



THIS RAM'S NAME IS 'A LAZY D SPEC'

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.

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BBSAI NEWSLETTER

NOV 2019

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Get Acquainted

A Lazy D Land & Livestock
Alden and Damian Stehly
Powell Butte, Oregon





Alden and Damian Stehly

Powell Butte, Oregon

When and how did you begin raising Barbados Blackbelly sheep?

We initially bought a flock of American Blackbellies to train our young Australian Kelpie before she graduated to cattle – the sheep are less dangerous for a pup. The sheep became shockingly enjoyable, so we expanded the herd with some commercial barbados. The barbados had much bigger frames and deeper bodies which attracted us to the Barbados Blackbelly and shifted our focus to purebreds.

What animals do you have now?

Currently we are a purebred Barbados Blackbelly operation, with a few exceptional commercial ewes that are flock favorites! We raise those alongside an expanding Boer goat herd, which we sell to local 4-H and FFA kids.

What is your philosophy about breeding your sheep?

Having a cattle background, we are pretty critical of our Barbados Blackbelly sheep. Besides requiring good maternal instincts, we are striving for a conformationally correct animal with a good attitude (nervous

animals don't gain weight the same). The wethers are raised for meat, so we strive for a well-muscled, quick maturing animal that will reach harvest weight in 11 months.

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

We are blessed to have multiple large non-climb fenced pens with run-in sheds. During the day, when there is not snow on the ground, the sheep are moved onto the perimeter of our hay fields. We move their mesh-electric-fence pen every other day to the areas along the fence that the hay-swather misses, or to ditches that need clearing – BB sheep and Boer goats love cattails.

We do not have a livestock guardian dog, since our sheep come back into the compound every night. This has the added benefit, for us, to work our herding dogs multiple times every day. It also keeps the sheep fit and easy to handle.

What about management and feeding?

Summer is easy since they are on fresh grass and weeds all day, and grass hay at night. During the winter months we supplement their normal grass hay, with high protein alfalfa to keep them warm. Central Oregon is deficient in selenium, phosphorus and potassium which we supplement with a mineral lick, and a BoSE shot twice a year.

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

We are transitioning to once-a-year lambing in January/February to coincide with our Boer goats. Come late March, they are ready to be moved out to pasture, and this gives them the best opportunity for growth. By late summer the ewes and rams that we have kept for starter flocks are ready to be rehomed. The January born wethers, that are destined for harvest, are finished for the holiday season, and we are back down to the smallest possible herd before the winter weather hits.

Our selection criteria is straight forward. We are looking for a conformationally sound animal, that can get around well (as mentioned, they will log many miles). Frame and muscling are our next judgement. We strive to create a bigger more muscled sheep to compete with the woolled breeds. Muscle is meat, and we like to analyze the carcass data of all harvested animals. Barbados Blackbelly are naturally lean, which some customers like, but others want their lamb fed out. Fed-out lambs get wet-COB (Molasses, corn, oats and barley), hay and alfalfa to promote fat retention, and keep the fat a nice white color. Otherwise our operation is grassfed lambs.

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

Central Oregon is considered high desert, we have dry mild summers reaching over 90 degrees for about 3 weeks in August. Nights always cool off between 50-60 degrees, with a constant breeze, giving the animals a break from the heat,

but also increasing the risk of pneumonia. The Barbados Blackbelly (knock-wood) have never had a problem with the weather.

Humidity peaks at 20% in the summer, and the extremely dry climate suits all of our livestock very well. We are lucky that our altitude is too high for ticks and too dry for foot-rot or for most internal parasites to survive in the soil.

Winters are either mild and cold or snowed-in and even colder. This past winter was late, and on the night of February 16th we received 3 feet of snow. That snow did not melt until the middle of March, and the day-time temperature hung around 30 degrees. The sheep fared extremely well all things considered, and were seemingly unfazed once we cut a trail for them to get from the barn, to the feeder, to water and back! We feed alfalfa during the winter to all of our livestock to keep their motors burning a little hotter, and ensure they make it through the night.

What makes you unique?

A Lazy D Land & Livestock is a diversified farming operation. We grow many types of hay and alfalfa, breed and raise race horses, cattle, goats and sheep. A professor at Cal Poly SLO told us, "those who cannot adapt [in the agriculture sector] will not survive." This has made us keen on looking forward and taking the risky bet, but respecting tried and true methods. The diversity of our operation allows for a rotational grazing of the cattle and sheep,

that year over year, enhances the quality of the fields. In good stewardship we strive to provide hardy, exceptional animals from the ranch to the racetrack.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

To find out more about our operation, see our day-to-day operation and inquire about animals, follow us on Facebook (A Lazy D Land & Livestock) and Instagram (@alazyd) and at www.ALazyD.com. We look forward to sharing our story and passion for agriculture with you.



Update on the Livestock Conservancy's Shave 'Em to Save 'Em program

by Pam Hand, DVM

Just to remind you what the program is about, here is the information from the website:

"In our ongoing commitment to making it more profitable to raise heritage breeds, The Livestock Conservancy, created the Shave 'Em to Save 'Em Initiative, thanks to funding provided by the Manton Foundation. It's a program that will recognize fiber artists for using wool from breeds on our [Conservation Priority List](#) while connecting shepherds of heritage breeds with customers.

The Livestock Conservancy has long said that the way to save endangered breeds of livestock is to give them a job. In the case of wool sheep, we need to start using their wool again. Because of marketing challenges, some shepherds discard or compost the wool after their annual shearing rather than cleaning it and selling it. In addition to encouraging fiber artists to try using rare wools, the program also educates shepherds about how to prepare their wool for sale and how to reach customers and fiber artists, thereby making it more profitable to raise heritage breeds."

This program has far exceeded the initial estimates: 558 fiber providers and 1,324 fiber artists have signed up. I have already provided fiber to 6 artists and have a waiting list of 11 more who want Barbados Blackbelly shed wool in 2020. The artists are willing to pay a nominal fee (I am charging \$10 - \$20 for 6 oz plus actual shipping costs) and it is fun to correspond with them and see what they are able to make with what used to be just discards at my farm. Won't you consider saving what you can from brushing, pulling, and picking up shed wool in 2020 just to make a little extra money and to promote our unique and lovely breed? Read below to see what one artist has done with BB fiber.

Using the wool from rare sheep breeds

By Leslie Horan Simon

<https://www.lesliehoransimon.com/>

[IG @lesliehoransimon.](#)

When it comes to wool I am drawn to the unusual. Some eight years ago I began working with and reading about wool, the sheep who produce it, and all that takes place between pasture and yarn store.

"The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook" by Deborah Robson and Carol Ekarius was especially influential. I learned there are hundreds of breeds of sheep that hold the key to biodiversity and the health and future of wool production world-wide. I found myself drawn in. As I researched the various rare and endangered breeds around the world I began finding ways to purchase wool directly from small farmers and shepherds that raise these beautiful animals.

Since I started I have used the fleece of over 70 rare breeds. I have made friends with shepherds and farmers as well as others who make it their business to gather and sell the less-commercially-popular wools for farmers who are just too busy to do it themselves. I am utterly fascinated by these wools and the processes I have developed to work with them.

I prefer to buy raw wool and if possible an entire fleece from one animal. I wash and dry the wool and process it in several ways to get it ready to spin, knit, weave, or needle-felt.

Let me tell you something special about Barbados Blackbelly fiber. Browns are hard to come by, especially those in the mid to light range so the felt and yarn that I make with BB is very special indeed. I'm afraid that most folks won't appreciate this type of fiber/yarn. It looks crazy and itchy BUT...I find it to be expressive and very interesting and I adore the color too.



After I make yarn I either weave or knit with it. My weaving is of the most basic type done on a small Saori loom and I use a knitting machine to quickly make a good amount of yardage. After I make the fabrics, I wash them so the fibers bind to each other and become felt. The other method I use to make felted fabric is a dry-felting technique called needle-felting. The path from raw wool to felts ready for composing is a slow process but I do certain things on certain days and somehow it all gets done.

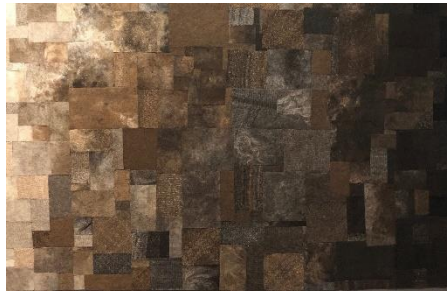
I keep records and label all the wool so I know the content of each felt. I sometimes combine wools but I also make a lot of single breed felts depending on the project. The finished felts are then organized so they are readily accessible,

ready to become part of a larger work.



The next step is composing. Using a combination of intuition and inspiration, I select pieces, cut my desired size and shape, and arrange the cut pieces on a base layer of commercially-made felt fabric. I use a single handheld felting needle to attach the two layers to each other. I then put the entire piece through my FeltLOOM to more thoroughly attach the cut pieces to the base. After that I attach a stiff buckram fabric to the back of the base using a steam-activated pH-neutral glue. A grid of hand-sewn stitches ensures that it will be stable and supported for the long term. Again, by hand-sewing, I attach this three-layer work to another piece of commercial felt that I stretch over a wooden frame,

creating a finished edge ready for hanging or framing.



You can see Leslie's piece called Big Brown, which she made in part with Barbados Blackbelly fiber from Springwood Farm at this link:

<https://www.lesliehoransimon.com/rare-breed-study/1>

Calling all Sheep show Exhibitors!

The BBSAI now has an exhibit table package available for members to borrow and use at sheep-related expos, educational seminars, and shows. This is one of several upcoming efforts that the association is working on to spread the word about Barbados Blackbelly and American Blackbelly sheep at points where people are looking to make breed purchase decisions.

If there is an event in your area that you are planning to attend, having an exhibit table is a great way to provide useful information about both breeds – particularly if the attendees will include small farmers who are trying to decide which breed of sheep will work best for them.

The package includes:

- A BBSAI logo banner that describes the benefits of membership
- A 90" X 132" rectangular black tablecloth
- BBSAI brochures
- BBSAI business cards
- Display holders for the brochures and cards
- Several 8" X 10" photos of Barbados Blackbelly sheep
- A PowerPoint presentation describing the benefits of blackbelly sheep ownership and membership in the BBSAI
- A box with prepaid postage for you to return the package after your event

If you are interested in reserving the package for an upcoming show, please contact Bridgett Leslie at bllleslie@outlook.com at least one month before the event.



Welcome to new Members!

Jerry Pritchett	Waxahachie, TX	Dan Heilman	Cartersville, GA
Jeff Stark	Egypt, TX	Alexander Ataev	Purgitsville, WV
David Brooks	Palestine, TX	Kim McDonald	Wimauma, FL
Timothy and Randy Sanford	Gundy, AB	Gina Baird	Toledo, OR
Christopher Burkes	Philadelphia, MS	Brian Guyton	Dyke, VA
David Richmond	Laurens, SC	Austin Shank	Dunnellon, FL
Mary Alford	Dyersburg, TN	Gigi Verano	Wimauma, FL
Jay and Rebecca Lukes	Franktown, CO	Jonathan Rosenblum	Valley Ford, CA

BBSAI NEWSLETTER

EDITOR
Pam Hand, DVM

4330 Springwood Drive
Free Union, VA
22940

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