



Greeting BBSAI Members!

This premier issue of BBSAI's new online newsletter is just one of many new features and services that you will be able to enjoy as your Association continues to grow and put your membership dollars to work.

BBSAI sent this newsletter to you because you gave us your email address when you joined. If you do not want to receive further mailings from BBSAI, unsubscribe now by scrolling to the bottom of this email and clicking on the unsubscribe link. Please read the important announcement concerning your membership that follows to learn how to continue receiving a hardcopy newsletter.

**Note:** If your email program is not set to accept HTML text, you have received a text-only version of this newsletter, which is boring because you can't see graphics and tables. If you would like to see what you've missed, go to

[http://www.blackbellysheep.org/newsletter/BBSAI\\_newlsetter\\_April2004.htm](http://www.blackbellysheep.org/newsletter/BBSAI_newlsetter_April2004.htm)

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**April, 2004**

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Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International Newsletter  
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[www.blackbellysheep.org](http://www.blackbellysheep.org)

The Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International Newsletter is a benefit of membership in the BBSAI and is published semi-annually. BBSAI was established to conserve and promote the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep breed. Annual membership is \$30.00, and includes the semi-annual newsletter. We also accept unsolicited donations. Please send changes of address to BBSAI. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

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 BBSAI 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. Issue deadlines for articles and ads are:

January - December 15  
April - March 15  
July - June 15  
October - September 15

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## **Read This Important Information about Your Membership**

### **Newsletter Renewal**

Because postage and printing costs continue to rise, the BBSAI has decided to publish future issues of its quarterly newsletter electronically and to distribute them via email. This new policy

will allow the BBSAI to use its funds to promote and preserve sheep rather than supporting Kinkos and the Post Office. We trust that our members will see the wisdom in our new priorities.

We are aware that not everyone has, or cares to use, an email address, and the BBSAI does not want to diminish the benefits of being a member. Therefore, we will continue to provide the option of receiving the newsletter via U.S. mail for a surcharge. Starting with the August 2004 issue, the cost of receiving four issues per year by U.S. mail will be \$10. This is the last issue of the newsletter that the BBSAI will mail for free.

### **Membership Renewal**

Also beginning in August, the BBSAI will change its membership renewal policy so that all annual memberships renew on August 1 of each year. We will email renewal notices (and mail to those people opting to pay the U.S. mail surcharge discussed above) on July 1. This will further decrease our postage costs, make it easier to plan our annual budget, and decrease the amount of volunteer time required to monitor renewal notices.

### **Privacy Policy**

The BBSAI will not sell or otherwise convey your email address to any third party. Period. Never. By giving us your email address, you agree to receive newsletters, time sensitive announcements (such as Annual Meeting notices and proxies), and occasional announcements relevant to your BBSAI membership. The BBSAI does not endorse, nor does it engage, in spam.

### **Our Promise to You**

The BBSAI Board of Directors is dedicated to giving you good value for your membership dollar. We have improved the quality of the newsletter and committed to four issues every year filled with articles about Barbados Blackbelly and Barbado sheep, hair sheep, and shepherding in general.

### **If you do not wish to receive this electronic newsletter**

[Click here to display a printable form](#) that you can mail to the BBSAI with your \$10 check to cover postage and handling of your hardcopy newsletter. You also will need to click the Unsubscribe link at the bottom of this newsletter to ensure that you do not receive future newsletters by email.

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### **From the President**

Dear BBSAI Members and Supporters,

I would just like to start by saying thank you to all of you that have shown your support for the BBSAI by purchasing items from our online gift shop. If you have not had a chance to visit the giftshop, I urge you to take a look. There is a lot of good quality merchandise that, as a BBSAI member, you would be proud to wear or drink from. We will be offering a cookbook in the upcoming months, thanks to all of you who submitted recipes.

During the past several months, the regional directors have been working very hard to find ways to better serve our members. One way is that we will publish our newsletter via email so that we can afford to provide you with more than just one newsletter. Those of you who do not have access to a computer can receive a hardcopy of the newsletter for a small fee.

We will be holding our annual meeting and workshop in Cobden, Illinois, on September 11th and 12th. I, along with the other regional directors, am looking forward to meeting each and every one of you and am anxious to get your opinions on your BBSAI membership. Feel free to e-mail or call me any time day or night for anything that you may need pertaining to the BBSAI. My phone number is 417-398-2526 or 417-398-9500. You can reach me by e-mail at [president@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:president@blackbellysheep.org).

Joshua B. Weimer  
President, BBSAI

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## [Use Caution with New Antibiotic](#)

The Michigan State University Cooperative Extension newsletter Shepherd's Voice cautions producers about the use of a new antibiotic recently approved for use in sheep.

The antibiotic, tilmicosin (marketed as Micotil) is an effective, one-dose treatment for pneumonia in cattle, and now in sheep. However, accidental injection in humans can be fatal.

Extension specialist Dr. J.S. Rook reports the case of a Nebraska rancher who accidentally injected himself with tilmicosin in the groin after being kicked by a heifer. Doctors in the emergency room who contacted the poison control center and the drug manufacturer (Elanco) were told that no treatment could counteract the drug's effects. The man died about an hour after the accidental injection.

Reprinted with permission by Martha Polkey, Editor, Virginia Shepherd.  
From the October 2003 issue of Virginia Shepherd, published by the Virginia Sheep Producers Association.

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## [BBSAI Annual Meeting and Workshop](#)

### **Hostess**

Mary Swindell  
Bellwether Farm  
815 Bell Hill Road  
Cobden, IL 62920

Put a **red** circle around the weekend of September 11 and 12, 2004 and plan to join us at Cobden, Illinois, for the 2004 BBSAI Annual Meeting and Workshop. Details of the workshop and registration information will be sent out later this summer.

This is a marvelous opportunity for breeders to buy and sell stock and acquire new bloodlines. One of the featured events will be a sheep auction, and we also hope to accommodate private sales as well. If you would like to sell sheep at this event, please contact Mary Swindell (618-893-4568 email: [mwindel@siu.edu](mailto:mwindel@siu.edu)) by July 15 to discuss housing needs and health requirements. Shortly after July 15, we will publish a list of members who will sell sheep at the event so that interested buyers can contact them prior to the meeting and make payment and transportation arrangements.

This will be a jam-packed weekend guaranteed to help you better manage your sheep operation. You will receive a wealth of information about

- health issues
- parasite control
- scrapie regulations
- tagging
- pasture management and fencing
- butchering
- marketing
- ranch chores using stock dogs
- lambing

- hoof trimming and foot bathing
- tours of a local butcher facility and sheep farms
- judging and showing sheep
- breeding and genetics
- record keeping

Stay tuned for details!

Animals are such agreeable friends;  
They ask no questions;  
Pass no criticisms.  
- George Elliot

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## Canadian Sheep Identification Program Tags Now Available

[Ottawa, September 15th, 2003] The Canadian Sheep Federation has announced that Ketchum Kurl Lock #3 tags are now available for producers to purchase in preparation for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program which begins on January 1st, 2004.

"The Canadian Sheep Federation has chosen the metal Ketchum tags for our program primarily because they are the most affordable tags for producers," explained Randy Eros, Chair of the national sheep organization. "We have also selected pink as the colour of the tags so that they will be easily recognized." Eros added that as the program evolves, more tags may be introduced.

All approved tags must meet requirements for retention, readability and the ability to withstand tampering. Tags will carry a logo featuring a maple leaf with the letters "CA" and a nine- digit number between 310,000,000 and 319,999,999.

Producers can purchase tags now from approved dealers. Producers living in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia may only purchase tags through Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers Limited. Tags can be ordered from CCWG by calling 1- 800-567-3693 in the Western provinces or 1-800-488-2714 in the Eastern provinces. Provincial check-off fees may apply in these provinces. Producers living in all other provinces may purchase tags from CCWG, other Ketchum dealers, or directly from Ketchum Manufacturing (1-613-722-3451). Prices will vary depending on where the tags are purchased.

When tags are purchased, producers will be asked to provide their name, address and phone number. This information will be entered into the central database maintained by the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) along with the purchased tag numbers. All information will be kept confidential and will only be accessed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in the event of an animal health or food safety concern.

As of January 1, 2004 producers must ensure that an approved CSIP ear tag is applied to all sheep and lambs on their premises before they leave their farm. This includes animals leaving the premises temporarily (for example: exhibitions, veterinarian clinics, community pastures).

The Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) is an industry-led initiative to develop a trace back system that will address producer concerns about sheep health and meet consumer expectations for quality assurance and food safety. The program is mandatory and will be enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Monetary penalties (\$ 500.00 and up) will be implemented for non-compliance.

For more information on the Canadian Sheep Identification Program, please contact the Canadian Sheep Federation at: (613) 248-8084 or 1-888-684-7739.

News release article reprinted with permission by Jennifer Vollmar, Executive Director, Canadian Sheep Federation from the September 19, 2003 issue.

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## Producing and Selling Sheep to the Ethnic/Religious Meat Markets

by Susan Schoenian  
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The per capita consumption of sheep meat (lamb and mutton) in the United States is less than one pound per person. Americans (or immigrants) of Northern European descent traditionally do not consume much lamb; however, lamb holds a significant meaning in the observances of many religions and is a dietary staple in many countries. In the U.S., the largest consumers of lamb are Middle Easterners, Greeks, and Hispanics. Population demographics and immigration patterns favor an increase in demand for lamb and goat.

Most lamb is consumed on the East and West Coasts and in major metropolitan areas; however, ethnic markets can be developed anywhere where ethnic populations exist (e.g. college towns, rural areas where foreign labor is utilized). The demand for sheep and lambs increases prior to various religious observances. The type of lamb (age, weight, sex, condition, etc.) and manner in which it is to be slaughtered (Halal, Kosher) depends upon the ethnic/religious group and the holiday. The table below lists some of the religious observances (for the next three years) in which lamb is commonly consumed:

Religion	Observance	Date(s)
Muslim	Ramadan Month of Fasting	October 26, 2003 October 15, 2004 October 4, 2005
Muslim	Eid-al-Fitr Festival of Fast Breaking	November 25, 2003 November 15, 2004 November 3, 2005
Muslim	Eid-al-Adha Festival of Sacrifice	February 1, 2004 January 21, 2005 January 10, 2006
Jewish	Passover	April 6-13, 2004 April 24-May 1, 2005 April 13-20, 2006
Christian Roman/Western	Easter	April 11, 2004 March 27, 2005 April 16, 2006
Christian Greek/Eastern Orthodox	Easter	April 11, 2004 May 1, 2005 April 23, 2006
Christian	Christmas	December 25

Muslim holidays occur 10 to 11 days earlier each year and cannot be predicted with exact certainty because they are based on a lunar calendar and the sighting of the moon. Eastern (Greek) and Western (Roman) Easter use different calendars (Julian vs. Gregorian) and rarely occur on the same date. In addition to the holidays listed above, the demand for sheep and lamb may increase prior to other ethnic observances. It is common for Muslims to consume

sheep (or goat) meat to celebrate a new baby.

### **Tapping Ethnic/Religious Markets**

There are many ways that sheep producers can tap the ethnic/religious markets for lamb. Producers may direct market their lambs to ethnic customers, take their lambs to local or regional livestock auctions prior to holidays, sell to middlemen who supply the ethnic/religious trade(s), and/or work cooperatively with other producers to market live animals or carcasses to ethnic markets. Producers should choose a target market and produce and market lambs in a manner that is consistent with the religion, beliefs, and customs of the customers. It may require changes in breeding and management to meet the needs of the ethnic market. The following tables contrast the different methods of marketing sheep and lambs, with the ethnic consumer in mind.

#### **Marketing Sheep & Lambs Through a Public Livestock Auction**

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Convenient weekly or periodic sales	Price is not known in advance
Requires minimal effort	No control over price - "price-taker"
Sell based on certified weight	Wide price fluctuations
Prompt payment	Must pay sales commission, yardage, and other fees (e.g. \$5/head)
Guaranteed payment	Transportation costs
Method of price discovery	Shrink (weight loss during transport)
	Stressful to sheep

The easiest way to sell lambs and sheep is to take them to a local or regional livestock auction. Producers can take advantage of the ethnic/religious demand for lamb when they sell to livestock auction markets, if they produce the type of lamb(s) that the ethnic buyers want and sell their lambs prior to the religious observances in which lamb is consumed. Many auction barns offer "special sales" of lambs and kids prior to Easter, Christmas, and the major Muslim holidays.

To maximize returns from public livestock auctions, a producer should develop a working relationship with the market manager. To start with, let him know when you are bringing a load of lambs to market. Ask the market manager what kind of lambs (or sheep) his buyers prefer and when the best time to sell is. You can also use public livestock auctions to make contact with lamb buyers and to negotiate direct sales to packers and other middlemen.

Producers should compare livestock auction markets and choose the markets that will return the most profit. Auction prices are listed in newspapers, farm periodicals, and on the Internet. When comparing the prices from livestock markets, it is important to compare "net" proceeds, rather than "gross" reported prices. The auction that brings the highest prices may not result in the most profit if the higher prices are offset by higher transportation costs, shrink, sales commissions, etc. The difference in prices between auction markets should reflect regional differences in transportation costs. Prices will be higher the closer the market is to the point of slaughter.



## Direct On-Farm Marketing of Sheep & Lambs

Advantages	Disadvantages
You set/negotiate price with buyer	Time consuming
Maximum price potential	Cultural differences
Sell by the pound or head	Customers like to bargain
Cash sales	Possible language barrier
No transportation costs	Loss of privacy
No sales commission, yardage, or other fees	Buyers may need place to slaughter
Repeat customers	May be stressful to producer, family
Less stress to sheep	
	ON-FARM SLAUGHTER
	"Facility" for slaughter
	Need to dispose of offal
	Need for discretion

Because you are eliminating all of the middlemen, the best price is usually obtained when lambs are sold directly from the farm to the consumer. Under this scenario, the buyer may take the live lamb with him, have the lamb slaughtered at a custom processing plant, or process the lamb on the farm.

### On-Farm Slaughter

It is illegal to slaughter a lamb on the farm for the purpose of sale. Lamb meat may only be sold if the lamb has been processed in a USDA inspected slaughter plant (some states have state meat inspection which allows the sale of meat within the state). When selling lambs for slaughter, you need to sell a LIVE lamb and let the buyer process the lamb or facilitate the slaughter of the lamb at a custom or USDA slaughterhouse. You must not help the buyer process the lamb; however, you have an obligation to ensure that the lamb is handled and killed in a humane manner (lambs should not be hung until they are insensible) and that offal is disposed of in an environmentally sound manner (e.g. composting). Cornell University has published a poster depicting humane on-farm slaughter. Producers should familiarize themselves with local, state, and federal laws before allowing on-farm slaughter of lambs.

Before you sell lambs directly from your farm, you have to develop a client base. Some of the ways you can develop a ethnic client base are

- Word of mouth
- Place a classified ad in a large metropolitan newspaper
- Post flyers at religious and social centers prior to a major holiday
- Send articles to magazines, newsletters, TV, and radio stations that represent specific ethnic groups
- Advertise on college campuses that have large foreign populations
- Leave your business card or brochure at a custom or USDA slaughterhouse
- Hand out free samples of lamb at a farmer's market



### Marketing Sheep & Lambs to Middlemen (e.g., dealer, broker, order buyer, buying station)

Advantages	Disadvantages
Price known ahead of time	Transportation costs if you must deliver lambs to a pickup point or buying station
No sales commission, yardage, or other fees	May have to pay a "pencil" shrink
No transportation costs if lambs are picked up by buyer on farm	No grading or weighing (varies)
	Payment/credit risk

Many producers do not want to sell lambs directly from their farm. Nor do they like the uncertainty of taking lambs to the auction. Selling to "middlemen" may be the best option, if you are certain you are getting a fair price. There are various middlemen that purchase sheep and lambs: Dealers (or traders) buy and sell lambs to make a profit on price and weight differences. Brokers or order buyers buy lambs (for a fee) for feeders, live markets, and slaughter houses. Packers buy live lambs, process them, and sell meat wholesale or retail. Retail markets sell to the end consumer.

#### To Find Middlemen

- Ask buyers, dealers, and producers at local and regional auction markets.
- Contact your local packers and stockyards office to obtain a list of processors.
- Contact USDA or your state department of agriculture for a list of USDA-inspected and custom slaughter houses.
- Visit restaurants that serve lamb.
- Visit stores that sell lamb.
- Look at meat marketing listings in the Yellow Pages.
- Check directory listings on [sheepgoatmarketing.org](http://sheepgoatmarketing.org)

When selling lambs to middlemen, there are many things to consider. For example, will you sell a live lamb or a lamb carcass? Will the buyer pick up the lambs or will you deliver them? Who will pay for the cost of transportation, including shrink. Sometimes a pencil shrink will need to be negotiated. You will need to agree upon a method of payment. There is considerably more financial risk when selling to an individual buyer as compared to selling lambs at a bonded livestock auction or to a bonded livestock dealer. You need to protect yourself from payment forfeitures and bad checks. Bank transfers prior to the sale of lambs are recommended. Good records should be kept on financial transactions.

### Marketing Sheep & Lambs Direct to a Meat Processor

Advantages	Disadvantages
Price known in advance	Must guarantee supply
Less fluctuation in price	Must guarantee quality
Year-round pricing possible	Prices may be higher elsewhere
Can re-negotiate price periodically	Hard for small producers, unless they form a marketing co-op or alliance
Sell lamb carcass instead of live lamb (value-based marketing)	
Less stressful to lambs	

Many producers wish to sell lambs directly to the packer because it streamlines the marketing chain and should result in higher prices (when averaged over the long run). When selling lambs directly to a packer, you need to negotiate a deal (or contract) that is beneficial for both

parties. The packer wants a guaranteed supply at a consistent price, whereas the producer is looking for price stability and the opportunity to forward price his product. While small producers may be able to sell a few lambs to custom slaughter houses or small butcher shops, most processors will want a regular supply of lambs and this may require several producers to work together or form a marketing pool or cooperative.

### Marketing Cooperatives/Alliances/Associations

Advantages	Disadvantages
Gives small producers more clout	Cooperative needs money to operate (e.g., membership fee, shares, sales commission)
Can share transportation costs	Need to have similar genetics and management to market cooperatively
Can organize special sales	
Can purchase inputs in bulk	
Democratic	

Producers can have more clout in the market place if they organize marketing cooperatives or informal marketing groups. This is because unless a producer is very large, it usually takes many producers to supply a market on a regular basis. Marketing groups can be as simple as lamb pools and sharing transportation costs to legally organized cooperatives that market their own branded meat products. Numerous public grants are available to help producer groups organize cooperatives and market value-added products.

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### Donations Needed!

The BBSAI is looking for donated items for our Silent Auction and Livestock Auction during our BBSAI Workshop. These auctions are an important source of our yearly fundraising. Even if you cannot attend the event, it would be great if you could send your donated item to us in the mail. It will make us miss you even more!

Members who attend the event are asked to kindly bring something representative from their home state to contribute to the Silent Auction.

Your donations will be acknowledged in our newsletter and at the event. Please support your Association. Click [here](#) for more information about our Annual Meeting and Workshop. Please contact James Harper for your donations at

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### Member's Spotlight

By President Joshua Weimer

I recently contacted Mr. Storey about doing the member's spotlight article on his farm. I chose the Storeys' because they have been an important part of the BBSAI through their registering of quality stock. They have been members since January 11th of 2003. In the past year the Storeys' have registered 15 sheep. Raymond, Casey, and Michelle have been a very integral part in making the BBSAI what it is today and in providing a standard of excellence in their stock that we should all model. I would personally like to thank them for taking the time to send me the following article about their operation. Below is their article.

## **Barbado Haven in Oregon**

Our horned Barbado sheep endeavor began in August 1999, when we were presented with a ram and ewe as birthday gifts from Mark and Lin Storey of Foley Peak Farm. We promptly named the ram Rocky because he was well hung in the quarters that count. Valentine the ewe was an appropriate name as she was born on 14 February. She presently remains our lead ewe with a demeanor that matches her birth date. She is a great asset.

We live in the Redland/Viola area east of Oregon City, Oregon. Our Storey Ohana (which means "Family" in Hawaiian) Ranch is only 5 1/2 acres nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. The three pasture areas are cross-fenced which assist us in pasture management. Red brand field fence with a top hot-wire is being utilized and has been quite effective. The fencing has not been challenged by our flock, however a resident coyote group has been wreaking havoc with the neighbors and their livestock. Unfortunately, this past week we spotted a coyote scout during the early morning hours, within the boundary of our property. This necessitated a call to the local federal trapper. He told us that we should not try to trap or shoot them, since our flock has not incurred a loss. If one of the pack is shot or wounded it could upset the established social structure therefore resulting in new behavior patterns of killing. We are hopeful that all will be resolved soon.

We constructed a barn/shelter where feeding, sleeping, birthing and just hanging out for the animals occur. We have at this time 17 Barbado sheep. Eight of them are lambs that were birthed this past January and earlier this February 2004. All are watched over by our 29-year-old Arabian mare named Baymyra. A few more births will occur later this February. We are grateful that we have been present for all but two of the 29 births since 1999. It is a wonderful experience that we hope each one of you has an opportunity to participate in at least once.

The BBSAI organization is an integral, vital and much appreciated part of our sheep history. All of our older Barbado sheep are registered including those we acquired from Montana.

This next month will find all of our sheep also participating in the USDA Sheep Tag/Scrapie Program. We just got our premise identification number assigned to us. We decided to get this accomplished, as it may be just a matter of time before the regulations on sheep are tightened.

We rotate out the lead rams every one to two years, in an effort to refine our stock and prevent in breeding. Quality not quantity is our desired goal. Surplus desirable rams/ewes are advertised for breed stock. Recently, our neighbors called upon us for lamb meat. We processed an eight-month old Barbado and they loved it! The neighborhood isn't the same anymore now that the word is out that Barbado meat is a tasty alternative to beef. The amazing fact is that they raise Black Angus steer!

Our feed is local grass hay, wet c.o.b., 36% protein supplement block and alfalfa during the winter pre and post delivery of lambs. About March or April all animals are gradually weaned off of hay and rotated to new grass fields where they feed until September. The cycle is then repeated with the local grass hay when the weather changes and becomes inclement. Thankfully, this regimen has afforded us healthy, happy and productive sheep.

Storey Ohana Ranch  
Raymond, Casey & Michelle Storey  
(503) 631-2558

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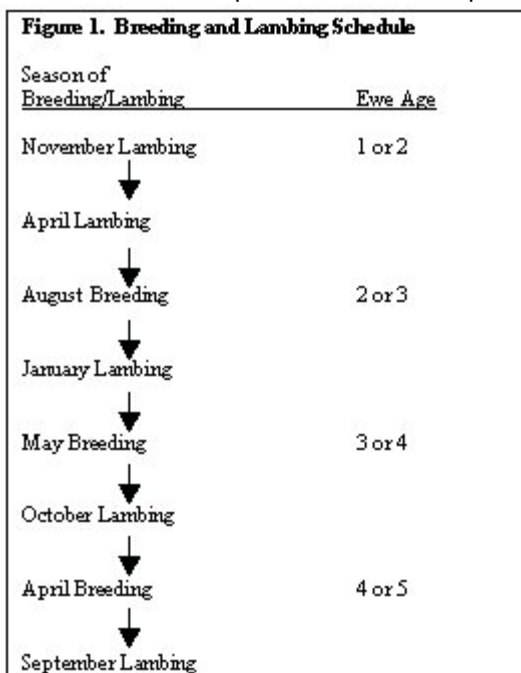
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## **Performance of Blackbelly Crossbred Ewes in Different Breeding Seasons**

David R. Notter  
Dept. of Animal and Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech

The hair sheep breeds of the Caribbean are a significant genetic resource for development of "easy-care" sheep types. High levels of ewe and lamb vigor, resistance to internal parasites, and freedom from shearing can reduce labor and management costs associated with the ewe flock, while crossbreeding with rams of meat breeds can maintain growth and muscling in the crossbred lambs. Further, among the Caribbean hair breeds, the Barbados Blackbelly is unique in combining these easy-care characteristics with high levels of prolificacy.

The experiment described below was designed to compare Barbados Blackbelly x Dorset crossbred ewes to ewes of several other maternal types including the Dorset, Finnsheep, and Dorset x Finnsheep cross. Ewes were born in 2 years and evaluated in several different breeding seasons. Young (one- and two-year-old) ewes were first mated in November to lamb in April. The ewes were then rebred in August to lamb in January, and finally, as adults, were bred in May to lamb in October and then in April to lamb in September (Figure 1).



Thus over the course of the study, ewes of the different types were evaluated both as young ewes in traditional fall and late summer matings and as adult ewes in spring breeding. Ewes were bred to blackfaced rams for the first two matings but to Dorset rams for the last two out-of-season matings. Lambs were weaned at 40 to 50 d of age to facilitate rebreeding of their dams.

The reproductive performance of the various ewe types is shown in Table 1. The fertility of young Blackbelly x Dorset crossbred ewes in November breeding averaged 92% and was similar to that of Finnsheep ewes. However, in older ewes, fertility of Blackbelly x Dorset ewes was consistently 100%, even in spring. The Dorset and Finnsheep ewes were similar in fertility to Blackbelly x Dorset ewes in August but the Blackbelly crosses were superior in fertility to other breed groups in May breeding and were superior to all breed groups except the Finnsheep in April breeding.

Table 1. Reproductive Performance of Various Ewe Types in Different Breeding Seasons

Trait	Breed group	Month of Breeding			
		November	August	May	April
Fertility, % <sup>a</sup>	Blackbelly x Dorset	92	100	100	100
	Dorset	87	93	81	84
	Finnsheep	95	95	75	95
	Finnsheep x Dorset	83	82	79	80
Prolificacy <sup>b</sup>	Blackbelly x Dorset	1.53	1.95	1.94	1.74
	Dorset	1.31	1.66	1.72	1.58
	Finnsheep	2.40	2.17	2.34	2.24
	Finnsheep x Dorset	1.93	2.02	2.15	1.76

<sup>a</sup> Percentage of ewes lambing of those exposed.

<sup>b</sup> Number of lambs born per ewe lambing.

Prolificacy (lambs born per ewe lambing) was consistently highest for Finnsheep ewes. Blackbelly x Dorset ewes were also less prolific than Finnsheep x Dorset crosses at first lambing but were consistently more prolific than Dorset ewes and were only slightly less prolific than Finnsheep x Dorset ewes after the first lambing.

Across all lambing seasons, average death losses within 3 days of lambing were much lower for lambs from Blackbelly x Dorset ewes than for lambs from ewes of other breed groups (Table 2). The proportion of lambs weaned was correspondingly higher for Blackbelly x Dorset ewes, although values for Finnsheep ewes may be biased somewhat since most triplet and quadruplet lambs were reared artificially and not credited to their dams.

Average weaning weights (Table 2) were similar for lambs out of ewes of the various types. Lambs out of Blackbelly x Dorset ewes were heavier than lambs out of Finnsheep ewes and similar to those produced by Dorset and Finnsheep x Dorset ewes.

Table 2. Mean Lamb Death Losses, Weaning Percentage, and Weaning Weights and Mean Adult Ewe Weights for Various Ewe Types Lamb Survival

Ewe breed group	% dead within 3 d of birth	% weaned	Average lamb weaning wt., lb	Average adult ewe wt., lb <sup>a</sup>
Blackbelly x Dorset	2.3	94.1	37	147
Dorset	11.5	78.6	37	168
Finnsheep	11.9	80.0	34	129
Finnsheep x Dorset	8.3	83.9	37	155

<sup>a</sup> Taken in November after weaning of the last lamb crop.

The mean adult ewe weight of 147 pounds for Blackbelly x Dorset ewes was somewhat less than that of Finnsheep x Dorset ewes (Table 2) but was acceptable for crossbred commercial ewes.

Our Blackbelly x Dorset ewes all produced substantial, kempy fleeces that required shearing but had no commercial value. Breeders should thus expect to have to shear hair x wool crossbred ewes. Backcrossing of these crossbred ewes to hair sheep or selection within advanced generations of crossbred animals will likely be required to produce animals that do not have to be sheared.

The Blackbelly x Dorset ewes produced in this study were very productive animals. They were superior to ewes of all other types in fertility in spring matings, lamb survival, and percentage of lambs weaned; were similar to Finnsheep x Dorset ewes in prolificacy; and, when mated to blackfaced or Dorset rams, produced lambs that were comparable in weaning weight to lambs produced by ewes of the other types. These Blackbelly x Dorset ewes could thus have been useful in a wide range of production systems.

The rams used to produce these ewes were of the Texas "Barbado" type, with large, flaring horns similar to those of the Rambouillet. Thus, despite having a predominantly hair coat, they should not be considered as equivalent to the polled Barbados Blackbelly animals found in the Caribbean. The relative merits and extent of common ancestry of these different Blackbelly types remains the subject of some debate. Greater access to animals from the Caribbean and the comparison of imported animals with existing U.S. Blackbelly populations would provide useful information. However, the performance of the crossbred ewes in this study clearly demonstrates that the Texas Barbado sheep are a valuable genetic resource in their own right

and may make important independent contributions to the development of easy-care sheep populations.

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### **New Members**

- Erin J. Mossa—Valley Spring, CA
- Beth O'Mahony—Banks, Oregon
- Robin Blakley—Germanton, NC
- Rick Cuzzort—Taylor, TX

We welcome you into our flock!

Members, we are looking for new members and friends to share the love, preservation, and dedication of our breed. Herd new members and friends to join BBSAI. In exchange you will receive two FREE Certificates of Registry.

### **Membership Renewals**

- Mike and Becky Lannon—Hockley, TX
- Dan & Beth Lockwood—Caldwell, ID
- E.J. Christiansen—Petaluma, CA
- Jesse & Donna Morgan—Big Spring, TX
- Mary Swindell—Cobden, IL
- Mark & Lin Storey—Nehalem, OR
- David Parks—Leonard, TX
- Raymond & Michelle Storey
- Mark Fleming—Lamar, MO
- Tony & Karen Maeder—Bonhan, TX
- James Harper—Prince George, VA

Thank you for staying with our flock!

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### **Growth Performance of Barbados Blackbelly Hair Sheep on Forage-Based Diets**

By Stephan Wildeus and Joni Rae Collins, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA

Barbados Blackbelly hair sheep evolved under low-input





management conditions, in a tropical environment stressful to animals. Their growth rates are generally lower than those of traditional wool breeds in the U.S., and this performance

must be viewed in the context of the nutritional and production conditions under which they were developed. In their native Caribbean environment, diets are based on tropical forages low in quality, with a high fiber component, and limited in crude protein. Supplements are not widely used due to the need for import at high cost.

In the U.S., these animals are generally raised under somewhat improved conditions, but their production niche very likely remains the production of lamb under forage-based systems. At the Agricultural Research Station at Virginia State University, Barbados Blackbelly lambs have been used in a number of hay-based pen feeding, as well as pasture grazing trials. These trials were conducted to evaluate the performance of the Barbados Blackbelly lambs with that of other hair sheep breeds (St. Croix, Katahdin) and/or land race meat goat breeds (Spanish, Myotonic, Boer cross). Lambs used in these trials were produced under an 8-month accelerated lambing system, and assigned to trials after weaning at 9 weeks of age. The accelerated mating resulted in trials being conducted at different times of the year. The following is a brief summary of the experimental conditions and resulting performance data in several of these trials:

In winter of 2000, a pen feeding trial was conducted with 36 male hair sheep lambs and meat goat kids of the breed types mentioned above. The breeds were equally balanced (18 animals per species; 6 animals per breed) and half of the animals in each breed were castrated prior to the start of the experiment. Animals were allocated to 6 pens (3 pens with sheep and 3 pens with goats). Animals were fed free choice a moderate quality grass hay (11.3% crude protein) and received a corn/whole cottonseed/soybean meal supplement at 2% of body weight. At the beginning of the trial animals were dewormed with Levamisole, but depressed performance suggested that the deworming had been ineffective and was repeated with Cydectin 49 days into the trial. Hay intake was higher in the hair sheep than the goats (2.08 vs 1.65% of body weight) in the first 100 days of the trial, but declined thereafter, and was not different between species (1.58%) for the remainder of the 160 day trial. Hair sheep also had a higher growth rate than goats (0.21 vs. 0.14 lb/day). Within the hair sheep breeds Barbados Blackbelly achieved gains of 0.17 lb/day, which was statistically similar to St. Croix (0.19 lb/day), but significantly lower than Katahdin (0.28 lb/day). Castration had no effect on the growth rate of animals in this trial.

The trial was repeated in the spring of 2002, with a similar experimental design (36 animals of the same breeds, supplemented at 2% BW, fed for 163 days). However, all animals in this trial remained intact and crude protein content of the grass hay was slightly lower (10.6%). Again, hay intake was higher in hair sheep than goats (1.49 vs 1.36% of body weight for the duration of the trial), and declined in both species as the trial progressed. Similar to the first experiment, hair sheep again grew faster than goats (0.32 vs 0.24 lb/day), and daily gain in Barbados Blackbelly (0.27 lb/day) was statistically similar to St. Croix (0.31 lb/day), but both were lower than Katahdin (0.38 lb/day). At the end of the trial animals were graded by two state-approved livestock graders. Hair sheep graded higher than goats, and within hair sheep breeds Katahdin graded higher than Barbados Blackbelly and St. Croix.

In a third pen feeding trial, conducted in the late summer 2002, the effect of forage (hay) quality on the performance of these same species/breeds was evaluated. The trial used a total of 72 intact males (36 lambs and 36 kids), allocated to 8 pens mixed by species and breed. Four pens each either received free choice fescue hay (13.5% crude protein) or alfalfa hay (16.3% crude protein). Hay for all groups was supplemented with a corn/whole



cottonseed/soybean meal supplement at 2% of body weight. Animals were on trial for 98 days. Alfalfa intake was initially higher (2.44 vs 2.06% of body weight), but decreased as the trial progressed and was similar for the two forage types towards the end of the trial (1.51 vs 1.54%). As was observed earlier, hair sheep grew faster (0.36 vs 0.23 lb/day) and graded higher than goats. Also as expected, animals on alfalfa grew faster than animals on fescue hay (0.34 vs 0.26 lb/day), and this response was consistent for both species. In this experiment there was no difference between hair sheep breeds in daily gain. On alfalfa, Barbados Blackbelly, Katahdin, St. Croix gained 0.38, 0.40, and 0.43 lb/day, whereas on fescue hay the breeds gained 0.32, 0.35, and 0.30 lb/day, respectively. The response in gain to the improved forage was most pronounced in the St. Croix and least in the Katahdin, with Barbados Blackbelly intermediate. Sheep receiving alfalfa tended to grade higher than those receiving grass hay, and live grades of Barbados Blackbelly and Katahdin were similar and higher than those for St. Croix.

In May 2001 a feeding trial was conducted with 36 ewe and wether lambs equally allocated to either a pasture or pen group. Pasture animals were maintained as one group on a 4 acre, predominantly fescue pasture (12-17% crude protein throughout the grazing season), subdivided for rotational grazing. Pen animals were allocated to 6 pens (separated by sex) and fed free choice alfalfa hay (16.6% crude protein). Both groups also received a corn/soybean meal supplement (16.5% crude protein) at 0.75% of body weight, and were dewormed (Cydectin) immediately prior to the onset of the trial. Animals remained on trial throughout the grazing season (168 days). Daily gain was higher in pen (0.17 lb/day) than in pasture animals (0.15 lb/day), and in this trial daily gain was lower in Barbados Blackbelly (0.12 lb/day) than Katahdin (0.19 lb/day) and St. Croix (0.17/day), which were not statistically different.

There was considerable variation in growth rates between the three breeds as well as between different trials. The generally low growth rates in the first trial were likely the result of the presence of clinical levels of gastrointestinal parasitism. While Katahdin generally grew faster, results from the third pen feeding trial indicated that both Barbados Blackbelly and St. Croix responded well to improvements in nutritional management (improved forage quality). The growth rates in the fourth trial were lower than was expected, considering that a good quality forage base was provided both on pasture and in the pens. This may point to the need to provide higher levels of supplementation for these animals if growth rates in excess of 0.2 lb/day are desired.

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### Poisonous Plants Websites

- <http://www.vet.purdue.edu/depts/addl/toxic/cover1.htm>
- <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/index.html>
- [http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/AgrEnv/ndd/goat/POISONOUS\\_PLANTS.html](http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/AgrEnv/ndd/goat/POISONOUS_PLANTS.html)
- [http://www.ivis.org/special\\_books/Knight/chap1/chapter\\_frm.asp?LA=1](http://www.ivis.org/special_books/Knight/chap1/chapter_frm.asp?LA=1)

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### Calendar of Blackbelly Events

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

- **Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival:** May 1 and 2, 2004 (<http://www.sheepandwoolfestival.org>)
- **Rare Breed Expo:** May 21–23, 2004 (<http://rarebreedexpo.com>)

- **World Sheep & Fiber Arts Festival:** September 4–6, 2004 (<http://www.worldsheepfest.com>)
- **Wool Festival of the Southwest:** November 13–14, 2004 (<http://www.woolfestivalsw.itctv.com>)

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

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### **Scrumptious Lamb Recipes...**

The BBSAI Cookbook is **coming soon!**

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## **BBSAI Secretary/Treasurer Update**

Hi folks, after six months or so on the job, I think I have a good handle on this job. I really appreciate the support, patience, and help I have received from several of our members. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments. We must all work together to strengthen the Association and promote our breed. In this update, I will address the following items: Memberships and Pedigrees, Website Breeders Directory, New and Renewed Members, and a financial comparison of expenditures for 2003 versus 2004.

### **Memberships and Pedigrees**

As a reminder, applications can be downloaded from the Association's website at: [www.blackbellysheep.org](http://www.blackbellysheep.org) or you can contact me at [secretary@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:secretary@blackbellysheep.org). If you do not have access to a computer, you can contact me at my home address and I will be glad to send them to you. My address and phone number will be at the end of this update. We currently have 98 members and have over 700 sheep in the BBSAI Registry. For those planning on attending the annual workshop and meeting in September, we will be able to complete membership applications, renewals, and Applications for Pedigrees at the workshop. Please be sure to bring a picture of your animal.

### **Website Breeders Directory**

If you want to update or change your information on the Directory, please e-mail me at: [secretary@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:secretary@blackbellysheep.org). As a reminder, we update the Directory on a quarterly basis, which is January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st.

### **New and Renewed Members**

We would like to welcome our new member since September 2003: Erin Mossa, along with our members who have renewed their memberships: Dan and Beth Lockwood, E.J. Christiansen, Jesse and Donna Morgan, Mary Swindell, Mark and Lin Storey, David Parks, Raymond and Michelle Storey, Mark Fleming, Tony and Karen Maeder.

On a sad note, we would like to pass along our condolences to Sheril Miller on the passing of her husband, Jeff, a lifetime member of the BBSAI.

### **Financial Comparison of 2003 Actual Expenditures versus 2004 Budgeted Expenditures**

To keep each of you up-to-date with the financial condition of the Association, we are providing you with a comparison of the 2003 expenditures and the 2004 budgeted costs. The Association is in good shape, but the Officers and Regional Directors are determined to enhance our financial condition.



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Lamar, Missouri 64759  
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secretary@blackbellysheep.org

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### What Protein Sources Are in My Feed?

The current BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) situation has raised a number of questions relative to protein sources used in animal feeds. The specific question relates to the potential use of animal proteins as protein sources in concentrate feeds.

In 1997, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) provided guidelines for the use of animal protein sources in animal feeds. This move was made to prevent the occurrence of BSE via animal feed. Specifically, this regulation prohibits the use of certain proteins derived from mammalian tissue in feeds fed to ruminants. There were also a number of products that were exempted from this regulation. These exempted products can be used in manufacturing feeds fed to ruminants. The exempted products include:

**Protein products derived from mammals:**

1. Blood and blood products—Gelatin
2. Milk products (milk and milk proteins)
3. Pure porcine (pork) or pure equine (horse) protein
4. Inspected meat products, such as plate waste, which have been cooked and offered for human food and further heat processed for animal feed.

Non-mammalian protein products are also exempt and can be fed. These include: poultry,

marine (fish), and vegetable. The following are exempt since they are not protein or tissue: grease, tallow, fat, oil, amino acids, and dicalcium phosphate.

Feed companies are permitted to use these exempted products in mixing and blending feeds for ruminants. They cannot use any prohibited products in the manufacture of feed for ruminants. There are a number of animal protein blends on the market that can be used in manufacturing feeds for ruminants. However, these products are using porcine, poultry, or marine animal protein sources. You should contact your feed supplier if you have questions about the protein sources used in making the feeds delivered to your farm.

### **What about milk replacers?**

The primary protein sources used in milk replacers are from milk protein sources: dried whey, dried whey product, dried milk protein, dried skim milk, dry whey protein concentrate, delactosed whey, and whole milk solids. In addition to these milk-based protein sources, there are a number of other protein sources that may be used in milk replacers: soy protein isolate, soy protein concentrate, soy flour, and modified wheat protein. There can also be some blood plasma products used in milk replacers. According to the 1997 FDA ruling, blood products are permitted in animal feeds. If any blood protein derived protein sources are used in milk replacers, they will be listed as follows: animal plasma, spray dried animal plasma, or spray dried animal blood cells.

Protein sources used in milk replacers are usually the first 3-5 ingredients listed on the bag. The three largest companies that produce milk replacer for lambs and kids are milk protein based; however, you should check the label on the bag to determine what sources of protein are in the formulation.

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Department of Animal Science, Cornell University

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## **Senate Votes to Support COOL Labeling Action**

The U.S. Senate voted 58 to 36 in early November to support mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) as it is authorized in last year's farm bill. The vote is a reaction of the House vote in July to place a one-year moratorium on implementation of the rule, which affects lamb, pork, beef, and other agricultural products. This Senate vote was a nonbinding "sense of the Senate" vote intended to instruct the conferees to oppose the House language on the same topic. Regional senators voting to support COOL were Warner (VA), Sarbanes and Mikulski (MD), and Rockefeller and Byrd (WV). Senators Allen (VA) and Dole (NC) voted against the action.

Under the COOL rule, meat may not be labeled as having a U.S. origin unless it is born, raised, fed, slaughtered, and processed in the United States. The U.S. Department of Agriculture was originally to have required labeling by October 2004. The House voted to delay implementation with a one-year moratorium.

The American Sheep Industry Association supports the rule, saying it will have a beneficial effect on marketing of American lamb. Further, it is expected to help protect American lamb producers in the event of consumer confidence loss related to disease outbreaks in foreign flocks. Consumer groups support COOL, reflecting the strong support of Americans for labeling of U.S. products.

On October 27, 2003 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued the proposed COOL rule as required by the 2002 Farm Bill. The rule requires retailers to notify their customers of the country of origin of covered commodities beginning September 30, 2004.

The Virginia Sheep Producers Association board moved at its August meeting to inform the

state's representatives and senators of the association's support for COOL.

Reprinted with permission by Martha Polkey, Editor, Virginia Shepherd, from the October 2003 issue of *Virginia Shepherd*, published by the Virginia Sheep Producers Association.

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## White Muscle Disease (WMD)—Stiff Lamb Disease—Nutritional Muscular Dystrophy

What is it? White muscle disease is a degenerative muscle disease found in all large animals. It is caused by a deficiency of selenium and/or vitamin E. Generally, it is not known which. Certain areas of the U.S., including the Northeast, are considered low in selenium levels. Selenium deficiency occurs when the soil contains less than 0.5 mg Se/kg of soil and locally harvested feeds contain less than 0.1 mg Se/kg of feed.

Pasture, hay, grain, and other supplements can be analyzed to determine the amount of selenium to be added to supplemental feeds. Grazing sheep usually consume adequate amounts of vitamin E. Fresh legumes and pasture are good sources of vitamin E whereas silage, oil seeds, root crops, cereal grains, and dry hays tend to be poor sources of vitamin E. Prolonged storage of feedstuffs results in a degradation of Vitamin E content.

In addition to white muscle disease, selenium and vitamin E deficiencies can produce symptoms of ill thrift and reproductive losses. They can cause poor rate of growth or ill thrift in young lambs throughout the growing period. Selenium and vitamin E also play key roles in the animal's normal immune response.

**Symptoms.** White muscle disease is most commonly found in newborns or fast growing animals. Kids are believed to be more susceptible than lambs, possibly because they have a higher requirement for selenium. The disease can affect both the skeletal and cardiac muscles. When the skeletal muscles are affected, symptoms vary from mild stiffness to obvious pain upon walking, to an inability to stand. Lambs/kids may tremble in pain when held in a standing position. Affected lambs/kids are usually bright and have normal appetites. When the problem occurs in newborns, they are born weak and unable to rise. When the disease affects the heart, the animal shows signs similar to pneumonia, including difficult breathing, a frothy nasal discharge (may be blood stained), and fever. The heart and respiratory rates are elevated and often irregular.

**Treatment.** Treating the heart form of white muscle disease is usually ineffective. The muscle form of the disease can be treated with supplemental selenium and/or vitamin E. Producers need to follow label directions carefully when using selenium for treatment. The concentrations of selenium (per ml) vary greatly with each product, and excessive or repeated injections can result in selenium toxicity and possibly death. The commercially available selenium/vitamin E product(s) commonly used in the U.S. do not contain therapeutic levels of vitamin E. Additional vitamin E may need to be provided through an injection of vitamin E alone or through oral vitamin E products.

**Prevention.** Deficiencies occur when animals are fed poor-quality hay or straw or lack access to pasture. Selenium deficiency can be confirmed by measuring selenium levels in whole blood or tissues. A diseased animal will have less than 0.04 ppm of selenium in its blood. Breeding ewes require more selenium, and their blood levels should be over 0.5 ppm.

White muscle disease can be prevented by supplementing the diet of susceptible animals with selenium and vitamin E. Since it occurs mostly in lambs and kids whose mothers were fed a selenium-deficient diet, supplementation of pregnant animals helps reduce disease in newborns. This is because selenium is transferred from dam to fetus across the placenta and also is present in the colostrum. While Vitamin E is not transmitted across the placenta, colostrum levels of Vitamin E increase with ewe supplementation.

Selenium supplementation is controlled by law. For sheep, selenium can be supplemented in a complete ration at a level up to 0.3 ppm, in a feed supplement so that the intake of selenium does not exceed 0.7 mg per head per day, and in salt/mineral mixes at 90 ppm as long as total daily consumption does not exceed 0.7 mg/head/day. Selenium supplementation of feed has not been approved specifically for goats.

Injectable selenium compounds are available to prevent WMD in at risk-animals; however, injections are a poor alternative compared to routinely providing adequate selenium and vitamin E in the diet. Ideally, the total diet for sheep and/or goats should contain 0.10 to 0.30 ppm of selenium.

References: *Sheep & Goat Medicine* edited by D.G. Pugh (2002) and *Sheep Production Handbook* by American Sheep Industry Association (2002).

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Editor, Maryland Sheep and Goat Producers, from the February 2004 issue.

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## Receive Payments for Ewe Lambs That You Buy or Keep

USDA's Ewe Lamb Retention Program, whereby producers can receive a payment (~\$18) for each ewe lamb they purchase or retain in their flock, has been extended for fiscal year 2004. The announcement was made at the recent American Sheep Industry Convention in Sacramento, CA. The purpose of the program, to which USDA has pledged \$18.85 million, is to encourage expansion of the U.S. breeding ewe flock. Producers who have received payments in the past will be notified about the particulars of the program by local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices when details are finalized and offices are prepared to accept and process applications. Producers who have not received payments in the past need to visit their local FSA offices.

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Editor, Maryland Sheep and Goat Producers, February 2004 issue.

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## Questions and Answers

### **Since Barbados Blackbelly sheep do not have horns then why are Barbado sheep being registered with the BBSAI as Barbados Blackbelly sheep?**

There have been many attempts in the last 15 years to maintain a registry for Barbados Blackbelly sheep. All of those registries failed because they couldn't generate sufficient membership and were not well managed. The BBSAI is the only registry to overcome those two hurdles—and we constantly work at it. There are just a handful of people doing a lot of work to make the registry work for breeders all over the world. The BBSAI Board of Directors recognizes that right now, registering sheep from both breeds is not only critical to the survival of the BBSAI, but also very important for the welfare of both breeds.

The BBSAI thus far has not taken a position regarding the nomenclature of the two breeds. It allows both horned and polled breeds to be registered, and requires breeders to identify whether their rams are horned or polled and to identify if the sire of the sheep being registered was horned or polled. Irrespective of what people call them, the sheep that are registered have to meet breed standard.

And finally, it is important to remember that the main purpose of a breed registry is to track

bloodlines and sheep. The BBSAI is developing a database of registered sheep that will serve to help preserve the genetics of both breeds and help breeders identify good stock of either breed.

### **BBSAI registers the Barbados Blackbelly sheep and the Barbado sheep as the same breed. Is there a way that BBSAI could have two different registries?**

One of this year's agenda items for the BBSAI Board is to address the issue of how best to handle Barbado sheep within the current structure of the BBSAI. We also plan to begin developing breed standards for the Barbado. The current BBSAI registry adequately separates the polled from the horned rams, so having two separate registries isn't necessary right now. A more difficult problem that we need to address is how to identify which breed of sheep to assign a ewe to. The ewes of both Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly sheep are polled. Unless a breeder has excellent records covering several generations of breeding (called progeny testing), the breeder is not likely to be sure which breed of sheep his ewe is. A ewe's "hidden" horn genetics can seriously disrupt the breeding programs of both Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly breeders.

### **What is the difference between a Barbados Blackbelly sheep and a Barbado sheep? How do I know which breed of sheep I own?**

There is SO MUCH confusion on the Web about what sheep is called by what name. Here is the short answer: Barbados Blackbelly rams and ewes are polled (they have no horns). In contrast, Barbado rams are horned but the ewes are polled.

### **But what if I have only ewes (and don't know their bloodlines)? What if my ram has short, stubby horns that are neither this nor that?**

When you register a ewe, take into consideration any information you have about her lambs or her flock of origin. If a ewe throws horned ram lambs, then either the ewe or the ram (or both) is of a horned bloodline. If there are any horned rams in a ewe's flock of origin, then the ewe is probably of a horned bloodline.

Short, stubby horns on a mature ram are called "horn buds" (see next question). A ram having horn buds can be registered as a Barbado but not as a Barbados Blackbelly. If you are not sure of your flock's bloodlines, we recommend that you wait until a ram lamb has reached maturity before registering him. This will give his horns, or lack of horns, adequate time to express themselves.

### **What are scurs? What are horn buds?**

A "scur" is a horny growth on the skin and not attached firmly to the skull. Scurs are tolerated when registering Barbados Blackbelly sheep. In contrast, "horn buds" are short, stumpy horns attached to the skull. Horn buds are not tolerated in Barbados Blackbelly sheep but are acceptable in Barbado rams.

For more Questions and Answers visit <http://www.blackbellysheep.org/faq.htm>

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### **Blackbelly in the News**

Caleb Shaw at 10 years of age won a 4-H award for keeping his project book (perfect score) and showing his Barbado ewe lamb named Peso in an Open Sheep Show in the County Fair. Last July, Caleb also came in 8th overall high individual score for the State of West Virginia in the West Virginia University 4-H Livestock Judging Team. Caleb says he would like to major in Agriculture Science at WVU. Peso, Caleb, and his parents live in Milton, West Virginia.

**Three cheers for Caleb and Peso!!!**





To help promote the breed and educate the public, the BBSAI has been advertising in the following publications and festivals:

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy  
Virginia Shepherd—Virginia Sheep Producers Assn.  
Shepherd's Journal—Canada  
Ontario Sheep News—Ontario Canada  
Sheep! Magazine  
Small Farm Today  
The Record Stockman/The Southwest Stockman  
Rare Breed Expo—Pulaski, TN  
Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival  
NY Sheep and Wool Festival  
Wool Festival of the Southwest

Suggestions about ways to educate the public and promote our breed are always welcome. Please contact

Mark Fleming, Secretary/Treasurer  
1156 N.E. 50th Road  
Lamar, Missouri 64759  
(417) 398-2875  
[secretary@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:secretary@blackbellysheep.org)

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### **Herding All BBSAI Members**

The BBSAI BREEDERS DIRECTORY is a great tool to promote your Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly sheep. Please make sure you are listed and all information is current at [www.blackbellysheep.org](http://www.blackbellysheep.org). With your help, BBSAI strives to serve its members better!

Contact: Mark Fleming, Secretary/Treasurer [secretary@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:secretary@blackbellysheep.org)

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### **All Livestock Will Require National ID by 2006**

The United States Animal Identification Plan (USAIP) will require all livestock, regardless of their intended use, to have national identification. USAIP will aid in the control and eradication of an animal health threat, with the goal of a 48-hour trace back of an individual animal to its farm of origin.

The USAIP will apply to all animals in commerce within their respective industries regardless of their intended use as seedstock, commercial, pets, or other personal uses. The USAIP currently supports the following species and/or industries: bison, beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, sheep, goats, camelids (alpacas and llamas), horses, cervids (deer and elk), poultry (eight species including game birds), and aquaculture (eleven species). Species groups will have the choice of designing systems that may or may not use visual ID. In the case of sheep and goats, the U.S. animal identification number will become the official number for use in the Scrapie Eradication

Program.

USAIP will be implemented in three phases: 1) premise identification; 2) individual or group identification for interstate or intrastate commerce; and 3) trace-back of animals through the livestock marketing chain. The plan will begin as a voluntary program, but eventually full compliance will be necessary for the system to work effectively. The cost of USAIP will be substantial and is expected to be shared by the public and private sectors.

Both Canada and the European Union (EU) are adopting similar identification programs. Canada's program went into effect Jan. 1, 2004, and requires all sheep and lambs to bear an approved ear tag before leaving any premise. The EU system is being gradually introduced to member states.

Web site: <http://www.usaip.info>

Reprinted with permission by Susan Schoeniam, Editor, Maryland Sheep and Goat Producers, February 2004 issue.

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## Reward Notices

Holly Kelly was the *first* person to receive the new BBSAI Member's Spotlight reward, one *free* Certificate of Registry.

For this issue, Mark and Lin Storey received the [BBSAI Member's Spotlight](#) reward, one *free* Certificate of Registry.

Who will be the next to receive the BBSAI Member's Spotlight reward?

Who will be the *first* to receive the BBSAI Newsletter Article reward? (Two *free* Certificates of Registry)

Click [here](#) for details about the BBSAI Newsletter Article reward.

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## With Great Appreciation from James Harper, Newsletter Editor

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

Joni Collins—Virginia State University  
Carol Elkins—BBSAI Regional Director, Webmistress and Years of Dedication to this Breed  
Mark Fleming—BBSAI Secretary/Treasurer  
Helmut Lang—British Columbia, Canada  
David Notter—Virginia Tech  
Martha Polkey—Virginia Sheep Producers Association  
Susan Schoeniam—BBSAI Marketing Advisor  
Don Schrider—Communications Director, ALBC  
Caleb and Danita Sha—West Virginia  
Mark and Lin Storey—Nehalem OR  
Mary Swindell—BBSAI Regional Director  
Jennifer Vollmar—Canadian Sheep Federation  
Joshua Weimer—BBSAI President  
Stephan Wildeus—Virginia State University

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## Scrapie Information Sessions Start

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) to conduct regional information sessions on the National Scrapie Eradication Program. The first of these information sessions was held on January 21, 2004 just prior to the ASI Convention in Sacramento, California. It was open to all producers at no charge. Diane Sutton, National Scrapie Program Coordinator, and Stephanie Kordick, Eastern Region Scrapie Epidemiologist, discussed the current status of the Scrapie Eradication Program; and received input from producers regarding the program.

Contact Judy Malone at ASI for further information on future sessions (303) 771-3500, ext. 35; [judym@sheepusa.org](mailto:judym@sheepusa.org).

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## Organic Livestock Documentation Forms

This package from ATTRA contains ready-to-copy forms for documenting practices, inputs, and activities that demonstrate compliance with the National Organic Program rules. This 73 page package is suitable for all standard organic livestock production systems, including pasture-based operations. To obtain it, call 1-800-346-9140 or visit the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) website: [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org).

Reprinted with permission from Don Schrider—Communication Director in the March-April American Livestock Breeds Conservancy Newsletter. The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy is a national non-profit organization working to conserve and promote over 100 breeds of livestock and poultry now threatened with extinction. For more information contact: American Livestock Breeds Conservancy P.O. Box 477, Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312; (919) 541-5704, (919) 545-0022 FAX; E-mail [albc@albc-usa.org](mailto:albc@albc-usa.org). Web: [www.albc-usa.org](http://www.albc-usa.org)

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## Committee Forming to Develop Barbado Breed Standards

The BBSAI recognizes the need to develop a formal breed standard for sheep commonly referred to as Barbado. Currently, Barbado sheep that conform to Barbados Blackbelly breed standards are allowed to be registered, the primary difference being the presence of horns on Barbado rams. The BBSAI would like to form an ad hoc committee to develop formal breed standards for Barbado sheep. We are looking for committee members who are knowledgeable about the Barbado breed and who can bring to the Committee a broad perspective regarding desirable traits and whose goal is to improve the breed. Committee members would be expected to communicate with each other via email and via occasional telephone conferences for which they would pay their own long-distance charges. If you would be interested in participating on such a committee, please contact the BBSAI at [info@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:info@blackbellysheep.org). Include in your email a brief explanation of your involvement in Barbado sheep and why you want to help develop the breed's standards.

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### [Check the BBSAI's For Sale/Wanted Bulletin Board](#)

Last year, viewers to the BBSAI Web site posted 60 ads on the BBSAI Bulletin Board at <http://www.blackbellysheep.org/sale.htm> to advertise sheep for sale and to locate sheep they want to purchase. Since January 1, this year there have been 23 ads posted. Surprisingly, the majority of ads are want ads. Barbados Blackbelly and Barbado sheep are very much in demand nationwide.

Although we allow anyone to post a want ad, For Sale ads can be posted only by BBSAI members. Take advantage of this members-only service--if you have sheep to sell, make the BBSAI Bulletin Board your first resource in finding a buyer. Add the site to your Favorites list and check the bulletin board frequently. New ads are sometimes posted on a daily basis.

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[WWW.BLACKBELLYSHEEP.ORG](http://WWW.BLACKBELLYSHEEP.ORG)  
AND CLICK THE BBSAI GIFT SHOP LINK

### [Classifieds](#)



All Digital  Photography



Critterhaven



**New Consortium of Polled Breeders.** If you raise polled Barbados Blackbelly sheep and can document at least two generations of the polled bloodline, please contact me to learn more about the Consortium of polled breeders that is forming. Be part of the effort to save this breed from disappearing in the U.S. Participate in ram sharing, artificial insemination programs, semen storage and dissemination, and other efforts to preserve this breed. See <http://www.critterhaven.biz/coop.htm> for details and contact Carol Elkins at 719-948-3773 or email her at [celkins@critterhaven.biz](mailto:celkins@critterhaven.biz) if you would like to participate in this group's efforts.

[goatsupplies.com](http://goatsupplies.com)

Seldon's  Acres



**Reward:** Two free Certificates of Registry from the BBSAI 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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Thank you for being a loyal BBSAI member. We value your membership and will continue to strive to be a good resource for you. Please let us know how we are doing and share with us any ideas you may have about what the BBSAI can do for you.

[Send an Email to the Association](#)

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