Chief Shepherd’s Message
Walter R. Threlfall, DVM, MS, PHD, DACT
Falling Tree Ranch
Powel, Ohio

The “nice” thing about the weather this year in Ohio was there was something for everyone! The rains in March, April, and May were ridiculous. This was followed by a drought to semi-drought. Temperatures fluctuated frequently most of the summer until August when it stayed in the 90’s. The first cutting hay could not be baled when indicated because it was too wet and then the second cutting took forever to grow back due to no moisture. In addition, there was significant alfalfa damage from the cool to cold temperature and too much water. So, who cares? Anyone feeding sheep! The cost of hay is up, the quality is down and there is a shortage. Oh well, enough about the hay problems for now.

Next consider: other than the price of hay, what goes up in wet years? Correct. Parasite numbers. It is imperative, (and has been all summer) to check for internal parasites. This has been a significant problem in overgrazed wet pastures. The dry conditions which followed the rains have helped, but lambs that carry a heavy parasite load may not survive.

As we have learned raising sheep, there is always something to lookout for and that is part of the enjoyment! It never gets boring. It is now time to select those ewe lambs which will be retained as part of the breeding flock. Careful attention should be paid to their structural conformation and size. Are the lambs big enough to carry a pregnancy and to deliver a lamb at term? Are the feet and legs correct and are hooves trimmed appropriately? Are the teeth structurally correct? Will your nutritional program permit your ewe lambs to continue growth while pregnant? Have you done your best in the selection of rams to complement your ewes’ characteristics?

And returning to the subject of hay, have you prepared for next year? That would be replacing stands of hay lost to weather conditions and/or finding sources of hay now to reduce the difficulty you may have had locating hay this year?

Best wishes.

Walt
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Write for Short Tales!!
Your experiences, opinions, trials and errors are of value to other shepherds. Consider writing for Short Tales!
Pictures of your flock, fiber, and sheep related activities are most welcome. Send them to maryfinnsheepbreeder@yahoo.com or Mary O’Malley
1600 Ednor Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905
Read Short Tales! Did you know that previous issues of Short Tales are available on our website? There is a wealth of information from past breeders there for you!

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### BOARD OF DIRECTOR CONTACT LIST

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Eligibility
The Finnsheep Breeders Association is offering a $250 scholarship to a student who is currently a high school senior, college freshman or sophomore and who is a member, or whose parent/guardian is a member, of the Finnsheep Breeders Association (minimum membership 2 years). Applicants must be attending or have been accepted to a technical, vocational, community college or a university. All academic majors will be considered. Preference will be given to those with agricultural career goals.

The scholarship will be awarded on October 18, 2020 at the New Your Sheep and Wool Festival which will be held in Rhinebeck, New York. Payment will be made upon provision of college acceptance documentation and/or evidence of attendance.

The Selection Criteria:
* Experience and involvement in the sheep industry, (4H, FFA, family business)
* Career goals
* Community service and leadership
* Academic record (Official High School or College Transcript)
* Essay (500 words)
* Two letters of recommendation

Deadline for submission: June 30, 2020. Please note, the essay and the response to the questions must be typed!!! The application is included in this issue of Short Tales (page 6).
If you have additional questions please contact

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Preserving the Integrity of Finnsheep
by Mary O’Malley

The FBA is a non-profit livestock breeders corporation and considered a “seed stock” organization. What exactly does this mean? A breeder is someone who raises purebred livestock with the intent of providing customers with the unique genetics of a breed. Rams and ewes of the same breed are mated and the best of their offspring (the seedstock) are provided to the commercial sheep industry, other seedstock producers and anyone interested in obtaining those particular genetics. Finnsheep have many desirable traits but the most unique of these is the genetic trait of prolificacy.

Finnsheep were brought to the U.S. (in 1968) to improve the productivity of commercial sheep. It was hoped that injecting fertile Finnsheep genetics into the commercial sheep industry would increase lambing rates. The efficacy of integrating Finnsheep into flocks of commercial ewes was confirmed both by research studies and the personal experience of sheep farmers. The Finnsheep Breeders Association formed in 1971 with a primary focus being to register and maintain pedigree identification of Finnish Landrace (Finnsheep) ewes and lambs. The lambing performance of registered ewes and the performance/progeny records guide the breeder in identifying the best candidates for passing on the key trait of prolificacy. While in recent years, fleece color and markings have been added to the registration papers because of the interests of fiber folks, fleece color is not a consistently inheritable trait. A member of the Finnsheep Breeders Association is making a commitment to the future of the breed by maintaining purity in their flock and records.

It is important to note that while adding ¼ or ½ Finnsheep genetics to a commercial flock can increase lambing rates, adding another breed’s genetics to a Finnsheep flock can depress lambing rates in Finns. Brian Magee explains in his article Inbreeding vs Outbreeding, (available on the FBA website under Finnsheep in Print) : In the late 1970’s and 1980’s adding 1/4 and 1/2 Finnsheep genetics to commercial flocks or developing new breeds such as the Polypay was all the rage. At the same time purebred Finnsheep breeders were quick to close their registry to what was called upbreeding. This had allowed 15/16 Finnsheep to be registered as purebred Finnsheep. The losses due to this very slight outbreeding, while anecdotal for individual Finnsheep breeders, are more easily observed in research flocks such as at Cornell University. In the early 1980’s the Cornell Finnsheep flock gave birth to a 380% lamb crop. The Cornell Dorset flock gave birth to a 140% lamb crop, A 1/2 Finn 1/2 Dorset flock from these two parent lines produced a 197% lamb crop, an example of outbreeding depression. With no depressive effect, the lamb crop would have averaged 260%...... Further evidence of the depressive effect of outbreeding on reproductive excellence of a foundation breed of sheep is reported in a study of a 50-year data set from the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, Dubois, Idaho (J. An. Sci. 58, p.22). The foundation Dubois Rambouillet was outbred with Lincoln to produce the Columbia and later the Columbia was outbred with Corriedale to produce the Targhee. After fifty years of selection the original Rambouillet, despite or because of a higher coefficient of inbreeding, which through selection could build maternal epistatic traits, outproduced by more than ten percentage points for lambs born per ewe exposed than the outbred Columbia and Targhee.
Preserving the Integrity of Finnsheep, cont.

This concern for preserving the unique genetic traits associated with prolificacy, led to the decision years ago by the FBA to not establish guidelines for showing Finnsheep in competition. Sheep competing in a show are evaluated and assigned points based on their adherence to their breed’s standards. Finnsheep cannot be judged solely on their physical characteristics. Sixty to seventy percent of the standard’s significance relates to reproductive characteristics. In addition, the “show bug” can influence breeding decisions. There are numerous anecdotal reports of changes in other breeds, like the Dorset, that are believed to have come about because individuals were seeking to improve their chances of winning by quietly breeding in another breed with desirable traits. While the FBA does not actively promote showing, it recognizes that attending and participating in shows and sales is an effective way to increase awareness of Finns.

Breed promotion is the responsibility of both the individual breeder and the association. The FBA routinely places ads in the three prominent “trade magazines”, THE BANNER, SHEEP! and THE SHEPHERD to increase awareness of Finnsheep. However, individual farms can and should place their own ads for best visibility. Participation in breed displays at sheep and wool festivals by FBA members is a wonderful way to increase awareness of the breed. The tri-fold brochures available on the website can be requested from Associated Registries for distribution at these displays and issues of Short Tales can be requested from the Short Tales editor.

Finnsheep are an important part of the American sheep industry. Former FBA president and treasurer Grant Blackburn commented, “While there has not been a census of Finnsheep across the nation, there are probably many, many unregistered purebred Finns in many commercial flocks doing their job of increasing lambing productivity”. In January 2000, Richard Hamilton of California wrote 30 Years of Finn Crosses on a Western Commercial Operation for Short Tales #43. A visit to the Hamilton Brothers website, https://www.hamiltonbrosranch.com/ shows that today, Finns are still an important part of their successful commercial sheep operation. The trait of prolificacy is like a diamond in the rough or a golden egg. It is a treasure to be preserved by the breeders of registered Finnsheep.

References:

FBA Constitution
http://www.finnsheep.org/docs/Inbreeding-Outbreeding.pdf
http://www.sheep101.info/201/breedingsystems.html
FINNSHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
2020 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Name:_________________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________
Phone #:________________________________________________________________________
Email: _________________________________________________________________________
Parent’s names:__________________________________________________________________
Are you or your parents current members of the FBA __________Date joined: _____________
Name of school you are, or are planning to attend in Fall 2020:_______________________________
Anticipated major area of study:___________________________________________________
High School attended:
____________________________________________________________________________

Please answer the following questions (use additional paper).

1. What are your career goals and why have you chosen them?

2. What has been your experience with Finnsheep and the sheep industry (examples: 4-H, FFA, family farm, employment)

3. What Leadership and extracurricular activities have you participated in during the last 2 years?

Essay Question (typed, double space, maximum of 500 words):

How has your experience with Finnsheep affected your current career goals?

Please return your completed application, essay and two letters of recommendation by June 30, 2020 to:

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Gypsy Mountain Farm
1346 Nester School Road
Dugspur, VA 24325
(716) 560-0226
eagypsy@aol.com
gypsymountainfarm.com
Purebred Finn Sheep, Finn-CVM crosses white, natural colors, fleeces, roving, hand dyed fiber, art batts

Cody L. Manspile
House Mountain Finnsheep
1055 Blue Grass Trail
Lexington, VA 24450
540-784-9254
crookedbridgecbf@yahoo.com
Purebred traditional white Finnsheep

Douglas & Dorothy Rogers
West End
677 Crosshills Rd.
Heathsville, VA 22473
(804) 580-4151
dorothyrogers@mac.com
facebook.com/westendsheep

Will Stewart
Skyemoor Farm
40101 Highland View Lane
Peaconian Springs, VA 20129
will.stewart1a@gmail.com
www.skyemoorfarm.com/
Purebred Finnsheep, white and natural colored

Vermont
Deborah and Isaiah Fuller
88 Garfield Lane
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
802-263-5372
mfullerfarm@gmail.com

Sara Kingsbury
20 Harts Road
Topsham, VT 05076
802-439-3643
frosthornhollow@gmail.com
frosthornhollow.com

Siri Swanson
Dancing Moon Farm
363 Fisher Road
Orwell, VT 05760
(781) 264-0430
dancingmoonvt@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/dancingmoonfarm
Purebred Finnsheep and Finn crosses in white and natural color.

Katy Wolfe
Boondoggle Farm
379 Houghton Brook Road
Putney, VT 05346
(802) 557-1163
eyeskatydid@gmail.com
Purebred Finnsheep, white and natural colored; fleeces

Washington
Ruth McCauley
Jeruth Farm
30722 N Monroe Rd
Deer Park, WA 99006
(509) 276-7715
rem68@aol.com
www.jeruthfinnsheepfarm.com
Finnsheep, breeding stock, wool

Debra L Perry
Dancing Waters Farm
4925 163rd LN SW
Rochester, WA 98579
(360) 273-9077
mountaintrailwalker@yahoo.com
Purebred registered Finnsheep, fiber

Wisconsin
Ruth Hansen
Hidden Mountain Farm
89202 N. Harrington Road
West Richland, WA 99353
509.539.6745
danlea23@msn.com
www.triplelfinnsheep.com
Purebred Finnsheep white and natural colored

Washington
Ruth McCauley
Jeruth Farm
30722 N Monroe Rd
Deer Park, WA 99006
(509) 276-7715
rem68@aol.com
www.jeruthfinnsheepfarm.com
Finnsheep, breeding stock, wool

West Virginia
JoAnn Jones
Capriole Farm LLC
453 Capriole Lane
Ronceverte, WV 24970
(304) 667-2117
kpingup@hotmail.com
capirolefarm.weebly.com
Purebred and crossbred Finnsheep, raw wool

Melissa K Orr
SHADY GROVE
604 Orr Drive
Martinsburg, WV 25401
(304) 671-0479
(304) 263-1153
morr@valleyhealthlink.com

THIS SPACE FOR RENT!
ONLY $30/YEAR
APPLY NOW!
Finnsheep Breeders Association
Membership and Breeder Directory Form
Instructions: Print, complete and mail this form and your payment to:
Finnsheep Breeders Association PO Box 231 305 Lincoln Wamego, KS 66547

Name_______________________________________ Membership #_________________ Date _______
Address_________________________________ City_________ State_______ zip___________
Website_______________________________________________ Phone #_________________
Fax #________________ Email___________________________________

Memberships:
_____ New Adult Member, applying, one time only ($ 35.00)
_____ Yearly activity fee, necessary to register sheep ($25.00)
_____ New Youth Associate member (date of birth __/__/__($10)
_____ Continuing Youth Member (date of birth __/__/__ ($15)

The Annual Activity Fees is due on or before January 31th of each year after the first year. Members
receive a free yearly subscription to “Short Tales” newsletter via email (unless requested in hard-copy),
access to the Finnsheep_Breeders chat group on Yahoo for encouragement or help in your endeavor.
Meeting minutes are published in Short Tales. Periodically, members may receive other pertinent mailings
or emails.

Breeder Listing _____($30.00): FBA Members Only
The Breeder Listing is entered into the FBA Website, FBA On-line Database, and FBA newsletter). Six (6) photos (.jpg format preferred) may be added to a listing by sending form and photo files by email to: webmaster@finnsheep.org
_____ Purebred Finnsheep
_____ Commercial Breeder
_____ Cross-Bred Finnsheep – List crosses_____________
_____ Wool or Other Value Added Products – list __________________________________________

A breeder listing may include a brief description of 20 words or less. (attach separate paper if needed).
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Flock prefix listing _____($20.00) Desired prefix __________
A flock prefix enables exclusive use of your name, flock or farm on registrations

I/we agree to be governed by the rules, regulations, constitution and by-laws of the Association as amended
from time to time, and to keep written records of breeding, exact birth dates and litter sizes of Finnsheep,
and further, that I/we will furnish promptly any information concerning same at any time when requested
to do so by the Association.
Signed: _____________________________________________________ Date: __________
Revised on: 05-28-16
Finnsheep Breeders Association

Finnsheep breeders are now found across many States producing purebred and crossbred Finnsheep. Breeders look to the Finnsheep Breeders Association, Inc. to provide record keeping of registrations and transfers of the breed. Since the 1971 inception of the Finnsheep Breeders Association, Inc. the organization has drawn on the expertise of leading research authorities to enhance the Finnsheep breed and provide leadership in promoting the Finnsheep qualities and characteristics.

Mission Statement

The American Finnsheep Breeders Association:

* Provides a national pedigree breed recording system for Finnsheep
* Maintains the Finnsheep breed standard for the USA. Promotes animal health within the breed and nationally
* Fosters and promotes the proliferation and marketing of Finnsheep within the national sheep industry and abroad