

# BBSAI Newsletter

February 2018



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**HELP! Our Editor has retired.**

If you can volunteer your expertise in graphics and desktop publishing, please contact [newsletter@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:newsletter@blackbellysheep.org)

The BBSAI Newsletter is a benefit of membership in the BBSAI and is published quarterly. Articles, photographs, and business cards that relate to American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly sheep are welcome. Submit your contributions to [newsletter@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:newsletter@blackbellysheep.org). Thanks! Pam Hand, Editor

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Back issues can be downloaded from <http://www.blackbellysheep.org/association/newsletters/>

## Be Prepared

### Humane Euthanasia of Sheep

Sooner or later this could happen to you. The ram is magnificent but suddenly aggressive. An appointment with the local slaughter house is not available on short notice. Or a ewe is down and unresponsive from some illness or injury which is not obvious, and recovery seems doubtful. However, an emergency farm call from your veterinarian adds an avoidable expense if you are otherwise prepared for this unfortunate situation. Humane euthanasia is a better choice than waiting for a suffering animal to die on its own. Knowing the best way to shoot a sheep if and when it is necessary will allow you to respond to such an unfortunate event quickly and correctly. The adequate type of gun, ammunition, and placement of the killing shot may not be obvious to the average sheep owner.

The following is taken from the Sheep Care Guide which is available on line for free [https://www.sheepusa.org/Resources\\_Publications\\_SheepCareGuide](https://www.sheepusa.org/Resources_Publications_SheepCareGuide)

*“An excellent resource for humane euthanasia can be found at <https://vetmed.iastate.edu/vdpam/about/production-animal-medicine/dairy/dairy-extension/humane-euthanasia>. “*

This resource includes the following diagrams and instructions:

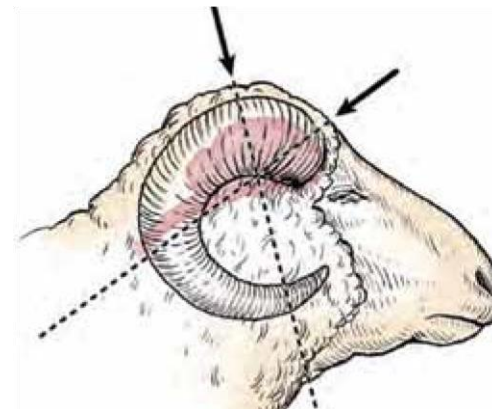
*“Firearm and Bullet/Shot shell Selection for Euthanasia of Livestock*

*Handguns and rifles - A .22 caliber rifle is sufficient for young animals, but results are not*

*consistent in adult animals. A .22 magnum or larger caliber firearm is preferred. Shotguns – A 12, 16 or 20 gauge are preferred loaded with slugs are best, but birdshot No. 2, 4, or 6 can be used. “*

*“It is important to note that the updated, correct landmark is determined by drawing a line from the poll to the mandible (jaw), with the shot directed at the poll downward; or alternatively by drawing a line perpendicular to the face, with the shot directed at the forehead below the poll, in line with the spinal column.”*

*Images from Shearer, JK and Nicoletti, PN*



## Get Acquainted

### An interview with a Breeder



Becky Lannon

Lone Star Farm



Mike Lannon

Hockley, Texas



#### **When and how did you begin raising Barbados Blackbelly sheep?**

We began in 1996 with American Blackbellies. In 1998, the Barbados Blackbellies were on the endangered list and we wanted to help preserve them. We sold our ABs and purchased our first flock of BBs sired by Nutrageous, a Hershey son. On several occasions we bought sheep out of Teddy and Ulysses from Mary Swindell of Bellwether Farm. We purchased Ulysses' full brother, Tutankhamen, from Carol Elkins. We were searching for rams that could consistently produce rams without horn buds or scurs. They were hard to find back then because of all the crossbreeding. We bought Amram and Ramses, sons of #13 Calvin, from Tina Hatley in Arkansas - hence the beginning of the Arkansas line.

#### **What animals do you have now?**

The rams we have now are all Lone Star. Lone Star Gideon, Lone Star Legend, Lone Star Boris Badenough, and Bellwether Horatio had a lot of influence on our sheep today. One ram, Lone Star Night Train's sire, Samos II, came from Pat Schooley's flock in Maryland. He has made a significant impact on the quality of our flock along with Lone Star Otis. Night Train is the pretty boy; Otis is a total block of muscle and strength and I can't say enough about these two rams. They both produce themselves no matter which ewes they are bred to. We have many nice rams; at times we have kept as many as 25 rams at once. I have to give credit to our ewes though. They are a culmination of many years of inherited good traits beginning with our girls, Show Me II, Caribe VSU, and Red Shanks VSU. They each had a special place in our hearts and their personalities still show up in their progeny today. We love all of them.

#### **What is your philosophy about breeding your sheep?**

At first, we got two rams that were scur-free out of every twenty we produced. With lots of hard work, dedication, and culling, we are now producing eighteen out of twenty that are scur-free. We actually guarantee our rams to be scur-free or we will replace them. We believe if a ram has a completely polled head with no scurs or horn buds, there is no question about his genealogy. We are also trying to breed out

white markings. We do not breed or sell rams with even a white-tipped tail. To each his own, but we don't breed sheep with wattles. Those things are cosmetic, but we believe they are traits that may have been contributed to this breed by less than pure genetics. We breed to the "ideal" of the BBSAI breed standard and accept nothing less for breeding stock.

### **Tell us about your facilities (barns, sheds, fencing, and livestock guardian animals)**

We have a horse barn with six 12'x12' stalls, and two-sided sheds in each of our pastures that are fenced partly with 5' chain link fencing, or field fencing with two strands of barbed wire at the top. We have also run a top and bottom hot wire to contain our 4 guard Anatolian Shepherds and to help keep the coyotes out.

### **What about management and feeding?**

We give a CD&T vaccination to our lambs at five and eight weeks, then annually to all our sheep. We use the FAMACHA method and symptoms to deworm quarterly. Rams are raised on hay and native pasture grass. Ewes are fed Lamb Bloom the last month of pregnancy. Lambs are fed Lamb Bloom until they are four months old, then males and females are separated and they go on grass or hay. After our ewes lamb in the pasture, we put them in a stall overnight to bond with their lambs and have a time to rest. They are transferred to the nursery pasture then and fed grain until they wean their lambs.

### **Breeding (What timing for lambing? What are your selection criteria for sires and dams?)**

Sires and dams must meet or come close to the ideal breed standard. They cannot be bred together if sire and dam show the same fault. We lamb in the spring and fall to be sure our ewes will produce year round.

### **What climate conditions work for or against you (heat, snow, too wet, too dry, etc.)?**

Timing is critical because of heat in the Houston area. We cannot lamb during the summer months due to fire ants bad enough to kill a newborn lamb and because it seldom freezes in our area to kill off parasites. During droughts we still breed but feed hay for lack of pasture grass from May until the following spring.

### **What makes you unique?**

We don't use or sell rams with scurs, white markings, or wattles. Our sheep are guaranteed to produce quality sheep or we will replace them. We support our buyers with advice and help whenever needed 24/7. We are willing to do whatever it takes to help newcomers be successful in their breeding programs and we hope that all will enjoy their sheep as we do.

### **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

We couldn't raise these sheep without our guard dogs. A neighbor who raises goats lost seven kids in a one night raid; they lost 12 kids that spring. We didn't lose a single lamb.

We have met the most wonderful people because of our sheep. Some were just one time callers who needed help. Many were owners and breeders that we have become good friends with through the years. We wouldn't trade that for anything. Sheep people are great people.



## SCRAPIE UPDATES



The annual report for the National Scrapie Eradication Program for FY 2017 is now available at [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_diseases/scrapie/downloads/annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/downloads/annual_report.pdf)

### Highlights of the FY 2017 EOY Report

- Samples for scrapie surveillance were collected from targeted sheep and goats at 206 sites in 41 states.
- Over 42,000 sheep and goats were tested for scrapie in FY 2017.
- No sheep have tested positive for classical scrapie since April 2016. Other than one goat in a herd quarantined since 2005 and depopulated in 2017, no goats have tested positive for scrapie since February 2015.
- No classical scrapie infected or source flocks were designated in all of FY 2017.

### Resources

- To report a sheep or goat with clinical signs of scrapie, please contact your local VS office or State Veterinarian.
- To learn more about scrapie, the disease, and the national scrapie eradication program, visit the APHIS VS Scrapie Website [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/sheep-and-goat-health/national-scrapie-eradication-program/ct\\_scrapie\\_home](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/sheep-and-goat-health/national-scrapie-eradication-program/ct_scrapie_home)

Also

USDA no longer providing free ear tags

<https://www.premier1supplies.com/newsletters/11-14-2017-sheep.html>

“Effective October 1, 2017, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is no longer providing free plastic ear tags and applicators as part of the National Scrapie Eradication Program. But producers are still required to follow Federal and State regulations for officially identifying their sheep and goats. They will have the option to purchase their own official plastic ear tags from approved tag companies like Premier.”

## The Power of One

### A Tribute to Carol Elkins

As a member of BBSAI, you likely know or have heard of Carol Elkins. You may not know that after years of dedication, Carol is retiring from BBSAI. Carol's tireless work epitomizes the positive effect that one person can have in the world – in this case, the world of these unique animals. To mark her retirement, to acknowledge her incredible work on our behalf, and to thank her, here are comments by some of the many people whom Carol helped.

If you would like to express your own appreciation to Carol or wish her well for her retirement, please send your comments to [newsletter@blackbellysheep.org](mailto:newsletter@blackbellysheep.org). We will forward them to her.

#### BBSAI Board

The Board of the BBSAI wants to convey our sincere gratitude to Carol Elkins for her steadfast, consistent and helpful guidance of this organization, and for her sustaining assistance to so many members throughout her years of involvement. On behalf of all of us, thank you, Carol!

*Mark Fleming:*

*After I purchased a small flock of Barbados sheep in the summer of 1999, my son-in-law researched information on this breed and found Carol Elkins. In January of 2000, I took on the job of secretary/treasurer for the BBSAI. I held this position until June 2005. I had very little knowledge of the sheep, let alone what to do as the secretary/treasurer. As part of those duties, I had to learn to operate the Microsoft Access program to maintain and work the sheep registry, as well the Association membership data. This was a huge task to overcome as I had limited experience with computers, and none with the Access program. With Carol's knowledge, help, and encouragement, we were able to keep things going. Through my years as the secretary/treasurer and President from 2006-2008 and later 2010-2012, Carol Elkins was the backbone of the BBSAI, accomplishing among other things:*

- *BBSAI website and newsletter*
- *Lamb Lover's Cookbook*
- *BBSAI Logo Gifts*
- *Redefined and redeveloped the BBSAI By-Laws and Standing Rules*
- *Obtaining the 505(C)3 non-profit status for the BBSAI in Missouri*
- *Splitting the BBSAI Registry into Barbados Blackbelly Sheep (polled) and American Blackbelly Sheep (horned); and instrumental in closing the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep registry to preserve the bloodlines*
- *Worked and communicated with the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) concerning rare and endangered species*
- *Designing the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep (BB) standards*
- *Coordinating and advertising the BBSAI throughout the world in such publications as Sheep! Magazine, The Record Stockman, Hobby Farms, and several other noted publications*

*She will be missed by all!*

Stephan Wildeus, Virginia State University:

My interactions with Carol date back many years, mostly through e-mail and phone calls, but we did meet in person when Carol took part in a Hair Sheep Workshop we hosted at Virginia State University in 2005. Rarely have I met an individual with that much dedication and commitment to a cause as Carol showed towards the Barbados Blackbelly sheep and their preservation. She continuously developed and advanced activities in support of the breed. Barbados Blackbelly and Carol Elkins became synonymous in the United States, and she became and has been a clearinghouse for all things Barbados Blackbelly. If people talked to me about Blackbelly sheep and did not immediately know Carol by name, I sometimes heard her referred to as 'you know, the lady in Colorado.'

Carol was tireless in her efforts to promote the breed, and used her training and skill as a technology writer to create web sites, set up

discussion groups, and organize educational phone conferences. She created a large volume of breed related articles, and a lamb lover's cook book. One of Carol's greatest contributions to the preservation of the breed was the creation of Barbados Blackbelly Breeders Consortium together with the late Mary Swindell. It set up a group of committed breeders along with guidelines to enhance the preservation of the breed. Carol was a stern leader of the Consortium, and let you know when rules and guidelines were not followed (which included me on occasion) or the focus moved away from the breed, but her resolute approach greatly advanced the cause of the breed and moved the Consortium forward.

I was involved with Carol on efforts to import Barbados Blackbelly semen initially from Barbados and then from Trinidad and Tobago, though the efforts remained eventually fruitless. She helped me to set up collections to have semen and genetic

material from Barbados Blackbelly included in the repository of the National Animal Germplasm program, and also became involved in several of my grant submissions. Carol encouraged me to summarize production data from our flock when discussions in our group turned to breed characteristics such as average mature weight, litter size, birth weights, and growth rates. I appreciate that Carol realized that performance and finding a production niche would be an important aspect in preserving the breed. As Carol is stepping back from her involvement in the breed, we will all have to step up our own efforts to try to remotely fill the large foot print that Carol is leaving behind.

Elaine Haas, Sunny Slope:

Carol sold me my best and most prolific sheep: Critterhaven Zakia, Critterhaven Zebulon, Critterhaven Savannah, Critterhaven Georgia, and, of course, Critterhaven Virginia. You can see these influential sheep in the pedigrees of many of the Sunny Slope sheep.

Phil Sponenberg,  
Virginia Tech:

For only a handful of breeds can it truly be said that one person has made all the difference between survival and extinction. For Barbados Blackbelly sheep in the USA, that can be said of Carol Elkins.

I first encountered Carol in my role with the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. As anyone involved in Blackbelly sheep knows, the issues between Barbados Blackbelly, horned Blackbelly, Barbado, and other hair sheep are not all that easy! Carol was always great in asking just the right questions to get at the underlying fundamentals that are so essential in effective breed conservation.

Over the years we worked out a breed definition that is effective in acknowledging and validating that core of the breed that goes back to an island origin. This was tricky, especially in a breed where the color pattern so dramatically influences the confusion of color and breed! Breed definition is a crucial first step in the conservation of any breed, and Carol wisely

shepherded all through that process.

Carol was also wonderfully, and doggedly! persistent in educating breeders as to the need for well-thought rational breeding plans. Her persistence always helped me to make sure any of my input or explanations were understandable. That can sound patronizing, but if we hit a snag I always discovered that the snag was in my understanding and my explanation. Our discussions always helped the final product to be that much better!

It is a rare person that “makes everything better,” and Carol was one of them!

Rita J Guill (Carroll):

I think it can be said that Carol has single handedly saved the Barbados Blackbelly Sheep from extinction in the United States. Not only that, but she was instrumental in developing the breed into the fine animals we have today. Her contribution to Blackbelly sheep cannot be over stated. Her love of, and dedication to this breed, coupled with her

tenaciousness in seeing things through has created a legacy that few stockmen in history can begin to approach.

Over decades, Carol has spent her precious time and resources educating others, correcting misinformation, and constantly publishing articles on the history and merits of the Barbados Blackbelly.

Personally speaking, she showed me why I should purchase registered stock and maintain a full blood and purebred flock. Carol provided guidance in choosing which of the available sheep were most valuable genetically. And, perhaps most importantly, from a conservation standpoint, she taught me how to view the genetic package, instead of individual personalities.

The BBSAI has some big shoes to fill. There will be successes and failures along the way, but we will strive to continue the work Carol began and pass her legacy on to future stockmen.

Carol, we appreciate all you’ve done, perhaps, more than you realize. And we’ll endeavor to reach the high bar you’ve set before us. You will be missed, however, and we wish you all the best in your retirement.



## **USING THE BOOK OF REGISTRY**

By Becky Lannon

In talking with breeders, I have found that many of you don't know how to take advantage of our Book of Registry. Let me explain how to use it and why it is helpful. First go to our website [www.blackbellysheep.org](http://www.blackbellysheep.org). Next, look at the list of items on the left and locate "About the Sheep". Click on the drop-down menu arrow on the right. Now, scroll down and click on "Book of Registry". You will see several boxes to fill in at this point. If you know the animal's full name, or at least the first three letters, fill it in. You may also type in the "Owner's Name" or "Breeder's Name" in the appropriate boxes. Once you have found the animal you are looking for, you can see a picture of it after you click on its name. Behind the animal's name, you will see the letter "P". If you click on that, you will go to the animal's pedigree. If the animal has registered offspring, there is also the letter "O" after the name. Clicking on it will show you all of the registered offspring that animal has produced, along with its photo. The pictures are a great resource if you would like to know what your sheep's ancestors looked like, helping you to choose a bloodline that you might like to breed to for your next generation. I hope this explanation will encourage you to seek more information about the sheep before you breed your next group of ewes. Happy searching!

### **BBSAI News Briefs**

- The 2018 BBSAI board members are:  
President: Jim Orr  
Vice President: Eileen Breedlove  
Secretary (membership): Sandy Hession  
Secretary (recording): Becky Lannon  
Treasurer: Pam Hand

- The Board is working to include the following enhancements to the website:
  - You will be able to upload a second photo of each animal you own, in addition to the original photo submitted when that animal was registered. The listing for each animal will then have a photo of that sheep as a young animal and also as a mature animal.
  - You will be able to go online to check a box to specify that any individual animal you own has died (via any cause or method which will not be specified). This will allow the registrar to compile more accurate statistics on *living* registered sheep.
  - You will be able to add genetic testing results for scrapie codon 171 on any individual registered sheep you own.
- BBSAI registered 194 BB and 41 AB in 2017; and transferred 166 BB and 59 AB.

### **NEW BBSAI MEMBERS**

Larry Schofield	TX
Brent Steenbergen	KY
Grace Ward	FL
Dianne Gonzalez and Timothy Hensley	NC
Allen Jacobs	MD
Andrew Blackstone	TX
Aurora West (Canada)	AB
Sarah and Kyle Martin	AB
Alba Gines and Cesar Burgos	FL
Scott Darnell	OH
Nathan Cochran	TX
Trista Kadatz	AB
Karen Batt	OR
Mary Jaimes	CA
Bonny McKay (Canada)	MB
Giselle and Bruce Moshier	TN