Chief Shepherd's Message
by Tracy Sengupta

This issue of Short Tales has been mailed to everyone with any business with the FBA in 2004 and 2005 (transfers etc.). We would like to give them an opportunity to find out more about our organization and invite them to join us in promoting Finnsheep.

I would like to remind our members that the FBA annual activity fee and Breeder’s Directory fee were due on January 7th. If you have not paid these fees yet, please take a moment now and send a check to the Milo, IA office.

These annual fees allow the FBA to serve you and promote the Finnsheep breed. The Breeder’s Directory is published in each newsletter, is listed on the FBA website and is sent out to prospective sheep buyers who request information on where they can purchase Finnsheep. It is powerful advertising tool and becoming more useful all the time with increased internet use in the US.

The 2006 FBA annual meeting will be held on Saturday, November 11, 2006 in Louisville, KY. This is in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition. (The sheep days at the Expo this year are Nov. 10th through 17th.)

We have a block of rooms being held at the Red Roof Inn -- Louisville Airport for the nights of Friday 11/10 and Saturday 11/11. These rooms will be set aside only until October 10th, so make your reservation now. Their number is 800-THE-ROOF. (Our block number is B118000631 - under “Finnsheep Breeders' Association”.) I hope you will plan to attend the meeting and participate. The FBA is your organization and our different experiences and viewpoints will make the organization stronger.

I wish all of you a Happy New Year and a productive and profitable 2006.

What is the Activity Fee?
(Sometimes referred to as Annual Dues)
by Grant Blackburn, Treasurer

Back in 1998 the FBA was in chronic financial circumstances. Membership numbers were low, annual registrations were below 200 and very few new members were joining the organization.

Traditionally the one time Membership fee was meant to be enough to support the FBA. The idea being that with increased interest in the breed many new members would evolve bringing with them large numbers of flock registrations.

At the 1999 board meeting, held at Springfield IL, it was decided to address the grave situation the FBA was in. The Board realized the only way the FBA would survive is through a serious marketing and advertising campaign. To undertake such a campaign required a serious cash injection and the only way to do that was to introduce an annual fee known as the Activity fee.

The annual Activity fee was set at $25 and for new members the one time membership fee of $35 included the first years Activity fee. The paid up membership is entitled to a free copy of each newsletter (Short tales) and discounted fees for registration. The additional revenue enabled the FBA to host a web-page on the internet and develop a nationwide advertising and marketing plan. This involved advertising in sheep related publication across the nation and support for advertising in sheep show/festival publication for annual meetings.

Has this shift in revenue policy worked? Today, six years later, the FBA is in a sound financial situation with increased membership and a small but steady stream of new members joining the organization annually. Finnsheep registrations are up to almost 500 in 2005. This is testimony to the productive use of the Activity Fee.
Breeder Profile: Rock Ridge Ranch
by Jan Herman

We started with a flock of Dorsets that my son had for 4-H, and like a lot of people, we kept showing and breeding after he left for college.

I took a sheep short course at Colby College in 1975, and was so impressed with the Cornell University and Doug Hoag's “STAR Breeding Program” and their use of Finns and Dorsets that I acquired a full bred Finn that year. To make sure she was bred, I put her in with our Dorset Rams. I still had a set of quads, but they weren't full Finns. I was surprised at their bounce and energy at birth. Weighing only four and 5 pounds at birth I was concerned and called the breeder, and they assured me that that wasn't unusual to be so small. They did well, but I still only had only one full Finn ewe. The breeder replaced the litter with a full set of quad ewe lambs, so then I had 5.

From there we continued to breed half-breds to make sure they would market here in Colorado. It took many years for the buyers at the Ft. Collins sheep auction to get a good price for my half bred Finn lambs. The feeder complained that they died from pneumonia, but today after 27 years of selling to feedlot buyers I usually come away from the sale yard with the top price of the day.

One day we had a visit from the County Assessors office, and the man said I couldn't breed the out of season lambs, not considering I was getting 3 lamb crops in two years. He had been raised on a mountain ranch with range ewes and said it just couldn't done. Later he returned with the assessor herself, who was a good friend of mine and also had sheep. She was just curious, and had the time to come out. They believed me after seeing our computer records and the 70 head of sheep we had at that time.

My son tried his hand a sheep shearing and thought it would be good to take the same shearing course his father took from Charlie Swain, so he went to a course in July at Colby KS, and returned to practice his speed and conformation of shearing. At the State Fair that year in Aug. he won the Colorado State Jr. Shearing Championship. He also found that he could make more money at State Fair fitting other sheep, leaving Mom to fit his. The year after he went to college, leaving us short one good shearer and shepherd, I went on to show his sheep at the National Western, actually doing better in the Open Show than he did in the Jr. Show. It was a real act trying to show at the National Western and lamb at the same time. One year, we had a Dorset ewe that insisted on prolapsing six weeks before she was to lamb. I literally had her hobbled and on a ramp and finally got the Vet to come the day she was to lamb to do a caesarean on her. With the help of three neighbors, we delivered a set of triplets, but we had to put Mom down. That was the time I decided to quit full bred Dorset's and do nothing but crosses, or full Finns. It was also the day I was to show down in Denver, and my great family of exhibitors showed my sheep, which I was very grateful for.

I was the first person to show Finns at the National Western. I flew to Michigan and picked up two unrelated black ewe lambs in June, and since Chuck worked for United Airlines we weren't charged freight. We went for my Grandmother's 100 birthday, and had to keep the lambs with a friend who was a retired farmer until we flew back. I asked the seller to make sure they had a long-acting penicillin shot. Her vet left syringes of procaine penicillin, and we gave the shots before we left the seller's farm. The next morning the poor lambs couldn't stand up on the rear legs that we gave the shots in. We found out the Vet didn't give her the long acting penicillin, and there was so
much procaine in the shots we gave them that the hind leg on each were numb... but by the next day they were fine. They made it back to Denver with a lot of comments from the people in the airport, thinking they were goats. I showed them as ewe-lambs and ram-lambs six months later, and the only colored class they had for us were in with the black Columbias. We made quite a hit, and even though we only placed third, people found out about the Finns and their fine spinning wool. Now we have a lot of people showing their sheep in natural-colored classes all over the state.

Now we lamb in May, and miss the bad heavy snow in March. We can turn them out on pasture as soon as they leave the mixing pen. We live at 7200 feet, between Denver and Colorado Springs. Without a lot of moisture, we feed a lot of hay, but we also have no problems with foot rot, or other moisture related diseases. I'm still the only one in Colorado raising Finns, and with the shortage of sheep, I don't have a shortage of buyers. We have 50 head of Finns and Dorset/Finn at this time.

We love our Finns. I sold this year's shearing of Finn wool (over 100 pounds) to a gal who took all of it. She processes and sells it on EBay. I spin, but it's a lot of work to process it. She called back two weeks later wanting to buy this year's shearing as well.

I developed Rheumatoid in 1987, so to make things easier for me we went to a closed-circuit video camera in the barn. It has saved a lot of trips to the barn. We also had to go to guard llamas because of the coyotes and the trapping laws in Colorado. We now have too many llamas but they do take good care of the ewes and especially the lambs. I've had great luck with the 6 ewes I got at MARC in Nebraska. Last year one of my ewes lambed in January with triplets, and again in September with quads (photo below). She is bred to lamb again in May.

You can contact Jan Herman at 303-688-9812 or cfherman@juno.com.

2006 FBA Annual Meeting

to be held in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition
Louisville, KY

November 11, 2006

FBA Host Hotel: Red Roof Inn Airport, Louisville, KY 4704 Preston Highway Louisville, KY 40213 (800-THE-ROOF)

block of rooms held for:
Finn sheep Breeders’ Association Block #B118000631

See you there!
Putting Fiber Testing to Work for Your Flock (Part 1)
by Tracy Sengupta

In Finland, the Finnsheep has always been a true multi-purpose breed used for meat, pelts and wool. The animals have been selected for quality wool which is soft, has good crimp and a high luster. In North America, the brief 40 year history of the Finnsheep has been a little different. Our Finnsheep were originally imported for their prolificacy in order to increase the lambing percentage of commercial flocks. All the sheep imported were white though some were recessive for color. In the early days, selecting for wool quality was not a primary goal.

As time passed, more people became aware of Finnsheep and this included people interested in fiber – both white and natural color. By most accounts, the wool, especially in the natural colored sheep, was not always of good quality even as recently as 10 years ago. Many of the sheep had a high percentage of hair mixed with the wool in their fleeces. Through selective breeding, shepherds gradually improved the wool quality in their flocks. However, there is still much work to be done in Finnsheep in the US to continue to improve the wool. Where do we go from here?

Fiber testing is a valuable and under-utilized tool which can help you improve your flock. This is especially true if you plan to market products to people interested in fiber. Even if your primary interest is not wool, it may be of interest to your customers. Having more complete information will assist you in selling your products (lambs, sheep, fleeces and wool products such as roving and yarn) to this growing market.

If you are a “fiber person”, you have some experience in judging a fleece by sight. But these judgments are extremely subjective and it is sometimes difficult to quantify just why you prefer a particular fleece. Through using objective data along with your subjective opinion, you will have a great deal more information about what makes a particular sheep’s fleece special. Then you can better plan your breedings to be sure these qualities will be passed down to its progeny. By breeding your sheep with the best wool to those with only fair wool, are you influencing your flock by distributing the “good wool” genes across more sheep? Or are you watering down the genetics of your better sheep by crossing them with sheep of lesser quality? How will you know?

Yocum-McColl is a testing laboratory in Denver, Colorado. This issue of Short Tales includes an article by Angus McColl, its owner, which describes the equipment they use and how it works. When I purchased my original sheep from Sandy De Master, she showed me how she sent in a sample of the lamb fleece of each sheep she planned to retain in her flock (replacements) for analysis. This was a sample of the first shearing taken at a year of age. When I sheared my sheep for the first time, I adopted this practice and now send in samples from those lambs which are “keepers” each year.

In my conversations with the staff at Yocum-McColl, they stress that the test is only as good as the sample. If you reach into a bag of wool and pull out a tiny tuft of wool from an unknown location on an unknown sheep’s fleece, you are not going to get good information for your investment. The sample should come from a specific location on the side of the sheep and it should be at least 2” square (as it laid on the sheep). The sample should start at skin level (sheared with clippers or flat bladed shears) and be in its original state (not cleaned or combed).

In order to do this, lay your fleece out flat on a skirting table or other large flat surface and find the location which would previously have been on the side of the sheep. With one hand make a C shape around a 2” area and lightly push down on the fleece to hold it in place. With the other hand, grasp that section of wool near the ends and give it firm tug to pull it free.
The Importance of Balanced Mineral
by Sandy De Master

It wasn't until the spring of 2004 that I realized the importance of having a sheep mineral balanced to my pastures and hay. Up until that time I had been feeding a respected pre-mixed commercial mineral specifically designed for sheep. When a good friend of mine called me and told me she had lost 4 ewes out of her large flock of Clun Forest sheep (approximately 60 ewes), to copper toxicity, I began to do the math. If I were to lose 3-4 ewes out of my breeding flock, that would be a good quarter to one third of my ewes. And on top of that, it would mean the loss of many valuable imported genetics.

What happened in my friend's flock to cause these losses? To this day, we are not sure. The sheep nutritionist she consulted felt that perhaps she could have copper in her soil in part of her barnyard. He assured her that her mill had not made a mistake in mixing her sheep grain on top of cow feed, which does contain copper, because he analyzed her feed from the mill. It did not contain any traces of copper. He did recommend that she consider having her pastures and hay tested to determine their nutritional value. Based on these results he could formulate a mineral that would give her sheep the nutrition, vitamins and minerals they needed. He stated that a pre-mixed mineral does not take into account the nutritional analysis of an individual farm's pasture and hay. Thus, what works for Farm A may not work at all for Farm B, or worse, could prove harmful.

I decided this idea made a lot of sense and consulted with the same nutritionist, Bill Keough of Bear Creek Enterprises (www.bksheep.com). My sheep and lambs had just gone onto pasture, so Bill had me collect pasture samples from different spots of my 6 acres of pasture. I sent them to a lab in Watertown, WI for analysis. I believe the tests cost me around $40-$50. The results were sent to both Bill and I. He then formulated a mineral mix for my flock that rounded out the minerals that were lacking in the pasture forage.

When fall rolled around and I began to feed hay, I did a random sample of my hay with a borrowed hay drill from my local feed co-op. Again, the samples were sent to the lab in Watertown and Bill revised the mineral mix based on the analysis from the lab. He also balanced a ration for me, which included the amounts and types of feed and mineral for my flock in the different stages through the year: the first 15 weeks of gestation, the last 4 weeks of gestation, and the first 6-8 weeks of lactation. This analysis is included in the price of the base mineral that I purchase from him.

The base mineral is a formula that Bill determined which constitutes the base of the sheep mineral. To that he determines how much, if any, white salt, calcium, and dicalcium phosphate need to be added. He formulates an equation that equals 20 pounds. I purchase the base mineral from him and purchase the rest of the ingredients at my local mill. It takes just a few minutes to mix 20 pounds of the mineral and this generally lasts my flock 1-2 weeks, depending on the number of sheep/lambs in the flock. All that is needed to mix the mineral in terms of equipment is a dairy scale, a bucket, and a tub to mix it in.

One would think that my pastures would not vary that much from year to year in their nutritional content. WRONG!! This year, for some unknown reason, at least to me, my pastures were very short on Calcium and I have had to add quite a bit to the mineral.

Thus, I have concluded that it really pays to test. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

2005 STATUS REPORT:
(January – December 2005)

491 Finnsheep were registered.
230 Finnsheep were transferred.
Methods for measuring microns
by Angus McColl

Visual appraisal and fiber handling are fundamental aspects of fiber judging, but are very weak appraisal methods for accurately identifying average fiber diameter. Instrumentation can accomplish the measurement of fibers with accuracy in the tenths of a micron (one millionth of a meter). The difference between a sample averaging 20.5 microns and one at 22.5 microns is very small in physical terms, but it is critical in terms of commercial use and pricing structure.

Fiber testing technology gives breeders a useful tool to analyze fiber and track the progress of their selection programs. The determination of average fiber diameter helps identify the best end use for fiber and is information that mills require before making their purchasing decisions.

The ability to provide accurate information on fiber quality places natural animal fiber producers in a stronger position to sell their fiber for what it is worth. Very few people buy and sell commodities without knowing everything they can about them. Information is power in the marketing world, and objective fiber assessment provides it.

Instruments in the Lab
There are four approved instruments and methods, the most widely used instruments now being OFDA100 and Sirolan LaserScan. Their development followed many years of use of the Airflow and Projection Microscope, which are both still in use. Testing methods are approved by the International Wool Testing Organisation (IWTO) and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and are performed in laboratories under standard conditions for testing textiles, i.e., 70° F. and 65% relative humidity (+2% RH). Yocom-McColl in Denver, Colorado has all four instruments, but performs fiber diameter testing using only LaserScan, OFDA100, and microprojection.

Sirolan LaserScan, (CSIRO), and Optical Fibre Diameter Analyser, (BSC Electronics) were both developed in Australia. These two instruments are calibrated using Interwoollabs tops, the only recognized supplier of calibration tops to the worldwide textile industry. A diagnostic and calibration check is performed each day on both instruments. For samples averaging 26.0 microns and finer, the accuracy of measurement is plus or minus 0.2 microns when the tests are performed properly under standard conditions.

Sirolan LaserScan
The LaserScan instrument measures fibers by dispersing individual snippets (two millimeter lengths of fiber) in a solution of isopropanol and water and this fluid transports the fibers through a glass cell where each one intersects a laser beam. The LaserScan measures the change in the signal generated when the shadow cast by the fiber snippets falls on a light detector. The signals, which are directly proportional to the fiber diameter, are recorded electronically and analyzed almost instantaneously by computer.

Optical Fibre Diameter Analyser (OFDA100)
OFDA100 was approved as an IWTO standard in 1995. Mark Brims and his company, BSC Electronics, designed the instrument. It uses a video camera to produce electronic images of magnified fibers which are distributed over a horizontal glass slide. Software analyzes the fiber images and derives measurement of diameter of a large number of longitudinal fiber sections. OFDA100 also measures and calculates the distribution of fibers (SD and CV) as well as average fiber diameter and several other fiber diameter related characteristics. Both of these methods provide the wool and textile industry with high volume testing applications.

Wanted:
Photos of your flock!
email to tracy@fireflyfields.com
or US Mail to
Tracy Sengupta,
4110 W. Plymouth Church Rd.,
Beloit, WI 53511
Airflow
Airflow measures the flow of air through a sample of wool and provides an indirect measurement of average fiber diameter. It does not give measurements of standard deviation and coefficient of variation and must be calibrated using wool samples that were originally measured by microprojection. Airflow assumes wool density is always constant, and this has caused problems with wools that are less dense (particularly those containing medullated fibers). According to the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA), Airflow can also be affected by large variations in Coefficient of Variation (CV), providing coarser results with a large CV and a finer result with a lower CV. It was the normal measurement for micron results in Australian wool auctions until the summer of 2000.

Microprojection
The projection microscope provides the only primary reference method available for the direct measurement of the mean fiber diameter and distribution of wool fibers. All other instruments are calibrated using standard wool samples where the diameter and distribution values have been determined using the Projection Microscope. Projected fiber images are individually measured at 500X magnification. However, this method is time-consuming and expensive and is only used occasionally nowadays for special jobs.

Portable Instruments (OFDA2000 and Fleecescan)
OFDA2000 and Fleecescan are two instruments developed in Australia for on-farm fleece testing with the objectives of separating superfine wool from flocks of fine-wool sheep and assisting with genetic selection based on fineness characteristics. The reason for the former practice is a premium paid for superfine wool. One of the problems of measuring purely for marketing reasons was in many cases when the superfine wool was removed from the clip, the remaining wool had a higher micron with a lower market value. The additional labor and testing expense to separate the superfine wool is not always economically justifiable.

The OFDA2000 and Fleecescan are not approved by IWTO or ASTM. Wools separated into different micron ranges by these instruments still have to be core sampled and tested by IWTO and/or ASTM approved methods and instruments when offered for sale.
The OFDA2000 measures the dimensions of raw (i.e., greasy and dirty) fibers and then uses a constant correction factor (within a "mob") to estimate the true dimensions. This correction factor is measured and calculated on-site and is typically the average of 30 samples. Since the cleanliness of every sample measured is different, this practice limits the accuracy of individual measurements.

The OFDA2000 has a built-in compensator for temperature and relative humidity that adjusts for the ambient air at the testing location. Thus it can only be properly used on samples that have been given time to reach equilibrium with the ambient air. OFDA2000 is not suitable for testing raw, unconditioned samples at a central location since raw samples from different areas of the country contain varying amounts of moisture that affect fiber diameter. Also, it would not be possible to use an appropriate grease correction factor. The only way to accurately test wool or other animal fibers is for the samples to be washed, dried, and conditioned at standard conditions for testing textiles, a worldwide requirement.

The OFDA2000 tests fewer than 100 fibers (depending on the fiber diameter and staple length) from tip to base in five millimeter increments for a total of about 1,500 measurements. It produces a fiber profile reflecting aging, health/production status, and environmental conditions the animal was subjected to during the growth of that particular staple length. Typically, a mid-side sample is measured to estimate the average fiber diameter of the whole fleece. Other (more accessible) locations (e.g., the pin bone) have also been investigated.

The OFDA2000 uses the same basic technology as its parent (the OFDA100), with the exception of measuring multiple fibers in profile. The OFDA100 is actually capable of measuring one fiber at a time in profile but this measurement is slow and tedious, and probably only used by researchers.

The Fleecescan is transported in a trailer. This system minicores each fleece and chemically cleanses the sample that is then tested on a specially designed LaserScan, heavily protected to avoid damage as it is being moved.

Genetic Selection Tool

Yocom-McColl uses both LaserScan and OFDA100 to test fiber of individual animals. We can measure average fiber diameter, diameter distribution, spin fineness, curvature, curvature distribution, and comfort factor on the LaserScan. Using the OFDA100, we measure all of the above plus medullation on white or light-colored animals. "Comfort factor" is the percentage of fibers greater than 30 microns subtracted from 100 percent (in other words, "comfort factor" is a marketer's positive "spin" on the original term "prickle factor," which was stated as percentage of fibers in the sample set that are greater than 30 microns.)

We test individual animals using two millimeter snippets obtained across the base of the two inch square submitted sample. In this way, we are able to provide estimates of the genetic uniformity of the sample at a precise environmental time.

The Laserscan and the OFDA100 test from 2,000 to 4,000 individual snippets per sample either core sampled (minicored) or guillotined. When guillotined at the base of the staple, all fibers measured were produced at the same time and in the same environment. Such a measurement indicates the genetic fineness and uniformity of the animal (at a specific age) that can be extremely valuable for selection purposes.

Neither LaserScan nor OFDA measure relaxed staple length. Yocom-McColl measures
average staple length on an Agritext instrument according to IWTO 30 on relaxed, conditioned staples.

In 1963, Angus McCall and Ira Yocom founded Denver-based Yocom-McColl Testing Laboratories, Inc. as an independent wool and animal fiber testing facility. Angus is a member of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the International Wool Testing Organisation (IWTO). Yocom-McColl Laboratories utilizes ASTM and IWTO procedures and methods when testing fibers and operates Strolan LaserScan and OFDA instruments, as well as microprojection for the measurement of fiber diameter and distribution. He can be reached at (303) 294-0582 or ymccoll@ymccoll.com.

Producing and Selling Sheep to the Ethnic/Religious Meat Markets

by Susan Schoenian
Sheep and Goat Specialist
Western Maryland Research & Education Center
University of Maryland Cooperative Extension
sschoen@umd.edu
http://www.sheepandgoat.com
(Published with permission from the author.)

The per capita consumption of sheep meat (lamb and mutton) in the United States is less than one pound per person. Americans (or immigrants) of Northern European descent the largest consumers of lamb are Middle Easterners, Greeks, and Hispanics. Population demographics and immigration patterns favor an increase in demand for lamb and goat.

Most lamb is consumed on the East and West Coasts and in major metropolitan areas; however, ethnic markets can be developed anywhere where ethnic populations exist (e.g. college towns, rural areas where foreign labor is utilized). The demand for sheep and lambs increases prior to various religious observances. The type of lamb (age, weight, sex, condition, etc.) and manner in which it is to be slaughtered (Halal, Kosher) depends upon the ethnic/religious group and the holiday. The table below lists some of the religious observances (for the next three years) in which lamb is commonly consumed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Holiday Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Ramadan</td>
<td>October 26, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>October 15, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>October 4, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Eid-al-Fitr</td>
<td>November 25, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Festival of Fast Breaking</td>
<td>November 15, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 3, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Eid-al-Adha</td>
<td>February 1, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Festival of Sacrifice</td>
<td>January 21, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January 10, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Passover</td>
<td>April 6-13, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 24-May 1, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 13-20, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Roman/Western</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>April 11, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March 27, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 16, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Greek/Eastern Orthodox</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>April 11, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May 1, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 23, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>December 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Muslim holidays occur 10 to 11 days earlier each year and cannot be predicted with exact certainty because they are based on a lunar calendar and the sighting of the moon. Eastern (Greek) and Western (Roman) Easter use different calendars (Julian vs. Gregorian) and rarely occur on the same date. In addition to the traditionally do not consume much lamb; however, lamb holds a significant meaning in the observances of many religions and is a dietary staple in many countries. In the U.S., holidays listed above, the demand for sheep and lamb may increase prior to other ethnic observances. It is common for Muslims to
consume sheep (or goat) meat to celebrate a new baby

Tapping Ethnic/Religious Markets

There are many ways that sheep producers can tap the ethnic/religious markets for lamb. Producers may direct market their lambs to ethnic customers, take their lambs to local or

of marketing sheep and lambs, with the ethnic consumer in mind.

The easiest way to sell lambs and sheep is to take them to a local or regional livestock auction. Producers can take advantage of the ethnic/religious demand for lamb when they sell to livestock auction markets, if they produce the type of lamb(s) that the ethnic buyers want and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct On-Farm Marketing of Sheep &amp; Lambs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You set/negotiate price with buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum price potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell by the pound or head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No transportation costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sales commission, yardage, or other fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less stress to sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

regional livestock auctions prior to holidays, sell to middlemen who supply the ethnic/religious trade(s), and/or work cooperatively with other producers to market live animals or carcasses to ethnic markets. Producers should choose a target market and produce and market lambs in a manner that is consistent with the religion, beliefs, and customs of the customers. It may require changes in breeding and management to sell their lambs prior to the religious observances in which lamb is consumed. Many auction barns offer "special sales" of lambs and kids prior to Easter, Christmas, and the major Muslim holidays.

To maximize returns from public livestock auctions, a producer should develop a working relationship with the market manager. To start

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Sheep &amp; Lambs Through a Public Livestock Auction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenient weekly or periodic sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires minimal effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell based on certified weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guaranteed payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of price discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to meet the needs of the ethnic market. The following tables contrast the different methods with, let him know when you are bringing a load of lambs to market. Ask the market manager
what kind of lambs (or sheep) his buyers prefer and when the best time to sell is. You can also use public livestock auctions to make contact with lamb buyers and to negotiate direct sales to packers and other middlemen.

Producers should compare livestock auction markets and choose the markets that will return the most profit. Auction prices are listed in newspapers, farm periodicals, and on the Internet. When comparing the prices from livestock markets, it is important to compare "net" proceeds, rather than "gross" reported prices. The auction that brings the highest prices may not result in the most profit if the higher prices are offset by higher transportation costs, shrink, sales commissions, etc. The difference in prices between auction markets should reflect regional differences in transportation costs. Prices will be higher the closer the market is to the point of slaughter.

Because you are eliminating all of the middlemen, the best price is usually obtained when lambs are sold directly from the farm to the consumer. Under this scenario, the buyer may take the live lamb with him, have the lamb slaughtered at a custom processing plant, or process the lamb on the farm.

On-Farm Slaughter

It is illegal to slaughter a lamb on the farm for the purpose of sale. Lamb meat may only be sold if the lamb has been processed in a USDA inspected slaughter plant (some states have state meat inspection which allows the sale of meat within the state). When selling lambs for slaughter, you need to sell a LIVE lamb and let the buyer process the lamb or facilitate the slaughter of the lamb at a custom or USDA slaughterhouse. You must not help the buyer process the lamb; however, you have an obligation to ensure that the lamb is handled and killed in a humane manner (lambs should not be hung until they are insensible) and that offal is disposed of in an environmentally sound manner (e.g. composting). Cornell University has published a poster depicting humane on-farm slaughter. Producers should familiarize themselves with local, state, and federal laws before allowing on-farm slaughter of lambs.

Before you sell lambs directly from your farm, you have to develop a client base. Some of the ways you can develop a ethnic client base are

- Word of mouth
- Place a classified ad in a large metropolitan newspaper
- Post flyers at religious and social centers prior to a major holiday
- Send articles to magazines, newsletters, TV, and radio stations that represent specific ethnic groups
- Advertise on college campuses that have large foreign populations
- Leave your business card or brochure at a custom or USDA slaughterhouse
- Hand out free samples of lamb at a farmer's market
Many producers do not want to sell lambs directly from their farm. Nor do they like the uncertainty of taking lambs to the auction. Selling to "middlemen" may be the best option, if you are certain you are getting a fair price. There are various middlemen that purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Sheep &amp; Lambs Direct to a Meat Processor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price known in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less fluctuation in price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-round pricing possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can re-negotiate price periodically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell lamb carcass instead of live lamb (value-based marketing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less stressful to lambs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sheep and lambs: Dealers (or traders) buy and sell lambs to make a profit on price and weight differences. Brokers or order buyers buy lambs (for a fee) for feeders, live markets, and slaughterhouses. Packers buy live lambs, process them, and sell meat wholesale or retail. Retail markets sell to the end consumer.

many things to consider. For example, will you sell a live lamb or a lamb carcass? Will the buyer pick up the lambs or will you deliver them? Who will pay for the cost of transportation, including shrink. Sometimes a pencil shrink will need to be negotiated. You will need to agree upon a method of payment. There is considerably more financial risk when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Cooperatives/Alliances/Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gives small producers more clout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can share transportation costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can organize special sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can purchase inputs in bulk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find middlemen:

- Ask buyers, dealers, and producers at local and regional auction markets.
- Contact your local packers and stockyards office to obtain a list of processors.
- Contact USDA or your state department of agriculture for a list of USDA-inspected and custom slaughter houses.
- Visit restaurants that serve lamb.
- Visit stores that sell lamb.

- Look at meat marketing listings in the Yellow Pages.
- Check directory listings on sheepgoatmarketing.org

When selling lambs to middlemen, there are
negotiate a deal (or contract) that is beneficial for both parties. The packer wants a guaranteed supply at a consistent price, whereas the producer is looking for price stability and the opportunity to forward price his product. While small producers may be able to sell a few lambs to custom slaughter houses or small butcher shops, most processors will want a regular supply of lambs and this may require several producers to work together or form a marketing pool or cooperative.

Producers can have more clout in the market place if they organize marketing cooperatives or informal marketing groups. This is because unless a producer is very large, it usually takes many producers to supply a market on a regular basis. Marketing groups can be as simple as lamb pools and sharing transportation costs to legally organized cooperatives that market their own branded meat products. Numerous public grants are available to help producer groups organize cooperatives and market value-added products.

### SHORT TALES ADVERTISING RATES AND PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rates Per Issue:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per word:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members $0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonmembers $0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display: Business card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members $5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonmembers $7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ Page: (approx. 3.5&quot; by 5&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members $10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonmembers $15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ Page: (approx. 3.5&quot; by 10&quot; or 7&quot; by 5&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members $20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonmembers $30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Page (approx. 7&quot; by 10&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members $40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonmembers $60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance payment on all ads required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Send your ad copy to tracy@fireflyfields.com Please put "ST Classified" in the subject line or send your hard copy and fee to Tracy Sengupta, 4110 W. Plymouth Church Road, Beloit, WI 53511. I can help you design your ad if you need assistance.

**Counting Words:** Phone numbers count as one word. Each number and two letter initial count as one word. For example "I. M. Wright" is two words, and "P. O. Box 999" is three words. Hyphenated words, (e.g.: Jones-Smythe) count as separate words.
FINNSHEEP BREEDERS DIRECTORY

CALIFORNIA
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Connie Santos,
34843 Wiemiller Rd., Tollhouse, CA 93667
flynsbar@psnw.com
Purebred Finnsheep
Black, white, grey

COLORADO
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Janet Herman
7054 S. Hwy. 83
Franktown, CO 80116
(303) 668-6812
Purebred Finnsheep/Crossbred Finnsheep
(Finn/Dorset)
Commercially processed batts. Specializing in out of season lambing

IOWA
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Dale L. Amendt
6815 Waterman Blvd.
Sutherland, IA 51058
(712) 446-3489
Purebred Finnsheep/Crossbred Finnsheep (Finn X Suffolk, Finn X Corriedales)

Marvin Blair
3402 Fletcher Ave.
Lake City, IA 51449
(712) 464-8153
Purebred Finnsheep Crossbred Finnsheep (Finn X Hamp & Finn Dorset)

MONTANA
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
JT and Julie Korkow
HC 40 Box 28A
Volk, MT 59351
(406) 554-3123
jtjinmt@midrivers.co
http://www.finnsheep.us
Flock prefix JK, Purebred Finns and Finn/Texel cross. Flock enrolled in VFSCP (MT30), OPP tested, no history of footrot or Johnes. Production of color and white Finns with selection for prolificacy and size.

NEW YORK
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Elizabeth Hale Kinne
Stillmeadow Finnsheep
5883 Randall Hill Rd.
DeRuyter, NY 13052
(315)852-3344
stillmeadowfinns@hotmail.com

OHIO
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Paul J. Hunter, DVM
11425 Bruns Rd.
Fort Loramie, OH 45845
1-800-628-LAMB (5262)
drhunter@bright.net
Breeder of Finnsheep since 1989, Cesarean derived-disease free flock, OPP test negative entire adult flock since 1996, Scrapie Certification Program OH 20, White Finnsheep selected for commercial important traits, 3 separate lines available for genetic diversity Finn/Dorset and Finn teaser rams also available.

Walter R. Threlfall, DVM
& Barbara A. Threlfall
Falling Tree Ranch
7012 Liberty Road
Powell, OH 43065
(740) 881-4417
OPP negative & entered in Scrapie program. Flock was established in 1977. Crossbreds include Finn/Dorset, Finn/Dorper, Finn/Texel. Ewes and rams available. WRTDVM@aol.com

OKLAHOMA
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Cynthia Smith
HC 65 Box 517
Hominy, OK 74035
(918) 885-1284
Cynthia Smith@Benham.com
http://www.boulderridgefarm.com
Purebred Finnsheep, OPP, Johnes and Footrot free, Voluntary Scrapie Program (OK001926). Breeding for maternal instincts, prolificacy, size & wool quality. Also raise Great Pyrenees Livestock Guardian Dogs.
Pennsylvania

Grace Hatton
HC 8 Box 8151
Hawley, PA 18428
(570) 775-9136
hatton@microserve.net
http://home.ptd.net/~hatton7/

Purebred Finnsheep, white and black, since 1986, OPP negative. Enrolled VSCP-PA 43, Spinning wheel repair, antique wheels for sale.

Dale and Martha Livermore
RR Box 134A
Brookville, PA 15825
(814) 328-2720

Megan Loyd-Thompson
1140 Creek Rd
Carlisle, PA 17013
717-249-4321
cowdance@epix.net

Purebred Finnsheep
Colored and white rams with very fine fleeces. Micron tested. Naturally colored and white, handspinning fleeces available.

Virginia

Grant W. Blackburn
*Anzar Sheep*
142 Gravel Lane
Lexington, VA 24450
(540) 463-4594
anzar@rockbridge.net

Purebred Finnsheep, Breeder of Finnsheep since 1994, participating in Finnsheep semen importation and specializing in high quality pure white pedigree livestock. We have never had scrapie, foot rot or OPP and the flock is enrolled (VA18) in the USDA Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program.

Joe and Naomi Smith
House Mountain Finnsheep
1765 Jacktown Road
Lexington, VA 24450
(540) 463-6062
Enrolled VA Scrapie Program, Purebred Finnsheep. Farm established in 1985 in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Flock of 50 breeding ewes, mostly quads and quint. Bred for size, multiple births, mothering ability and structural correctness.

Glen Avon and Root bloodlines. Also rams available for crossbreeding.

Linda and Leanna Witt
154 Quail Call Lane
Amissville, VA 20106
(540) 937-4707
linda@MistyMountainFarm.com
www.MistyMountainFarm.com


Washington

TRIPLE L FINNSHEEP
Dan and Leanne Hughes
89202 N. Harrington Road
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-3975
danlea23@msn.com

Purebred white, black and gray finnsheep, all ages. OPP and disease free flock. Breeding records since 1982. Breeding for size, milking and lambing ability.

Wisconsin

Sandy De Master
Wee Croft Finnsheep
N 7087 Hillside Dr.
Watertown, WI 53094
(920) 699-7420
weecroft@execpc.com
www.weecroftfinnsheep.com

Flock of gray, fawn, brown, black and white Finnsheep with a high percentage of imported Finnish bloodlines. Primary focus is wool color and quality. Jacketed handspinning fleeces, roving, and yarn.

Tracy Sengupta
Firefly Fields Finnsheep
4110 W. Plymouth Church Rd.
Beloit, WI 53511 608-361-1446
tracy@fireflyfields.com


www.fireflyfields.com/finns
You Now Have a Choice For Sheep Nutrition!

- Ration balancing
- Nutrition consulting
- “bk” Sheep Vitamin/Trace Mineral products at affordable prices
- Mineral and grain mixes formulated specifically for your flock’s needs

“Big” companies sell the same few products to everyone.

Custom-formulated “bk” Sheep products & services are used by nationally-known purebred, show lamb, commercial & dairy sheep producers!

Bill Keough ~ “bk” Sheep Nutrition Services
Division of Bear Lake Enterprises ~ Manawa, WI
Phone: 920-596-1931 ~ Fax: 920-596-3399
E-mail: bksheep@netnet.net ~ www.bksheep.com