



# The Producer

*Maine Sheep Breeders Quarterly Newsletter*

WINTER 2013

## Message from the MSBA President

After a full year of not serving as on the board of MSBA I am pleased to return not only as a director but as the president of our association. I have taken on this responsibility not because I have extra time to create personal reward but because I feel strongly in the need to serve our membership and ensure you receive quality services in return for your membership dues. I ask each of you to renew your membership (p. 9) and reach out via email to me and ask what we can do to improve and grow MSBA in its 61st year. 2013 marked our 60th year since my great grandfather served on the first board of MSBA, and I will do my best to make both him and you proud to be part of this association in 2014.

*Lisa Webster, MSBA President  
North Star Sheep Farm  
Windham, ME*



Dear Sheep Breeders,

This issue marks my one year tenure as editor of The Producer. I hope you have been enjoying the newsletter, and the articles have helped you in your sheep endeavors. FYI - the MSBA membership has steadily increased over the past couple years. Currently, MSBA has 181 farm members.

In this issue, Tom Settlemyre has compiled valuable information about profitability of forage fed lamb (p. 2).

Leah Hoenen writes about her experience with the Emerging Maine Sheep Entrepreneurs program (p. 8).

Maine is one of four states that received an ASI grant to offer an educational program, called Ethnic Marketing of Lamb & Mutton. Learn more about this program on p. 9.

Are you looking for a sheep-related holiday gift? Read about K. K. Gooding's Simple Gourmet Lamb cookbook (p.11).

The 2014 calendar is just starting to shape up and still contains some TBD events (p. 7). If you know about an event you would like to share with other MSBA members, please let me know and I'll add it to the calendar.

What would you like to read about in future issues? What are the problems you encounter at your farm? What breed of sheep do you have, and why? Have you taken any pictures you were especially proud of or that made you laugh out loud? Have you tried out any new products you like or dislike? I encourage you to contact me with your ideas and articles for this newsletter, pictures of your farm or animals you like to share with other sheep breeders, as well as your feedback, comments, questions, and suggestions.

Happy Holidays, and all the best for 2014.

*Dorothee Grimm, editor*



## Profit With Sheep - You Are Kidding Of Course!!

*by Tom Settlemyre*

For as many years as I have been in Maine, which is now getting close to 50, we have talked about all of the advantages we have to make lamb production a more important aspect of our state agriculture. Many of you have heard the story. Maine is part of the eastern United States lamb-marketing region, where the American Lamb Council reports 75% of the lamb is consumed. At one point in Maine's history we were a major producer and had over 800,000 head of sheep in our state. Wow!

In the 1980's Maine participated in the "Blue Print for Expansion" of lamb production. On the surface Maine has the needed "ingredients" to take advantage of growing and marketing lamb. We have an instate demand for lamb that is growing. And in the bigger picture we have the land mass and potential to not only grow for our local market, but also to become a player in supplying the large lamb consumer markets such as Boston, New York City, Hartford, and Philadelphia, and points in between.

So why are we still "looking in" to the potential rather than grabbing the gold ring and making lamb production a significant part of Maine agriculture? I would suggest there is one answer - we have not focused on - PROFITABILITY.

There are a number of pieces that are part of profitability - here I want to get you to think with me about only two - but two that could change lamb production in Maine dramatically.

Of course that is assuming profitability is a major factor holding back lamb production in Maine and not one we have made a proper focus. Here I think I am on safe ground - with a few exceptions, when you talk to Maine sheep farmers and bring up the profitability word you don't get that as the reason they are growing sheep. "I just like having them around, they make great 4-H projects, I love having a flock of sheep to show at the fairs, I love wool, they keep down the grass and weeds" - all of these are perfectly good reasons, but keeping sheep because they are money makers is not a common answer.

There are a few farms working to change that image so maybe there is hope.

Let's take a look at two topics that could change things and make lamb production a significant part of Maine agriculture.

First let me admit that I am not including the importance of wool production in this article. I myself was involved for a number of years in producing high quality fiber via our flock of Rambouillets. Along with four other Rambouillet breeders we harvested and marketed "Rocky Shore Rambouillet Yarn" from Texas up into Detroit down to Washington, D.C. and here in Maine. My thesis here is that wool production for some can be profitable and important and should remain such, and we should look at ways to improve that product and its market. But for the sheep industry to become important on the scale I am hoping for, we really need to focus on meat production.

Several years ago the Maine Sheep Breeders Association brought to Maine one of the resource people of the Pipestone Sheep Program in Minnesota. If you don't know about that program, check out: <http://www.mnwest.edu/index.php/management/lamb-and-wool/history>

The Pipestone program has earned a high reputation for a lamb production system that results in a profitable, sustainable sheep enterprise and recognized as such not only in the United States but also internationally.

The Pipestone speaker's first comment during his visit to Maine is that you have nearly 30 breeds of sheep in Maine producing a range of products, that mean huge "product diversity", that limits your options to combine production from different farms to meet markets that want a volume and consistency of product. What can we do about all this? Believe me there is no way I will take on the "my breed is better than your breed" argument. But the simple fact is that a key to the success of the Pipestone program is that to be involved in the program you agree to use specific genetics - and along with common production protocols used by participating farms, there is a uniform end product going to market in quantities that attract the largest purveyors of lamb.

I would love for Maine to be the next "Pipestone". It would be fantastic for a similar program to be centered in Maine. Maybe call it the "Mainely Lamb Production Program". I am sure you can think of a better name - my kids would never let me name our sheep - my suggestions were always vetoed. What do you think? A topic for future discussion. And I would suggest a proper project for the MSBA board to investigate.

Another key component of the Pipestone profitable lamb production system is "cost of production" - this is the second area of the two topics of this article and where I really want to focus. We are not Minnesota. So we need to look at what are resources we have that allow us to produce high quality lamb at lowest cost.

*continued on p. 3*

*Profit with Sheep - You Are Kidding Of Course!!**Continued from p. 2*

This is something I have thought about a lot as long ago as the late 70's and 80's. I know I am old but don't rub it in. In fact, I worked hard on this issue then and, believe it or not, got a free trip to the annual meeting of the American Sheep Producers Association in Reno, Nevada to accept an award for efforts thought to be important to the Northeast for lamb production. It was quality production and use of forages for sheep. Little good it did!

A sheep producer friend of mine from New Zealand (NZ) made an interesting point. He was visiting Maine in the 80's and said, "your biggest handicap to really being a serious producer of lamb is your cheap grain". That is certainly not true now. Grain has approximately tripled in price since then. But his point was that in NZ, grain has never been an option - they have learned how to produce meat, milk, and fiber totally on forage and can ship the product around the world and still make money. Wow! We can't even produce milk or meat and ship it 50 miles and see much profit.

My proposal is: Let's use our ace in the hole and produce natural, high quality lamb using TOTAL FORAGE BASED SHEEP PRODUCTION systems. Maine has the landmass, water, climate and the soil to produce high quality forages both for pasturing and for stored forage (hay, silage). We already have some lamb production taking place on islands in Maine, where forage is the only option. And a few others using only forage, but few really are exploring the potential of producing high quality lamb only on forages.

Here I am talking about a system that takes 100% of the grain out of the production program and replaces it with a highly managed pasture and stored forage system that dramatically reduces production costs and produces a highly desired product at a much improved profit.

Like much of sheep production, and key to the success of the Pipestone project, sheep genetics is important. We need sheep in the model I am proposing, that are selected for the ability to use high quality pasture and stored forage and turn it into milk and growth. Some of our breeds are better suited to this system than others. A key aspect of a system like the one I am proposing is a constant selection of breeding stock that are raised in a 100% forage program and selecting the stars as our breeding genetics.

Work from Iowa State in 1985 by Heath and et al. showed that both sheep and cattle could meet total reproduction and growth needs from a highly managed forage production system. Sheep are the best however, with USDA studies reporting that sheep are 26% more efficient than cattle at converting forage into meat.

The advantage of quality forage systems can be seen when we look internationally. New Zealand and Australia farmers produce meat and milk products that they can ship all the way to our supermarkets AT A PROFIT!! And why is that? Because they have worked hard at putting together a systems approach to production that keeps production cost low by using forages as the protein / energy source. They have a lower cost of production but with an equal consumer price meaning more opportunity for more profit.

Our New Zealand visitor provided a great take home message - "you as a farmer must think of yourself first as an agronomist - your product is forage - what grass and legume cultivars do I grow? How do I manage them for the highest protein and energy content? The animal then is simply the harvest machine - if you focus on constantly looking at how in the pasture you can provide the animals with high digestible protein and total digestible nutrients (TDN) via forages you are a long way there toward a profitable lamb producing system.

Here in Maine we also must focus on how we harvest and store the highest quality forage for use during the time when pasture is not an option.

Let me say we need as producers to know the difference between forage and high quality forage. Standing forage can vary from as low as 4% digestible protein to as high as 30%. And the energy values supplied by these forages mirror the protein levels. In this article I can't describe all the forage options we have but want to emphasize the point that all pastures are not the same - and as the protein analysis suggests we can see pastures that are as much as 10 fold different in energy and protein.

I have pulled together a table (p. 4) that summarizes estimated costs of a confined lamb production system versus a high quality grazing system. The numbers tell an interesting story and a huge difference in production costs.

The table summary of costs for a grain based and forage based system are based primarily on information from Minnesota. The numbers are simply an estimate to see on paper if there should be advantages in either a grain based or forage based program. The grain costs are those now being quoted in Maine, mid-November 2013. From this analysis a forage-based program would save nearly

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*Profit with Sheep - You Are Kidding Of Course!!*

*Continued from p. 3*

**Comparison costs of raising lamb from birth to finish on a grain based program vs a high quality forage system.**

Much of the information below is from a Minnesota program plus information from the forage program at Crystal Spring Farm, Brunswick, Maine.

NUMBERS ARE COSTS FROM LAST MONTH OF GESTATION THROUGH LACATION FOR THE EWE AND TWO LAMBS FROM BIRTH TO A FINISHED MARKET LAMB WEIGHT OF 110 LBS FOR LAMBS BORN IN FEBRUARY

**GRAIN BASED PROGRAM**

GRAIN (16% PROTEIN SHEEP PELLET- Cost: \$0.25/lb

\*ewe - 1 lb grain per day during last month of gestation = 30 LBS  
 - 1½ pounds/day during 8 week lactation period = 84 LBS  
 \*lambs - creep feed (45 pounds/ lamb - birth to 90 days) = 90 LBS  
 - 90 days of age to finish at 110 pounds  
 (avg. 69 days @ 2.2 lbs/day/lamb for 2 lambs = 152 LBS.

TOTAL GRAIN FOR A EWE AND 2 LAMB = 356 lbs

HAY - FOR GRAIN BASED PROGRAM

Ewe - last month of gestation (4 lbs/day for 30 days) = 120 LBS.  
 - 8 week lactation (4 lbs /day for 56 days) = 224 LBS  
 - lambs - hay from birth to finish (2 lambs) = 400 LBS

TOTAL HAY FOR EWE AND TWO LAMBS = 744 LBS

Cost summary - grain program

grain for ewe and two lambs (356 lbs @ \$0.25/lbs) = \$89.00  
 hay for ewe and two lambs (744 lbs @ \$0.10/lbs) = \$74.40

**GRAIN BASED SYSTEM:**

**TOTAL FEED COST FOR EWE & 2 LAMBS = \$163.40**

**FORAGE/PASTURE BASED PROGRAM**

SILAGE

EWE - last month of gestation (6 lbs/day-30 days) = 180 lbs  
 - 8 week lactation (6 lbs/day for 56 days) = 336 lbs

LAMBS - silage consumption birth to 8 weeks

50 lbs/lamb over 8 weeks for 2 lambs = 100 lbs

TOTAL SILAGE FOR EWE AND 2 LAMBS = 616 LBS

HAY- supplement silage feeding with 1 lb/ewe /day.

EWE - last month of gestation and lactation

- a total of 86 days @ 1 pound /day = 86 pounds.

Lambs - a total of ¼ pound/day for 80 day =20 lbs

Lamb - 2 lb/day/lamb for 105 day finish period

TOTAL HAY FOR EWE AND 2 LAMBS = 106 lbs

Lambs fed creep (alfalfa pellets)

45 lbs/lambs - birth to 90 days of age - 2 lambs)= 90 pounds

Cost summary - forage program

Silage for ewe & lamb - 616 lbs @ \$0.04 = \$24.64

Hay for ewe and 2 lambs - 106 lbs @ \$0.10/lbs = \$10.60

Lamb pasture cost (fencing, fertilization, seeding)

\$6 /lamb/month - 4 months for 2 lambs = \$48.00

**PASTURE/FORAGE BASED SYSTEM:**

**TOTAL FEED COST FOR EWE & 2 LAMBS = \$83.24**

*continued on p.5*



*Profit with Sheep - You Are Kidding Of Course!!**Continued from p. 4*

50% per lamb in production costs. Now you may have a program that would narrow the difference but with the high grain costs now in Maine it would be hard pressed to beat the cost advantage of using a high quality forage system.

Some will say – what about a mix of using forages and grain? Several studies show some interesting complications of this approach. The rumen of our wonderful sheep is designed for forages – not grain. Feeding grain complicates the working of the rumen process with always a balance between more energy/protein for animal use and acidosis, a process that limits animal health. I would suggest we can produce a high quality product at a lower cost with more PROFIT using only forages.

There are also other benefits from a forage based lamb production system. USDA researchers have reported that meat from grass-raised lambs has:

- 14% less fat,
- 8 % more protein
- and 3 to 5 times the level of CLA's (conjugated linoleic acid) – a family of fatty acids required for good human health.

These are all great marketing tools for promoting lambs raised on a total forage system. So using forage based production system we get less cost and better product. Wow!

Now a testimonial. For the last few years we at Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick have been seeing how far we can go to have our sheep operation use only forage as our protein/energy input. Seth Kroeck and myself manage the program. We are on a total forage system for both lamb production and the feeding of the ewe / ram flock.

This year (2013) we finally seem to have all components together, and we are very pleased with the results. Just a quick outline:

We lamb in February. The farm is primarily an organic vegetable operation and lambing later than February means serious competition for farm help time due to greenhouse work and other early spring tasks.



*Lambs Grazing a mixed grass legume pasture. Similar pastures have tested at 24% protein.*



*Ewes grazing an oats/field peas pasture in late fall.*

Ewes: during summer are rotated – about 3 times each week – through grass legume pastures, moved to higher quality pastures before breeding. The major focus of the farm is organic vegetable production, and in the rotation of crops some areas are planted to oats and field peas late summer. These areas are used as early to late fall pastures and provide high protein/energy with high digestibility.

We have tried a few ways to store high quality forage for the ewes to use during the winter and now are making round bale silage to try and capture stored forage that has 14%- 16% digestible protein. The silage is fed the month prior to lambing and during lactation free choice – we give them all they want with dry hay available free choice as well (we think it is important to maintain healthy rumen function). Again high quality forage is the emphasis here – we still think we have an opportunity to improve this part of our program.

We do offer a creep feed opportunity to our lambs and use alfalfa pellets as the input. We did cheat just a little bit from the no grain bit here. We sprinkled small amounts of soybean meal on top of the alfalfa pellet to encourage consumption by the lambs beginning at an early age.

Results of the above program has resulted in lamb growth only slightly below our previous high grain program with average daily lamb growth rates to 90 days averaging about 85% of the grain program. With that growth coming at much lower cost. I have added some pictures of our operation in progress. Along with a picture of a grass fed ram lamb weighing 118 pounds in August.

The lambs also had access to the silage offered the ewes during the barn-feeding period and it was interesting to see how quickly lambs realized silage was good stuff and became big consumers.

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*Profit with Sheep - You Are Kidding Of Course!!**Continued from p. 5*

There was another advantage that we observed this past spring - the transition for lambs from the barn to pasture for us in the past has seen an adjustment period for the lambs with lower growth rates for two weeks or so. But with the use of alfalfa pellets as creep and quality silage and hay available to the lambs, the adjustment period was virtually non-existent. We think a big reason is that lambs go to pasture with improved rumen development and quickly are set to now use high quality pasture as their only protein/energy input.

I will add here that all sheep on pasture (both breeding stock and growing lambs) have available a sheep salt/mineral mix free choice. Maine soils are low in a few trace elements needed for good sheep health - and by far one of the lowest cost ways to good sheep health is via a good sheep salt mineral mix.

Our program is based on Katahdin genetics. Our ewe flock is high percentage Katahdin. We breed roughly 40% of the ewe flock to a Suffolk, which for us creates a great market lamb. The other 60% of the ewe flock is bred to a Katahdin to produce breeding stock.

The lambs this past summer were grazed on high quality rye grass/alfalfa/timothy/blue grass mixes. We used portable electric fencing with lambs on a new paddock ever two days.



*A February-born Katahdin ram lamb raised on grass, weighing 118 lb in August..*

The results have been satisfying for us - we began marketing February-born lambs in July with a goal of 100 lb live weight.

Do we have the perfect system yet? NO - we are still learning to be better agronomists. "How do we produce even higher quality forage both for grazing and hay and silage?" is a question we are constantly asking ourselves. But we think we are on track to a more profitable, healthy sheep enterprise - and we have more opportunities still to explore.

If you have questions/comments I can be reached at: [tsettle@earthlink.net](mailto:tsettle@earthlink.net) or 207-841-6747

Tom Settlemyre

Prof. Emerit. Bowdoin College

Recipient of the MSBA Shepherd of the Year Award in 2011

Yarmouth, ME

### MSBA Wool Pool

The MSBA 2013 wool pool was held on Saturday, June 2, at the Maine Fiber Frolic at the Windsor Fairgrounds. Sheep breeders dropped off 1,134lb of wool. Buyer Lindsey Bartlett from Bartlett yarns, Inc. in Harmony, ME reported that he received an additional 12,334lb from sheep breeders who dropped off their wool directly at his mill.

We are in the planning stages for the 2014 wool pool. Are you planning on bringing your wool to the wool pool at the Fiber Frolic? Will you drop it off directly with the wool pool buyer? Are you selling your wool directly? You will receive a survey with further questions regarding the wool pool within the next few months. Your answers will help us better serve you, the membership.

As a paid member of MSBA you receive this newsletter four times per year. Please make sure we have your correct email address/mailling 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.

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

## MSBA Calendar of Events and Board of Directors (BOD) Meetings 2014

**January 7-9:** Maine Agricultural Trade Show, Civic Center, Augusta. Details will be posted at [www.getrealmaine.com](http://www.getrealmaine.com) in December.

**January 22-25:** ASI Annual Convention, Charleston, SC. More information at [www.sheepusa.org](http://www.sheepusa.org)  
 Lisa Webster (ASI Director, voting member), Richard Brzozowski (ASI Production, Education and Research Council), and Brant Miller (ASI Legislative Action Committee) will attend on MSBA's behalf. Convention reports will be published in the next Producer issue.



**February:** BOD meeting via conference call. Date, time, and call in number to be determined.

**March 1:** Spring 2014 issue of The Producer to be sent out. Submission deadline February 15, 2014.

**Mid or End March:** Maine Agriculture Day at the Legislature, Augusta. Date and time to be determined.

**April 4-5:** Blade Shearing School with internationally renowned instructor Kevin Ford. Location and time to be determined.

**April 19:** Beginner Shearing School, Wolfe Neck Farm, Freeport. Time to be determined.

**April:** Intermediate Shearing School. Date, time, and location to be determined.

**April:** BOD meeting at the Great Wall Buffet, Augusta. Date and time to be determined.



**May 16-18:** Northeast Livestock Exposition (NELE), Windsor. More information at [www.northeastlivestockexpo.com/](http://www.northeastlivestockexpo.com/)

**May 1-3:** ASI Legislative Trip to Washington, DC. The purpose of this annual trip is to bring the message of the sheep industry to the nation's capitol and coordinate updates on wool, lamb, trade, sheep disease and protection programs with the USDA. Visits with federal policymakers regarding legislation and meetings with agriculture and land management agencies about programs that affect the business of sheep producers in this country are being planned.

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)

Elected, re-elected, or confirmed at the annual MSBA meeting and BOD meeting on November 25, 2013.

**President:** Lisa Webster, North Star Sheep Farm, Windham, ME; [MSBA@me.com](mailto:MSBA@me.com)

**Vice President:** Brant Miller, Bowdoinham, ME; [bsmiller99@gmail.com](mailto:bsmiller99@gmail.com)

**Secretary:** Donna Flint, Oak Ridge Farm, Sanford, ME; [donna.flint@maine.edu](mailto:donna.flint@maine.edu)

**Treasurer:** Richard Brzozowski, Buckminster Farm, New Gloucester, ME;  
[richard.brzozowski@maine.edu](mailto:richard.brzozowski@maine.edu)

Cindy Green, Houlton, ME; [cindygreen98@gmail.com](mailto:cindygreen98@gmail.com)

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

Joe Miller, Rivercroft Farm, Starks, ME; [rivercroft@dialmaine.com](mailto:rivercroft@dialmaine.com)

Diane Schivera, Appleton, ME; [dianes@mofga.org](mailto:dianes@mofga.org)

Nancy Webster, Woolweb Farm, Brooks, ME; [woolweb@aol.com](mailto:woolweb@aol.com)

Philip Webster, North Star Sheep Farm, Windham, ME; [northstarfarms@me.com](mailto:northstarfarms@me.com)

Cindy Kilgore, ME; [Cindy.Kilgore@maine.gov](mailto:Cindy.Kilgore@maine.gov) (Maine Dept of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry; non-voting BOD member)



## New Shepherds Gain Confidence Through UMaine Extension Program

by Leah Hoenen

My husband and I found ourselves on the receiving end of more than a few odd looks and awkward silences as we told friends and family we were joining the ranks of latter-day homesteaders, moving to Maine and hoping to raise an unusual breed of sheep. It was a gamble, for sure, with only one job secured and no real knowledge of sheep. The whole thing was pretty unnerving until we realized we weren't the only ones just starting out.

Dogs in tow, we packed up and went north, leaving home, family and career behind. As we settled into our new digs, we found a shepherding family around the way and asked if we could stop over. During that fortuitous first meeting, we learned about the Emerging Maine Sheep Entrepreneurs Program and signed up, a few days late and fairly uncertain of whether we could meet the end requirements of business plans and detailed records, but pretty certain we'd get on our feet much faster this way.

With the books and online courses we've started to build a knowledge base, helping us figure the sheep out with fewer panic-stricken calls to the vet or neighbors. The farm visits were revelatory. Yes, we examined housing and fencing and learned about husbandry from people who have been doing this their whole lives. But, we also met many other couples trying the same venture.



Most have had their sheep for only a few years, and are raising flocks of single digits or dozens. All were open to sharing their experiences, successes and misadventures. Like us, they have some property, but not vast expanses, and don't want huge flocks of sheep.

Ours are Gotland crosses, and we hope to breed toward the highest possible percentage of Gotland DNA. The sheep are quiet, sociable and inquisitive. They're excellent company for our horse and spectacular property managers, eating grass, weeds and scrub, virtually eliminating the need for weed whackers. The Gotlands grow a long, curly gray fleece with a bit of luster - think elfish cloaks in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy - which spins into beautiful yarn. The original attraction for us was the breed's Swedish origin: my husband Karl's fam-

ily comes from Sweden, so it was an automatic draw. Their unusual looks and calm demeanor made us fall in love.

We hope to develop a small flock of high-percentage, true-to-type Gotland sheep that produce high-quality fleece we can retail. With the EMSE program, we're learning how to keep our sheep happy and healthy while meeting other new Maine shepherds with similar goals in mind.

Leah Hoenen  
Windham, ME

More information about this program can be found at <http://umaine.edu/livestock/sheep/entrepreneurs/> and in the December 2012 issue of this newsletter.



### 73rd Maine Agricultural Trade Show 2014

The show will be held January 7-9 at the Civic Center in Augusta. The detailed program will be published at [www.getrealmaine.gov](http://www.getrealmaine.gov) in December 2013.

MSBA will have a booth at the show on all three days. The booth will have information available about MSBA and the Maine sheep industry. We still need volunteers to staff the booth. Please contact Donna Flint at [donna.flint@maine.edu](mailto:donna.flint@maine.edu) or 207-324-1582 if you are interested. Do you have lamb recipes you want to share? Do you have woolens made from your sheep's fleeces, you would lend to MSBA for display? Please let Donna know.

On Wednesday, January 8, MSBA hosts an evening program from 6pm until 8pm with the following speakers:

Jim Weber, PhD (University of Maine) will talk about *Haemonchus contortus* (barber pole worm) and related issues.

Richard Brzozowski, PhD (University of Maine Extension) will give a sabbatical report from his sheep-related experiences in England and Iceland.

Dorothy Hayward will be receiving the 2013 MSBA Shepherd of the Year Award as recognition for her efforts to further the sheep industry in Maine (see p. 10).



## Ethnic Marketing of Lamb & Mutton An Educational Program for US Sheep Producers - 2013

Sheep producers across the country are invited to participate in a 4-session webinar series that is designed to help them explore the feasibility of marketing lamb and mutton to ethnic consumers.

This educational outreach has been jointly designed by Richard Brzozowski of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension; Susan Schoenian of the University of Maryland Extension; and Roger High of Ohio State University through a grant from the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) to the state sheep associations of Maine, Maryland and Ohio. The series is free to anyone who wishes to participate.

The purpose of this multi-state effort is to equip sheep producers with skills and knowledge for effective marketing of sheep/lamb meat to ethnic communities in their respective market areas.

This outreach will be accomplished via a webinar series (broadcast live and then archived) and will be supplemented by readings, self-driven activities, assignments and group discussions. Producers are encouraged to participate in each of the four sessions for a complete educational experience.

By the end of the series, webinar participants will be expected to . . .

1. Identify lamb consuming ethnic populations in their area by performing a demographic analysis of specific ethnicities using census data and other sources.
2. Learn about the ethnic consumers as well as the specific holy days and holidays when lamb is customarily preferred and the demand for lamb /mutton or specific value-added products is typically high.
3. Evaluate their production system to determine needed changes in breed(s), carcass size, lambing time and or management to meet this market if deemed feasible.
4. Adapt or create a marketing plan as a part of a business plan for their sheep operation to include an ethnic component (if appropriate)

Successfully answer an ethnic lamb marketing quiz with a score of at least 80%.

Each session is scheduled for 60-90 minutes in length and includes time for questions. Each session is scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm (eastern) and will feature sheep marketing experts. The schedule for the free webinar series is as follows:

Session 1 – Ethnic Market Background - Tuesday, November 19, 2013

Session 2 – Understanding the Ethnic Consumer - Tuesday, November 26, 2013

Session 3 – Understanding & Evaluating Your Market Options Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Session 4 – Your Marketing Plan - Tuesday, December 10, 2013

All sessions will be archived for later viewing. This series will also be useful for goat producers.

For more information about specific sessions, instructors and other related information go to

<http://umaine.edu/livestock/sheep/ethnic-marketing-of-lamb-and-mutton/>

or contact Richard Brzozowski via phone 207-926-3310 or email [richard.brzozowski@maine.edu](mailto:richard.brzozowski@maine.edu)

### Classifieds

Two purebred Finnish Landrace rams, born May 4, and May 20, 2013. Gentle and easy to manage. \$175 each. Call for more information. Appleton, 207.785.6969. Sarah Akin

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## Dorothy Hayward Inducted into the Maine Sheep Hall of Fame

by Richard Brzozowski

The Maine Sheep Breeders Association (MSBA) recognizes Dorothy Hayward of North Yarmouth as the 2013 Maine Sheep Hall of Fame inductee. This honor is awarded to individuals who have positively influenced the sheep industry in Maine and beyond. This award recognizes individuals who have consistently worked to improve some aspect of sheep production, management, health and/or marketing through demonstrated actions.

Dorothy Hayward served as a 4-H Sheep Club helper, assistant leader and leader in Cumberland County from 1967 to 1981. She served as a helper and assistant leader to Margaret Anderson. Dorothy's three boys, James, Dean and Andrew, joined 4-H as soon as they turned 9. Members of the Hayward family have been involved in sheep production and 4-H for nearly 50 years. When it came to sheep Dorothy and her husband, Bill, were a major influence on their own family and numerous others.

Upon hearing of this prestigious recognition, Dorothy reminisced about her years of experience as a 4-H leader. Over the years, she influenced hundreds of youth. The youth toured farms, woolen mills and meat processing plants. "I loved it. It was a great thing for the children. They learned lots from it." Many of the youth who participated in the club went on to raising sheep or into other aspects of farming as adults.

Dorothy was active in the 4-H Leaders Association and served as secretary. She was one of the first members of the MSBA. Congratulations Dorothy Hayward!

Dorothy will be recognized at the MSBA educational event scheduled for Wednesday evening, January 8, 2014 at the Maine Agriculture Trades Show in Augusta.

Richard J. Brzozowski  
Small Ruminant & Poultry Specialist; Agriculturist  
University of Maine Cooperative Extension

### Maine Sheep Breeders Association

### 2014 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**

**2014 Membership Dues \$20 per Year/per Farm, Payable by January 31, 2014**



**Make check payable to: MSBA Treasurer**

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

## Book Review

by Dorothee Grimm

According to USDA statistics, the meat of choice of the American palate is certainly not lamb. In fact, it is way, way down the list. Less than a single pound of lamb is consumed per capita. It is one of the lowest amounts of almost any food, right down there with food outcasts like Lima beans. Market forces being what they are, less demand makes for less supply. That affects economy of scale in a negative way, as Maine lamb producers are intimately aware and anyone else can see whenever perusing the meat counter at the local food emporium. So if lamb is going to cost more than other animal meats, what appeal does it have to the occasional lamb consumer to make up for the uptick in cost? To my mind, that would not be convenience, nutrition or safety. It would be, by a wide margin, the taste unique to lamb.

The taste of lamb is what Kate Gooding's little cookbook, Simple Gourmet Lamb with Side Dishes & Wine Pairings, is all about. It is a thin volume of 109 pages with 48 lamb recipes, side dishes and suggested wines to enhance the meals. Ms. Gooding is a chef, who has created savory recipes that are easy to follow and are nearly foolproof. One might wonder if her simple but gourmet-good recipes are the results of being a self taught professional chef. The impression I get is that she either left out or deftly cut any step that did not significantly impact the end results in a positive way. If you are inclined to a 'less is more' aesthetics, Gooding's cook book will fit into your attitude towards cooking and eating. It does mine.

The side dishes are high on versatility and are tasty foils for lamb or any meat main course for that matter. They can be switched around without confusing any palates. Mixing and matching makes for some interesting combinations.

The suggested wine pairings include a wide variety, including mead and Rose Champagne. While I have my favorite list of wines I like to drink with lamb dishes, other readers might be looking for something novel, and follow Ms. Gooding's suggestions. Beer drinkers won't be disappointed either, as she included several beer suggestions with some recipes.

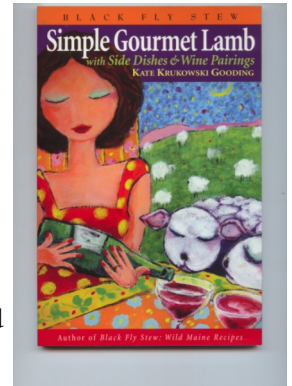
Simple Gourmet Lamb with Side Dishes & Wine Pairings is available for \$9.95 in bookstores and on-line.

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Many of us take their lambs to a USDA certified butcher, so they can sell lamb from their farm, at farmers markets, or to stores and restaurants. But we often have to educate our customers about the taste of lamb - which is not necessarily the mutton they might remember from their childhood. However, some customers might like a more gamey flavor and don't mind a layer of fat, while others prefer mild and very lean meat. So all lamb is not equal. If we want to highlight the variety of lamb, wherever in the flavor palette our particular breed falls, and the variety of ways in which lamb can be prepared, this cookbook can be a very helpful tool.

Ms. Gooding is willing to publish a special version of her lamb cookbook (incl. new and yet unpublished recipes) as a promotional tool for MSBA and its members. The minimum order is 500 books, so there have to be enough MSBA members who want to support this product for it to go to print. The final cost of the books depends on the order size, and has to be determined once we have a number of interested farms. If you are interested in this unique cookbook, please let me know by January 15, 2014. If I get enough interest, we can go ahead with this project.

Dorothee Grimm, editor  
dorothee.grimm@web.de  
207-883-5853



Edward Avalos, the USDA Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing & Regulatory Programs, along with several State and Federal Department personnel toured North Star Sheep Farm in Windham, the sheep operation of Phil and Lisa Webster, on Friday, September 27. Discussion included how Maine could benefit from less federal regulatory roadblocks when marketing regional meats, and how expansion of the sheep industry in Maine would be a great thing for not only Maine but the entire East coast market.

The meeting was attended by MSBA members Lisa Webster, Richard Brzozowski, and Brant Miller.





MSBA  
Maine Sheep Breeders Association  
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Gotland sheep at Leah Hoenen and  
Karl Arnberg's farm, Windham, ME