



The Producer

Maine Sheep Breeders Quarterly Newsletter

WINTER 2014

Message from the MSBA President

With colder temps and winter weather our thoughts turn to the necessary care of the flock during the long winter months. Preparing your farm with plenty of feed, bedding and supplies well in advance of the deep snow and freezing temperatures ease your work load when the snow is deep, the water buckets frozen and for some the flock includes caring for new-born lambs. May everyone have a blessed holiday season and safe winter.



Lisa Webster,
msba@me.com, 207-838-9410



Dear Sheep Breeders,

It was a bittersweet task to put together this newsletter: obituaries for dedicated shepherdesses on one hand, exciting news about sheep and fiber projects for high school and college students on the other. I think Anne Gass, Edith Allard, and Betty Stover would be glad to see that their passion is carried on by the next generation.

Please remember to renew your MSBA membership for 2015, if you haven't done so yet p. 11.

The calendar on p. 5 is an overview of what we have planned so far for the first few months of 2015. More details on each event will become available over the course of the year. If you have an event you would like to have listed, please contact me at dorothee.grimm@web.de

We are looking for volunteers for the first event in 2015, the Maine Agricultural Trades Show.

Please consider donating a couple hours to be present at the MSBA table. Bring your carding, spinning, knitting, or felting project. If you are interested, please contact Donna Flint (p. 10).

Previous newsletter issues are posted on the MSBA website <http://mainesheepbreeders.com/Producer.shtml> where you can read again some great articles on biosecurity during shearing, preparing your fleece for show, lifecycle of a parasite, etc.

Starting in 2015, the minutes of the BOD meetings will be available on the website.

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 like to share with other sheep breeders, as well as your feedback, comments, questions, and suggestions.

Enjoy the holidays, and have a good year 2015!



Dorothee Grimm, editor

News From The UMaine Icelandic Sheep Flock

By Kate Pouliot

In early September, the University of Maine was thrilled to welcome a flock of ten Icelandic ewes and two rams to Witter Farm in Orono. The sheep were born and raised at Frelsi Farm in Limerick, Maine, and we are incredibly grateful to Elaine Clark and David Patterson for their donation of the flock, their ongoing support, and their assistance in transitioning the flock from their farm to the university campus. The Icelandic sheep were originally brought to the farm when Dr. James Weber, a professor at UMaine, received a grant in conjugation with numerous other professionals throughout New England to research *Haemonchus contortus* (also



known as the barber pole worm) in sheep populations. The flock will be used for research on identifying and exterminating *H. contortus* over the next few years through new management practices and deworming practices. Research has already been started by undergraduate students to determine the prevalence of *H. contortus* on Maine and New England sheep farms, detecting *Haemonchus contortus* in white tailed deer, examining methods of controlling *Haemonchus contortus*, and developing a better assay for identifying *H. contortus* fecal eggs. These studies should be helpful to Maine and New England sheep farmers in their management of their sheep.

Most recently, Dr. Weber and students spoke at the Maine Sheep Breeders Association about the work being done with sheep at the University of Maine at Orono.

In the meantime, all of the students are thoroughly enjoying the woolly additions to our farm. We have started the Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club, and the majority of the daily sheep care is provided by a rotating schedule of student volunteers. One of the purposes of the club, in addition to caring for the flock, is to educate students about proper sheep management and care. Over the past few months, we have participated in worming, estrus synchronization, shearing, cleaning and processing wool, as well as ear tagging, handling techniques, and hoof trimming. The sheep are providing us with an incredible opportunity to gain valuable experience that will help us in our future careers. We couldn't be more pleased to have them here with us.



Our club was also gifted with a special surprise soon after the flock came to live in Orono. One of the young ewes, Wasserbebe, unexpectedly gave birth to a small white and black lamb. The lamb was born a bit premature and weighed in at only 3.7 lbs, but she soon proved to be a fighter! We named her Elska, which is Icelandic for "sweetie" or "love". Wasserbebe's milk never arrived, so the Elska became our bottle baby. Luckily, Dr. Weber has a dairy sheep farm of his own and was able to supply Elska with colostrum. After spending a few weeks living in Dr. Weber's kitchen, she lived in a few club members' apartments until she was big enough to return to the farm with the rest of the ewes. She was such a remarkable gift for all of us and has given us a great chance to prepare the club for our first lambing season this spring.

Overall, having the flock of Icelandics out at Witter Farm has been a fantastic experience and we can't wait to see what the future holds for the sheep. We are currently in the middle of the breeding season, and are hoping to lamb out between fifteen to twenty lambs in April. At that point the research endeavors should also be in full swing, and we

look forward to sharing our discoveries about *H. contortus* with sheep breeders throughout Maine. We will make our findings accessible to Maine sheep breeders through conferences and newsletters such as this one. We hope that the sheep will be able to stay at Witter for years to come and will continue to assist with research to benefit Maine sheep producers. We meet as a club on Friday afternoons to work with the sheep. Come to Orono and visit our flock some time!



Kate Pouliot
Ewe-Maine Icelandics Club
UMaine, Orono

Meet the Flock Project

By Marcia Martin

We all know that groups of sheep are called flocks. However, I never realized that you could define members of the fiber community the same way you would define the animals they raise. They are a flock, and some of the most supportive people I have had the pleasure to meet. Lindy Gallop of Swiftwater Farm in Turner and Pogo from Friends Folly Farm in Monmouth have been invaluable partners, and the inspiration for the "Meet the Flock" project.

The Meet the Flock Project is an initiative that is an important component of the Fiber and Fabric course at Leavitt Area High School in Turner, Maine. Through this project we're taking students through the complete fiber process; from farm to finished product. We go on field trips to area farms where we can meet the flock and talk to the farmers so that we may understand the process of raising fiber animals. Then we are buying and processing the wool to use in the fiber course. The intent is that the students meet the animals, see the farm, meet the farmer, and learn to spin, felt, knit, and crochet with the fibers we purchase.

In November we went to our first fiber farm, Swiftwater Farm. We learned about farm sustainability, how fiber is collected and processed, and general animal care. Many students haven't had lots of experience around animals, so interacting with the animals was a lot of fun for everyone involved.



When you look at students walking the halls of our school, you will see a number of students with knitting needles sticking out of their backpack, and see hands that fidget during class with something other than electronics. It's wonderful to see high school students knitting, crocheting, and spinning. It's also wonderful to see young people connecting with the agricultural community. There is so much that our young people don't know about agriculture, and they are our future.

This year Maine Agriculture in the Classroom partially funded my grant request for this project. Friends Folly Farm has donated the processing cost, and Swiftwater Farm has donated 2 fleeces to help us get started. Funding is limited this year, but I'm hoping as the program gets more established we will be able to provide more opportunities for students.

If you're interested in getting involved, want to hear more, or wish to donate equipment or materials please feel free to contact me.

Marcia Martin
Leavitt Area High School
Turner, ME
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Maine Fiberarts



The Maine Fiberarts online directory, Maine Fiber Resource Guide, www.maineiberresourceguide.com, contains listing information for fiber artists, craftspeople, producers, and businesses. Fiber folks can list their contact info, website, and a 25-word description free of charge at this direct link: <http://www.maineiberarts.org/touring/maine-fiber-resource-guide/add-new-fiber-resource>. We're happy to help or to list for you.

We have two shows of fiber work on display just now: contemporary fiber art at the Glickman Family Library at USM in Portland through December 19, and fiber work on sale for the holidays at 13 Main Street, Topsham.

Christine Macchi and Carol Jones are researching funding sources to help fiber producers and craftspeople create marketing materials such as photographs, postcards, rack cards, and simple websites. If you'd be interesting in taking advantage of such a service or would like to join a committee to make this happen, email us at mainefiberarts@gmail.com.

Check www.maineiberarts.org for more information about the shows and to find out what's new.

Carol Jones
Maine Fiberarts
Topsham, ME

COOPWORTH SHEEP – just a little bit different

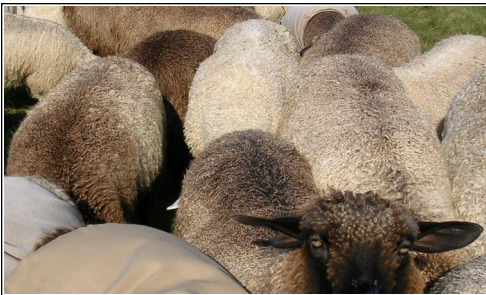
By Pam Child

When we decided to get a few sheep, I was driven by my addiction to spinning longwool fiber – natural color preferred – and Jim simply wanted to spend less time mowing our newly acquired, overgrown pastures. That was just over 20 years ago, and we had no idea what we were getting into. We looked around locally and found Romneys in abundance and some Border Leicesters; a few Cotswolds and the occasional Lincoln and of course, crosses of all of them. I bought a bunch of sheep books and plowed through them. At the end of all that reading, I still had no idea which breed to choose, but we now had a list of questions to ask while we shopped around.

As we began to connect with sheep folks, on numerous occasions we were directed to Tom Settlemire. We should go see him, we were told...so we did. I don't remember how much time we spent following him around his farm as he did this and that, but our heads were spinning with all sorts of new information when we left. Probably the most consequential thing he said to us that day was, "If you want to raise sheep, you'll need to be grass farmers first." We took



Coopworth ram lambs.



Coopworth fleeces on the hoof.

Tom's words seriously. It was becoming clear that feeding sheep was going to be the most expensive part of raising them. Back to the library...lots more reading...learning that not all grass is created equal, and not all sheep will do well on unimproved pasture.

With the growing list of must-haves in hand, we headed to the New Hampshire Sheep & Wool Festival to do some comparison shopping. As I walked through the booths, a fleece caught my eye. It was like nothing I'd seen before...the crimp and the silvery blue color were unique and the lustre...amazing! A conversation with the breeder followed and we were introduced to the Coopworth. We learned that this was a relatively new breed developed in New Zealand, officially named in the 1960's and first brought to the US in 1979. We pulled out the list...

Medium size...medium was perfect for me, and I'd read that shorter sheep are historically good grazers.

Foot health...Coopworth have consistently shown resistance to foot rot.

Lambing...their body structure provides plenty of space for their nutritional needs while growing multiple lambs and birthing them. Improved lambing percentages was the prime objective of their development.

Mothering...they're wonderful mothers. They'd been used to import lambs of other breeds through en vitro fertilization because of their attentive behavior and milkiness.

Disposition...Coopworths are alert but calm and confident, making them easy to handle.

It was looking good for Coopworth sheep coming to Hatchtown Farm, but we still had to ask the all-important grass question. Would these sheep eat and thrive on our rough, old pastures? Lucky for us, New Zealand is the land of grass-based management and these sheep were developed with low-input in mind. Our Extension person assured us that the grasses would "come back" given the chance. Putting sheep on it, religiously mowing behind them, a little soil amending, maybe a little frost seeding would certainly help it along.

We'd found a nice dual-purpose sheep not unlike many other breeds out there...but there was something that made Coopworths just a little different. The breed was viewed by some as less desirable due to the breed association's requirements for registration. The practice of selection and registration based on measured performance, rather than appearance, had come with the

breed from New Zealand and was not well received here in the US. Being told which sheep and how many from your lamb crop could be registered in any one year was tough to swallow.



Coopworth roving and yarns in several natural colors.

Registration wasn't a priority for us at the time, but raising a flock that was productive and efficient and wouldn't put us in the poorhouse was, so we went ahead with our decision to raise Coopworths. And we took a stab at the record keeping as well. It was actually fairly simple to work it into our schedule of regular handling and Jim managed the math and spreadsheets. We soon began to see the benefits of keeping track of traits like fertility, lamb growth and fleece production along with using management intensive grazing and forage analyses to minimize costs.



Hatchtown Coopworth ewe.

We were fortunate to have run into Coopworth sheep. By way of their heritage, we were introduced to performance recording and selection as well as the managed grazing that Tom spoke of ... tools that we've used over two decades to make our flock easy to live with, cost effective and profitable.

Continued on p. 5

COOPWORTH SHEEP - continued from p. 5

Today, Coopworths are much easier to find throughout the US. They've proven themselves to be profitable commercially and equally at home on the small family farm. They're a particularly good fit for sustainably managed homesteading ventures because they're hardy, easy keepers with multiple income potential. Coopworth wool is sought after by fiber crafters, spring born lambs can reach 100 pounds liveweight or better in one grazing season, and pelts are wildly popular.



Coopworth ewe lambs in the snow.

For more information about Coopworth sheep, please visit the American Coopworth Registry (ACR) at www.AmericanCoopworthRegistry.org. Established in 2002, their policy is to register purebred Coopworth sheep while encouraging selection through their voluntary merit-based Performance Designation program. ACR is a non-profit providing support and education through member-based services including a website, newsletter, discussion group and breed promotion activities, and they welcome all with an interest in the breed.

Pam Child

Hatchtown Farm -- Pam & Jim Child

Elegant Tools for Fiber Enthusiasts, Coopworth Sheep, Yarn & Good Eats

Bristol, ME

207-563-5851, www.Hatchtown.com - www.instagram.com/hatchtownfarm

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

January 13-15: 74th Maine Agricultural Trades Show. Civic Center, Augusta. The full schedule should be available soon at www.getrealmaine.com. MSBA will have a booth again, that needs to be wo/manned - to volunteer please contact Donna Flint at donna.flint@maine.edu

January 14, 6-8pm: MSBA workshop with presentations: Adam Vasher (APHIS) on guard animals and pet predators; Dave Kennard (Wellscroft Farm, NH) on pros and cons of herding dogs; MSBA members Joan Rolfe, John Simmons, and Philip Webster on guard animals.

January 28-31: 150th ASI Convention, Reno, NV. More information available at www.sheepusa.org. MSBA directors Brant Miller and Richard Brzozowski will attend the convention and report back to the membership in a future newsletter issue.

February 17, 7pm: BOD meeting via conference call. Call in number will be made available prior to the call. If you are interested in participating, please email Lisa Webster at msba@me.com

March 1: Spring issue of The Producer. Submission deadline 10 days prior.

March 22: Intermediate Shearing School with Gwen Hinman. Limit of six participants. Registration includes shearing manual, morning refreshments and lunch.

April 17-18: Blade Shearing School with Kevin Ford, at Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village, New Gloucester. Limit of ten participants. Registration includes shearing manual, morning refreshments and lunch each day.

April 26: Beginner Level Sheep Shearing School, at Wolfe Neck Farm, Freeport. Registration includes shearing manual and lunch. More information on these three shearing schools and registration forms will be available in 2015 at: <http://umaine.edu/cumberland/programs/agriculture/sheep-shearing-school/>

April 21, 7pm: BOD meeting via conference call. Call in number will be made available prior to the call. If you are interested in participating, please email Lisa Webster at msba@me.com

May 15-17: New England Livestock Exhibition (NELE), Windsor Fairgrounds, Windsor.

Friday: Youth Outreach Day. Events around livestock with Cindy Kilgore, Diane Schivera, Donna Flint.

May 30, 10am-2pm: Farm Tour with focus on sheep feed and guard animals at Collyerbrook Farm in Gloucester. Followed by pot-luck lunch and BOD meeting.

June 6-7: Maine Fiber Frolic, Windsor Fairgrounds, Windsor. More information at <http://www.fiberfrolic.com/>
Saturday: 8am-12pm MSBA Wool Pool. Afternoon: FAMACHA training.

Please check the MSBA website and Facebook page frequently for updates to the calendar www.mainesheepbreeders.com

Elizabeth “Betty” Stover, 1953-2014

Almost twelve years ago I met Betty Stover while searching for my first ram. I was looking for a smaller breed as my kids were young and I wasn't comfortable with keeping a larger ram. I called Betty, who raised Babydoll Southdowns and arranged a visit. That day, standing in her barn, enjoying her chunky little sheep, I realized that I had found a kind and wonderful woman, and someone who would become a dear friend to me.

Betty spent lots of time with me, she taught me different ways to shepherd my flock, we shared experiences and learned from our wins and losses. She was a beautiful soul who gave much of her self to her farm and to her children and grandchildren, including many foster children who found a safe and structured home with Betty and her husband Bill.

Betty was always proud of her family history and told me many stories about their roles as rug hookers in Newfoundland, Canada. She was an amazing rug hooker herself, creating her own hand-spun yarns for her designs, and teaching others how to rug hook with yarns rather than the traditional wool cloth strips. One of her favorite projects was of a hooked rug of a white rabbit. She used the hand-spun Angora from her own Angora rabbits for the body, and mohair from her Angora goats for the flower embellishments. The background was a natural chocolaty-brown, hand-spun yarn from her beloved Babydoll Southdown sheep.



From Babydoll Sheep, to Angora Goats, to her sweet Angora rabbits, Betty had a passion for the life she lived. She enjoyed dyeing her beautiful yarns using natural plants and the colorful dyes from W. Cushing. She inspired and encouraged me to try different things. Her house was always full to the gills with yarns and roving and projects she was working on. It was a welcoming, inspiring place to be.

Betty and I traveled together to many fiber shows over the years, always joking and teasing each other about who would win the bigger ribbons in the competitions. Sometimes we would load up my SUV with wool and drive to the mill in Vermont, bags upon bags were crammed into the back and sometimes strapped to the top getting us strange looks and laughs from the toll booth workers. Other times we would just visit each other's farms and share our ideas and work. She was encouraging and always so full of energy and life. I'll never forget the day she hugged me and said how she was so glad we had met.

She was honest, caring and a little outspoken, and she taught me that that was ok as long as you were true to your thoughts.

My heart is a little empty as I write this. I am thankful that she has been such a big part of my life. I am thankful for all she taught me and for her endless encouragement even when others thought my ideas were a little "off the wall". If you are lucky enough to have a person such as this in your life to guide you along the way in your shepherding adventure, grab on to all that they share and offer you as it is as precious as gold, and hopefully you will form a lasting and wonderful relationship like I did.

Kelly L. Corbett
Romney Ridge Farm Yarn Co.
Woolwich, Maine

www.romneyridgefarm.com www.facebook.com/romneyridgefarm



Edith Joan Allard, 1934-2014

Edith Joan Allard, 80, of Wakefield, died August 10. Born in Providence she was the daughter of the late Chauncey and Esther (Harris) Allard. Ms. Allard graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design/ (RISD) in 1956, majoring in illustration. After graduation she travelled in Italy before returning home to work in the art department at Little, Brown and Company in Boston. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1961 and returned to Italy to travel and paint.

Edith worked at Harvard University Press as a book designer, as a freelance designer, and as a designer at Designworks, in Cambridge, MA. She was on the faculty of New England School of Art and Design in Boston, and became head of their Design Department. After living in Cambridge, MA she moved to family land in Somerville, ME. Living off the grid on Crummett Mountain Farm she raised Icelandic sheep, grew and sold organic blueberries, and continued to illustrate and design books. She moved back to Wakefield in October of 2013.



The Lincoln County News

Anne Bradstreet Whitehouse Gass, 1930-2014

South Paris Resident, Master Spinner

Anne 'Nanky' Gass passed away at her beloved camp in East Raymond, on June 1, 2014. She was an amazing woman who will be much missed by the people who loved her including her children and grandchildren and the many friends she made, and kept, throughout her long life.

She was born in Portland to Anne and Brooks Whitehouse and grew up attending schools in Portland and in East Raymond, where her grandparents had built a camp at the turn of the century. Her father preferred to live at camp from April to November, so initially Nanky attended public schools in both towns, though she later stayed with her grandmother during the winters to attend Waynflete.

In high school Nanky joined the Portland Children's Theatre (PCT) and discovered a passion for all things theatrical. She learned to act, build sets, do electrical wiring, and direct plays. In the summer the PCT created the Stagemobile, loading the stage on the back of a flatbed truck and then unfolding it for performances in parks throughout southern Maine. The Stagemobile even traveled to New York City to participate in a gathering of children's theatres from throughout the country. She majored in theatre at Skidmore College and continued in children's theatre for many years. She loved watching kids grow through the process of rehearsing and performing as much as she loved the plays themselves.

In summer breaks from Skidmore Nanky worked as a counselor at Little and Big Wohelo on Sebago Lake. It was there she met her future husband, Allen Gass, who worked as a counselor at Camp Timanous on Panther Pond. They married in 1953. Marriage to Allen led to adventures she had never dreamed of growing up in cozy Portland, where she'd assumed she would live for the rest of her life. They started their married life in Cambridge while Allen completed his coursework at MIT. Tom, Katy and Amanda were born there, and then Allen accepted a job offer from a Canadian engineering firm, GeoCon, which required a move first to Vancouver, British Columbia, and then back to Port Credit, Ontario where Anne, Elizabeth, and Vicki were born. Although the moves were challenging she made many new friends from all over the world.

In 1964 the family moved to Andover, Mass., where Mom busied herself with her six children but still found time to direct plays at the YMCA in nearby Lawrence. She juggled scheduling and transportation to before- and after-school hockey practices, art classes, horseback riding, and swimming. Somehow she figured out how to equip, pack for, and shepherd the kids, two dogs, and often one or two neighbor friends on skiing trips to Mt. Abram in Maine, and on camping trips in the White Mountains. Eventually, to help with the family coffers she found work substitute teaching in the Andover Junior High School and managing a fabric store. Nanky discovered a new creative outlet when Allen's work required a move from Andover to the Seattle area in 1977, where they built a house in Snohomish in a grassy field with terrific views of the North Cascades. She bought her first sheep and soon became expert in spinning and knitting. This passion led to breeding natural colored sheep for their high-quality, hand-spinning fleeces, and she won many prizes at state fairs. As her human flock dispersed her sheep flock increased in size, eventually numbering about 30. This presented a challenge when Allen decided in 1984 that it was time to move back to Maine. What to do with the prize winning sheep?

They bought a large gooseneck trailer (the 'ewe haul') for their sheep that their big black truck ('Darth Vader') could tow. Another U-Haul held their worldly goods. Together the caravan took a week to make the 3,000 mile drive. In later years Nanky loved telling the story of the sheep caravan road trip.

Nanky and Allen settled at Moose Crossing Farm in South Paris, where they lived until Allen died in 1999. Nanky had just one more move to make, and that was to a house she built next door to the farm that which would be easier for her to manage as she grew older. In South Paris Nanky quickly made new friends and settled into the community, keeping in touch with her far-flung brood, 15 grandchildren and old friends by phone, mail, and email. She also continued raising and promoting natural colored sheep, served for many years as the president of the Maine Sheep Breeders Association, judged sheep and fleeces at the Common Ground and Fryeburg Fairs, and demonstrated spinning in the Museum at the Fryeburg Fair. She was inducted into the Maine Sheep Breeders Hall of Fame in 2010 for her leadership in the industry.

A central focus of the summers was time at the family camp on Panther Pond. She was always happiest when all six kids and as many grandkids as possible could be gathered there. In the summer of 2013 she spearheaded organizing a Whitehouse family reunion that brought nearly 100 relatives from all over the U.S. So it was fitting that she spent her remaining days at camp, with her family gathered around.



<http://obituaries.pressherald.com/>

Tips for Detecting Disease or Injury in Your Herd or Flock

Assembled by Richard Brzozowski, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

As a sheep or goat producer, the health of your animals is essential for optimum performance and profitability. You will likely use 4 of your 5 senses in detecting disease or injury (sight, smell, touch and sound) of your livestock. Building skills and knowledge to quickly identify signs of poor health of your livestock can help in their early treatment and recovery. Some individuals have the innate ability to interpret signs and symptoms of animals while other people have to work at mastering the interpretation of different situations. Take notes or photos of normal and abnormal animal conditions as these could help you improve your skills and abilities. Organize this information to help you remember past circumstances and treatments. Several tips to help you interpret normal and abnormal health conditions of sheep and goats are listed below for your possible use.

Animal Movement / Action – Is the animal moving with ease? Does the animal struggle, limp or stay back from the group? Does the animal walk straight or does it tend to veer to one side? Is the animal on its knees when feeding? Upon inspection of the animal's feet, is one hoof warmer in temperature than the others or is there injury? Twine or poly wire can easily get wrapped around a foot and cause severe damage and pain. Does the animal resist your attempts to handle that foot? Act quickly to diagnose and remedy the situation.

Stretching – Does the animal stretch when it stands up from a laying down position? This stretching (by newborns, young stock and adults) typically signifies normal health.

Appetite – Does the animal come to the feeder (hay or grain) and does it eat its full? Does the animal at pasture graze or browse with eagerness?

Rumination – Is the sheep or goat ruminating (regurgitating and chewing its cud)? The healthy act of ruminating will occur when they are laying down and standing. Watch and listen.

Droppings – What do the feces look like? Are there fresh droppings in the pen or in the field? Is the fecal matter solid or is it soft or loose? Are the pellets distinguishable? Is the rear end of the animal stained or caked with manure? Is the top line of the back fairly straight or does the animal show a humped back stance (strain) when defecating? Make a habit of inspecting droppings in the barn and at pasture for animals of all ages. Watch while animals defecate.

Urinating – Does the female animal arch its back and squat when urinating? This arching is normal. Does the male animal arch its back or strain to urinate? This arching for a male animal is not normal. Attention to the problem is required. Watch while animals urinate.

Body temperature – Does the animal have a body temperature that is above normal? Are the ears hot or cold to the touch? The normal body temperature of sheep and goats is 101.5 – 103.5 F. Obtain and learn to use a rectal thermometer. The body temperature of a down or sick animal is likely one of the first questions the veterinarian asks of you. As an alternative to rectal thermometers, infrared thermometers are used for a non-contact temperature measurement. These gun-shaped thermometers are reasonably priced and some models come with a laser target feature. The laser feature allows for the temperature measurement of specific body parts such as udder or feet. This type of thermometer might prove handy to farmers in measuring body temperature or body part temperature of individual animals from a distance.

Dehydration – Does the skin return to normal position after “tenting” or does the skin stay upright? Have you seen the animal drink? Is water in the drinking buckets being used up regularly? Is the water source clean and free of debris, dead birds, scum or manure? Have you checked for stray voltage around automatic watering systems? Make sure animals have access to fresh water 24/7. Have electrolyte (and possible stomach tube) available for use with dehydrated animals.

Body smoothness and bumps – Are there any visible abscesses or bumps under the skin. Is there any oozing or discharge from abscesses? Use your hands to feel body parts as you check for abscesses. Check especially in the body areas where lymph nodes exist (on the sides of the face and jaws, just behind the poll, along the neck, on the back legs, etc.). Consider having a supply of examination gloves of the proper size available for use when handling abscesses.

Face – Does the animal's face and shape of its face look normal? Are parts of the face swollen? Do the jaws look normal or are they swollen? Are there abscesses? Is there swelling on both sides of the face or is only one side affected? A symmetrical swelling of the face might be bottle jaw. Swelling on one side might be a sign of a problem tooth. Further inspection may be required.

Ears – Are the ears in their natural position? Do the ears droop abnormally? Are they hot or cold to the touch? Is the ear tag causing a problem?

Eyes – Are the eyes bright and clear? Or is there yellow matter or excessive tearing coming from the eyes? Are flies stirring about the face? Or are the eyes sunken into their sockets (another sign of dehydration)? Check the capillaries of the lower eyelid. Are the capillaries red? Is the animal anemic? Learn to use FAMACHA for monitoring possible blood sucking parasites.

Continued on p. 9

Detecting Disease or Injury - cont.

- Mouth** – Is the animal drooling or frothing from the mouth. Check mouth for missing teeth (broken mouth). Do the teeth and gums line up correctly? Are there sores around the mouth and lips? Use examination gloves in handling animals with sore mouth. It is a zoonotic disease.
- Bloodstains** – Do you detect any blood on the animal's hair or wool? Check for punctures or wounds caused by sharp protrusions or predators.
- Prolapse** – Does the rear end of the animal look normal or is a part prolapsing (rectal or vaginal)? Be prepared with a treatment device.
- Sounds** – Does each animal voice itself for normal interactions (for her offspring, for others in the flock/herd, at feeding time, at breeding, at lambing or kidding, etc.)? Or is their bleat strained? Take time to listen when you are with your animals. Train yourself for sounds. Listen for breathing, munching, regurgitation, etc.
- Smell** – Does the barn or area have an earthy smell, or do you smell rotting flesh, diarrhea, or other stinky smells? Flies can be telltale signs of diarrhea or decay.
- Rubbing** – Are some animals spending much of their time rubbing themselves? Inspect the animal for keds, lice, mites, maggots or other external parasites.
- Loss of hair or wool** – Are there patches of missing hair or wool? Hair or wool loss can signify external parasites, stress or a passed fever. Be observant for tufts of wool or hair on the ground or hanging on fencing, feeders, walls, gates or passageways, etc.
- Isolation or non-grouping behavior** – Does the animal mix with others or does it stay by itself? Animals typically want to be together as a group. This instinct is a method of protection from predators.
- Breathing** – Does the animal have a normal breathing rate? Is the tongue inside the mouth when breathing? Normal respiration rate for sheep and goats is 12-15 breaths/minute (20-25 kids). Does rattling occur when the animal breathes? A stethoscope would be a handy tool for listening to breathing.
- Coughing / Choking** – Can the animal swallow feed or water? Is an animal coughing or wheezing? Are you feeding dusty hay? Determine the cause of coughing or wheezing.
- Head cocking** – Does the animal hold its head in a natural position when standing, walking and laying down?
- General behavior** – Is the animal acting normal or abnormal? Is the animal scared or anxious? Abnormal behavior might include cribbing, circling, grinding of teeth, etc.

List other abnormal signs and symptoms here:

The following were added by participants at the Sheep & Goat Seminar:

Standing, Posture - on all four feet? arched back? Upside down (cast)?

Tugging tail - sign of intestinal distress

2014 Sheep & Goat Seminar: Animal Health

“Keeping your animals healthy is key to success in raising sheep or goats. A single disease, if not addressed effectively in a timely fashion, can put you out of business. Understanding how specific diseases can occur, preventing those diseases recognizing symptoms and using effective treatments are important for producers to understand and apply.”

This is the introductory paragraph to this year's seminar's manual. About 30 participants came to learn more about the subject.

Jim Weber (DVM, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Food & Agriculture, UMaine, Orono) explained how key disease preventive measures like biosecurity, quarantine, vaccinations, can prevent common diseases of sheep and goats like internal parasites, Ovine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP) and Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE), sore mouth, Johne's disease, overeating disease, tetanus, rabies. He presented new data of his research on the barberpole worm in New England. He compared the costs versus potential benefits of joining the new voluntary scrapie program. He rounded up the seminar with the questions: How much is a healthy flock/herd worth to you? Does it pay to worry about disease status? And his presentation clearly showed that it does!

Anne Lichtenwalner (DVM, PhD, Animal and Veterinary Science, UMaine Extension) presented information on reproductive problems and diseases of small ruminants. She reported her findings from the Caseous Lymphadenitis (CL) study in Maine, and presented case studies from the UMaine Animal Health Lab.

Several of Anne's students presented data from their research studies.

Marianne Walsh (DVM, State Veterinarian, Maine) talked about reportable diseases of small ruminants in Maine.

Richard Brzozowski (PhD, UMaine Extension) presented simple steps and clues to detect normal/abnormal animal behavior indicating disease (see p. 8-9), and health related tools and medications.

Some of the presentations will be published in future issues of this newsletter.

If you have questions for any of the presenters, please feel free to contact them:

Dr. Richard Brzozowski 207-781-6099 (office), richard.brzozowski@maine.edu
 Dr. Anne Lichtenwalner 207-581-2789 (office), anne.lichtenwalner@maine.edu
 Dr. Michele Walsh 207-287-7615 (office), 207-215-6727 (cell), michele.walsh@maine.gov
 Dr. James Weber 207-581-274 (office), jaweber@maine.edu

Other important health-related contacts for Maine sheep and goat producers:

USDA Veterinarian for Maine Dr. Chip Ridky chip.w.ridky@aphis.usda.gov

District Office USDA APHIS (New England) 508-363-2290, VSMA@aphis.usda.gov,
www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth

University of Maine Animal Health Lab 207-581-2788 or 2775
 For questions contact Melissa Libby 207-581-2788, Melissa.libby1@maine.edu <http://umaine.edu/veterinarylab/>

MSBA Annual Meeting



The annual meeting started out with dinner prepared by Lisa Webster, Northstar Farms, and her mother Linda Daigle. As in previous years, Linda had again made beautiful table decorations (see picture).

After dinner, MSBA president Lisa Webster presented an update on the sheep industry in Maine, and reviewed the 2014 MSBA activities.

Dr. James Weber presented an update on the Icelandic sheep flock that moved to the Witter Farm at UMaine in Orono in September (see p. 2). He currently has grant money available for two years to keep the flock for research.

Dr. Anne Lichtenwalner spoke about the new UMaine Animal Health Lab. Funding for the lab was just passed in a bond issue in November elections, but still has to clear the governor's desk. She mentioned that the lab is still offering CL testing for free, as part of her research project. She is currently pondering new research areas for future projects such as coccidia (a cause of scours in lambs), working sheep dogs, and wildlife livestock interface problems.

Dorothee Grimm
 Scarborough, ME

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**



MSBA
Maine Sheep Breeders Association
Dorothee Grimm
227 Black Point Rd
Scarborough, ME 04074



Hatchtown Farm Coopworth ewes and lambs on pasture