



BBSAI NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

The Barbados Blackbelly Sheep Association International is a non-profit organization, which has defined the following goals as its corporate mission:

- Raise, preserve, improve, promote and publish facts pertaining to American Blackbelly (horned) and Barbados Blackbelly (polled) sheep.
- Register and keep on file all records of registrations and transfers of American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly sheep in the United States.
- Support and promote the interests of American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly sheep breeders.
- Work together and exchange information and ideas that will be helpful in raising and preserving American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly sheep.
- Improve the genetics of each generation of sheep, including artificially inseminated sheep.
- Develop better markets.

Inside this issue:

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- ✓ Welcome to new members!



Genetic Study

Nominate your best ram to represent genetic diversity within the Barbados Blackbelly breed.



Get Acquainted

An interview with a Breeder

Featuring:

Joanne William & Jamie Vaughn
The Genesee Ewe-ery Scottsville NY

GENETIC STUDY

Would you be willing to help scientists study the genetic diversity both within the Barbados Blackbelly breed and also compared to other sheep breeds?

If so, please read the following by Mark Wintermute, a long time sheep breeder who has worked with these scientists in the past. He explains who will do the study, why we all would benefit from such a study, and how to volunteer to participate.

“The United States Meat Animal Research Center (U.S. MARC) located at Clay Center, Nebraska has expressed interest in doing a genetic study (specifically, a whole genome sequencing or WGS) of the Barbados Blackbelly breed.

The intent is to ‘take a picture’ of the genome that represents all the Barbados Blackbelly breed. MARC can see the entire genome now, but they do not know what everything in the genome does. They are hoping to find unique traits that could be used to assist improvement of lamb production and other traits. They are building a data bank future research can use. MARC has already sequenced nine other sheep breeds which were selected to represent genetic diversity for traits such as fertility, prolificacy, maternal ability, growth rate, carcass leanness, wool quality, mature weight, and longevity. The samples they are looking for are the healthiest, most robust members that fully represent each breed, starting with rams. If you’d like to see a summary of their genetic research to date, look at: <https://www.ars.usda.gov/plaines-area/clay-center-ne/marc/wgs/oviref/>

The WGS will allow BBSAI members to compare ‘pictures’ of the genome of the bloodlines available to the Barbados Blackbelly. Members will see differences along with common areas for the breed. If every sample provided looks identical to each other, there is a very shallow gene pool. If every sample provided looks different from any other sample provided, there is a very deep gene pool. With this information we can determine what bloodlines are threatened and need extra support. Or, we can find which bloodlines are enriched by breeding them with another bloodline.



The BBSAI is looking for breeders of the Barbados Blackbelly who are interested in participation. If interested, please email your willingness to cooperate, which of your rams you are nominating (the most robust, healthy, productive individual with registered progeny), and his pedigree as many generations back as possible. The goal is to produce a maximum sampling of genome diversity currently existing in the Barbados Blackbelly breed. The BBSAI will sort through the pedigree information to select the initial 10 rams to represent the breed. If pedigrees indicate more than 10 rams are needed to represent the breed, re-evaluation of the sampling number will occur.

If your ram is chosen, you will be asked to ship (overnight) to MARC a frozen blood sample collected either by you or your veterinarian. Depending upon the interest in this project, the BBSAI board may decide to reimburse you for your costs associated with the sample collection and shipping. This will be a long term project and results might not be known for a year or more. However, your participation will be a valuable contribution to understanding and conserving this unique breed”

Email your interest and information on your nominated ram to:

newsletter@blackbellysheep.org

If your ram is selected, you will be contacted with further instructions. Be patient as this is a long term process. THANKS!



Get Acquainted: An interview with a Breeder

Joanne William & Jamie Vaughn
The Genesee Ewe-ery
Scottsville NY

When and how did you begin raising Barbados Blackbelly sheep?

In 2012 Joanne had acquired 9 Barbados Blackbelly crosses. Initially the plan was to keep them at a friend's house, but we soon found an interesting piece of property closer to home so we moved our little flock there. With the new space we set a new plan of growing the herd and keeping some registered Barbados Blackbelly as a conservation flock. The flock has been closed since 2014. The conservation flock numbers about 10 and there are an additional 70 crosses. Starting as we did with just a ram (Rose Valley Gibbs from [Bellwether Houston](#) x [OFF Lecah](#)) and 2 bred ewes (Summer Hill's CAP Kitt and Summer Hill's BD Lucia) our conservation flock is still small. The selected ewes were carefully bred (RE7 REF Marlowe and Marshal VSU) for us by Sandy and Greg Hession to bring in diverse genetics. Thank you Sandy and Greg!

Breeding philosophy & practices?

Practices: We lamb in the spring after the weather has settled. We strive to remain a KISS (keep it simple stupid) operation.

Philosophy: We keep extensive records on our sheep to help us select for functional traits that characterize this breed. We track growth rates, gestations, weaning weights, treatments and maternal abilities. We are using MS Access to maintain a relational database that follows these traits through the generations. Our animals must be able to keep condition on grass-legume pasture during the grazing season and on pasture-fed grass hay with some supplementation in winter. They must demonstrate maternal

behaviors to care for their lambs on pasture and be able to provide sufficient milk for growth of twins. In addition, we track parasite resistance by recording symptoms of parasite infections and recovery after treatments, if treatment should become necessary. We have attended a NSIP conference and we hope that, at some point, Barbados Blackbellies can be added to that database.

Tell us about your facilities

Shelter: We have three 12'x12' run-ins and two 10'x 20' run-in distributed in 3 permanent fenced paddocks. Fencing: The permanent 4' woven wire fenced paddocks are contained within the perimeter 4' woven wire fencing enclosing 18 acres. Guard Animals: Two standard spotted "johns" (gelded jacks) are doing a great job of keeping predators at bay. The johns are still young and rowdy, so we do not house the johns in the same paddock as the sheep. They are housed in an adjacent paddock. Over 4 winters and spring lambing seasons it appears that the scent of the johns is sufficient to keep the coyotes, coy-wolves and stray dogs off the entire property. We have found no tracks on the entire property since they have come to live with us.

What about management and feeding?

Pasture Management: Our sheep are trained to solar energized portable net fence and moved every 1-3 days during the grazing season. This gives the pasture an intensive stimulus of grazing and allows ample time for regrowth. We had the soils sampled in 2013 and we are still getting them to recommended levels. Nutrition Management: We send samples of pasture forage and hay to Dairy One for analysis. We add supplemental Vitamin, Mineral mix and protein as needed. We use FORMFEED, a free MS ACCESS based database (Cornell Sheep and Goat Program), to calculate what quantities of supplement are needed. Lambing: Ewes usually elect to come into the sheds to birth and are placed into jugs for 2 weeks. They are then graduated to a "kindergarten" mixed pen for a variable time depending on weather. Before leaving the kindergarten they are given Baycox to minimize infection by coccidia while their immune systems are still immature. They are allowed to wean naturally on pasture and then given a CDT.

Vaccinations & Hooves: The ewes are given a spa day a month before their expected lambing. It does not always work out that way.

What climate conditions work for or against you?

Graze season: Our growing season is from Taxes to Thanksgiving. Our goal is to have the lambs on the ground and the ewes in the field during that time. Using strategies of rotational grazing to maintain a vegetative state, overseeding seasonal grasses and forbs and stockpiling, we work to provide sufficient forage for 210 days. We are fortunate to have ample moisture and a climate that supports a rush of cool season grasses, dandelion and clover until June-July when the warm season grasses such as millet and alfalfa fill the summer stretch. Regrowth, chicory and stockpiling takes us into December. We are improving this strategy every year.

Hay season: From Winter Solstice to Taxes the sheep self-feed from hay bales on pasture we are aiming to improve. They are supplemented daily with a gruel of minerals, vitamins, and protein. Daylight is short and waterers must be monitored for freezing. The flock has free access to the sheds and pasture bales. Except in the coldest temps they prefer to be outside. Difficulties might arise when the snow is too deep and they can literally walk over the fences. They choose not to. I guess they know which side of the fence their hay is buttered.

What makes you unique?

In our climate, parasites are a big problem for pasture based operations. So far we have been successful in minimizing the infection levels in our flock through pasture rotation, individual monitoring and treatments, and mixed species grazing (donkeys cleaning up after sheep).

Is there anything else you would like to add?

We enjoy working outside and working together. Sometimes it's a challenge to work together with family members to solve critical problems. When we conceived of this operation we sat down and agreed on a set of Holistic Management Goals and wrote them down. This was well worth the time and discussion.

CAN YOU MAKE CHEESE FROM BB MILK?

A personal story by
Karen Batt, Oregon
KarenBatt@frontier.com
EwesNLambs Barbados sheep
MilkNKids Nigerian dwarf goats
MHF TIP wild horse trainer
Bernese Mountain dogs



“How much cheese could a hair sheep give if a hair sheep could give cheese?”

“I have never owned a sheep and wouldn't want one.” That is what I used to say up until just over a year ago. I've had many other kinds of farm animals and currently have Nigerian dwarf dairy goats for milk, meat and lawn and pasture mowing.



But a little over a year ago a neighbor was telling me how her sheep eat different foods in the pasture compared to goats. So I thought I'd diversify and help the health of my pasture and wooded areas by getting a sheep. She lambed and I milked her a time or two. I then got 2 American Black belly and when they lambed I sold their lambs at birth and I milked the ewes. I didn't milk them for very long as it was not worth my effort since they only gave 12oz a day while milking twice a day. I began to wonder if this is why they are 'slow to mature'; the fact that their dams didn't give them much milk as lambs. Milking the two ABB's was not fun I have to admit. They were not tame and I had to usually hold up a leg or lean against them very hard to either milk by hand or with my milking machine. This is why I truly believe women should have been born with 3 or 4 arms instead of only two. They fought it pretty hard at first, but I tame wild horses, so that was no big issue for me. The sheep's teats point straight out to the side which is very strange. So for the milk machine I could only use one inflation at a time and simply lean over the sheep to put it on the opposite side. They soon learned that this was going to happen and accepted it and let their milk down for me.

But since Nigerian dwarf goats at roughly 50# animals can easily give a quart a day, I don't think that a 75ish pound sheep giving a quart is all that great. So I am on a mission to start producing sheep that give more milk. Ones that don't need shearing every spring. My Nigerian dwarf goats give a lot of milk for their size and have high butterfat. But they are more demanding than the sheep. I have seen though an increase in demand from the sheep when I regularly feed twice a day due to low growth this time of year as well as more demand from sheep that are tamer than the wild ones.

Meanwhile I did save up enough milk last spring to attempt mozzarella cheese. It actually made a lot of cheese compared to my high fat Nigerian dwarf milk. The cheese tasted great as does the goat cheese. Then I reheated the whey and it made a lot of Ricotta comparatively as well. You can see in the pictures how much cream comes to the top of my most recent sheep milk in January of this year as well as how much cheese I got out of sheep milk a year ago. That cheese if I recall came from around 2 qts of milk. The whey is to the right. The ricotta is in the middle and the mozzarella with Oregano is on the left. One day in the future I'll try other kinds of cheeses, but I am no pro at that and don't like to spend a lot of time in the kitchen.

So fast forward, I now own a small herd of registered Barbados black belly and I have hand milked a few after they lambed just enough for testing as to who I'd want to keep for milking ability and quantity. One seemed to be at about a qt a day and another was only 20oz a day. I am raising lambs to be tamer so that I can milk them in the future. For the young adults I bought who are not tame I will pull their lambs at birth and start milking the ewes and they should begin to think of me as their babies as do the goats when babies are pulled at birth. This is the same management as is used on any cow dairy farm for the sale of milk. My bottle raised babies are growing faster than the dam raised babies I currently have.

I haven't ever had the sheep milk tested for protein and fat content, but that information is obtainable on the internet since the internet knows everything. ;) However, I will someday have my Barbados milk tested in the future.”



Use of the Maggidan milker for helping save newborn lambs

By Pam Hand, DVM

I confess I am not handy at hand milking sheep, even though my name is Dr. Hand. Discovering the Maggidan's milker has made saving newborn lambs much easier because this gadget is easy to use and works to get milk quickly even out of a jumpy ewe as long as you can restrain her briefly. It is basically a pistol grip squeeze 'sucker' which attaches by a tube to a teat cup on one end and a long tube which goes into the collection container of your choice. You simply hold the teat cup against the udder with the teat inside and squeeze the trigger. The teat is sucked into the cup and forms a vacuum, and then as you continue to squeeze and release the trigger, milk flows down the tube, thru the gadget, and into your collection container. To release, you simply insert your finger between the teat cup and the udder to release the suction.

The current cost is about \$50 plus shipping. [Full disclosure, I get no commission]

We took a cottage cheese container and poked a hole in the lid so that the tubing from the milker goes directly into the container with the lid on, to reduce accidental spills while working with that jumpy ewe. Every drop of colostrum is precious! The small teat cup, which is basically a 12 cc syringe tube works perfectly on our Barbados Blackbelly ewes. The website has a video showing you how to use it, plus it comes with written instructions. There are several accessories you can purchase as well.

www.maggidans.com/milker

Newborn lambs should nurse colostrum as soon as possible after birth. Lambs that are not vigorous and figure out how to nurse right away (within the hour) can be helped by milking the ewe and tubing the lamb or offering that milk in a bottle.

Surprise! You can win your very own Maggidan's Milker. Enter our free raffle by sending an email to Newsletter@blackbellysheep.org by July 15, 2018.

Include your name, state, and a numerical census of your sheep so that we can tally how many American Blackbelly and Barbados Blackbelly are alive in 2018. Just list like this:

AB # rams # ewes

BB # rams # ewes

Include lambs in count.

One winner will be selected from all the entries and notified by email. You will receive your milker by mail within two weeks after the drawing. Winner will be mentioned in the next newsletter.

Good Luck and thanks for helping us promote our unique breeds of sheep.

BBSAI NEWS

Eileen Breedlove no longer has sheep, so she is stepping down from her position on the board and the office of Vice President as of July 1st. Elaine Haas will be taking her place per vote of the Board in May 2018.

New Members: Welcome!

Zeb Akers	AL
James Artis	TX
Sonia Deweese	GA
Bob and Becky Dunnebacke	TN
Bonnie Mclean	VA
Scott Revier	MN
Ingrid Sievers	WA
Jeff Weld	CA

BBSAI NEWSLETTER

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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

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