



Greeting BBSAI Members!

Welcome to the second issue of BBSAI's new online newsletter. 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, or if you would like to download the newsletter from BBSAI's Web site, go to http://www.blackbellysheep.org/newsletter/BBSAI_newlsetter_July2004.htm

July, 2004

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Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International Newsletter
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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.

Membership Renewal

This July, the BBSAI will change the membership renewal policy so that all annual memberships will be renewed in July each year. This is an effort to simplify and decrease the time involved each month to monitor and mail renewal notices. We will use a proration schedule to ensure that members do not pay any extra dues in the changeover. As an example, Joe's regular membership is scheduled to renew in January, 2005. In January, 2005, BBSAI will charge him \$17.50 for membership to July. Then in July, Joe will renew his regular membership at \$30 and will be on track from that point.

In an effort to further cut our operating costs, we will email renewal notices to those members that have

an email address. We will continue to send via U.S. mail the renewal notices that do not have email addresses. For further information or clarification, contact the Secretary.

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 news-letter. 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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Hello from James Harper, Newsletter Editor

This is the third issue of the BBSAI newsletter that has been published, and the second to be published electronically, since I started getting heavily involved in the association, so I thought you should hear from the Virginia Regional Director. Even though I have not written any articles for the newsletter, I have been gathering articles for the newsletter and helping to publish it. I have been busy helping BBSAI behind the scenes as a TEAM member. I am using the term TEAM because a handful of the Board members have been working as a TEAM and we have been very active on a daily basis working to further improve our great association. I would like to personally thank our past Board members and the current experienced but non-active Board members for bringing our association to the point I started getting involved in June 2003.

Below are a few areas that the officers, committee members, and TEAM have been concentrating on since June 2003.

BBSAI Website—Please remember to check our website regularly. Carol Elkins, our webmistress, has been doing a great job in updating it.

BBSAI Workshop and Annual Meeting—Please put September 11 and 12, 2004, on your calendar for this year's workshop and annual meeting. This event is graciously hosted by Mary Swindell, Bellwether Farm, 815 Bell Hill Road in Cobden, Illinois. Please visit our website at <http://www.blackbellysheep.org> for more information. We really wish all members could attend. Whether or not you are able to attend, please remember to send or bring at least one item to contribute to our silent auction. This is a major fundraiser for our association. Do you have any registered stock that you would like to auction off during this event? Check our website for further information. Again, I hope to see everyone at this event and personally get to know each one of you better.

BBSAI Cookbook—Look for our association's cookbook coming out this year with numerous scrumptious lamb recipes for you to indulge in cooking for your family and friends. Carol Elkins has been diligently working on the BBSAI Cookbook. I was pleasantly surprised to hear of all the recipes that everyone contributed and to learn that Lynn Magedson took time from her busy schedule by contributing a section on carcass utilization. This will also be a major fundraiser for our association.

BBSAI Advertising—BBSAI has been advertising in a wide range of magazines and festivals to help

promote our wonderful breed and association at little or no cost to our Association. Please make sure you are in the BBSAI Breeders Directory and all your information is correct. Also make sure you place your sheep ads on our website so people visiting our site will see them. Are you lambing in the near future? Post your ads of the expected due dates and weaning dates on our website so buyers will have an idea of when you will be selling your stock. This is one of the many reasons why BBSAI is advertising in a wide range of places to help promote your stock, our breed, and the association.

Membership—Our association is growing with new members joining monthly, and current members are renewing their memberships.

4-H/FFA Programs—BBSAI has revitalized these programs with thanks to new member Susan Smith who is volunteering her time in promoting our breed in 4-H programs. Susan accepted the 4-H Chairman position and Danita Shaw is on the 4-H Committee. We hope others will help promote our breed in 4-H/FFA programs.

BBSAI By-Laws, Standing Rules, and Breed Standards—BBSAI has committees that are actively updating our by-laws, standing rules, and the breed standards in hopes to having them ready for members to vote on during our annual meeting on September 12, 2004.

BBSAI Budget—President Joshua Weimer and Secretary/Treasurer Mark Fleming have really done an outstanding job streamlining the budget. They have also increased the Association's income, have lowered the expenses, and, at the same time, provided more value for BBSAI members.

These are just a few areas the officers, committee members and TEAM are working to help improve BBSAI. Your voice counts! Please contact Josh or Mark to give your input on these and any other items.

This is the time of year for festivals and fairs. In Virginia, the Virginia State Fair and the Orange County Fair have asked for the rare Barbados Blackbelly sheep to be displayed again during their Rare Breed Events. I am sure the Chesterfield County Fair will also be asking the same in a few weeks. These events in the Virginia area will give great exposure to our breed and to BBSAI. I urge all members to do the same in their State and County.

Starting with my next breeding season, I will sell all breeding stock as registered and give the buyers a free one year membership to BBSAI. I am hoping this will increase the BBSAI membership in the Virginia area and increase the number of animals being registered. I challenge ALL members to follow suit.

I wish all Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly breeders success in lambing and Raising Sheep the EASY Way!TM

James Harper
Virginia Regional Director
Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International

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BBSAI Secretary/Treasurer Update

I have just finished transferring the BBSAI Registry to a new computer, so if you have had problems contacting me, I am back in business. Our database and Registry continues to grow and expand. Please be sure to notify me if your address or email has changed. Several of the last newsletters and emailed items have been returned due to invalid mailing addresses or invalid email addresses. 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, and a Financial Summary of the Association.

Memberships and Pedigrees

We currently have 105 members and have over 740 sheep in the BBSAI Registry. As a reminder, applications to become a member or register your sheep can be downloaded from the Association's website at: www.blackbellysheep.org or you can contact me at 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. In an effort to streamline and simplify our membership process, we have established the month of July as our expiration and renewal month. In the past, we have had membership renewals come due each month of the year. This system caused some financial constraints to many of our members. Plus, this is an effort to cut down on the time consumed with the correspondence each month, as well as to provide a consistent service to our members. Until we transition all of our members to July memberships, we have worked out a special cost share plan. In this plan, none of our members that renew or member to be, will be out any additional money. They will pay only their normal dues or the proration rate to July. For specific details and the cost share plan, please feel free to contact me.

Note: For those planning on attending the annual workshop and meeting this September 11th and 12th, we will be able to complete membership applications, renewals, and Applications for Pedigrees, on the spot. For your registrations, 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. As a reminder, we update the Directory on a quarterly basis, which is January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st.

I encourage each of you to take a look at the Breeders Directory format at: www.blackbellysheep.org. This wonderful new format, created by Carol Elkins, has simplified the time spent in creating the Directory and its appearance.

Financial Summary of the Association

To keep each of you up-to-date with the financial condition of the Association, we are providing you with a comparison of the Budgeted Expenses versus Actual Expenses through May 2004.

	2004 Budgeted Fixed Expenses		2004 Actual Fixed Expenses	
Telephone Fees		\$60.00		\$20.00
Web Site Fees		\$95.40		\$143.10
	2004 Budgeted Discretionary Expenses		2004 Actual Discretionary Expenses	
Postage Fees		\$213.60		\$184.29
Office Supplies		\$240.00		\$176.67
Newsletter		\$60.00		\$61.00
Annual Meeting		\$60.00		\$572.21
Note: Includes workshop t-shirts and petty cash for working capitol				
Advertising		\$150.00		\$25.00
Organizational		\$0.00		\$25.00
Note: Oklahoma Secretary of State filing fees				
Total Expenses		\$879.00		\$1,044.17
	2004 Estimated Income		2004 Actual Income	
Memberships		\$425.00		\$787.50
Registrations		\$395.00		\$285.50
Transfers		\$0.00		\$56.00
CafePress		\$60.00		\$53.73
Advertisements		\$0.00		\$30.00
Newsletter Postage		\$0.00		\$90.00
Additional Income		\$25.00		\$1,075.50
Note: Includes monies generated from silent auctions, workshop fees, donations, etc. from Annual Mtg				
Total Income		\$905.00		\$2,324.50
Current Bank Balance as of October 28, 2004				\$2,389.82

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Make the 2004 BBSAI Annual Meeting and Workshop Part of Your Summer Vacation!

What better way to combine learning and fun!! The 2004 BBSAI Annual Meeting and Workshop will be held in Southern Illinois, an area rich in history, recreational activities, wineries, and fun for the whole family. Why not add a couple of days to the BBSAI's weekend event and spend them enjoying the surrounding attractions?

Cobden, Illinois, is a lovely village within convenient driving distance from three major cities in southern Illinois—Carbondale, Anna-Jonesboro, and Cape Girardeau. Cobden is a great stop for visitors, and is located within 10 miles of several B&B's, numerous hiking and biking trails (including Giant City Park), and lots of antique shops.

These recreational facilities and attractions are all within 15 miles of Cobden:

- **Water Sports:** Fishing, motorboat rentals, canoe rentals, and swimming
- **Daredevil Sports:** Rappelling and spelunking
- **Other Sports:** Horseback riding, hunting, and golf
- **Out In The Town:** Antique shops/malls
- **Out In Nature:** Birdwatching, apple/berry picking, parks, hiking trails, and bike trails

Check out the links to these Cobden attractions:

- [Blueberry Hill Farm](#): U-Pick strawberries, blueberries and blackberries in season.
- [Cobden Museum](#): Items from the Civil War, Indian artifacts, antiques, glassware and memorabilia from World War 1 and World War II.
- [Flamm's Orchard](#): Fresh-picked apples from August through October and peaches from July through September.
- [Fernwood Gardens](#): Walk through gardens and a formal herb garden, where they grow what they sell.
- [Owl Creek Vineyard](#): Free wine tasting and great picnic areas.
- [Winghill Winery](#): Free wine tasting, tours, gift shop, featuring an art gallery for artisans to show and sell work.
- [Inheritance Valley vineyards](#): Free wine tasting, on the Shawnee Hill wine trail.

Don't limit yourself! A short drive will take you to these other area attractions:

- [Giant City State Park](#)
- [Cache River Wetlands](#)

- [Shawnee National Forest](#)
- [Southern Illinois University](#)
- [Shawnee Wine & Orchard Trail](#)
- [The Cache River](#)
- [Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge](#)
- [Great Rivers Scenic Byways Area](#)
- [Trail of Tears State Forest](#)
- [Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge](#)
- [Cypress Pond State Natural Area](#)

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Member's Spotlight—Mike and Becky Lannon

Mike and I are soul mates who were country folk at heart, trapped in the metropolitan city life of Houston. Eight years ago our dream of buying a place in the sticks and living the "Green Acres" lifestyle came true. We live just outside Hockley, Texas, about an hour northwest of Houston. We've always loved the rare and unusual, being a little rare and unusual ourselves, thus our attraction to the Barbados Blackbelly. From 1969, I bred, raised, trained, and showed dogs until I retired in 1990. Since then, I've developed a degenerative spine disorder that keeps me home, so our world is centered around the Lannon Farm of 5 acres where we feel like we've died and gone to heaven before our time. When we married 20 years ago, Mike was raising Rex cats and has since graduated to tomatoes. He has become a rather eccentric gardener who enters tomato contests and such. Never a dull moment on the 5 acres. This year he is growing 65 heirloom varieties of tomato plants along with his multiple other veggies. Ladies, he likes to can what he grows. Lucky me! Raising and growing things is in our blood. Mike raised wool sheep (boo!) when he was a boy. We're both pretty good cooks, so that's another attraction to the Barbados Blackbelly that we could wrap around some mint jelly. Mmmmmmm!

We've had several different species of critters since we've been on the farm. We have a few ducks, 5 Jack Russell Terriers, but the livestock we most enjoy are the Barbados Blackbelly. They are easy to handle and care for, even in my condition. They are very striking in appearance to someone who appreciates a handsome animal.

Our five acres are cross-fenced so we have five separate pastures, one with a quarter-acre pond and a six-stall horse barn. The first year we were here (on Christmas Day), Mike's horse bucked him off and broke his shoulder in five places. Needless to say, horses are out—sheep are in. Lucky sheep! Four of the pastures have access to the barn from four different directions. The fifth pasture has a shed built onto the back of our garage for protection from the elements. We have a catch pen in the center of the five pastures, which makes it very easy to move sheep from one pasture to the next by opening & closing gates. That is handy for pasture rotation and separating them when necessary, ie., weaning, breeding, etc. Each year, to Mike's credit, we raise a garden large enough to be a sixth pasture. After we harvest the corn, etc., we pull up the stalks and feed them to the sheep. When we clean out the barn stalls, all the hay and manure go into a compost pile to decompose for use in the garden the following year. We have quite a nice ecosystem working for us. The neighbors just don't understand why Mike's tomato plants are 5 feet high by the 1st of May. We're moving all the day lilies out of the garden so next year we won't have to pull up the corn stalks. We'll just open the gate and let the sheep do the work.

The horned Barbado sparked our interest in the breed when we first began to clear our 5 acres. The "brush busters" saved the day. We are now concentrating exclusively on the polled Barbados Blackbelly, partly because we love a challenge, and partly because we think they need support if they are going to survive as a heritage breed. Our goal is to preserve the breed and to help promote consistency of type in the polled progeny. We think it is vital to register stock (ours or anyone's) to document the lineage for future generations and ourselves. We wish the best of success to any members who are interested in the horned or polled varieties.

Y'all, the coffee is always on, so give us a shout and come on by. Conversation and company are always welcome.

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Sheep Record Keeping for Better Breeding

By Mary Swindell
BBSAI Director

Our Barbado or Barbados Blackbelly breeding stock are a valuable asset to each of us. We chose them for the wonderful characteristics of this breed. We have acquired them from various sources, and have perhaps registered them with the BBSAI. We hope to increase our flock by producing healthy, high quality lambs who will exhibit the best attributes possible from the rams and ewes that we have available. Many of us have started with rams or ewes that look wonderful and visually meet all the BBSAI breed standards, but which have little or no pedigree available. We hope they will produce healthy offspring, which will continue to meet breed standards, but how can we have the best chance of success?

Careful record keeping is a large part of the answer to successful breeding. Record keeping for a breeding flock involves four steps: 1) individual animal identification, 2) a daily journal, 3) record forms, and 4) analysis of recorded information for making decisions on breeding and culling.

Photo above: Teddy with farm ID tag (right ear) and scrapie ID tag (left ear)

1. Individual Animal Identification.

Only by tagging, tattooing or otherwise identifying each individual sheep can breeders put into effect a detailed record-keeping program. Each sheep may possibly have three different types of ID numbers: 1) a farm ID number (usually in consecutive order of birth), 2) a BBSAI registration number (beginning with the 3-letter alpha code for the farm's Flock ID), and possibly 3) a Voluntary Scrapie Eradication Program ID.

Usually, every sheep will have one ear tag (sheep in Scrapie programs may have two separate tags - one in each ear). An easy way to tell ewes from rams and wethers at a distance is to put the farm ID tag in the left ear on ewes, and put it in the right ear on rams and wethers. And since little lambs have such small, delicate ears, it is a good idea to delay tagging the lambs until their ears are big enough to support adult tags. Instead of tagging the babies, try spray painting their farm ID number on their side, with lamb

marking spray paint. You can use blue paint for the ram lambs and red for the ewe lambs. This paint is nontoxic, and is scrubbable. Another alternative is to tag the lambs with tiny farm ID tags (such as a snap tag), and later replace these with adult sized tags (with the same tag number) when the lambs are older and larger.

2. Daily Journal.

A daily journal, such as a spiral notebook (or note paper in a ring binder) is a good way to jot down "raw data" each day. This notebook may be taken to the barn with you as you do chores. It is the first place where you will record information that you observe about your livestock, medical and hygienic treatments that you give your livestock, exposure dates for ewes and rams, and any other events that affect them, such as

4/22/04 (Thursday)

- twin ewe lambs born to Ewe #37: #102 (5.5 lb, lighter) and #103 (5.25 lb, darker).
- trimmed feet of Ewes #38, #39, #55, #55, and #57.
- moved Ewes #54, #61 and #72 to shady pasture and exposed them to Ram #67.
- noticed Ewe #53 limping on back rear foot. Will check tomorrow.

Your notes do not need to be highly organized, as long as you get them written down. It is like a diary for the day. Later, this information will be copied onto the various record forms.

3. Record Forms.

When time permits, you can use your daily journal to fill in various record keeping forms. Some of the most important forms are: 1) Barn Record, 2) Individual Ewe Production Record, and 3) Sheep Family Tree Record.

These records may be done in several ways. The first way is to keep handwritten records on a handwritten or typed form. Another way is to develop a computer spreadsheet for each of the forms and fill them in by hand or by computer. At my farm, I use a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet program to make and fill in my forms. Still another method is to put all the raw data (i.e., lamb birthdates, lamb name, weights, etc.) into a database, such as Microsoft Access. The various forms, called "reports," can be viewed or printed as needed from the database. The advantage of using a database is that you will never need to enter your raw data more than one time, and you do not need to re-manipulate it to organize it into the various charts. The database program will do all of this for you, if you set it up that way.

Regardless of the method that you use, below I have shown details of some of the most important forms. These forms were originally obtained from Dr. Richard Cobb at the University of Illinois, and I have modified them to fit my specific farm needs:

Barn Record. This is a chart of lamb births, in date order of birth. The chart may include, from left to right:

Ewe Number & Ewe Name
Sire Number & Sire Name
Birth Date and Birth Time
Lamb Number & Lamb Name
Sex of Lamb and Birth Weight
Type of Birth (S= single, TW= twin, etc.)
Birth Difficulty (OK, etc.)
Date of 1st CD/T Vaccination
Date of 2nd CD/T Vaccination
Date Tagged
Date of Castration

30 Day Weight
60 Day Weight
Date Weaned
Weight and Age at Weaning
Comments (physical characteristics, problems, etc.)

[\(Click here to see the Barn Record Form\)](#)

Individual Ewe Production Record. This chart has the same information as the Barn Record above, but it is for just one ewe. The individual ewe's personal information is in a section at the top of the form, including her name, ID number(s), date of birth, her sire and dam, and her birth type. Below the ewe's information is a list, in order of birth, of all the lambs she has ever had. The birth year is shown in the far left column. This information can be copied directly from lines on the Barn Record (above).

[\(Click here to see the Individual Ewe Production Record\)](#)

Sheep Family Tree Record Form. This form utilizes information from the Barn Record to make an ancestry or pedigree chart, showing each sheep and his/her parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, in a typical family tree formation. Basic information about each animal is listed along with their ID number, registration number, name, date of birth, and anything else the breeder wishes to include.

[\(Click here to see the Sheep Family Tree Record Form\)](#)

Other Record Forms. It is also helpful to keep other records, such as

- Sheep Identification Log (a list of all your sheep, together with identifying characteristics, their farm ID tag numbers, their Scrapie tag numbers, and their BBSAI registration numbers, as well as date of birth or acquisition, and date of sale or disposal).
- Sheep Purchases and Sales Journal (showing all stock purchased or sold, date of purchase or sale, buyer or seller name, purchase or sales price, and total purchases and sales for the year). This record is especially helpful at income tax time.
- Sheep Breeding Plan Log (showing dates of exposure and farm ID numbers of ewes exposed to particular rams. May also include lambing dates).

4. Analysis of Records for Decision Making.

After you have started a record keeping system, you will find that you have a basis for making better breeding and flock management decisions.

- a) You will have records showing when your ewes have lambed, and how many lambs each ewe has borne.
- b) Since you will know who the sire is, you can then make good decisions concerning returning ewes to an appropriate ram after they have lambed.
- c) And by keeping track of lambing data, you will learn which ewes are good producers.
- d) Also, you will know which rams are good breeders, based on time from dates of first exposure to lambing.
- e) Additionally, you can feel assured that your decisions to cull particular sheep are based on sound data that you have observed and documented over time.

Finally, with the above overall information available to you, you can make long range plans to develop and diversity the best genetics available in your flock. You will be able to manage and be in charge of your breeding plan, rather than simply being at the mercy of chance matings.

You will be able to document the history of your flock and the ancestry of each individual sheep. This is important for you, if you plan to sell breeding stock, since many of today's breeding stock buyers want the best genetics they can possibly find, especially if they are raising a rare or watched breed such as the Barbado or Barbados Blackbelly sheep.

Good record keeping is also very important in tracking resistance to disease, and in developing the best, strongest, most desirable characteristics that you can obtain from the sheep that you have available. By preserving and breeding your very best genetics, you are actually making your own investment in the future of your flock, while at the same time, you are providing a service to the preservation of the breed.

In the Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly sheep, we have a wonderful set of unusual genetic characteristics which include extreme hardiness, parasite and disease resistance, resistance to heat and humidity, prolific breeding and easy lambing, ability to survive on native pasture with minimal supplements, and excellent self preservation instincts.

There are also other issues at stake with our breed. Barbado breeders want to work to enhance the beautiful large, curled horns of their rams. Barbados Blackbelly breeders want to develop the original Island of Barbados polled ram characteristic in their stock. Each of these goals is extremely worthwhile.

As sheep breeders, we can preserve these excellent attributes through careful breeding. However, if we do not attempt to identify what is good in our sheep, document it carefully, and actively work to preserve it, we may end up with less hardiness, less resilience, and overall a less valuable flock, than what we started with. My hope is that each of us will carefully consider how important record keeping is in this overall plan as we attempt to enhance and develop our flocks.

By Mary Swindell
Bellwether Farm
Cobden, Illinois
05/16/04

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Sheep 101

By Sue Smith
BBSAI Member

Late last summer, that is the summer of 2003, I began looking online for a breed of sheep I felt I could raise to help with farm expenses. I have never been a "real" farmer, only hobby farming with my mules and donkeys, chickens, guineas, turkeys, peafowl-well you get the picture. I wanted a breed of sheep that was low maintenance and I knew there had to be one because the Israelites didn't have time to stop and shear all those sheep, and worm them, and vaccinate them, and still wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

So to begin my search, I decided that if sheep didn't have wool, and I knew they couldn't possibly have fur, there must be a "hair sheep" out there. My search for a hair sheep took me to the Oklahoma State University Web site's list of sheep breeds (<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep/hair.htm>) where they had a bunch of different kinds of hair sheep. There are some really neat looking sheep out there, but the one that grabbed me was the Barbados Blackbelly. I began a more thorough search and found the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep website-BBSAI. All that information had me convinced I was on the right track of the hair sheep breed I wanted. I only had one search left and one decision to make. The decision was whether to go with polled or horned Barbados Blackbelly, and the search was to hopefully find a breeder here in Michigan.

Back to the old search engine on the computer. Do you know some of the weirdest things pop up when your are looking for a subject...but anyway. After a long search, I finally found someone here in Michigan who had registered horned Barbados Blackbelly sheep. So there was the two-fold decision answered in the same breeder. Now I am into September. I called her, she did not have any ewes available but she did have an eight-month-old registered ram lamb that was a champion. I purchased the ram and placed an order with her for some next spring ewe lambs.

I built the ram a pen all fenced in with a nice building for shelter from the Michigan winter. It was a beautiful site to behold when I was done. The original shelter does not now exist because it was used over the winter by "the battering ram."

I began to read everything I could get my hands on about sheep in general and Barbados Blackbelly in particular. I lived, breathed, and talked sheep. I wanted to learn all I could before I had my own lambs in 2005. See, I had my breeding program all worked out right down to the genetics of my flock. I would have all my equipment bought and in place, all my lambing pens up, etc. I had my sheep business all planned out...or so I thought.

In early February 2004, a friend called with the name of a breeder of Barbado sheep who had ewes for

sale. By this time I knew the difference between Barbados Blackbelly and Barbado sheep. Just before finding this out, the Michigan breeder had called and told me she had only one ewe lamb born from the breeding I wanted. My original plan was for three ewes, all registered, all from different breedings, none related to my ram nor related to each other. I truly believed I had the perfect plan, until only one ewe lamb was born, and then the lady having Barbado Sheep for sale came along.

So OK, I'll have one registered ram and one registered ewe, and then some unregistered Barbado sheep. I'll have registered stock for the people who want them and then, using my ram on the other ewes, I will have meat sheep, trophy sheep, or whatever comes along that people want them for. A little deviation from the original plan, but not an uncomfortable change.

The Barbado ewes were located about 50 miles from where I live. The plan now is going to be for one registered ewe and three unregistered Barbado ewes. Having arrived at the Barbado breeder's farm in the late afternoon on a very cold February day, I was ecstatic with surprise when I saw that the Barbado sheep looked just like my ram, meaning they looked like Blackbelly sheep. I'm not sure what I was expecting, maybe polka dotted sheep, but these sheep were nicely marked. I had three large dog carriers and we loaded one ewe per carrier. Just at the time of the "thanks and I appreciate this purchase," the nice lady asks if I minded that these ewes were pregnant. Little late to say no. She did not know when they were due for sure, and was not sure which ram had bred these ewes.

Let me think now, I had read the chapters on Sheep Farming Today, Breeding, Pastures and Fences, Herding Dogs, Predators and Protection, Feeds and Feeding, and Problems with Rams, Disorders in Ewes, Lamb Problems. Up until this point (purchasing of these ewes), I thought I pretty much had a handle on my life. After all, I wasn't going to have any lambs on the ground until the spring of 2005. No sweat, I'd get the rest of what I needed to know in my head by then.

On the morning of February 25, 2004, I went out to feed the sheep, I ended up doing more that day than feed sheep; there were twins on the ground! Two weeks later there were two more, and two weeks later there were two more. Thank goodness that I only bought three ewes. I have now gone from Sheep 101 right into Sheep 104, skipping over Sheep 102 and 103 completely. I kept thinking over and over the scripture in Jeremiah 29:11 that says, "For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

The first twins were fine, Mom did a good job. Not so good were the next sets of twins. One ewe rejected a small ewe lamb and then the ram lamb from the other ewe had hypothermia. I scrambled to figure out what to do. I had no lamb bottles, no formula, I didn't know how to milk out a "wild" ewe, I was up that creek without a paddle. After I ran the gambit of emotions, I settled down and went into my animal technician training mode. I did milk out one ewe for the ram lamb so he got colostrum, but the little ewe lamb was pretty far-gone. I put all I knew about saving a life into motion. Long story short, they are both just fine.

All my plans and advertising and all I had thought I was going to do with sheep had been accelerated by one year. I decided to put up quickly made flyers in the local feed stores. I had the ram lambs advertised as 4-H projects for fair. A couple of children wanted to show the ram lambs but changed their minds. Then a man and his wife contacted me after seeing the flyer and right on the phone bought all four ram lambs. When he came to pay the down payment, he asked if he and I could make up a contract so as every ram lamb I have born next year he will buy. Be still my heart.

Well, the lamb rams are gone and I have a contract to sell all of the ram lambs born next year. (Guess what I am praying for!) I am purchasing six more Barbado ewes in a couple weeks. All in all, I think my first unplanned year in the sheep business went pretty well. Next year, I'm not planning anything-what will be will be.

Sue Smith
Sandoah Achers

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Obstetrics and Newborn Management

It really doesn't matter what you do, ewes will decide for themselves when they want to lamb. You can, however, be prepared for lambing and the potential problems that can occur. The most common physical sign of impending lambing or parturition in the ewe is the udder begins to fill or bag up. One may also observe a softening of the tissue around the head of the tail. The vulva enlarges and a colorless mucous discharge, the cervical mucus plug, may be observed. Even observing these signs in ewes only gives one an approximate time of lambing, as these observations may be present a week before lambing.

Parturition occurs in three stages. The first stage of parturition lasts from 2 to 12 hours, the time during which the cervix dilates. During this stage, ewes will try to isolate themselves. In a crowded barn, this may be in a corner or up against a wall. The ewe acts uncomfortable, getting up and down, lifting her lip, pawing the ground, and frequently urinating. Ewes do not "push" at this stage but the uterus is contracting causing dilation of the cervix. Some ewes seem to stare off into space and then go back to chewing their cud or eating.

The second stage of parturition is expulsion of the lamb. This stage is fairly quick, only lasting 1 to 2 hours. The water bag may be observed followed by the feet and the head. There should be steady progress once the water bag is observed or appearance of the feet. If the ewe strains longer than 45 minutes without producing a lamb, she should be checked for problems. Ewes may rest between delivering twins, but twins should be delivered within 45 minutes of the first delivery. Cleanliness is important when examining a ewe for problems. Contamination of the uterus can lead to serious infection that will negatively impact the health of not only the ewe but also the newborn. Likewise, it protects the shepherd as well. The ewe's vulva should be cleaned with a mild soap and water solution. The shepherd should use a obstetrical sleeve and apply generous amounts of lubrication on the sleeve before entering the vagina.

The most common problem observed in ewes with dystocia, difficult birth, is fetal postural abnormalities. Normally, the lamb is born with the front legs extended followed by the head. The head should be 2 to 4 inches from the tip of the toes. If the head is right on top of the toes, the lamb may be "stuck" because the elbows are caught. Pulling on one leg at a time and fully extending the limb usually resolves this problem. If difficulty occurs in trying to manipulate the fetus, raising the hind quarters of the ewe sometimes allows the uterus to fall forward and reduces the ewe straining allowing for easier repositioning.

A common problem occurs when twins are trying to come out at the same time with each having a leg in the birth canal. One should follow each leg back to the chest to ensure that the legs presented are of the same lamb. If the head and two different legs are presented, it is best to gently push the head back in and then replace the leg and retrieve the other matching leg. Be sure to guard the feet as they are sharp and can tear the uterus. In any ewe dystocia, always keep in mind that you may have more than one lamb coming out at the same time.

Sometimes the legs appear but the head seems to be missing. Again check to be sure the legs belong to the same lamb. The head may be turned back or down between the legs. In any case, by gently pushing back on the lamb's brisket, one will usually have enough room to manipulate the head into the proper position.

Sometimes a ewe may not strain but the membranes are present or the tail is present but no legs. When you examine the ewe, the lamb's butt is pushed up against the pelvis and the legs are extended forward. This is referred to as a true breech. Gently push the butt forward and reach under to grab one of the legs. Place a finger around the hock and gently retract, then reach forward and grab the foot. With the hand around the foot, guarding the toe from penetrating the uterine wall, bring the toe to the middle and push the hock to the side while lifting the toe into the vagina. Repeat with the other leg. Place the tail between

the legs, this reduces the chances of tearing the uterus and remove the lamb.

The third stage of parturition is expulsion of the placenta. The placenta should pass within 8 hours of lambing. If the placenta retains, the ewe's appetite should be monitored as well as her temperature for a fever (>103.3 °F). If the ewe goes off feed or develops a fever, she should be given penicillin. Mild traction can be applied to the placenta but it should not be torn. If the ewe remains bright, alert, and eating, nothing needs to be done and eventually the placenta will fall out.

Lambs should be born in a dry draft free environment to reduce the risk of hypothermia. Lambs attempt to stand and nurse within 30 minutes of birth.

Lambs should nurse within the first 2 hours of birth. Lambs should receive 50 mL of colostrum per kg of body weight (.75 oz/lb) during the first 2 hours and a total of 200–250 mL/kg (3.5 oz/lb) during the first 24 hours of life. For example, a 6 lb lamb should receive 4.5 oz in the first 2 hours and 21 oz over the first 24 hours of life.

If a ewe does not have adequate amounts of colostrum, colostrum from another ewe may be used. If ewe colostrum is not available, goat or cow colostrum can be used. There is a chance for disease transmission to occur using goat or cow colostrum, e.g., Johne's Disease, so investigation into the health status of the herd is important. Likewise, in rare cases some lambs fed cow colostrum may develop a hemolytic anemia. Commercial colostrum substitutes are available but their efficacy is not known.

Lambs should be placed in a claiming pen or lambing jug. This allows for proper bonding to occur as well as gives the shepherd an opportunity to observe the ewe and lambs for problems. Lambs should remain there a minimum of one day, plus a day for every lamb. Ewes may ignore weak lambs or lambs born subsequent to the first of a litter, so even though the lambs are with the ewe, one must observe ewe-lamb interactions.

The lamb's navel/umbilical cord should be dipped in a disinfectant. A 2% iodine or betadine solution can be used as well as chlorohexidine. Chlorohexidine has been shown to provide some residual bacterial inhibition. Although tincture of iodine is commonly used, it may be too strong as it can cause burning of the tissues. Lambs may need selenium supplementation if ewes are not properly supplemented. Feeding a quality trace mineral salt with the highest allowable selenium should provide the ewe and her lambs adequate selenium. If supplementation is given, lambs should receive 1/3 mL of BoSe®.

Heat lamps may provide lambs needed warmth if the lambs are wet or sick. Lamps should be no closer than 4 feet from the ground. Positioning of the lamp is important, as a misplaced lamp may set the barn on fire.

Fostering of lambs may be necessary in the case of triplets or inadequate milk production. Match lambs for size, color, and age. The closer to birth fostering occurs, the better the results. Placing fetal fluids on the adopted lamb may help the fostering process.

Colostrum should be hand fed before fostering to insure adequate passive transfer of immunoglobulins. When selecting the lamb to foster, pick the strongest of the lambs. Remove the ewe's lambs and return them after she accepts the new lamb. Do not separate the ewe from her lambs any longer than 2–3 hours.

Bottle feeding may be necessary if fostering is not an option. Provide the lamb colostrum during the first 24 hours of life. A lamb milk replacer should be used. Lambs should be fed 4 times a day. The lamb should receive a total of 20% of its body weight a day. For example, a 6 lb Barbado lamb would receive 19 oz of milk (1.2 pints) a day, 4.75 oz per feeding. The milk should be fed warm in order to avoid chilling of the lamb during the first week of life. If bloating is a problem, either try feeding cold milk replacer or feed smaller quantities at a time more frequently. The second week of life, lambs can be fed 3 times a day rather than 4. Lambs should be offered creep feed within a week of life and can be weaned when they are between 8 and 12 weeks old. More information is available at <http://www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/artificialfeeding.html>.

Lambing Equipment Box

- Bucket
- Mild soap, Ivory
- Towels
- Obstetrical lubrication, KY Jelly, J-Lube
- Obstetrical sleeves
- Clean baling twine
- Antiseptic to dip navels
- Hair clips to use on umbilicus in case of hemorrhage
- Bottle nipples
- Feeding tube
- 60 cc syringe to fit feeding tube

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Production Management Medicine Diplomate
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VA-MD Regional College of Veterinary Medicine
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New Members

- Barbara & Robert Lee—Oregon City, OR
- Susan Smith—Barryton, MI
- Caleb Shaw—Milton, WV
- Elaine Haas—Hillsboro, MO

We welcome you into our flock!

Members, we are looking for new members and

Calendar of Blackbelly Events

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

- [Mason County Fair, Point Pleasant
West Virginia—August 4–9, 2004](#)
- [World Sheep & Fiber Arts Festival:
September 4–6, 2004](#)
- [Wool Festival of the Southwest:
November 13–14, 2004](#)

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
- Cheryl McLaughlin-Willcox, AR
- Ryan Wickenheiser-Carleton, MI
- Kodie and Kolbie Hatley-Dyer, AK
- Heather Sharfeddin-Sherwood, OR

Thank you for staying with our flock!

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If you know of any upcoming events in which Barbado or Barbados Blackbelly Sheep are participating, e-mail jharper53@erols.com.

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USDA Opens New Biosecurity Facility

A new \$1.65 million Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) facility that will conduct analyses on a wide range of potential biological threat agents opened April 22, 2004, in Athens, Ga.

Facilities with the designation BSL-3 use pathogens in research and diagnostic activities that could constitute a threat to either human health or productivity of the agriculture system. BSL-3 facilities prevent contamination by using a broad range of techniques and barriers, including tightly controlled and restricted access to facilities, techniques that require handling of infectious materials in sealed containers or biosafety cabinets, special clothing, and advanced training.

In addition to the Athens facility, FSIS has four laboratories staffed by about 200 microbiologists, chemists, and veterinary pathologists. Three of the labs, located in Athens, GA, St. Louis, MO, and Alameda, CA, conduct continuous regulatory testing on meat, poultry, and egg products.

FSIS is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's public health agency and is primarily responsible for ensuring the safety of the nation's meat, poultry, and egg supply.

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Meat Label Standards

In recent years, the marketplace has seen a growth in niche markets that strive to meet consumer demands for specialized commodities. In regard to meat consumption, consumers are looking for products from animals that have been raised with sustainable farming practices or that have been specifically selected for flavor and tenderness. In their attempt to capture these growing niche markets, farmers, ranchers, processors and marketers have turned to labels as a way to alert consumers to the unique qualities of their products.

Anticipating the growing interest in specific labels, the USDA published a set of meat label standards in December 2003. Their purpose was to establish minimum standards for production practices that would support a USDA process-verified label. These standards, which can be found at the website www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/stand/claim.htm, were published in the December 2002 edition of the Federal Register and were open for public comment until March 31, 2003.

Farmers, processors, and marketers may now request these meat labels at any time and use them to market the ways in which their livestock is raised, processed or treated. Upon making this request, applicants must submit documentation of their quality management systems (production practices) based on a set of guidelines written by the Livestock and Seed office at the Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS). This documentation is then submitted to the Livestock and Seed Program Audit Review and Compliance Branch (ARC) where the applicant's systems are first reviewed and approved on paper. Then the business is given an on-site, third party audit to verify the documentation first-hand. This process must be carried out yearly for re-approval. For more information about this verification process as well as examples of existing meat marketing labels, visit the website www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/prover.htm or contact Jim Reeva at (202) 720-1124.

In response to the proposed meat labels, the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (SAC) worked to organize a coalition of groups to oppose four categories of label claims: those relating to antibiotic and hormone use and those that used the terms "free range" and "grass-fed." They contended that the USDA had not consulted a diverse group of agricultural interests in the process of writing the label claims. To convince AMS to withdraw the four identified claims, therefore, these agricultural interests wrote letters and used the public comment period to generate thousands of comments backing their request for withdrawal. In response to this outpouring of public opposition to the four meat claims, USDA withdrew them.

SAC is now in the process of organizing meetings with USDA's AMS/Livestock and Seed program staff to discuss each of the four withdrawn label claims. The first of these four meetings is scheduled for November 13, 2004, and will address antibiotic label claims. Representatives from Keep Antibiotics Working Campaign Coalition, the retail sector, marketing interests, animal rights groups, and farmers and ranchers will participate in this meeting. Their goal is to write strict, minimum standards for antibiotic label claims that will maintain the integrity of the label, instill consumer confidence, and protect an important market for farmers using sustainable farming practices.

Reprinted with permission from 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.

Web: www.albc-usa.org

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Are Livestock Protection Dogs and Other Working Dogs Being Covered Under the "Right to Farm " Laws?

In April 2004 Fran Mazzara received word from his attorney that the Oregon State Court of Appeals ruled on the question "Are Livestock Protection Dogs and Other Working Dogs Covered Under the 'Right to Farm' laws?" The Court's answer was YES!

The "Right to Farm" laws forbid any jurisdiction from establishing or citing any local "nuisance" laws that would interfere with a legitimate farm's acceptable farming practice. The court has decided the use of LPD and working dogs is a legitimate farming practice and immune from any actions by any jurisdiction other than State laws.

This case has established a precedence that may be cited in any future cases across the United States.

"While this has cost us a bundle in many ways," says Mazzara, "and we no longer have the farm or our animals, we pursued it in hopes others may profit. It now behooves everyone to get the word out that a precedence has been established, an Appeals Court has ruled and anyone caught in a situation like ours can now direct their attorney to this case to establish their rights."

Fran Mazzara would like to thank all those who helped him in his battle, not just for his family but for the dogs and farms that will benefit from this.

For the Oregon Judicial Department Appellate Court Opinions, filed April 28, 2004, visit <http://www.hbalaw.com/KFA/oregon.htm>

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF OREGON
HOOD RIVER COUNTY, Respondent,
v.
FRANCIS N. MAZZARA, Appellant.
010058DG; A118596

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Lamb Processing Plant in South Dakota

Over the next year, South Dakota Ag Producer Ventures (SDAPV) plans to buy a lamb processing company based in California and move it to Corsica, SD.

Chief executive officer of SDAPV, Joel Dykstra, spoke about the creation of Great Plains Lamb and Veal at a Farmers Union meeting in Beresford. The venture group has plans to process 600 head of lamb per day and 350 head of veal per day.

SDAPV will buy the company in two phases for \$3 million. They plan to hold an initial offering until June 1 to raise money to buy the company. After the purchase, a public offering in early 2005 will be held to offer shares to a wider group of investors.

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New Scrapie Tags Available

As many know, the first plastic scrapie tags issued free to producers under the mandatory tagging program proved difficult to insert in adult sheep ears and were prone to high tag losses.

In June 2002, USDA-APHIS approved Premier's request to substitute a tag (2X tag) that is larger, made of more durable material, snag resistant, and capable of penetrating thick ears. The cost per tag to APHIS did not change. This was good for the procrastinators who did not request tags until June, 2002, but it did not correct the problems for all those who already had the other tags. There is good news! In Oct. 2003, APHIS approved the free supply of the improved 2X tags to producers, even if they still have a large supply of the other tags. Producers may discard the earlier tags and request the new ones via your state office at 1-866-USDA-TAG. The number of tags supplied this time will be only enough for annual needs (instead of 3 years in some cases with the first supply of tags).

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Don't Miss a Great Opportunity for a Good Buy!

Currently, we have over 25 valuable items to be sold at the BBSAI Silent Auction and Livestock Auction. The livestock auction will consist of registered Barbado and Barbados Blackbelly sheep. The items to be auctioned are donated by suppliers, members, and friends of BBSAI. Donated items are arriving weekly. Make sure you do not miss out on these great deals at the 2004 BBSAI Workshop and Annual meeting.

Listed below are some of the suppliers, members, and friends who have already contributed to the 2004 BBSAI Auctions.

For more information about our 2004 BBSAI Workshop and Annual meeting visit www.blackbellysheep.org.

American Livestock Breed Conservancy
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Blackbelly Barbados Sheep Association International
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E-mail: softball@tri-lakes.net

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 if you would like to participate in this group's efforts.

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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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Shearing School (April)

Eastern Stud Ram Show & Sale (June)

Ram Lamb Performance Test and Sale (sale in August)

Commercial Ewe Lamb Development Program (September)

Sheep Management Basics Workshop (October)

Bred Ewe Sale (October)

Quarterly newsletter *Virginia Shepherd*

Contact **Scott Greiner, VA Tech, 540-231-9163.**

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American Sheep Industry Association

Subscribe to the ASI WEEKLY newsletter via e-mail and receive FREE issue and market updates every Friday. To sign up, send an e-mail to mary@sheepusa.org in which you ask to receive the newsletter electronically. Questions? Call the American Sheep Industry Association at (303) 771-3500.

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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](#)

You are receiving this email because you provided BBSAI with your email address when you became a member. If you do not wish to receive newsletters or other email communications from the BBSAI, you can unsubscribe. To do so, reply to this email with "unsubscribe" in the subject or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

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