



BBSAI NEWS

Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International Newsletter

November, 2003

From the President

Dear BBSAI Members and Supporters,

At this time I would like to publicly say thanks to a lot of people who have, in a very short time, made many new things happen. First and foremost, I thank all of you who voted me into office. I would like to thank James Harper for all of his efforts in putting the newsletter together for the BBSAI. Also Carol Elkins for maintaining the website and for researching and getting the software for the cookbook as well as Mary Swindell for volunteering to put the cookbook together for us. Mark Fleming deserves a huge thank you from all of us for his willingness to take on the tremendous task of learning how to run the BBSAI's database as well as Ray and Janet Palmer for taking the time to teach him. Lisa Shrum deserves a very large thank you for her time and effort in designing the new association logo. Also thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Robert D. Herr for the Sheep Market Calendar. For taking time from their busy schedules, I would like to thank Dr. Stephan Wildeus, Susan Schoenian and Dave Notter for submitting articles for our newsletters. Thank you Ed Christiansen and Holly Kelly for taking the time to write your articles. Mary Swindell, thank you for all your help with the BBSAI Cookbook. I would also like to recognize all of our supporters with the ALBC, Sydell, All Digital Photography, and Register's Sheep and Goat Supply. If I have forgotten anybody, I apologize.

In the months and years to come, I look for many new and exciting things to take place within the BBSAI. If anyone has any ideas and suggestions on what they would like to see happen, feel free to contact me at any time. It will take the commitment and cooperation of each and every single one of us to make our wonderful association all that it can be. The sky is the limit. Don't forget to support the BBSAI by purchasing a new mug or apparel with the BBSAI logo at our brand new BBSAI gift shop. You can find the gift shop by going to the association website at www.blackbellysheep.org and clicking the BBSAI Gift Shop link.

Sincerely,

Joshua B. Weimer, President BBSAI

Barbados Blackbelly Sheep in the Caribbean

by Susan Schoenian¹
Sheep and Goats Western Maryland Research and Education Center

From 1998 to 2002, I served as a technical advisor to the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Caribbean Hair Sheep Trade Initiative, visiting Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, and the British Virgin Islands. I judged the National Sheep and Goat Show in the Dominican Republic on three occasions. This article is based on my observations and experiences in these countries.

Sheep raising is a traditional enterprise in many parts of the Caribbean. According to the Food and Agri-

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Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International Newsletter

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The BBSAI Newsletter welcomes articles, photographs, letters and classified ads that deal with Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly Sheep. Publication of articles or advertisements is not necessarily an endorsement by BBSAI. No part of The Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International Newsletter (including photographs) can be reprinted, put on websites or used in any manner without the written permission of the President or Secretary of the Association.

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Member's Spotlight

by Joshua B. Weimer, President, BBSAI

In this issue I would like to recognize Holly Kelly of Holly's Hidden Ranch. She is currently a lifetime member of the BBSAI. Holley is located at 650 Hidden Ranch Way P.O. Box 489, Arroyo Grande, California 93421. If you would like to contact her, her phone number is 805-481-8615. Holly has registered 32 sheep in the last year. Thanks to members like Holly, the Association has become what it is today. Without memberships and registrations, the Association would not be able to exist. All of Holly's breeding animals are currently registered with the BBSAI. When asked why she felt it was important to register her animals, she replied that the BBSAI is a world-wide registry that promotes, maintains records on, and preserves the Barbados Blackbelly breed. She also added that the Association is dedicated to preserving and improving our wonderful breed. The Association is constantly offering more to those who are involved with the registered sheep. Holley started out with the Blackbelly sheep to train her herding dogs. She rents her animals out to other people who want to train their own dogs to herd sheep. They are rented for \$20 per half hour session. She found the sheep to be quite interesting and realized that they could add a lot to her small ranch environment. She didn't realize just how much of a lifestyle change she was in for. Holly says that she is so proud when visitors look out into the oak trees and see fifty or sixty Barbados grazing/browsing along contentedly. She added that the atmosphere is priceless. Holly says that we are all welcome to visit her farm at any time and there is never any obligation to purchase stock. She sent me a really nice write-up on the Barbados Blackbelly sheep on her farm. Due to space requirement in this issue, I am not able to print it all. I hope to publish the rest of it in a later newsletter. Again, on behalf of the Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International, I would like to say thank you for your patronage, Holly.

Preserving Sheep Genetic Resources National Animal Germplasm Program National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation (USDA/ARS) Ft. Collins, Colorado

Inserted in this issue is a one-page overview of the National Animal Germplasm Program. This information will greatly help us understand the dynamics of our breed. For additional information please contact:

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Barbados Blackbelly Sheep at Virginia State University

Stephan Wildeus and Joni Rae Collins
Small Ruminant Program, Virginia State
University, Petersburg

Background

Virginia State University established a Meat Goat Research Program in 1992. The program's objectives were to identify and develop a superior meat-producing goat and to develop low-input management systems suitable for the environment of the Mid-Atlantic region. A research herd composed of five goat breeds with potential for meat production was initially established. It was subsequently decided that hair sheep would make a significant contribution to the program, and Katahdin hair sheep were added in 1997, followed by Barbados Blackbelly in 1998, and finally St. Croix in 1999. The effort was subsequently renamed 'Small Ruminant Program' to reflect this expanded species composition. The facilities currently house 250 breeding females, representing seven breeds of goats and hair sheep on 60 acres of permanent and annual pastures, and include an extensive pen system, animal handling facilities, and on-farm laboratory.

The Barbados Blackbelly flock at VSU stems primarily from a very generous donation of 25 ewes and 5 rams by Dr. Claude Hughes and Ms. Linda Sakiewicz, owners and operators of Bracken Brae Farm in North Carolina. The rams from this acquisition were used to establish breeding lines to maintain some genetic diversity in the flock. Additional stock was acquired in 1999 through an importation of two Barbados Blackbelly ram lambs from the research flock of the University of the Virgin Islands. Again, these rams were used to establish additional breeding lines. Finally, three Barbados Blackbelly ewes were obtained from the dispersal of a flock in Ohio, that was established from an importation of two ewe lambs and one ram lamb from the University of the Virgin Islands research flock and subsequently maintained as a closed flock.

The Barbados Blackbelly flock is part of a mixed species herd of 150 sheep and goats. This herd is maintained as a single group, except during mating. Females are mated in pens using single sires, with two sire groups per breed for each mating. The herd is managed under an accelerated, 8-months breeding system, with 30-day mating periods in November, July, and March. Lambs are weaned at 9 weeks of age. The herd is maintained predominantly on forage (pasture and hay) with some supplementation dependent on stage of production (late gestation or lactation). There is limited control of gastrointestinal parasitism through anthelmintics to allow for the identification of breeds and individuals within a breed with high tolerance to internal parasites.

Current Activities

A major emphasis of our work with the Barbados Blackbelly sheep is their evaluation under the accelerated mating system. We recently completed the 6th and final, mating in a four year production cycle. As part of the project we recorded seasonal estrus and mating activity, pregnancy via ultrasonography, litter size at birth, and weaning. These records are used to determine embryonic mortality, and neo-natal and pre-weaning survival. Also recorded are lamb birth and weaning weights and ewe weights in 14 day intervals. This information is used to determine production efficiency (weight of lamb born and weaned in relation to ewe body weight) of the various breeds under the accelerated system and to identify unique breed characteristics.

Weaned lambs are used in feeding trials to determine performance on high forage diets. Sampling is currently in progress in a cooperative feeding trial with the University of Georgia and Louisiana State University evaluating growth rate, feed intake, carcass characteristics, and gastrointestinal parasite tolerance in Barbados Blackbelly, Katahdin, and St. Croix lambs maintained either on permanent pasture or in pens with hay-based diets and supplemented at 1.5% of body weight either with a low or high crude protein supplement. Body weight, fecal egg counts, and packed blood cell volume are being determined in 14-day intervals from April to September. Male lambs will be slaughtered to determine carcass characteristics and to record the gastrointestinal parasite burden. Findings are intended to confirm results from a smaller pilot trial conducted earlier.

Efforts are under way to establish a functional estrus synchronization protocol for hair sheep using the limited number of products currently available on the U.S. market for this purpose. Initial trials have looked at the estrus response and timing of estrus, ovulation rate, and fertility using melengestrol acetate (MGA) as a source of exogenous progesterone. Protocols are also being developed for the collection and freezing of hair sheep ram semen. Initial trials evaluated differences in ejaculate quality in samples collected either by artificial vagina or electroejaculation. Current trials look at the effect of freezing protocol on the post-thaw quality of frozen semen.

Future Plans

The Barbados Blackbelly sheep in the U.S. is a breed with a small population size (especially polled stock) and a narrow genetic base. It appears to have lost some of the unique characteristics that the breed displays in its Caribbean populations (large litters, good parasite tolerance). One of our goals is to introduce additional, original germplasm into our flock at VSU to continually expand its genetic base. Our research in assisted reproductive technologies is aimed to help us to effectively employ cryopreserved semen and artificial insemination to

achieve this goal. We hope to involve interested breeders of polled stock in the U.S. in this effort.

A second goal is to design economical, forage-based production systems for Barbados Blackbelly sheep that capitalize on their ability to breed out-of-season, have multiple offspring, and tolerate parasites. Lambs produced under such a system will not fit the traditional lamb market, but they may have a role to play for ethnic niche market production or as organically produced meat. In order to maintain the Barbados Blackbelly as a viable breed in the U.S., they have to be established as a breed suited for economically feasible niche market production and/or for upgrading wool breeds towards a hair sheep composite.

BBSAI Secretary/Treasurer Update

Since taking over this position from Ray and Janet Palmer in June, I have been busy trying to learn and use the computer database and associated software. The transition has been fairly smooth and with Ray's and Janet's on-going help, I will get a handle on everything. In this update, I will address items in the following categories: Memberships, Application for Pedigrees, Website Breeders Directory, and a listing of new and renewed members.

Memberships

Applications for membership can be downloaded off of the Association's website at: www.blackbellysheep.org or you can contact me at secretary@blackbellysheep.org. If you do not have computer access, you can contact me at my home address and I will be glad to send one out to you. My address and phone number will be at the end of this update. On your applications, please be sure to include your e-mail address, if you have one. This may help us in the future to cut back on some of our mailing fees.

Applications for Pedigrees

The applications for the pedigrees can also be obtained on the Association's website or through me. In filling out the application, here are a few points that will help us expedite the registration process:

1. Be sure to include your sheep's birth date as it is an integral part of the Association Number we assign to your animal.
2. You do not need the Sire's name, Dam's name, or Association Number to obtain a pedigree.
3. If you have only the Sire's name and Dam's name, without an Association Number, you can obtain a pedigree.
4. Please include a picture of your sheep with the application. Some of the pictures received through e-mail are difficult to download and in some cases they lack clarity. Your picture will be returned intact with your certificate.

Website Breeders Directory

We have made a few changes to the Breeders Directory since it was last updated in June. The Directory will be updated on a quarterly basis, which will be October 1st, January 1st, April 1st, and July 1st. If you want to update or change your information on the Directory, please contact me. When I receive a change, I update the database and then forward it to Carol Elkins, who manages and updates the Association's website. Please do not contact Carol with your changes.

New and Renewed Members

We would like to welcome and thank the following people for becoming and/or renewing their memberships since June: Mandy Missant; Diane Baker; Sherry Lorentzen-Gacke; Lindsey Jacobson; and Tabettha Hill.

Secretary/Treasurer Contact Information

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments. We are all looking to strengthen and expand our Association, along with preserving and expanding the Barbados Blackbelly breed.

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Resistance to Internal Parasites in Lambs of Hair Sheep Composite Breeds

David R. Notter - Virginia Tech

Introduction

The Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences maintains an active program of evaluation and further development of hair sheep. The objectives of the program are three-fold: 1) to evaluate the production potential of currently available hair x wool composite breeds such as the Katahdin and Dorper, 2) to develop easy-care, wool-free ewe types that can be used in crossing with terminal sires such as the Suffolk, Columbia, and Texel to produce lean, muscular lambs that can be harvested at live weights of 120 pounds or more, and 3) to study the inheritance of easy-care characteristics such as freedom from (or shedding of) wool and resistance to internal parasites using crosses of hair and wool breeds. While there are excellent opportunities to market lambs from hair sheep at relatively light weights in various ethnic and other niche markets, the research program at Virginia Tech has chosen instead to focus on the development of hair sheep breeds that can directly compete with existing wool breeds in the more traditional heavy-lamb markets.

The Barbados Blackbelly has made major contributions to the Virginia Tech hair sheep research program and has proven itself to be a valuable resource for development of productive, easy-care sheep. The article below summarizes recent research on resistance of various hair sheep types, including Barbados Blackbelly crosses, to internal parasites.

Summary of Results

A comparison of resistance to infection by barber-pole worms (*Haemonchus contortus*) in straightbred Katahdin, Dorper crossbred, Dorset crossbred, and Caribbean hair sheep crossbred lambs revealed that resistance levels were consistently higher for Katahdins than for Dorper crosses or Dorset crosses. In Katahdin ewe lambs exposed to artificial parasite infection in drylot (Table 1), average numbers of parasite eggs in the feces were 45% less than those observed in Dorset crosses and 62% less than those observed in Dorper crosses. Dorper crossbred ewe lambs had higher fecal egg counts than Dorset crosses in all 3 years. In wether lambs exposed to natural infection by grazing of contaminated pastures (Table 2), severity of infection was less than in artificially infected ewe lambs. However, fecal egg counts in Katahdin wethers on pasture were still 45% lower than those observed in Dorper and Dorset crosses. Differences in fecal egg counts between Dorper and Dorset crosses were not observed in grazing wethers. Caribbean hair sheep crosses (St. Croix x Barbados Blackbelly) were evaluated only on pasture with natural infection. Comparisons of fecal egg counts between Katahdins and Caribbean hair sheep were not consistent

across years. Caribbean hair sheep had lower egg counts than Katahdins in 2001 but not in 2002.

Effects of parasitism on animal health are generally monitored by measurement of packed cell volume, which quantifies the percentage of red blood cells in a blood sample. The barber-pole worm affects its host by attaching to the gut wall and sucking blood. Animals become anemic with losses in production and, potentially, death resulting from blood loss in the gut. Low values for packed cell volume are thus indicative of anemia and are commonly associated with high fecal egg counts. Measures of packed cell volume in Katahdin lambs were generally equal to, or higher than, those of other breeds, confirming a level of resistance to parasitism. Interestingly, Dorper crosses exposed to either natural or artificial infection consistently had slightly, though not significantly, higher packed cell volumes than Dorset crosses, despite their generally higher fecal egg counts. Dorper crossbred wethers also had higher packed cell volume than Katahdin wethers under conditions of low parasite challenge in 2002.

This situation, in which an animal becomes infected by parasites but is still able to maintain reasonable health status, is sometimes referred to as *resilience* to infection. Dorper crosses thus appeared to be somewhat less resistant to internal parasite than Dorset crosses, at least under the more challenging environment provided by the artificial infection, but their somewhat greater resilience to infection allowed them to maintain similar packed cell volume. In contrast, Katahdin and Caribbean hair sheep crosses were clearly more resistant to parasitism, and also tended to become less anemic.

Although the Dorper and the Katahdin are both derived from hair sheep crosses, differences in parasite resistance between the two breeds are not surprising. The Dorper and the Katahdin were derived from very different types of hair sheep. The Dorper originated in South Africa from crosses between the Dorset and the Blackhead Persian. The Blackhead Persian is a fat-rumped hair breed from the arid lands of the Middle East. In South Africa, the Dorper is likewise most commonly found in arid and semi-arid regions where parasite challenge is often low. There is thus nothing in the evolutionary history of the Dorper breed to suggest that these animals would have developed resistance to internal parasites. In contrast, the Katahdin was developed from the thin-tailed Caribbean hair breeds. These breeds originally came from the hot, humid, high-rainfall regions of West Africa, where parasite challenge is extremely high and where development of parasite resistance would have been advantageous. The results observed in the current study are thus consistent with the evolutionary history of the breeds involved.

The Details

This experiment was conducted over 3 years (2000-2002) at the Southwest Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Glade Spring. Dorset and Dorper crosses were produced by mating rams of these breeds to whitefaced crossbred ewes (50% Dorset, 25%

Rambouillet, and 25% Finnsheep). Four imported Dorper rams were used by AI in 2000; two different natural service rams were used in each of the next 2 years. A total of eight Dorset rams were represented. Katahdin lambs were purchased at weaning (approximately 60 days) from a total of 10 different flocks, and St. Croix x Barbados Blackbelly wethers were introduced at weaning from the Virginia Tech Sheep Center, Blacksburg. Wethers were evaluated only in 2001 and 2002, and no Caribbean hair sheep ewe lambs were tested.

Ewe lambs were maintained in drylot after weaning and at approximately 120 days of age were challenged with an oral drench of approximately 10,000 infective larvae of barber-pole worms. Ewe lambs remained in drylot after infection. Fecal samples were collected for determination of fecal egg counts and samples of blood were taken to determine packed cell volume at 3, 4, 5, and 6 weeks after infection in order to monitor the course of infection.

Wether lambs remained on pasture after weaning at about 90 days of age. They were provided with supplemental grain and dewormed as needed. At about 120 days of age, wethers were dewormed and returned to infected pastures. Fecal egg counts and packed cell volume were measured at 3, 4, 5, and 6 weeks after deworming.

Means for body weights, fecal egg counts, and packed cell volumes over the measurement period are shown for ewe lambs in each year in Table 1. Consistent breed differences in body weight were not observed. Dorper crossbred lambs sired by imported rams in 2000 were significantly heavier than lambs of other breeds, but this advantage in body weight was not observed for Dorper crosses in 2001 or 2002. Breed differences in fecal egg counts were quite consistent across years, even though considerably reduced under the low mean fecal egg counts observed in 2000. Breed differences in packed cell volume were likewise consistent in 2000 and 2001 but much-reduced in 2002.

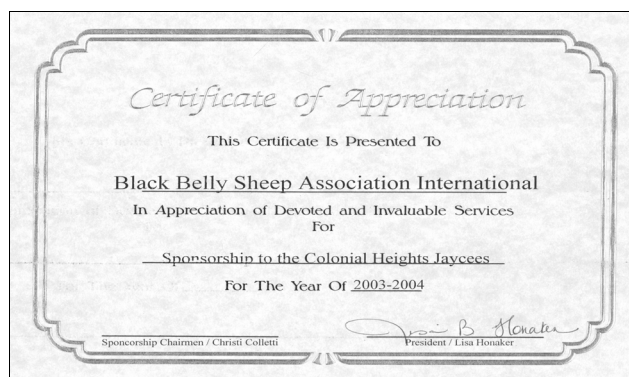
Results for wether lambs grazing infected pastures in 2001 and 2002 are shown in Table 2. Katahdin wether lambs in 2001 were notably smaller than in 2002. The 2001 Katahdin wethers came from only one flock, and a high proportion were out of yearling ewes, so the Katahdin breed is probably better represented by the 2002 wethers and by the ewe lambs, where four flocks were sampled in each year. Despite the lower body weights of Katahdin wethers in 2001, breed rankings for fecal egg counts were consistent across years in wethers, indicating higher levels of worm resistance in breeds with Caribbean hair sheep ancestry. Breed differences in packed cell volume were consistent with those in fecal egg counts in 2001. In 2002, low rainfall in late summer reduced the level of worm challenge and required an increase in level of supplemental feeding. Under these conditions, breed differences in packed cell volume were reduced and the apparently high baseline level for packed

cell volume in the Dorper was evident.

These results confirm high levels of parasite resistance in Caribbean hair sheep and a moderate level of resistance in Katahdins. Dorper crossbred lambs were not more resistant than Dorset crosses, but the Dorper appears to express a degree of resilience to infection that may reduce symptoms of parasitism in moderately infected animals.

This report was taken from the M.S. thesis of Hima Bindu Vanimisetti at Virginia Tech (vbindu@vt.edu). For more information, contact Dr. David Notter (drnotter@vt.edu) or Dr. Scott Greiner (sgreiner@vt.edu). We would like to thank the Katahdin breeders who produced lambs for the study and the American Dorper Sheep Breeders' Society for donation of the semen used to produce the 2000 Dorper crossbred lambs.

See Table 1. on Page 7



A BBSAI member anonymously made a donation to the Colonial Heights Jaycees.

With Great Appreciation!

from James Harper

I would like to thank the below devoted individuals who made this issue of the BBSAI Newsletter possible.

Joni Collins - Virginia State University
Carol Elkins - Regional Director, Webmistress and Years of Dedication to this Breed
Ed Christiansen - Ed Jingle Farm, Petaluma, California
Mark Fleming - BBSAI Secretary/Treasurer
Robert and Betty Herr - Nix Besser Livestock Company
Holly Kelly - Holly's Hidden Ranch
David Notter - Virginia Tech
Susan Schoenian - Maryland Research & Education Center
Joshua Weimer - BBSAI President
Stephan Wildeus - Virginia State University

Table 1. Means and standard errors for body weights (lb), fecal egg counts (FEC; eggs/gram of feces) and packed cell volume (PCV; %) during infection for ewe lambs in drylot following artificial infection with barber-pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus*) over 3 years

Measurement	Breed group ^a	Year			
		2000	2001	2002	Average
Mean body wt	DO	91.8 ± 1.1	90.7 ± 0.8	86.8 ± 1.5	89.8 ± 0.7
	DP	103.3 ± 1.6	84.9 ± 1.0	89.7 ± 1.1	92.6 ± 0.7
	KT	90.7 ± 1.1	90.5 ± 1.2	85.2 ± 1.2	88.8 ± 0.7
Mean FEC	DO	897 ± 122	2835 ± 303	2490 ± 468	2074 ± 190
	DP	1064 ± 219	4064 ± 541	3866 ± 564	2998 ± 271
	KT	539 ± 79	1188 ± 188	1720 ± 265	1149 ± 114
Mean PCV	DO	27.9 ± .5	25.0 ± .4	26.1 ± .7	26.3 ± .3
	DP	29.5 ± .8	26.2 ± .5	25.5 ± .6	27.1 ± .4
	KT	30.8 ± .6	28.9 ± .6	26.2 ± .6	28.6 ± .3

^aDO = Dorset crossbred, DP = Dorper crossbred, and KT = Katahdin.

Table 2. Means and standard errors for body weights (lb), fecal egg counts (FEC; eggs/gram of feces) and packed cell volume (PCV; %) during infection for wether lambs following deworming and return to contaminated pastures over 2 years

Measurement	Breed group ^a	Year		
		2001	2002	Average
Mean body wt	DO	69.6 ± 1.0	83.2 ± 1.3	76.4 ± 0.8
	DP	71.6 ± 1.1	81.1 ± 1.2	76.4 ± 0.8
	KT	50.3 ± 1.4	90.8 ± 1.6	70.6 ± 1.1
	HH	53.5 ± 1.4	65.5 ± 1.4	59.5 ± 1.0
Mean FEC	DO	1556 ± 151	953 ± 123	1255 ± 97
	DP	1556 ± 160	944 ± 108	1250 ± 97
	KT	1012 ± 135	351 ± 55	682 ± 73
	HH	437 ± 60	284 ± 39	361 ± 36
Mean PCV	DO	24.4 ± 0.6	33.9 ± 0.8	29.2 ± 0.5
	DP	25.9 ± 0.6	35.5 ± 0.7	30.7 ± 0.5
	KT	26.1 ± 0.8	32.8 ± 1.0	29.5 ± 0.6
	HH	27.4 ± 0.9	32.6 ± 0.9	30.0 ± 0.6

^aDO = Dorset crossbred, DP = Dorper crossbred, KT = Katahdin, and HH = St. Croix x Barbados crossbred.

(Caribbean, con't. from page 1)

cultural Organization of the United Nations, there are approximately 1.4 million sheep in the Caribbean. Cuba has the largest national sheep flock, followed by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Some of the smaller islands such as Barbados, have large sheep populations relative to their geographic size. There are considerably more goats than sheep in the Caribbean, though some islands have larger sheep populations.

As with other countries and geographic regions, various production systems are used in the Caribbean to produce lambs, though there are certain practices that are popular among many producers. These include year-round and accelerated lambing, early weaning, and confinement rearing.

Ewes in the Caribbean are able to produce lambs throughout the year, since there is not much variation in photo period (length of day) in countries that are close to the equator as compared to the U.S. Instead, nutrition is the limiting factor to sheep reproduction, as most countries experience a wet and dry season and tropical forages tend to lack the nutrition of temperate forages. Protein is in especially short supply and hay and concentrates are expensive to purchase.

Sheep in the Caribbean are often raised in confinement, often on slatted floors and raised decks. There are many reasons for this: internal parasites, security, and the high cost of land. Forages are fed as green chop in what is typically called a "cut and carry" system. Small farms cut forages by hand, whereas larger farms mechanically harvest the forage. Due to the high costs of concentrates, the feeding of by-products is quite common, e.g. poultry litter, cull bananas, sugar cane molasses, and citrus by-products. It is also common to fatten lambs in feed lots. In Barbados, there is a central feed lot where producers can bring their lambs. Lambs are slaughtered at lighter weights as compared to the U.S. and lambs are generally much leaner. Some of the better farms will market lambs weighing over 90 lbs. Prices for lambs tends to be higher than in the U.S.

Marketing is a limiting factor to sheep production in the Caribbean. Most of the small islands lack adequate processing facilities, and thus cannot market lamb to the potentially lucrative tourist trade. As a result, most small ruminant production is consumed by the local population. Local demand is usually greater for goat meat, though sheep meat tends to be preferred by tourists.

Due to the climate, the vast majority of sheep raised in the Caribbean are hair sheep, as hair sheep are better able to withstand the rigors of extreme heat, humidity, and internal parasites as compared to woolled sheep. While many sheep breeds are raised in the Caribbean, the Barbados Blackbelly is probably the most populous. Other breeds include the (Cuban) Pelibuey, West African, and St. Croix.

In Barbados, the island where the Barbados Blackbelly evolved, probably from sheep brought over on slave ships, the breed is truly a "national treasure." No other breed of sheep is raised on this tiny island which is the eastern most in the Caribbean chain. In fact, Barbados is the only Caribbean country I visited where local lamb was available on the menu of some restaurants. It was listed as "local Barbados Blackbelly" lamb, and it was delicious!

Barbados Blackbelly sheep are favored in the Caribbean, not only because of their adaptability to the environment, but due to the reproductive efficiency. I consider them to be one of the most reproductive efficient breeds of sheep in the world. Barbados Blackbelly ewes and rams reach puberty at an early age. With adequate nutrition, they produce lots of twins and triplets. They readily breed out-of-season. In the Caribbean, it is common for a ewe to drop three lamb crops in two years. Rams are aggressive breeders.

However, I found the Barbados Blackbelly breed in the Caribbean to differ significantly from the breed in the U.S. and from the Texas Barbado. The differences can be explained by crossbreeding. When Blackbellies were brought to the United States, many were crossed with the Rambouillet or wild Mouflon, to create a "trophy" animal for game ranches. Texas, in particular, has a lot of these "Barbado" sheep.

In the Caribbean, Barbados Blackbelly rams do not have horns. Only small scurs or diminutive horns are permitted. Barbados Blackbellies in the Caribbean have a more calm disposition than those raised in the states. Many of the Barbados Blackbelly sheep I have seen in the Caribbean are larger than those I have seen in the U.S. The best animals I saw were on the island of Trinidad, the southern most island in the Caribbean chain. Efforts are currently underway to try to import Barbados Blackbelly semen from there to the United States. Of course, animal health regulations make this a difficult and lengthy undertaking.

My very first experience with the Barbados Blackbelly breed was as an undergraduate student at Virginia Tech where I helped lamb out a bunch of Dorset x Barbados Blackbelly crossbred ewes. Though these ewes tended to be a bit "flighty," many people agree that they are one of the most productive ewes you can have in a commercial lamb production system. Virginia Tech still uses Barbados Blackbelly ewes for crossbreeding to compare hair sheep to wool sheep and perhaps one day the breed will be part of a new composite hair sheep breed.

¹ Sheep and Goat Specialist, Western Maryland Research & Education Center, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, sschoen@umd.edu, www.sheepandgoat.com

See photos of Susan and Barbados Blackbelly ram and ewes on page 9.



The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, founded in 1977, is the only organization in the U.S. working to conserve rare breeds and genetic diversity in livestock.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy protects genetic diversity in livestock and poultry species through the conservation and promotion of endangered breeds. These rare breeds are part of our national heritage and represent a unique piece of the earth's bio-diversity. The loss of these breeds would impoverish agriculture and diminish the human spirit. We have inherited a rich variety of livestock breeds. For the sake of future generations we must work together to safeguard these treasures.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy's programs include research on breed population size; distribution and genetic health; research on breed characteristics; gene banks to preserve genetic material from endangered breeds; rescues of threatened populations; education about genetic diversity and the role of livestock in sustainable agriculture; and technical support to a network of breeders, breed associations, and farmers.

The need for livestock conservation is urgent. Throughout agricultural history, each generation has taken its turn as steward of the genetic trust. Our generation is now in danger of bankrupting this trust and leaving little for the future. Each day, some breeds move closer to extinction. Each extinction reduces the diversity within the livestock species and the biodiversity of the Earth.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy has the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep on their "watch list." Their "watch list" means fewer than 2500 annual North American registrations and estimated fewer than 10,000 global population. Also included are breeds with genetic or numerical concerns or having a limited geographic distribution. To become a new member and/or more information please contact the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy

P. O. Box 477

Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 USA

Telephone: (919) 542-5704

Fax: (919) 545-0022

Website: www.albc-usa.org

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The Voice from Northern California

I told Mark that I would write at least two articles a year from way out here in the West. I must say that it's taken a lot longer to gather information than I thought but hopefully things will speed up from here. The topic of this article is related to what small producers could employ to enhance the popularity of Barbados Blackbellies.

As a sidelight, I might add that I have been enrolled in the local Jr. College Agricultural classes for the last 10 years. First in the horse classes, then large /small animals, and lastly viticulture. As a result of all this time I have become friendly with one of my instructors, Mr Jim Porter. He operates a ranch in addition to his teaching activities. He is an authority on breeding and judging and runs a large flock of Suffolk's. (You can probably look him up under Porter's Suffolk's). Anyhow I met with Jim at his ranch the other afternoon to discuss the situation with Black bellies. (If anyone is a fan of Mark Twain, one of his classic statements is "the coldest day he spent was a summer day in San Francisco") Jim's place is in Western Mann County about six miles from the Pacific Ocean and roughly twenty-five miles north of San Francisco. As we drew up some folding chairs in his barn he with his stocking cap and heavy work jacket and me with what I thought would be warm enough clothing, it was no match for the swirling fog and wind blowing thru the barn. I must say it wasn't a pleasant experience and I was glad to get home and grab a good solid glass of California wine. It was truly a Mark Twain Day.

For openers I had brought a copy of our "standards required for registration" We sat around and discussed these in detail as they may relate to what a local judge who is not familiar with the breed might use as a guideline in judging a class. (I might add, out here BB's are normally combined into a lesser breed group) It was Mr. Porter's conclusion that these guidelines were as good or better than what some of the more popular breeds offer.

I raised the next question. If there is a good workable set of standards why is this breed relegated to a somewhat second-class citizen? For instance, why wouldn't a 4-H parent jump for joy to have a child raise one of these with no tail docking required, no shearing expense, and an animal that pretty well takes care of itself?

Jim highlighted the answer may lie in the fact there are basically two ways to show at a local fair. One is to show in the market class and the other in the breeding class. To show in the breeding class both rams and ewes must be shown. The market class would be the logical next choice since most fair managers will create a separate class if five or more animals of the same breed can be shown. But the question remains: will a BB make weight? Out here the minimum weight is usually around 105 pounds. A 4-H'er who is saving his or her fair winnings for college would probably opt for a breed that can more easily make the weight cut. Thus, the class is

competing against sheep that are bigger, faster producing, and thicker, meaning at judging time they will lose against one of the wooly breeds.

So two issues emerge. 1) How to grow the class; and 2) how to make entry weight. With regard to class size, several ideas were brought up. Several producers could get together and donate 10-15 ewes to a local 4-H club with the understanding that they would be shown at the local fair. (Make sure the fair director is advised that there will be sufficient animals to make up a separate class. In addition, provide the judge with a copy of current BB standards so that he will have something to work with.

Another way might be to have several producers offer a sum of money, say \$150, to the Champion and Reserve Champion of the breed. This should have the effect of bringing out some showmen. The dollar winnings may create an interest, since there is a prospect of winning in a group that would normally be losing to the larger, faster producers.

As an additional consideration, a flock could be offered to a local FFA high school. It would be their project to raise and show the herd. With continuing classes showing the breed, the long-term goal would be to have a growing interest and to move the class from a market only class into a breeding class.

Another possibility to promote the breed is to have the local Farm Bureau profile several of the local breeders. This of course requires membership in the local organization, but the effect would be to bring more interest in the breed.

Regarding the qualifying weight issue, since one of the features of the BB is their generally small, manageable size, breeders are faced with a dilemma. Do we breed larger animals for the sake of competing with larger breeds or do we stay where we are?

Mr. Porter raises this question. Since these sheep are generally lighter and frailer than some of the other breeds. without changing the breed standards, could they be judged with some of the goat classes? In that way they could easily make weight and would not be competing with their heavier brethren. These are questions that still will need to be decided. I note with interest the organization is producing a recipe book. If the breed becomes better recognized, and flavor and cuts are efficient enough, certainly local restaurants would be a source of income for producers. Out here, both goat and sheep are used for niche cheese products. This may be another source of revenue for local producers. These are merely ideas that might help move this breed from a niche to mainstream products. We won't have to raise them solely for the purpose of training Border Collies or eating grass in an unused pasture. I'll let you know how my efforts are turning out from time to time and see you at the next Newsletter.

In closing I would like to acknowledge Mr. Porter for his time and ideas and pass these to the

members with hope some discussion will ensue as to how we can improve the breed.

See you all at the cow palace.

E. J. Christiansen—Ed Jingle Farm-Petaluma, California

What's Cooking in BBSAI? The BBSAI Cookbook!

You Can Be a Part of our New BBSAI Cookbook!

Send in your favorite lamb or mutton recipes to

recipes@blackbellysheep.org

Using whatever method is easiest: MSWord; scanning; email text. If you would like credit for your recipe, please include your name, email address, and city/state. All recipes must be submitted by February 15, 2004.

This cookbook will be the BBSAI's major fundraiser for 2004. Your recipes will be a valuable contribution to the BBSAI and will help promote Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly sheep. There is no doubt that every recipe in the cookbook will taste better if cooked using lamb/mutton from these wonderful breeds of sheep.

Stay tuned for information about when, where, and how to purchase this great cookbook!



**What is Your Favorite
Scrumptious Lamb
Recipe?**

Kitchen Trivia Circa 1500s

A lot of cooking was done in a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day the fire was lit and things added to the pot - mostly vegetables, not much meat. Leftovers stayed in the pot to get cold overnight to be started over the next day. Sometimes the stew had food in it that had been in there for a month. Hence the rhyme: Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old.

U.S. Developing National Animal Identification Plan

A national animal identification plan is being developed to help protect American animal agriculture and homeland security. State animal health officials, livestock industry groups and the USDA are working together to finalize the plan. They hope to have Phase One of the plan, Premises ID, in place by July 2004. This phase would require that standardized premises identification numbers be established for all production operations, markets, assembly points, exhibitions and processing plants.

Once the Premises ID systems are in place, the plan will proceed to Phase Two, which calls for individual identification for cattle in commerce. This phase would be in place by the beginning of 2006.

States, industry and the USDA have been working in partnership on the plan through the National Animal Identification Development Team. The team, which includes a steering committee and five working groups, has produced a draft plan with the working name of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP). It carries the tagline "Protecting Animal Agriculture."

The draft plan draws on existing voluntary and compulsory animal identification programs currently in place in the United States and coordinates them into a truly national program for the first time. Details are still to be finalized, but the development team expects to complete its work within the next 60 days. It is anticipated that the plan will then be formally delivered to USDA/APHIS, which in turn will develop rulemaking and continue the process of review and comment by industry stakeholders.

American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) leaders and staff have been invited to participate in the animal ID process through involvement in various working groups. ASI sent a letter to the steering committee stating, "While we will reserve our opinions on the total approach and outcome of the ID effort for the review and comment phase on the proposed rule, we are encouraged by the spirit of the effort." ASI Staff contact: Paul Rodgers, (304) 647-9981

The plan, which carries the tag-line of "Protecting American Animal Agriculture," is available for review online at: <http://www.usaip.info>. **THIS LEGISLATION WILL AFFECT YOU!!!**

Questions and Answers

Barbado versus Barbados

The rams with horns are Barbado. Both sexes of Barbados Blackbelly are polled (no horns). See (<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep/BARBS/index.htm>) and (<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep/BARBADO/>) for clarification. Both are beautiful, and both are eligible for registration in both breed registries. But it is important to understand the difference and not misrepresent your breed when you sell sheep.

By Carol Elkins

Why Are We Named Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International?

The Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International was founded in January of 1996 by Charles Beam of Newala, Oklahoma, with the help of Rudy Crawford of Lexington, Oklahoma. Charles and Rudy felt as though they needed to differentiate the association from the association that was already in existence on the island of Barbados. Therefore they named the association the Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association instead of the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep Association. Not long after its inception, it became apparent that the association had a need to become an international association, so in 1998 we became the Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International.

By Joshua Weimer

Can I Obtain a Copy of the BBSAI Newsletter from the BBSAI Website?

Yes, this and future issues of the newsletter will be available for download as PDF files from the BBSAI Website at <http://www.blackbellysheep.org>.

Hard copies of back issues are \$5.00 each, which includes postage. Please make checks payable to BBSAI, c/o Mark Fleming 1156 N.E. 50th Road, Lamar MO 64759.

By Carol Elkins

Blackbelly in the News

In Virginia, the second annual Heritage Breed Exposition was held at the Orange County Fair on the grounds of Historic Montpelier on Friday July 25 through Sunday July 27, 2003. For the first time at the Fair, James Harper displayed two of his Barbados Blackbelly sheep named Trouble and Worrisome.

Dr. Stephan and Mrs. Cyndi Wildeus displayed two St. Croix ewes and one young ram. The Barbados Blackbelly and St. Croix sheep were the only hair sheep displayed at the Heritage Breed Exposition.

Trouble and Worrisome were the only Barbados Blackbelly sheep displayed at the Chesterfield County Fair. The only other hair sheep displayed were two St. Croix sheep from the Wildeus family. The Fair was held from Friday August 22 through Sunday August 31, 2003.

Among the rare breeds at the Virginia State Fair, Barbados Blackbelly sheep were displayed for a second year in the Rare Livestock Breed Exposition. The dates of the Virginia State Fair were from September 25 through October 5, 2003. Our thanks to Lorene Blackwood, Senior Director of Programs, and Carey Padgett, Jr., Livestock Manager, for supporting this Rare Livestock Breed program.

Do you know of any Barbado and/or Barbados Blackbelly Sheep that were displayed or shown at any event? Let us know so we can publish it!

Calendar

Barbados Blackbelly Sheep are being displayed and/or advertised at the following sheep and wool festivals:

Wool Festival of the Southwest - November 8 & 9, 2003

<http://www.woolfestivalsw.itctv.com>

Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival - May 1 and 2, 2004

<http://www.sheepandwoolfestival.org/>

NY Sheep and Wool Festival - October 16 and 17, 2004

<http://www.sheepandwool.com>

If you know of any upcoming events dealing with Barbado or Barbados Blackbelly Sheep, or related events, e-mail: jharper53@erols.com.

Holiday Calendar for Marketing Sheep & Goats

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
New Years	January 1	January 1	January 1	January 1	January 1
Epiphany	January 6	January 6	January 6	January 6	January 6
Eid ul Adha	February 12	February 2	January 21	January 10	December 31
Islamic New Year	March 5	February 22	February 10	January 31	January 20
Christian Easter	April 20	April 11	March 27	April 16	April 8
Orthodox Easter	April 27	April 11	May 1	April 23	April 8
Ashura	March 14	March 2	February 19	February 8	January 29
Birth of the Prophet	May 14	May 2	April 21	April 11	March 31
Isra' and Me'raj	September 24	September 12	September 1	August 22	August 11
Nisfu Sha'ban	October 12	September 30	September 19	September 9	August 29
Ramadan Begins	October 27	October 15	October 4	September 24	September 13
Thanksgiving	November 27	November 25	November 24	November 23	November 22
Nuzulul Qur'an	November 21	November 12	October 28	October 20	October 12
Eid al Fitr Ramadan Ends	November 26	November 14	November 3	October 24	October 13
Christmas	December 25	December 25	December 25	December 25	December 25

The Holiday Calendar for marketing sheep and goats is provided by:

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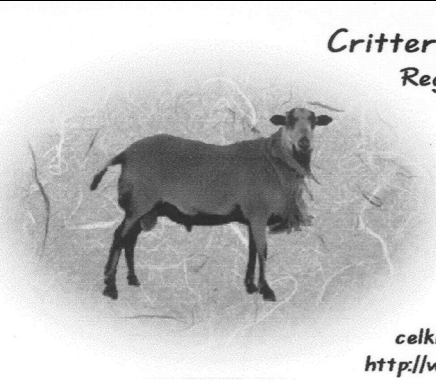
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Wanted: Polled rams and ewes. You must be able to document at least two generations of the polled bloodline. (Ewes must have dam and sire whose mating has produced polled ram lambs.) Photos, health certificate, and scrapie flock ID required. I will pay up to \$150 for quality animals, depending on how far the animal must be shipped. Bonus if you belong to a voluntary scrapie control program.

Carol Elkins
 Pueblo, CO
 Phone: 719-948-3773
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WANTED

Articles for your BBSAI Newsletter are WANTED. Herd your flock of articles to jharper53@erols.com

REWARD

Two free CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRY from the Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International for every published article that you send. REWARDS are good for up to one full year from the date that your article is published.

The subject matter in the article must be between 400 and 600 words about members' experiences with Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly Sheep. We will not accept articles from previously published sources without written permission from the copyright holder. The President and Editor will have final approval of each article that is submitted.

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Send to:
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Send Your Favorite Lamb or Mutton Recipes to : recipes@blackbellysheep.org - See Page 11 for more Details

Place Your Ad in the BBSAI News - See Page 15 for Details



**WANTED!
Recipes**

Send us your
favorite lamb and/or
mutton recipes to:

recipes@blackbellysheep.org

Details on Page 11

Send us a photo of
your Barbado and/or
Barbados Blackbelly
Sheep to:
jharper53@erols.com

***See You in the
BBSAI News***



Above ram & ewe are owned by Mark Fleming.

Top photo is a ram named Jasper. Bottom photo shows ewes owned by Joshua Weimer.



1156 NE 50th Road
Lamar, MO 64759
(417) 398-2526 or (417) 398-9500
Email: secretary@blackbellysheep.org

Application for Membership in the Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International

I wish to be a member of the Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International and enclose my check for the membership indicated below:

- ☐ Lifetime membership with one vote—\$200
- ☐ Lifetime dual membership (husband and wife team) with two votes—\$300
- ☐ Regular membership non-voting—\$25
- ☐ Regular membership with one vote—\$30
- ☐ Regular dual membership (husband and wife team) with two votes—\$45
- ☐ Junior membership non-voting (with verification of active Club membership)—\$15
 - ☐ 4H Club members Age: _____
 - ☐ FFA Club members Age: _____

Each member must register a unique 3-character flock prefix that is to be part of the identification of every registered Blackbelly Barbados originating from that flock. (Example: PAL) To ensure that no one else will have the same number, please give your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices below. You may use letters, numbers, or a combination of both.

(Continued on Other Side)

Date		
Farm Name		
First Name	Last Name	Middle
Address		
City	State or Province	
Zip/Postal Code	Country	
Phone No.	Phone No. 2	
E-Mail Address		
Web Site		

The BBSAI periodically sends out newsletters and other communication about the Association. We ask that you allow us to transmit these communications to you electronically via an email address if you have one. This allows the BBSAI to use its funds to promote and preserve sheep rather than purchase postage. The BBSAI will *not* sell or otherwise convey your email address to any third party.

☐ Yes, please communicate with me via this email address: _____

☐ No, I prefer to receive information via U.S. Mail.

Do you want to be listed on the Membership/Breeder Directory? (The Membership/Breeder Directory is sent to anyone requesting information from the association office and is available on the Internet at www.blackbellysheep.org) This information can be updated at any time by contacting the association office.

☐ Yes ☐ No

(If Yes, please answer the following questions)

☐ Yes ☐ No I have Blackbelly sheep for sale.

☐ Yes ☐ No I breed horned Blackbelly rams.

☐ Yes ☐ No I breed polled Blackbelly rams.

☐ Yes ☐ No I am enrolled in a Scrapie program. _____ Scrapie Premises I.D. Number

☐ Yes ☐ No I will ship sheep.

☐ Yes ☐ No I will export sheep.

Signature	Date
If under 18, parent or guardian name (please print)	
If under 18, parent or guardian signature	Date
Make check or money order payable to BBSAI. Personal checks must be drawn on United States Bank. Payment must be in US Dollars (USD). Mail application with payment to this address: Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International 1156 NE 50th Road Lamar, MO 64759	

BBSAI Survey

(Note: You can complete this survey online at <http://www.blackbellysheep.org/survey.htm>)

Part 1: Electronic Newsletters

The BBSAI periodically sends out newsletters and other communication about the Association. Mailings such as these cost the Association a great deal in postage. We ask that you allow us to transmit these communications to you electronically via an email address if you have one. This allows the BBSAI to use its funds to promote and preserve sheep rather than purchase postage.

The BBSAI recognizes that not all members have access to email or the Internet. We do not want to discriminate against these members, but in order to afford the costs of hardcopy newsletter production and distribution, we may need to add a surcharge to subscriptions requiring a hardcopy newsletter.

Note: The BBSAI will not sell or otherwise convey your email address to any third party. You have total control over our electronic communications with you. You will be invited to subscribe; you can unsubscribe at any time.

- c Yes, please communicate with me via the email address I've supplied below.
- c No, I prefer to receive information via U.S. Mail even if I may have to pay extra for it.
- c No, I will not renew my membership if I must pay more for a hardcopy newsletter.

My e-mail address is _____

Part 2: 2004 Educational Workshop and Annual Meeting

The BBSAI Board is beginning to plan the 2004 Educational Workshop and Annual Meeting. We would like to annually rotate the location of the workshop and annual meeting to make it as fair as possible for all members attending. The Board would like YOUR input and ask that you answer the following questions.

In what city and state would you like to have the 2004 workshop and annual meeting? _____

During what month would you prefer to travel to the workshop and annual meeting? _____

Would you prefer a one-day or two-day event? _____

What topics would you like discussed at the workshops? (Check all that apply.)

Would you like to attend the meeting? (This is not a commitment; we're just asking your opinion.)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

If not, please tell us why (e.g., too far away; can't afford it; not interested; other):

In order to present quality programs, there will be some expense. How much are you willing to pay to attend the meeting?

- ☐ \$25 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100

We will need helpers in order to offer this event. Will you volunteer?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Mail survey to Joshua Weimer · BBSAI President · 552 N.E. 100 Lane · Lamar MO 64759



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