



Raising sheep the EASY way!

Barbados Blackbelly Sheep Association International

# Blackbelly Banner

## Hair Sheep Rock the Maryland Wool & Sheep Festival

My name is Nancy Johnson and I live in West Friendship, MD. Six years ago, my husband and I bought a small 5-acre farmette with 1 resident sheep, a Blackbelly ewe. After getting to know her for a while, I decided I wanted more like her. Two years later, I purchased three American Blackbellies from a breeder in Gerard, PA, who, as it turned out, was the previous Blackbelly breed exhibitor for the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.

The festival is held annually, the first full weekend in May, at the fairgrounds in Howard County, MD, which happens to be 1 mile from my farm. I was very excited to be a part of this festival. At first, it was just a chance for me to show off the sheep I love so much, and it has evolved into breeding the sheep I love, learning about my breed's history, and hopefully helping to preserve their future. Because I love talking to people, the festival was a good fit,

and in 2010 I became the festival's Blackbelly breed exhibitor.

The 2011 festival was more fun and a bigger success for the hair sheep! I took an American Blackbelly ram and a Barbados Blackbelly ram, each 8 weeks old. Prior to the festival's opening day, my sister (the breed exhibitor for Painted Desert sheep) and I spread straw for the lambs, set up our displays, and separated the lambs from other sheep with tarps to reduce their stress and keep them healthy.

My breed display was not expensive or difficult to put together. I printed out pictures of my own sheep and some others for examples. I made a small photo album with various photos from my farm. I printed out recipes cards (people loved them!). Most people don't know what to do with lamb meat and they were VERY interested in learn-



Parading Barbados Blackbelly, American Blackbelly and Painted Desert

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Inside this issue:

<a href="#">Hair Sheep Rock the Maryland Wool &amp; Sheep Festival</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Turn Your Farm into a Trophy Ranch!</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Fun New T-Shirts and Other Stuff at BBSAI's Gift Shop</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Ask the BBSAI</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Hobby Farms Magazine Provides Online Breed Profiles</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">How to Transfer Sheep Ownership</a>	<a href="#">8</a>



# Hair Sheep Rock the Maryland Wool & Sheep Festival

(Continued from page 1)

ing how to cook it. I printed out the BBSAI brochure on ivory paper and displayed the BBSAI's Lamb Lover's Cookbook. It took me a couple of hours to put it together. The BBSAI sent me the artwork for the banner and I had a 3' by 1' vinyl banner printed for \$23.

This year the key was BABIES! Everyone loves babies! Especially as cute as mine! We trained our babies to walk on a 2-way leash for the Parade of Breeds. After the parade, a 5-minute walk took 45 minutes! Everybody wanted pictures of the babies, alone and with their children. Then they started asking questions. What breed of sheep are

they? What are they used for? How old are they? How big do they get? Where do you live? People were puzzled when I told them that hair sheep don't have wool. Most people had no idea what hair sheep are. They were fascinated with that.

Many people were interested in finding out where they could learn more and find some to purchase.

The festival is looking for more hair breeds to be represented. Currently, the breeds represented are AB & BB, Painted Desert, St. Croix, and Katahdin. To learn more, go to the Maryland Sheep & Wood Festival's Web site at <http://www.sheepandwool.org>.

**Editor's Note:** If you would like to participate in your local fair's sheep show but don't know how to get started, contact Joan Eubank, chair of the BBSAI Youth Outreach Committee at [youth\\_outreach@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:youth_outreach@blackbellysheep.org) Joan will help you identify who you should talk to at the fair and figure out how to help the fair board establish a category for your sheep. She will help arrange for you to receive materials to display at the fair and answer questions about how to show your sheep.

If your local fair can't provide a category for your blackbelly sheep, then consider simply being an exhibitor at the event. It is a great opportunity to teach people about the breed and can help drive customers to your farm.



BBSAI's banner above the holding pens



Blackbelly display table at the Maryland Wool & Sheep Festival



## Turn Your Farm into a Trophy Ranch!

By Andrew Dotson

This article is intended as a guide for turning your sheep farm into a successful trophy ranch. It is not a be-all-end-all "how to guide." It is just a few pointers written by a long-time hunting enthusiast and shepherd. One of the first things that you should do with any business venture is to draw up a business plan. Even a lemonade stand on the side of the road should have a business plan; it is just the first step to success. Second is to develop a breeding flock with an emphasis on large and fast horn growth. There is another option to breeding your own trophy rams, and that is to purchase them. Purchasing your "trophy" flock is a fast way to get started, but unless you have the entire infrastructure in place already, it may be premature—and expensive.

You should set up this infrastructure before any hunter steps foot on your place. A major concern with a hunting ranch is the terrain that you employ. Generally, a regular farm with flat terrain will not work for a sheep hunting ranch (although this can be bypassed by having great flora). A hunter is paying for an experience to remember.

He doesn't want to walk up to a sheep eating from a feed bunk and shoot it. The hunter wants to stalk it through the bushes and grass, or up among the rocks, all the while testing his skills against a wild animal that is wary. If he succeeds, he then has a story to tell as well as something to remember while sitting by a fire in his golden years.

What else is a hunter looking for in a hunting experience? Well, when most people think of wild sheep they picture a majestic Rocky Mountain Big Horn on a rocky outcropping high in the mountains. Obviously you can't give them that unless you have a couple hundred acres in the mountains or have a lot of

expendable capital. But think about how you could make the land more appealing by doing a bit of landscaping. You can rent a front-end loader or bulldozer and push a lot of dirt into a "mountain," while simultaneously making another essential landscape feature—a lake or pond! Once you have the mound or hill made, you can place some rock on the top (really big rocks are preferred). To make the rocks look natural, you can push dirt in and around them. Over time, rain will wash some out of the crevices and make it look natural. You can make as many or as few mountains as you have space, time, and money for.



Also consider how to hide your sheep equipment. You can't use traditional bunk feeders and watering troughs if you want to make your illusion stick. Nothing would ruin the hunting experience more quickly than coming around a group of trees and seeing the target chowing down on grain and drinking from a large stock tank. Instead, create a watering hole using the pit left over from making your new "mountain."

A pond in nature takes years to make as the decomposition of leaves and other organic material builds up on the bottom and fills up the porous ground to make it water tight. A much easier and less time-consuming way to build a

pond is to dump a couple bags of lime in the bottom and fill the pond with water. The lime precipitates out the metals in the water and clogs up the pores in the ground, leaving you with a pond that looks natural but takes a fraction of the time to make. The water will have a higher PH, but still be drinkable for them, and over time the PH will drop back to normal levels.

If you need to feed your sheep grain on your trophy ranch, find a flat rock or a rock with a depression to hold the grain and keep it off the ground. You can hide a salt lick in some trees or cover so that it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb.

Remember, the hunting experience is everything! From the moment a hunter talks to you on the phone or sees you Web site, everything should scream experience (even if it's the first hunter you will be hosting). I recommend that you go on a hunt and see what you like and what you can improve upon, or talk to hunters who like that kind of hunting. Once you get an

idea of what you think the hunters would like, go for it. If you are courteous and act professional, and if you give them an experience they will not forget, they will tell their friends. Word will spread about your ranch.

Consider offering a package deal. While some people relish the full experience from shooting to butchering, many would rather have someone else do it. You can start off by guiding the hunting party (this will help to ensure success and make a good experience). Once the animal is found, you can help guide them to the best shooting position (believe it or not, not all hunters are good at hunting). After the shot is

*(Continued on page 7)*



## Fun New T-Shirts and Other Stuff at BBSAI's Gift Shop



**Dare To Be Different!**

**Raise AMERICAN BLACKBELLY HAIR SHEEP**

**Baaa, Baaa, Black Sheep,  
Have You Any Wool?**

**No Sir, No Sir,  
I'm COOL!....**



**I'm a BARBADOS BLACKBELLY  
HAIR SHEEP!**

In the last newsletter we announced the winning slogans in our t-shirt slogan contest. The T-shirt Committee worked with a talented cartoonist to turn the slogans into fun designs that we think you will definitely want to wear.

Visit BBSAI's Gift Shop at

<http://blackbellysheep.org/giftshop.html>

It's not just the designs that have changed, either. The company that hosts our store has added hundreds of new products that you can buy with BBSAI's new designs on them. Choose from

- t-shirts in many bright colors
- sweatshirts
- hoodies
- coffee mugs
- mouse pads
- baby items
- hats
- tote bags
- water bottles
- sleeveless T's
- duffel bags and beach totes
- thermos containers
- signs
- Christmas ornaments
- clocks
- keepsake boxes
- BBQ aprons
- magnets, calendars, note cards, and key chains

**Show off your sheep!  
Shop Now!!**



## Ask the BBSAI

Questions sent to [info@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:info@blackbellysheep.org) are answered by BBSAI Registrar Mary Swindell.

**Q: We just purchased a small herd of American Blackbelly/Barbados sheep. I have been told to worm them with ivermectrin under the skin and or thru a drench. Which is the best way to worm these beautiful animals?**

**A:** Before deworming a sheep, it is important to determine IF the sheep has worms and what kind of worms are present. Each deworming agent is designed to treat only specific types of worms. In addition, because one of the desirable integrity traits of both blackbelly sheep breeds is their parasite tolerance [Mary, sheep are not resistant to worms but are tolerant of the worms' effects], you need to decide whether or not you want to deworm your flock at all. Deworming prevents sheep that are vulnerable to the affects of worms from being naturally culled and may weaken your entire flock's overall tolerance to the effects of worms. In other words, if you routinely deworm your flock, then individual sheep that would otherwise be debilitated by worms will be allowed to continue to breed and they will pass their parasite vulnerability on to their offspring. In many parts of the country (especially those with dry, cold winters), breeders do not need to deworm their sheep at all, and their sheep do not suffer from the effects of a worm load. Not having to deworm sheep is not only cost-saving but allows you to provide butcher lamb to customers who require a chemical-free animal.



If you determine that your sheep need to be dewormed, you may deworm them by oral drench Ivermectin if you wish. That should

be as effective as the injectable. The oral drench comes in a brand name bottle called Ivermec (for sheep). The dosages are on the bottle. Please keep in mind that although the American Blackbelly breed is very parasite tolerant (one of the most parasite tolerant breeds, in fact), parasite control is not an exact science. Parasites are always becoming somewhat resistant to the drugs that we use. It is wise to talk to fellow breeders and see what dewormers work best in your geographical area. Ivermectin is a very good dewormer, and has been in wide use for awhile. Other classes of dewormers include Fenbendazole (brand name Panacur), and Levamisole (brand name Prohibit). You may use Ivermectin for awhile, and then may decide to switch (for awhile) to a different dewormer just to ensure that your sheep do not have worms that have become resistant to the Ivermectin.

**Q: Am I jeopardizing the quality of my flock by breeding the father back to his daughter? If I do so, can I register the babies?**

**A:** Yes, you can breed a father to his daughter, and you can register the babies. The babies would be 75% father's genetics. They would be considered inbred, but this is OK as long as you then breed them to somebody who is mostly unrelated.

The BBSAI does not make judgments about the level of inbreeding among stock. It is up to breeders and buyers to determine if the level of inbreeding is a useful thing for them or something they would rather not have.

I have personally done some deliberate inbreeding in order to preserve genetics from a favorite ram or a favorite ewe who is getting old. For instance, If I bred my ram Teddy to my ewe Effie and got a son, Bartholomew, and then bred Bartholomew back to his mother Effie, I could have some 75% Effie lambs (either girls or boys). And this is something I have actually done. So now

that Effie is too old to breed anymore, I have a young ewe that is 75% the same as her mother Effie.

**Q: I was offered two lamb rams and no ewes for brush control. Is it possible to have two rams on 10 acres without conflict between them when they grow up? Is it safe for me to be in the pasture when they grow up?**

**A:** Rams who are raised together often get along very well with each other as intact adults, if there are no ewes around. It is the presence and scent of the fertile ewes which excites the rams and starts the competitive fighting. So my opinion is that if neither you nor your neighbors have grazing sheep anywhere near these rams, they should probably be able to coexist just fine without fighting.



Photo: edencreekfarm.blogspot.com

However, if they do start to fight, they may back up and ram each other's heads to the point of breaking their own necks and killing each other. The only way to stop this behavior is to either 1) castrate one or both of them as lambs, before this behavior starts, or 2) removing one or the other of the rams so that there is no competition. It is extremely dangerous to break up a ram fight in progress, so proceed with great caution.

Even if your intact adult rams get along great with each other, things

*(Continued on page 6)*



## Ask the BBSAI

(Continued from page 5)

may certainly change if you add some ewes at a later date. If you are planning to add ewes to your pasture, it is recommended that you only have one ram with them. You can remove the second ram before you introduce the ewes, or you can castrate one of the rams and leave him in with the intact ram and all the ewes.

As for aggression toward humans, rams can become dangerous if they are allowed to become too affectionate and familiar with their human owners as lambs. Often little ram lambs are more friendly than their female lamb counterparts, from the very beginning. New sheep owners have a tendency to respond to the fearlessness and friendliness of ram lambs by giving them special attention in return (scratching their heads, petting them, picking them up often, etc.). Unfortunately, this attention often starts an unhealthy familiarity in ram lambs which turns into aggression toward humans as the rams grow and become sexually mature. It may begin with gentle

"head-butting" by the 6-month old ram lamb, and may become more serious head-butting in the 1-year old ram. Rams also may learn to take advantage of times when humans are not watching, but have their backs turned while they are feeding or filling water tanks, etc. Many humans have been seriously injured (or killed) when a ram has unexpectedly charged them while they were not looking. And looked at another way, an aggressive ram is a dangerous ram. And a dangerous ram is probably going to be a dead ram very soon (after some tragic event has proceeded it, such as the breaking of a family member's arm or worse).

To avoid problems with ram aggression, I recommend the following:

- 1) Don't coddle or show affection to ram lambs, no matter how cute they are. Admire them and be humane to them from a distance. Reserve your affection for ewe lambs.
- 2) Most rams are sweeties and just want to behave themselves and be treated fairly. Regardless, never turn your back on a ram. They can charge

pretty fast, often without a sound.

3) Don't hesitate to clobber them if necessary. Carry a stick or something larger (like a heavy hardwood stick or shovel handle). But use only as much pressure as needed to deter them from horsing around. Always keep something in reserve in case you need it. If you get an indication that your threat isn't working, then be prepared to dish out something more.

4) Make your rams keep a healthy distance from you at all times.

5) Don't ever allow children ever to be in ram areas. Children cannot read ram aggression fast enough to avoid being hurt if a ram decides to charge.

The bottom line is, unless a ram has been mishandled as a baby (as stated above), I think successful management of adult rams is mostly about showing these guys through your body language that you will not tolerate any misbehavior on their part. It also involves paying attention, being aware of your surroundings, and just being careful.

(Continued on page 7)

## Hobby Farms Magazine Provides Online Breed Profiles

At the request of BBSAI's Education Committee, Hobby Farms Magazine has added American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly sheep to their Web site breed profiles. You can view them now at

<http://www.hobbyfarms.com/farm-breeds/others-profiles/american-blackbelly-2.aspx>

<http://www.hobbyfarms.com/farm-breeds/others-profiles/barbados-blackbelly-2.aspx>

The screenshot shows the Hobby Farms website interface. At the top, there's a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'Calendar', 'Publications', 'Online Exclusives', 'Community', 'Hobby Farms Rewards', 'My Farm', 'Say Cheese', 'Videos', 'Hobby Farms Blogs', 'Product Spotlight', and 'About Us'. The main content area features a large image of a sheep and a detailed profile for the American Blackbelly Sheep. The profile includes a description of the breed, its characteristics, and a featured product section for 'Horse Feed'. The page also has a 'Hobby Farms Rewards' section and a 'Subscriber Services' button.



## Ask the BBSAI

(Continued from page 6)

**Q: We've planted some new Redwood trees in the pasture. If the sheep have grass and weeds in the pasture, will they bother these trees?**

**A:** If a Blackbelly sheep has a choice between browsing (eating bushes and trees) and grazing (eating grass), they will browse. Unless a tree has sufficient girth and a bark that is hard to nibble, it will very quickly be girdled and killed. Blackbelly sheep are used in the southern states to clear scrubland of cedar. I know of a family in California who planted an entire apple tree grove and let the sheep in to graze down the grass. No more apple trees.

You will need to fence off your trees. You can wrap 4-6 ft chicken wire or stucco wire around each tree; or if the trees can be fenced as a group, you can use t-posts and 4x2 field fencing.

## New BBSAI Members

Cindy Coombs	SC
Tanisha and John Hunter	TX
Nancy Johnson	MD
Rob Peden	MO
CJ Tritt	GA
Raul Valdez	TX
Roman Nietfeld	TX
Greg & Sandra Hession	MA

## Turn Your Farm into a Trophy Ranch!

(Continued from page 3)

taken, make sure to take good pictures and get them developed quickly. Clean the ram for them (keep in mind what kind of a mount they will want—this will dictate how you skin the ram). Load up the skinned carcass and take it and the hunters back to the headquarters. You can offer optional services such as butchering and packaging the meat to be shipped to a destination of their choice. You can also offer taxidermist services (just get a quote from a local taxidermist and add 50% to the price, and it will help to make that ram worth more to you).

During their stay, you can house the hunters (if your ranch house is big enough) and feed them. Room and board generally adds \$250-\$400 a day for two people. When they get back to headquarters, hopefully the pictures will be ready. Just like that, you gave them a GREAT hunting experience, and you made a lot more than \$100-\$200 for that ram.

Prices vary depending on where you go hunting. Here in New Mexico, hunts cost around \$700 (not all-inclusive). In Texas, they run \$1600 to a high end of \$3000. I don't know about you, but that trophy ranch is starting to sound real good about now... Start off pricing your hunts on the low end, but **DON'T START OUT TOO LOW!** If you undersell your sheep, they will be perceived as less valuable). Here in New Mexico, I would start at around \$800-\$1000. As your client base expands and word of mouth promotes your ranch's name, you can start to slowly raise your prices.

There are some things that you really have to watch out for if you want to have your rams end up at a hunting ranch (yours or any other). For one thing, you need to make your rams wild. You can accomplish this by not handling

them. When you go into the pen, chase them around a little. Once they are sufficiently scared, they should try to get away at the mere sight of you. You should also prevent them from associating you with food. This can be accomplished by feeding them through a trap door so that they don't see you. You also should have some ewes in with the rams so that your flock resembles a herd of wild sheep. When hunters see only rams in the pasture, they know they're at a shooting gallery. Again, you should avoid using stock tanks and structures when possible. Be creative in your ways of hiding them. When you name your trophy ranch, make it sound exotic, like Teton Outfitters, Rocky Mountain Exotics, or Crystal Creek Ranch. The name isn't as important as the impression it gives. Whatever you do, don't call it a farm—that evokes



Photo: stoneyhills.com

thoughts of domestic animals. Refer to your sheep as Corsican or Mouflon. I know it goes against everything that the BBSAI stands for, but hunters don't know what an American Blackbelly sheep is, and everyone else is marketing AB's as Corsican, Mouflon, Black Hawaiian, or just Barbado.

Over all, there is a great money making opportunity for your excess rams that aren't needed for breeding, or the ones you have already used for breeding. For those of us who have worked so hard to get the massive horns on those rams, we won't find anyone who admires them more than a hunter, unless it's a fellow breeder. For those who try it, good luck, and good hunting.

*BBSAI member Andrew Dotson raises American Blackbelly sheep on his ranch in Socorro, New Mexico. He and his wife are also the new owners of the Black Dog Boarding Kennels, Inc., which they purchased after he returned to Socorro from two tours in Iraq while with the Marine Corps. Email: dotsonar@gmail.com*



The Barbados Blackbelly Sheep Association International is a non-profit organization registered in the State of Missouri



Raising sheep the EASY way!

The BBSAI Newsletter is a benefit of membership in the BBSAI and is published quarterly. The BBSAI Newsletter welcomes articles, photographs and classified ads that relate to American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly sheep. Publication of articles or advertisements does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by BBSAI. No part of the BBSAI Newsletter (including photographs) can be reprinted, put on Web sites, or used in any manner without written permission of the BBSAI.

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 July Issue – June 15  
 April Issue – March 15  
 October Issue – September 15

Please send changes of address to BBSAI  
 808 30th Lane,  
 Pueblo, CO 81006

**BBSAI Officers:**

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[registrar@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:registrar@blackbellysheep.org)

## How to Transfer Sheep Ownership

By Carol Elkins

Great news! You've just sold one of your registered rams. What is the next step in transferring the registration of the sheep to its new owner?

When you registered your sheep, the BBSAI sent you a Certificate of Registry. The front of the certificate contains information about the sheep—its registry number, date of birth, sire and dam. The back of the certificate contains the Transfer of Ownership Form.

As Seller, you are responsible for completing the form and signing it. Give the Certificate of Registry to the buyer when you receive payment for the sheep.

The Buyer must send this form plus a \$5.00 transfer fee to the BBSAI Registrar. The address is on the form. The

Buyer does not have to be a BBSAI member to transfer the registration of a sheep to his name. However, he will have to join the BBSAI in order to register new sheep.

The registrar will issue a new Certificate of Registry to the Buyer that shows the Buyer as the new owner of the sheep.

It's important to not forget to transfer the sheep's ownership. Although you may legally be the owner of the new sheep, the BBSAI won't recognize you as the owner until you submit the transfer form. This means that you won't be able to register any offspring from the sheep or sell the sheep to someone else without considerably more time and effort filling out forms, obtaining the Seller's signed statement regarding your purchase, and communicating with the registrar.

### TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP FORM

Use this form to transfer this sheep's registration from the seller's name to the buyer's name.  
 Seller: Complete and sign this form when you sell the sheep and give the Certificate of Registry to the buyer.  
 Buyer: Send the Certificate of Registry and the transfer fee to the BBSAI Registrar.  
 Registrar: Issue a new Certificate of Registry to the buyer, showing the buyer as the new owner.

On this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, I hereby transfer ownership of this American Blackbelly Ewe to the following person:

Name of Buyer	Address	City	State
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If this sheep is a ewe and if it has been bred, I certify that it was bred to the following ram:  
 Ram name \_\_\_\_\_ BBSAI Registration No. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Seller	Address	City	State
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Transfer of ownership fee: \$5.00 per head. Personal checks must be drawn on United States bank. Payment must be in US Dollars (USD).

Make checks payable to BBSAI and mail to:  
 BBSAI Registrar  
 815 Bell Hill Road  
 Cobden, IL 62920

## BBSAI Board Votes

4/27/2011	Vote to base the decision about which farm name and flock prefix to use when registering a sheep on who owned the candidate sheep's ewe at time of breeding. (4 yes, 0
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