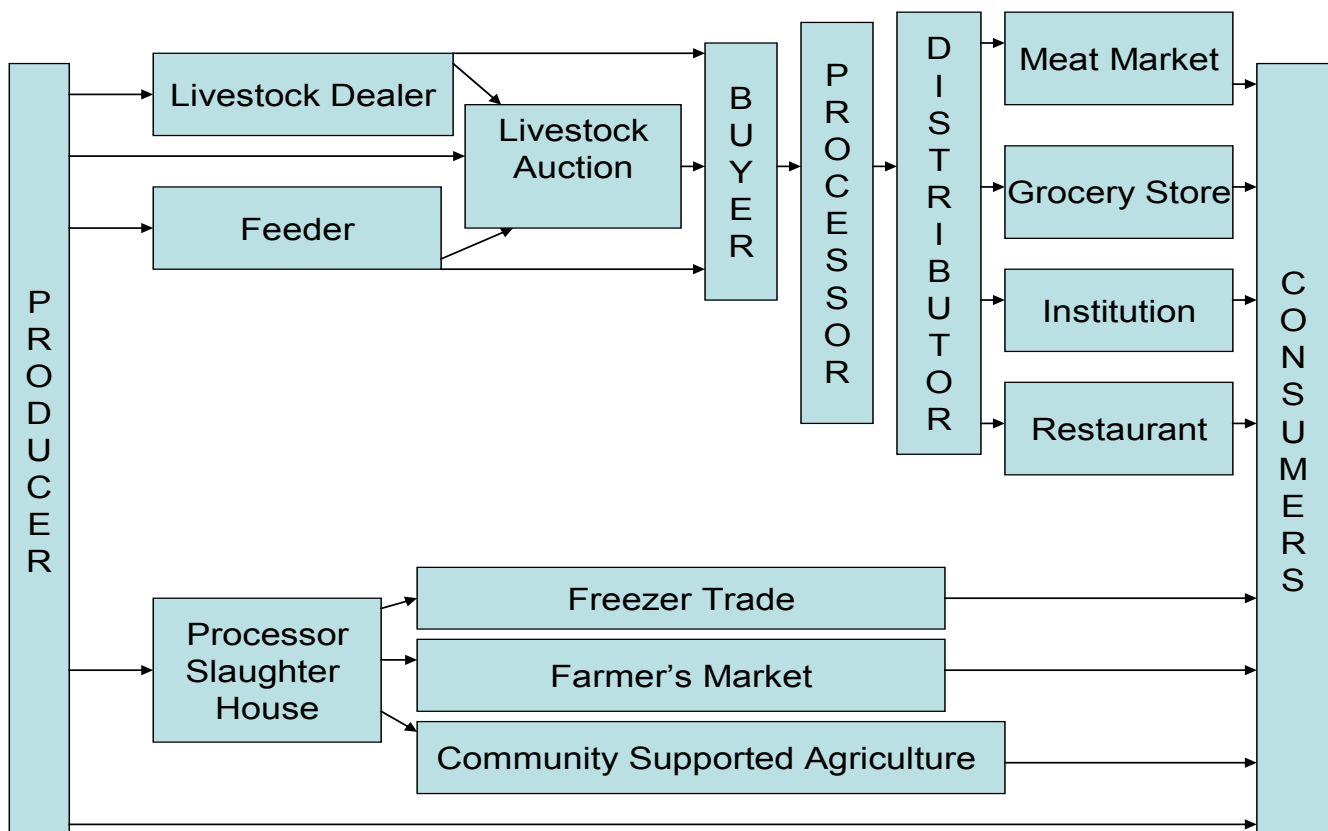
By Richard J. Brzozowski

Small Ruminant Specialist, University of Maine

As a sheep producer, you may be in a position to identify new customers for lamb & mutton. Some of these new customers may look like you while others may be from different ethnic cultures. Many ethnic cultures view lamb, mutton and goat meat as the basis for traditional dishes and for special celebrations. I recently developed a worksheet to help sheep and goat producers identify and learn about potential new customers and possibly to supply specific ethnic groups in your locale with meat animals or products that are available at the right age and time of year for optimal customer satisfaction.

The accompanying chart helps producers understand the many options for marketing their lambs and sheep. Many of these options involve processing while one is selling live animals to customers. As you view the chart, figure out which option(s) is best for you and your business.

For more information about marketing lamb & mutton, see <http://www.sheep101.info/201/lambmarketing.html>



continued on p. 5

## Lamb & Mutton Customer Profile

Developed with support from American Sheep Industry "Grow Our Flock" Initiative

by Dr. Richard Brzozowski, Small Ruminant Specialist

University of Maine Cooperative Extension

[richard.brzozowski@maine.edu](mailto:richard.brzozowski@maine.edu)



Your name or farm name here:

Date:

Use this template to describe potential or existing consumers of lamb or mutton in your vicinity or market area. The template is meant to help you describe a specific ethnic group of consumers so that you can effectively serve them and strengthen your market. Respond to each of the statements and questions as thoroughly as possible. Update the information as changes occur or your customer base expands for this ethnicity. Use a separate template for each ethnic group or type of consumer.

Identify the consumer group by specific ethnicity. *For example: Greek ethnicity or customers of Mediterranean decent*

Make your best estimate of the population of this ethnicity in your market region (such as 30 mile, 50 mile, 100 mile, etc.).

To obtain this data, consider contacting current customers of this ethnic group, the state planning office, the census bureau, town or city hall; school district; etc.).

The population of this consumer group in my market area is approximately

Briefly list details for this ethnic group that will help you serve them effectively. Read and learn more about this group to better understand them.

List specific holidays and holy days that this customer group recognizes for which lamb or mutton is likely sought. Interact with a sampling of this consumer group to help identify these special days. An Internet search may also be helpful. Verify your list with consumers of this ethnicity in your vicinity as regional differences may exist. Use the chart below for quick reference. Consider identifying future dates for planning purposes.

Name of holiday, holy day, festival or special event	Calendar date for this

Specify the type of lamb or mutton (product) that this group typically desires. Consider animal age, sex, size, weight, cuts, specifications, etc.

Use this space for other notes.

## 2015 Maine Wool Pool

**The Annual Wool Pool of the Maine Sheep Breeders Association  
is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2015 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm  
at the 2015 Maine Fiber Frolic at the Windsor Fairgrounds in Windsor.**



**Producers will be paid 58¢ per pound for wool.  
The buyer of the 2015 Maine Wool Pool will be Bartlett Yarns of Harmony.**

### **GUIDELINES FOR SELLING YOUR WOOL AT THE 2015 WOOL POOL:**

We will be accepting clean, well-skirted wool only.  
Wool **MUST** be dry. Wool must be from the 2015 wool clip.  
Colored and white wool must be separated.

**The following will absolutely NOT be accepted:**

- Cap & belly wool, tags or manure
- Wet, musty and moldy wool
- Heavy hay chaff - pull out neck wool that is heavily contaminated
- Straw, shavings, hay, old wool - must be from current year's shearing
- Cotted wool
- Moth damaged wool and/or moth infested wool
- Hair
- Hoof trimmings
- Burdocks

**All bags will be opened and inspected.**

**The MSBA reserves will reject any wool that does not meet our stated guidelines.**

Replacement wool bags will be available for producers to purchase at the cost of \$5/bag.

Wool will be purchased from MSBA members (at no cost) and non-members.

For new members, a pro-rated MSBA 2015 membership fee of \$10.00 will be accepted at the Wool Pool.



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

**June 5, 10am:** Fiber Friday. The first Friday of every month is set aside from 10am until noon for all to come visit, stitch and chat about their work, ask questions, share stories, successful ventures, and anything that comes to mind. All are welcome. It's a good way to find out more about Maine Fiberarts. Join us! Start the weekend off right!  
Maine Fiber Arts, Gallery and The Red Studio, 13 Main Street, Topsham, ME 04086; 207-721-0678

**June 6-7:** Maine Fiber Frolic, Windsor Fairgrounds, Windsor.

More information at <http://www.fiberfrolic.com/> and on the Fiber Frolic Facebook page

**Saturday, 8am-12pm:** MSBA Wool Pool. See p.6 for guidelines on how to prepare your wool for the wool pool.

**Saturday afternoon:** FAMACHA training.

Gain the skills and knowledge to address the arch enemy of sheep and goats, the barber pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus*). The barber pole worm is a blood sucking internal parasite that is a common cause of death and poor-doing in small ruminants. This practical workshop will show producers how to determine the degree of infection by observing the blood color of the capillaries around the eye of the sheep or goat.

Participants will receive an information packet, record sheets and a FAMACHA card.

Cost will be \$25.00 per farm.

To enroll:

<http://extension.umaine.edu/register/product/famacha-workshop-windsor-me-6615/>

For more information or to request disability accommodations, please call 207.781.6099 or 1.800.287.1471 (in Maine only) or email [lynne.b.hazelton@maine.edu](mailto:lynne.b.hazelton@maine.edu)



**June 15, 6:30-8:30pm:** Small Ruminant Parasite Workshop

A workshop for sheep and goat producers is planned for Monday evening, June 15, 2015 at the Maine Forest Service located at 356 Shaker Road (Route 26) in Gray, Maine. Dr. James Miller, a parasitologist from Louisiana State University, will be presenting a talk titled "What sheep & goat producers ought to know about internal parasites". This workshop is free and open to the public, and is sponsored by the Maine Sheep Breeders Association. Feel free to arrive at 6:00pm for a time to ask specific questions or request advice on addressing parasite problems.

**July 26:** Open Farm Day throughout the State of Maine. A list of participating farms can be found at [www.getrealmaine.com](http://www.getrealmaine.com)

**September, date TBD:** Sheep and Goat School. Focus on guard animals and predators. More information will be made available to MSBA members via email and in the next newsletter issue (to be sent out September 1),

**October 3-4:** Maine Craft Weekend (MCW), a statewide tour of Maine craft studios, breweries, businesses and events, is an opportunity for the public to explore the life and work of craft artists and craft brewers in Maine. Modeled after Maine Maple Sunday and Buy Local Saturday, this self-guided tour features participants all over the state who are not regularly open to the public or who have planned special MCW events and demonstrations at their locations. Visit [www.MaineCraftWeekend.org](http://www.MaineCraftWeekend.org)

**October 3-4:** Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival, Tunbridge, VT.

**October 17-18:** New York Sheep & Wool Festival, Rhinebeck, NY.

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

For sheep dog herding trials and training events in the US, visit <http://www.northeastherdinginfo.com/events.htm>

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

**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 Bits

Dear Maine Sheep Breeders Association

My name is Kelly Irvine and I am a member of the Buffalo FFA. My family has a beef production operation in West Virginia. I am currently working on an Agri-science Fair Project in which I am researching how farmers/ranchers obtain the land used for their agricultural operations. I chose this topic because land is essential for agriculture and I am concerned that many persons are not choosing to engage in agricultural production because of difficulties obtaining suitable land. I would greatly appreciate you taking a few moments out of your busy schedule to complete and return the attached survey. I assure you that the information you provide will only be used in aggregate in my FFA school project and will not be shared with any other programs or agencies. Please share this survey with any others that would be interested in participating. It is my goal to obtain input from 1,000 farmers across the United States. Without your help, my project will not be possible.

Thank You!

Kelly Irvine  
671 Melton Rd  
Poca, WV 25159  
kelly.irvine@buffalohighwv.com

### JOB OPENING AS MOFGA'S FLEECE TENT COORDINATOR

Penelope Olson is stepping down after many years and would like to find someone to take over the job. You can contact her directly for more information: Penelope Olson, 207-785-2784, mizoly@midcoast.com

### Ag day at the Maine legislature

MSBA along with all of the other commodity groups and related Ag stakeholders of Maine gathered at the State House on March 11 to display their products and programs. Senators, Representatives from the House, and the Governor all visited during the event. This event is one of only a few opportunities for sheep farmers to give their opinions in a broad open forum to our state government. I thank the members who attended and look forward to more of you being involved in 2016.

Lisa Webster  
North Star Sheep Farm

### Small-Scale Sheep and Goat Production Curriculum Materials

Sheep and goats are an excellent way for new and beginning farmers to enter livestock production. They are also especially well-suited to small farms. A profitable sheep and goat business will consider many different aspects including marketing, stewardship, animal care and production.

The materials on the website were developed for teachers and educators to use in their classrooms and programs. The target age range is high school, junior college, and beginning farmer groups.

<http://www.extension.org/pages/67784/small-scale-sheep-and-goat-production-curriculum-materials#.VS.XRHD3aKQ>

### A new sheepskin tannery is coming to the Northeast soon:



[www.vermontnaturalsheepskins.com](http://www.vermontnaturalsheepskins.com)

Twitter @vtsheepskins

Facebook [facebook.com/vtsheepskins](https://www.facebook.com/vtsheepskins)

Vermont Natural Sheepskins  
PO Box 823  
South Royalton, VT 05068



MSBA  
Maine Sheep Breeders Association

Dorothee Grimm  
227 Black Point Rd  
Scarborough, ME 04074



**Icelandic lamb at  
UMaine, Orono**