



Short Tales

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FBA To Celebrate 40th Year At NY Sheep and Wool Festival Oct. 15, 16, 2011

September, 2011 Volume 72

The American Finnsheep Breeders' Association will celebrate its 40th anniversary in conjunction with the New York Sheep and Wool Festival the weekend of October 15 and 16, 2011 at Rhinebeck, New York. In an effort to boost lambing rates and improve productivity in the U.S. sheep flock, the first Finnish Landrace were imported from Canada in 1969 and the Association was organized two years later.

The FBA annual business meeting will take place Saturday, October 15, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. EDT at the Morton Memorial Library, 82 Kelly Street, Rhinecliff, NY 12574. The location is less than five miles from the New York Sheep and Wool Festival site at Dutchess County Fairgrounds where FBA will have a breed display in place throughout the weekend.

This year's annual meeting will feature discussion of a proposed Finnsheep Improvement Plan and a possible reopening of the flock book for expansion of the breed's gene pool. The program will also include thoughts on the breed's role in the 21st century American sheep industry by researchers, Dr. Michael Thonney, Cornell University and Dr. Kreg Leymaster, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center.

People attending who will need overnight accommodations are encouraged to contact Motel 8, Kingston, N.Y., at 845-338-3078 as soon as possible. FBA members unable to attend in person will have the option of participating via conference telephone call. For more details, contact FBA Secretary, Deb Olschefski, at: finnegansflock@comcast.net.

MEMBER NOTICE

In an effort to be fiscally responsible, as well as "green" the FBA has made the decision to email all future Short Tales Newsletters to our membership.

A paper copy of the newsletter will only be mailed if requested by a member. Otherwise all newsletters will be sent by email.

Please direct your request for a paper copy to Deb Olschefski, FBA Secretary, 3937 Ridgewood Road, York, PA 17406 or by email to FBA Secretary at Finnegansflock@comcast.net.

Members are also encouraged to contact the FBA Secretary to confirm your email address at Finnegansflock@comcast.net.

Inside This Issue

FBA to Celebrate 40th Year, FBA Going Green	1
FBA 2011 AGM Info with Teleconference Info	2
Speaker for the AGM, Candidate Bios Begin	3
Candidate Bios Continued	3-4
Pros and Cons of Opening The Flock Book	5
R Genes Found in Finnsheep, Editors Comment	6
Board Contact Information, Events	
FBA Treasurer Reports, New Members	7
Finnsheep History & Research: It's Relevance	8-9
Signs of Inbreeding In My Flock, Comment	9-10
Dr. Sponenberg's Remarks on Finn Genetics	11-12
Member Notices, Advertizing Rates, Ads	13
Finnsheep Breeders' Directory, FBA Registry	14-16

FBA General Business Meeting Information

The FBA General Business Meeting will take place on Saturday, October 15, 2011 at 7:00 PM EDT.

The location of this years meeting is:

Morton Memorial Library— 82 Kelly Street Rhinecliff, NY 12574

Our meeting location is within five miles of the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. As previously mentioned, the FBA will have a breed sponsored display at the NY Sheep and Wool Festival.

Directions to Morton Memorial Library from the Fairgrounds are as follows:

Go South on Rt 9

Turn right on Rt 85. This takes you into the town of Rhinecliff and the Library is located in town on the right side of the road.

If you plan to attend the NY Sheep & Wool Festival and the FBA Annual Business Meeting and have not made overnight accommodations I encourage you to contact the following Motel as soon as possible to make your hotel/motel reservations. At the time of the release of this issue of Short Tales, they had several rooms available.

Motel 8 — 487 Washington Avenue (I-87 Exit 19) Kingston, NY 12401-2906

Phone: 845-338-3078

Email: kingstonsuper8@gmail.com

Please contact the FBA Secretary, Deb Olschefski to RSVP your attendance at the annual meeting or for more information. Contact her by email: Finnegansflock@comcast.net or telephone: 717.324.2320.

We encourage all members to participate in this years meeting as many important issues will be discussed. **If you are unable to attend the meeting in person you will be able to participate by telephone through conference call.** The call can be accessed from either a land line or a cell phone. **Members are responsible for the cost of their call.**

The call-in procedure will be as follows:

Dial: **1-641-623-3733**

After the prompt enter the 5-digit PIN code: **81110** followed by the # sign;

Again, after the prompt: **state your name** followed by the # sign.

As a courtesy to all participants:

- * Please do not operate either type of phone on speaker as this will cause noisy feedback throughout the system.
- * Care should also be taken to eliminate any distracting background noise from the call.

Speaker at the FBA's Annual Meeting

Dr. Michael Thonney, head of Cornell University's outstanding sheep program, will be addressing our members at the FBA annual meeting the evening of Oct. 15.

Dr. Thonney plans to attend in person and will be collaborating with Dr. Kreg Leymaster from U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in preparing remarks on the role of Finnsheep in the 21st century American sheep industry.

Dr. Leymaster will not be able to attend, but is planning to join us for questions via teleconference.

I think having two of the leading sheep researchers in the country willing to share their thoughts and research expertise with us adds a lot of credibility to both our meeting and the Finnsheep breed in general.

FBA Director Bios

My name is **Mary Tucker of Lighthouse Farm** in south western New York. We have many Finnsheep of both white and color. I believe Finnsheep are the most awesome sheep in the world. There is nothing they can not do with proper management and selection.

It has been my privilege and honor to have been elected by you to the Board of Directors for the year of 2010-2011. It has been an interesting year with many changes in process. I believe that the FBA is in a time of change and what happens during this time will affect our Finnsheep and many others as well as ourselves in the future. I have learned much this year that I believe will make me better able to work for you as an FBA Director. I have also learned that there is much more to learn about Finnsheep, our association, what we do, and need to do in the future.

I have met and talked to many of you who breed, own or use Finnsheep products. I desire to talk with many more of you to learn what you wish to see for the FBA of the future. Our association has the potential to become much more than we currently are. Our Finnsheep are amazing. Our people are great. We are capable of accomplishing much... and becoming what? That you will decide.

I believe that we, the members of the Finnsheep Breeders' Association, can listen, learn, and teach others about our awesome Finnsheep. Finnsheep can do anything we select them for and they can meet the needs of many.

As FBA members we can welcome new tools, technology or methods that will help our selection processes and goals, weighing the old as well as the new, keeping that which is good and changing as needed to meet our selection needs. As we work together (even when we do not necessarily agree) for the good of the Finnsheep, we can become an organization to be pleased with.

I hope you will elect me again to represent you for this next term as we all work together.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Mary Tucker
mary@lighthousesheepfarm.com

FBA Directory Bios, cont.

Gail Von Bargaen
14255 Jacob Street
Hamburg, MN 55339
Little Red Oak Farm

I am interested in serving a second term as a Director on the Finnsheep Breeders Association Board in 2010. I was elected last Fall for a one-year term, and would continue the work begun with the board if re-elected. Below, I submit the same biographical info as last year, with this added note:

In the past year I spent hours researching the FBA's Constitution to fix simple errors in the document, and to address changes in practice that have never been updated. Changes are being undertaken now. Through careful reading I also determined the proper procedure required if members wanted to seek a change to FBA registry, a question being voted on this Fall.

I am happy to be part of an organization that seeks to promote the Finn breed and to remain relevant to all of its members.

My history as it relates to my qualifications:

After early years spent in graphic arts and drafting, I earned a law degree in 1997. I clerked for a city nonprofit org. during law school and for a solo practitioner afterward.

I became a Director on Minneapolis' Hale Page Diamond Lake Neighborhood Association Board, serving 1996-2000; as its Treasurer for 3 years. On the HDPL Board I chaired or sat on three committees: one, to secure, site and select a \$50,000 piece of sculpture for Minneapolis; on the Environment Committee, where I secured a waste-reduction grant from a 7-county Metro Board; and on a committee that determined area business' eligibility for state grant money.

Finding Neighborhood Organization work invigorating, I took a part time position as Coordinator for another Minneapolis neighborhood. Their sole employee, I maintained their office, compliance with Neighborhood Revitalization Project and State non-profit requirements, and advised their Board of Directors and volunteers.

Having moved to the country 8 years ago, I now sit on the Park Commission and the Water, Environment and Natural Resources Committee of Carver County.

I have kept registered Shetland sheep for 7 years, and three years ago, acquired Finnsheep. Their colors and patterns are comparable, and the wool is possibly superior to Shetlands', so I am enjoying these new animals in my flock.

I would be interested to serve on the FBA Board of Directors. I hope to add some stability to the Board, initiate some progressive changes that might add to FBA's financial resources and make it more helpful to Finn breeders and newcomers interested in Finnsheep.

8 Good Reasons to Reopen the FBA Registry

By Clark BreDahl, Heidi Trimbur & Dr. Paul Hunter

1. Loss of Finnsheep traits - The Finnsheep Improvement Program (FIP) has well-defined selection criteria to insure that animals chosen complement the true traits and characteristics of the Finnsheep breed. If anything, the program will restore the traits and characteristics to the North American flock.
2. I don't have a problem with inbreeding in my flock – Maybe true; maybe false. Simply due to its size, the national Finnsheep flock is experiencing inbreeding to varying degrees and could be entering a potential genetic bottleneck. Some breeders have already seen the negative effects which can include lowered parasite resistance, depressed immunity, loss of fertility in both rams and ewes, birth defects and reduced vigor in newborns, lethal syndromes, unusual fleece patterns and reduced longevity.
3. Pony-sized sheep with unusable wool - Selection criteria would prevent program participants from selecting such animals for foundation stock. While wool traits and characteristics can definitely be improved upon in our national flock, the fear of “pony-sized” sheep can be put to rest by reading the FIP selection criteria.
4. R genetics are already available within the breed - Since the breed is naturally QQ, the source of these genetics is unknown, though they probably gained entry between 1971-1991 when upbreeding to pure status was still allowed. Regardless, most registered R gene carriers that have currently been identified are related to each other. Breeders already possessing these genetics may not wish to add more due to inbreeding concerns.
5. Class II crossbred program can be used - This program is inefficient and carries no selection criteria or guidelines. If used, this option could farther dilute traits and characteristics of the breed, potentially creating ‘pony-sized sheep with unusable wool’ and a myriad of other undesirable features.
6. Dilution of Finnsheep genetics - If anything, the FIP will improve traits and characteristics of the breed while increasing the breed's disease resistance and marketability. Remember, the breed in North America is not a purebred breed. It was developed from many different breeds through out-crossing and back-crossing. The FIP, with its well-defined selection criteria and culling requirements, is designed to restore traits and characteristics true to the breed.
7. R genetics are only wanted by commercial breeders – Not true. Many smaller breeders have been contacted by other small flock owners looking to purchase scrapie- resistant animals. Some of our breeders live in states with more aggressive scrapie eradication programs. For these folks, procurement of scrapie resistant genetics is a very prudent move so they are not potentially faced with loss of their entire flock and business investment.
8. Enrollment or Certification in a state scrapie eradication program protects me so I don't have to worry about the disease – Not true! USDA/APHIS has identified scrapie in Certified flocks and many others on down throughout the system. Enrollment in a scrapie program, even *with* Certification, does not mean a flock is scrapie free. As things currently stand, without the R gene, USDA can come in and destroy any flock containing or exposed to scrapie, regardless of size. Further regulatory changes could be in store.

R Genes For Scrapie Resistance Found In Existing North American Flocks

By Gail VonBargen

Recent discussions among Finnsheep breeders, and a look at some breeders' websites have revealed the presence of QR and RR gene (scrapie resistant) rams on several farms.

Breeders were encouraged to test, this year, for the presence of R genes in our domestic flocks, and we have been rewarded with knowledge of sources of the gene. A breeder in Minnesota and at least two in New York report having tested and found QR rams they'll use in next year's breeding. A breeder of white commercial Finns has identified the R gene, and a Washington breeder offers RR gene animals for sale on their website. We hear that a Canadian breeder has the R gene, as well. There are doubtless more North American Finns that carry R-genetics, as this information was casually gathered from internet discussions and websites, and not all breeders participate online. However, it appears that the R gene is well-dispersed across the continent.

This is encouraging news. With our Finns' ability to breed out of season, R genes could be rapidly proliferated among the domestic flock, to the benefit of those who want to breed R animals for the market.

Editorial Comment:

By: Mary Tucker, STC

Due to the USDA's desire to attain a scrapie free status by 2017 there is a push for sheep breeds in the US to pursue the RR gene at codon 171. Several states and associations have already begun to require the RR gene at codon 171 in all rams bought or sold for breeding purposes. These requirements DO AFFECT some of our association members due to the strict requirements of their state of residence.

Finnsheep are genetically QQ at codon 171. However, the FBA has received reports from several breeders that QR and RR Finnsheep have been located in the US and a breeding program for the RR genetic is already underway.

The FBA strongly recommends that members that intend to sell or purchase QR or RR Finns retest these animals as there has been incidence of false positive results reported. We are cautioning our members to review test results prior to purchase and that members have a plan in place between buyers and sellers if the case of a false positive test is reported.

Please remember the FBA is not liable for the sale or purchase of animals nor will the FBA mediate this issue should it occur.

Upcoming Sheep & Fiber Events

Contact Mary Tucker with items to be included

- * Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival: September 9-11, 2011; Jefferson, WI
www.wisconsinssheep&woolfestival.com
- * Endless Mountains Fiber Festival: September 10-11, 2011; Harford Fairgrounds, Harford, PA
www.pafiberfestival.com/
- * Finger Lakes Fiber Festival: September 17-18, 2011; Hemlock Fairgrounds, Hemlock, NY
www.gvhg.org/fest.html
- * New York State Sheep & Wool Festival: October 15-16, 2011; Rhinebeck, NY
www.sheepandwool.com/
- * NAILE Sheep Show: November 5 - 18, 2011 Louisville, KY www.livestockexpo.org/

FBA Board of Directors:

Clark BreDahl, President (2011, First Term)
641-745-2323 bredahl.mtfarms@gmail.com

Grant Blackburn, Treasurer (appointed)
540-463-4594 anzar@rockbridge.net

Mary Tucker, Director (2011)
585-928-1721 mary@lighthousesheepfarm.com

Dr. Paul Hunter, Vice President (2013)
1-800-628-5262(2013) drhunter@nktelco.net

Joe Smith, Director (2012, Second Term)
540-463-6062

Gail Von Bargen, Director (2011)
952-564-9522 gvonbargen@aol.com

Deb Olschefski, Secretary & Director (2013)
717-840-7316 finnegansflock@comcast.net

Elizabeth Kinne Gossner, Director (2012)
315.852.3344 stillmeadowfinnsheep@frontier.com

FINNSHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION		
Balance Sheet as of August 29, 2011		
	29-Aug-11	31-Dec-10
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
Cheque-BB&T	13,334.30	11,144.13
Petty Cash	23.26	23.26
Total Checking/Savings	13,357.56	10,860.76
Accounts Receivable		
Accounts Receivable	79.06	-305.64
Total Accounts Receivable	79.06	-305.64
Total Current Assets	13,463.62	10,860.76
Other Assets		
Equipment	370.00	370.00
Franklin Templeton Fund	1,038.80	1,038.80
Total Other Assets	1,408.80	1,408.80
Total Assets	14,845.42	12,269.56
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Equity		
Opening Balance Equity	3,543.42	3,543.42
Retained Earnings	8,726.14	6,821.62
Net Income	2,575.86	1,904.22
Total Equity	14,845.42	12,269.56
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	14,845.42	12,269.56

Welcome New Members

Daisy Timney, Bear, DE

Peggy Jean Basinger, Ewesfull Acres, Kuna, ID

Darren Bender & Beauregard, Brambleberry Farm,
Paoli, IN

Marilee Imker Rybacki, Milroy, MN

William Hackenberg, Lighthouse Farm,
West Clarksville, NY

Deborah K. Hilliard, The Meadow's Gate, Andover, NY

Jim & Mary Scholefield, Hut on the Hill,
New Woodstock, NY

Gail Workman, Meadowlark Farm, Mt. Vernon, OH

Connie Santos, Inola, OK

Shawna Smith, Case Acres, Colton, OR

FINNSHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION			
Profit & Loss			
January 1 thru August 27, 2011			
	Jan 1 to Aug 27, 2011	Jan 1 to Aug 27, 2010	
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Annual Dues			
2010	0.00	875.00	
2011	1,025.00	0.00	
Total Annual Dues		1,025.00	875.00
Breeder's Directory Income			
2010	0.00	630.00	
2011	900.00	0.00	
Total Breeder's Dir. Income		900.00	630.00
Flock Prefix Income		550.00	140.00
Income (other - dup certs)		39.95	4.95
Membership Income			
Youth membership	43.00	10.00	
Membership Income - Oth	490.00	455.00	
Total Membership Income		533.00	465.00
Misc/non mbr reg income		90.00	126.00
Registrations			
Finn Pedigrees	1,278.00	2,028.00	
Non-purebred	38.00	10.00	
Pedigree o/12mth	444.00	456.00	
Transfers	588.00	424.00	
Total Registrations	2,348.00	2,918.00	
Total Income	5479.95		5158.95
Expense			
Advertising			
Web-page	0.00	146.69	
Advertising - Other	1395.05	1462.75	
Total Advertising		1395.05	1609.44
Contract Labor		1182.66	1437.11
Postage & Delivery		142.57	61.6
Printing & Reproduction		153.97	398.35
Supplies			
Office	29.14	0.00	
Total Supplies		29.14	0.00
Total Expenses	2903.59		3,506.50
Net Ordinary Income	2576.35		1,652.45
Net Income	2576.36		1,652.45

MaryAnn Ost Bean, Ost Ridge Farms, West Chester, PA

Dale & Martha Livermore, The Ark, Brookville, PA

Angela Treherne, Villatila, Stewartstown, PA

Sandra DeMaster, The Wee Croft, Egg harbor, WI

Finnsheep History and Research: It's Relevance Today

By: Brian Magee

Several FBA members have requested that I record some of my memories of the history of the Finnsheep breed.

In 1970 I was living in Beltsville, Maryland, when the first Finnsheep at Beltsville were in quarantine. My finance (now wife) couldn't believe how excited I was to see this new breed of sheep. Eight years later Cornell University had acquired Beltsville's Finnsheep (as well as Morlams) and both infected breeds came under my care as the new sheep farm manager. First to be eliminated was foot rot, then the Morlams were sold, and finally OPP was eradicated. That left only clean Finnsheep – the gem of the deal. This group of Finnsheep was still not in the FBA registry so I purchased some of the best and proceeded to upbreed with registered sires and got 15/16 offspring fully registered before FBA closed registration to upbred Finns.

Simultaneously I had use of a \$5,000 Booroola Merino ram that was homozygous for the prolific F gene and upbred that ram to registered Finnsheep ewes. Several of the F1 (1/2 Finn, 1/2 Booroola) daughters were quite impressive in litter size, mothering ability, and weaning weights of litters. But the average production was very unimpressive when compared with the average Finnsheep of my flock. Even though I was only trying to introduce a single F allele, the other Merino genes were disruptive to the entire reproductive package of genes that purebred Finnsheep possess. The Finnsheep excellence not only includes an increased ovulation rate but also implantation and gestation of a large litter, resistance to ketosis, and the successful delivery of live lambs. In addition, the soft mouths of lambs and the small teat canal of the ewe reduce the risk of mastitis. I am sure breeders can add other desirable traits of the Finnsheep. The outbreeding depression I experienced when introducing Booroola genetics is undoubtedly the disruption of the sequence of epistatic traits (Non-Allelic gene interaction) that contribute to pounds of lambs weaned from a Finnsheep ewe annually.

In a more controlled data set at Cornell with ewes of the same age and over the same year, the purebred Dorsets, purebred Finnsheep, and the 1/2 Finn 1/2 Dorsets had a total annual lambs weaned per ewe of 140%, 380%, and 197%, respectively. The mean between the Dorset and Finnsheep was 260%, again demonstrating significant outbreeding depression.

In Short Tales, June 2011, page 5, Heidi Trimbur states that “in a nutshell as inbreeding percentages rise, profitability declines.” This statement highlights inbreeding depression and ignores outbreeding depression. A closer look at An Sci 58, p. 22, reveals in the study by Ercanbrack and Knight at Dubois, ID, that lamb production purebred Rambouillet -- from which the Columbia (Lincoln x Rambouillet) and the Targhee (Columbia x Corriedale) were developed by outbreeding over 50 years ago -- still exceeds the Columbia and Targhee flocks by more than ten percentage points for lambs born per ewe exposed at any age. The Rambouillet flock which has had the greatest opportunity for an increased coefficient of inbreeding is highest in number and pounds of lamb weaned year after year. Does this higher productivity happen despite inbreeding or because inbreeding is a catalyst to the development of epistatic traits that are favored by selection?

How do we reconcile the negative effects of outbreeding and the negative effects of inbreeding? First we acknowledge that inbreeding and outbreeding depression occur. The Dubois researchers reported that on the average the more highly inbred an individual sheep is the more likely it is to be less productive. Occasionally, a highly inbred individual may be very productive and by selection its prepotence can contribute greatly to the productivity of the flock.

Finnsheep History and Research: It's Relevance Today, cont.

Inbreeding separates the wheat from the chaff and since there is generally more chaff than wheat, commercial flocks are encouraged to avoid inbreeding. On the other hand, purebred flocks should use inbreeding and selection as a powerful tool, particularly with highly prolific sheep. The Cornell data and Dubois study should make Finnsheep breeders particularly cautious of outbreeding since the negative effects on reproduction can take forever to correct. A high inbreeding coefficient can be greatly reduced in just one generation by mating the ewe flock to an unrelated sire. Selection within a population the size of FBA registered Finnsheep and a reproductive rate of nearly four lambs per year will maintain positive heterozygosity and build desirable homozygote traits such as RR for scrapies resistance. Maintaining a closed registry will ensure that the fragile but well-established reproductive elegance based on epistatic as well as additive strengths will thrive and surprise us. I will always remember the ewe that gave birth to ten live lambs at a seven-month interval and raised eight lambs to weaning.

While I am having a Paul Harvey moment, may I suggest that anyone who believes that Finnsheep need an improved carcass consider results published by Clay Center USMARC 1972. Their ½ Finn carcasses of Rambouillet, Targhee, Corriedale, and Dorset, had on the average slightly heavier boneless lean meat than the purebred lambs of these four breeds.

Because of the susceptibility of Finnsheep to OPP, USMARC eliminated the breed as they did the Texel breed years earlier for the same reason. In my opinion, all sheep production research should be conducted in an OPP-free environment to discover the potential of existing breeds.

Signs of Inbreeding in my Flock

By: Deb Olschefski

There has been a lot of controversy surrounding the proposed opening of the flock book. As a resident of Pennsylvania, an FBA Director, and most importantly, a Finn breeder, I think the best thing I can do to serve the members of this association is to relate to you my own experiences with inbreeding and its effects on my flock.

Pennsylvania has more stringent requirements for those, like myself, who are enrolled in the Scrapie Eradication Program. In order for me to protect the investment I have made in my flock, I must begin to incorporate scrapie resistant genetics into my flock. At the current time, the only process legally in place for FBA members is to incorporate these genetics from a currently registered scrapie resistant Finn sheep (either QR or RR at codon 171). That may sound easy enough but it is not, as most of these individuals share a common gene pool. If we all use only these animals to source scrapie resistance, we will narrow the gene pool considerably and cause genetic bottlenecking of the breed as it exists here in North America. As for me personally, using the scrapie resistant genetics that are published as existing would cause further intensive inbreeding into my flock and I am already seeing the affects of what inbreeding can do.

When I examined all the pedigrees of my sheep, I was shocked when I realized I had such intensive inbreeding in my animals. I have 1 x 2 and sometimes 1 x 1 inbreeding to full siblings in my flock. I've purchased animals from several breeders over the last few years. Most times pedigrees were not available to review prior to sale. Not reviewing the pedigrees prior to sale does show negligence on my part however, I took the word of the seller. One of the sellers told me that there was "some inbreeding but nothing to be concerned about." I didn't give this another thought until I began look-

Signs of Inbreeding in my Flock , cont.

ing over the registrations papers. When I noticed the intensity of the inbreeding of my sheep, I became concerned and began to do some research of my own. A particularly informative article about the effects of inbreeding in sheep, authored by J.E. NEL of the Agricultural Research Institute of the Karoo Region is entitled Genetic Defects and Undesirable Characteristics in Woolled Sheep. I encourage all of you to read this article located at: <http://gadi.agric.za/articles/Agric/undesirable.htm>.

What I found is when heavy inbreeding occurs, the effects range from abnormalities and undesirable characteristics to dominant lethal mutations. Lethal and Semi-Lethal Characters are anywhere from paralyzed limbs, footlessness, earlessness and cleft palate, dwarfism and sub-lethal grey to abnormalities and defects of the jaw, inverted eyelids, cryptochidism, etc. After reading this article I closely examined the last two years of breeding and lambing in my own flock. I have two ewes that are infertile. I've had these sheep thoroughly examined by a reputable vet and he can find no other reason they cannot conceive. One of these sheep shows visible signs of dwarfism. Is this the result of the 1 x 2 inbreeding and an extremely tight gene pool behind it? I've had ewes whose lambs died at birth. Could it be that the lambs that died are the result of sub-lethal gray? It is possible.

So now, for me, I must obtain unrelated animals to repair the damage that currently exists in my flock and, due to my state's aggressive scrapie eradication program, the addition of scrapie resistant genetics is wise. As an FBA Board Director, I am aware that I am not the only breeder dealing with this type of situation. If we only use currently registered FBA animals to incorporate these genetics, how long will it be until all of us are seeing the effects of inbreeding manifest in our national flock? How long will it then be until we cause the breed's extinction in North America by literally breeding our sheep to death?

I encourage each member of the FBA to review the pedigrees of your flock and take a look to see if your own flock might be exhibiting signs of inbreeding. Are your sheep small? Infertile? No longer parasite resistant? Do you have an increasing percentage of dead lambs? Are birth weights dropping? Are unusually patterned lambs being born? Are more ewes dying during lambing? Is your ram's fertility decreasing and you don't know why? All of these are signs of increasing inbreeding. Look into the future. Who will you purchase future rams from? How inbred are they? How long will it be until the national flock is completely related?

I realize that for many of you, this issue of Short Tales represents the first time you have seen the Finnsheep Improvement Program (FIP) in print. Please, read it carefully and think of the future of your flock and mine. My flock is current, existing, real "on the farm" proof of the horrific reality of inbreeding and the resultant genetic bottlenecking. I can personally testify to the physical, emotional and financial costs; they are devastating.

Dr. Phil Sponenberg's Remarks on Widening the US Finnsheep's Genetic Base

In response to a recent inquiry by Mary Tucker, FBA Newsletter Editor, Dr. Phil Sponenberg, renowned sheep geneticist and Professor of Pathology and Genetics at Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, replied to her email questions. A transcript is printed here with permission. Questions were edited for length, while Dr. Sponenberg's answers are printed in their entirety, in italics. We appreciate Dr. Sponenberg's willingness to talk with us.

On 8/9/11 2:30 PM, Mary Tucker wrote:

Hello,

I raise Finnsheep and within our FBA association we have been having discussion on R genes (scrapie resistance test of codon 171) and pro and cons of opening the flock book to gain it as the majority of Finnsheep are QQ. I also understand that Finnsheep have been registering about 400 annually for the past decade. ... I think that the low number of Finnsheep in the US may be overlooked. To me, it seems that issue may be far more important. Do you know anyone who could speak/write with me?

Mary Tucker, Lighthouse Farm
and FBA Newsletter Coordinator

--- On Tue, 8/9/11, Dr. Phillip Sponenberg wrote:

I can try, but am somewhat of a renegade on scrapie genetics. My own feeling is that the absolute best situation would be to have a susceptible genotype with no evidence of scrapie. That way you are sure you don't have the agent. There is evidence that "genetic resistance" is nothing more than "prolonged incubation." I'd rather have susceptible sheep and no disease! That way I'm pretty sure I don't have the agent!

Low numbers are a problem, although it should be possible (if only occasionally) to use semen from Finland. In any event, upgrading is always an option, and should do little to change the main underlying genetics of the breed.

--
D. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD

From: Mary Tucker <
Date: Tue, 9 Aug 2011 22:08:43
To: "Sponenberg. Phil"

Thanks for answering so quickly.

Well, I think I agree far more with you than with others I have talked with. Is not that the idea and method that Australia/New Zealand is utilizing? I wonder if that is why Finland does not have anything other than QQ. They said they no longer even test for scrapie as they are certain of what they have.

...
Is bringing in R gene necessary in the US?

Not really, because you already have it here. So, you can use what is here to get it more widely distributed if that is the goal.

Dr. Phil Sponenbergs Remarks, cont.

Explain the difference between the US scrapie program and the method you mentioned please?

I am not up to date on the US program. Last I knew, they did not insist on RR genotypes. That said, some states have done so, and some breed associations have done so. In the face of that, breeders would have no choice but to breed towards RR status. I personally think that is short-sighted, because I prefer susceptible sheep without the disease.

Explain what happens to any breed such as Finnsheep when the numbers get low?

When numbers get low several things can happen. One is that it becomes more and more difficult to avoid inbreeding. That can lead to a general decline in growth rate, fertility, and vitality. A second, and somewhat more insidious consequence, is that opportunities for selection go down. This means less opportunity to improve (or even to maintain) levels of production.

How can a shepherd/flock owner know when "bottle neck effect" is beginning to happen?

By realizing that there are no breedings available that are not inbreeding/linebreeding. When that happens, the bottleneck is here!

When do we or any breed meet the danger zone/break point of breed viability?

There is no single answer to this one. Some breeds (Ancona ducks, White Park Cattle) are able to withstand incredible degrees of inbreeding with little to no decline. In others, the decline can be pretty severe. The trick is that we cannot predict this – so wise breed stewards try to avoid the danger zone in the first place! That way we don't have to say "oops" later on. This message does not resonate very well with breeders who want to sell everyone in the breed one of their rams. This message implies a much broader participation in the breed and its future, so that it is broader than a few elite flocks that everyone relies on.

When Finnsheep were originally imported I am told that there were very few rams (I think 8-9) they opened the flock book from 1971 - 1991 to widen the gene pool... anyone could use any other breed... now we can see the differences between the Finnish Landrace and the US Finnsheep. What numbers do we need to widen the gene pool? How would we need to track the widening to know it was working? How can we lower/lessen the change in the breed if we open the flock book for R gene or widening the gene pool?

This has no easy answer. In any breed, the key to keeping the breed true to its roots is selection for the original breed type. This is easily lost, either through crossing OR through selection within the pure breed. So, it is much more than an issue of upgraded sheep, but more of an issue of how careful breeders are to select for the original breed type.

What else do we need to know that I have not thought to ask about?

I think you got 'em.

Thanks,
Mary Tucker, Lighthouse Farm

Milo Registry Notification

In the future Milo will automatically use the flock owners last name as a flock prefix at no charge. Flock owners may choose something else for their flock prefix, i.e., Farm Name, etc. but will be charged an additional fee of \$10/letter.

Please contact any FBA Board member if you have a question about this change.

JR. Member Notice

Jr. Memberships are part of the Category II Associate Membership in the FBA Constitution and By Laws.

Jr. Membership allows persons under the age of 18 to become more involved in our FBA Association. Jr. Members can do and be involved in everything that the Associate Member may.

Jr. Membership allows persons under the age of 18 to listen in or attend with parent to AGM, ask questions, voice thoughts, learn the whys and wherefores of the FBA, volunteer on committees, be involved with the planning of meetings or clean up afterwards. There are other areas that Jr. Members may be involved.

Jr. Membership does allow registrations of Finnsheep to be recorded in the names of persons under the age of 18 at discounted member rates. Cost: New Jr. Membership—\$10.00 Annual Youth Dues—\$ 15.00

Advertising Rates for Short Tales

Classified: Members \$.10/word	Business Card Display: (approx. 2" by 3.5")
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Quarter Page (approx. 3.5" by 5')	Non-members \$7.50/card
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Non-members \$60.00	

Advance payment required for all ads

Send your advertising copy to the Short Tales Coordinator, Mary Tucker - mary@lighthousesheepfarm.com

Please place "ST Classified Ad" in the subject line or send your hard copy and applicable fee to:



Finnsheep, naturally
Mary & Herb Tucker

PO Box 85
8885 Daggett Hollow Road
West Clarksville, NY 14786-0085
www.lighthousesheepfarm.com

(585) 928-1721

mary@lighthousesheepfarm.com

The ARK

Joshua 24: 14-15

Dale & Martha Livermore

(814) 328-2720 or (814) 591-1789

TheArk5@Windstream.Net

Finnsheep - Starter Flocks, Rams, Pasture Lambs
White Fleeces, Sheep Cheese

Finnsheep Breeders' Directory

California

Tamara Myers
Medley Farm & Kennel
 13470 Alabama Road
 Galt, CA 95632
 209.748.5046
 Medleyrn@yahoo.com
 www.MedleyFarm.com
 Flock Prefix: MEDLEY
 White, Black, Brown, Gray, Fawn, Piebald
 Purebred, Registered Stock. Fleeces available
 Breeding stock and fiber pets

Idaho

Peggy Jean Basinger
Ewesfull Acres
 5760 E. Kuna Rd
 Kuna, ID 83634
 208.869.0636

Illinois

Cheryl Medlin & Frank Moore
Wolf Moon
 10304 Julie Lane
 Lebanon, IL 62254
 618.623.2628
 cherylmedlin@sbcglobal.net
 Purebred Finns

Bryan & Elizabeth Pullen
Walnut Springs Farm
 11111 W. Parks School Road
 Princeville, IL 61559
 309.385.4637
 walnutspringfarm@hughes.net
 www.pullenfarms.com
 Healthy purebred Finnsheep for breeding or
 fiber pets. Beautiful fleeces available, raw or
 processed. 4H discount.

Fran Smith
Zip Ty Acres
 7588 E State Route 9
 Rankin, IL 60960
 217.375.4311
 Ziptyacres@gmail.com
 www.Ziptyacres.com
 Flock Prefix: Zip Ty Acres
 Purebred Registered Finnsheep, Finn-
 Southdown/Tunis Cross, Angora Goats,
 Pygora Goats & Angora Rabbits. Breeding
 stock. Fleeces and hand dyed wool and
 rovings (\$2.00 Fee)

Indiana

Pamela K. Hoover
Rooster's Run Farm
 5197 SW Washington School Road
 Salem, IN 47167
 812.896.1223
 Pam.Hoover@rrfiberfarm.com
 www.rrfiberfarm.com
 Purebred Finnsheep, Finn x Shetland
 Enrolled Status; Mandatory Scrapie Program
 since 2002; Flock ID: 88035
 New for 2011: The Rooster's Run Store sell-
 ing yarn, rovings, fleeces plus other wool prod-
 ucts as well as Kromski Spinning wheels and
 Howard Brush Carders. We also offer regis-
 tered Angora goats.

Iowa

Dale L. Amendt
 6815 Waterman Blvd
 Sutherland, IA 51058
 712.446.3489
 Purebred Finnsheep
 Crossbred Finnsheep (Finn x Suffolk, Finn x
 Corriedale)

Marvin Blair
BBG Sheep
 3402 Fletcher Avenue
 Lake City, IA 51449
 712.464.8153
 Purebred Finnsheep & Crossbred Finnsheep
 (Finn x Hamp and Finn x Dorset)

Clark BreDahl
Mormon Trail Farm
 1911 290th Street
 Greenfield, IA 50849
 641.745.2323
 bredahl.mtfarms@gmail.com
 Purebred Finnsheep & Crossbred Finnsheep
 (Finn x Dorset x Ile de France)
 Foot rot free; OPP flock test negative
 Flock Prefix: MTF

Maryland

Mary & John O'Malley
Honeysuckle Farm
 1600 Ednor Road
 Silver Spring, MD 20905
 301.421.9420
 Johnandmaryomalley@yahoo.com
 Purebred Finnsheep & Finn cross

Phil & Judy Osborn
Abundance Acres
 9713 Crystall Falls Drive
 Hagerstown, MD 21740
 Office: 240.556.0627
 Home: 301.791.1110
 abundanceacres@myactv.net

www.abundantfiber.com

Michigan

Darren & Margaret Cole
Sable Forest Finnsheep
 2114 South Magruder Road
 St. Louis, MI 48880
 989.681.0024
 sableforest@aol.com
 www.sableforestfinns.webs.com
 Flock ID: MIF2042
 White, black, brown and badgerface; Fleeces
 available yearly; call to check prices and
 availability

Bobbie L. Peck
The Counting Sheep Farm
 5709 E. 12 Street
 White Cloud, MI 49349
 231.429.3364
 john_330_live_it@yahoo.com
 www.thecountingsheepfarm.com
 Registered breeding stock, freezer lambs,
 fleeces and roving. Call, email or check us out
 on Facebook!

Callie Welch
Bramble Berry Finnsheep
 6861 Old Pipestone Road
 Eau Claire, MI 49111
 269-461-4101
 brambleberryfinns@blogspot.com
 Callielw@gmail.com
 Registered Finnsheep and Finn X Corriedale
 SW Michigan Fins. Breeding for quality fleec-
 es, easy lambing, good mothers and easy
 keeping Finns.

Minnesota

Tim Reese
Gale Woods Farm Park
 7210 County Road 110 West
 Minnetrista, MN 55364
 763.694.2002
 treese@threeriversparkdistrict.org
 www.galewoodsfarm.org
 Purebred Finnsheep
 Cross-Bred Corriedale & Icelandic
 Flock Prefix: TRP
 SFCP Enrolled Status since 2005
 Flock ID: MN43
 Gale Woods is an educational farm. Products
 include wool & yarn and pasture-raised lamb,
 beef, poultry and hogs and a vegetable CSA.

Finnsheep Breeders' Directory

Minnesota cont.

Gail Von Bargaen
Little Red Oak Farm
 14255 Jacob Street
 Hamburg, MN 55339
 Office: 952.467.2305
 Home: 952.564.9522
 gvonbargaen@aol.com
 www.littleredoakfarm.blogspot.com
 SFCP Enrolled in 2006
 Flock ID: MN62
 Purebred Finnsheep & Shetlands in white, brown, gray, and black. Piebald & Badger. We sell breeding stock, unregistered stock, raw wool & roving.

New York

Kathryn & Bill Clemens
Sunrise Farms
 252 Plymouth-NO Norwich Rd.
 Plymouth, NY 13832
 607.336.5834
 clemensclan@citlink.net
 Enrolled Scrapie Flock
 Purebred Finnsheep, white & colored; meat, breeding stock

Elizabeth H. Kinne Gossner
Stillmeadow Finnsheep
 5883 Randall Hill Road
 DeRuyter, NY 13052
 315.852.3344
 www.stillmeadowfinnsheep.com
 stillmeadowfinnsheep@frontier.com
 SFCP #NY69
 Registered Finnsheep since 1994. O.P.P. negative; Emphasis on Health, Maternal Traits & Fleece Quality; All Colors; Starter Flocks Available; Grass Fed Lamb & Roving for sale.

Brian H. Magee
Star Finnsheep & Dorsets
 1184 Harford Slaterville Road
 Dryden, NY 13053
 607.844.9711
 OPP Free
 Selected for accelerated lambing STAR
 Codon 171R Heterozygous and Homozygous

Mary & Herb Tucker
Lighthouse Farm (LHF)
 P.O. Box 85
 West Clarksville, NY 14786
 585.928.1721
 mary@lighthousesheepfarm.com
 www.lighthousesheepfarm.com
 SFCP: Enrolled Status 2007 ID: NY 103
 Registered Finnsheep and Finn X Dorset
 Selecting for maternal abilities, carcass traits, parasite resistance, and quality fleeces of many colors. Finland AI genetics. Breeding color to like color. Lambing throughout the year. Two QR Registered Finn rams in use.

Cara Leigh Wilson
Point of View Farm
 PO Box 535
 Bangall, NY 12506
 845.868.4140
 finnsheep@me.com
 www.pointofviewfarm.net
 SFCP Flock ID: NY120
 Purebred Finnsheep raised all naturally on pasture, organic grains, minerals and herbs. Biosecure farm offering healthy breeding stock for sale including white, brown, fawn, black and grey lambs. Entire flock tested for negative OPP status annually, enrolled in SFCP, Flock #NY120. Random flock testing for CL and Johnes. Flock goals are wide genetic variety, confirmation, maternal traits, parasite resistance and high quality wool. Chemical free coated hand spinning fleeces, roving and yarn available for sale in all colors. Come visit and see how we have an alternative Point of view at our farm following the traditions of our family in Finland.

Ohio

Gayle Workman
Meadowlark Farm
 20090 Fred-Amity Road
 Mt. Vernon, OH 43050
 954.290.0737
 Flock Prefix: Meadowlark
 Registered breeding stock, Finn crosses, raw wool, and fiber pets for sale. Lambs due May, 2011. Call for availability.

Pennsylvania

Dale & Martha Livermore
The Ark Farm
 1094 Allens Mills Road
 Brookville, PA 15825
 814.328.2720 or 814.591.0185/1789
 Theark5@windstream.net
 Flock Prefix: The Ark
 SFCP Enrolled Status—Certified
 Flock ID: PA 155
 Starter Flocks, Proven Rams, White Fleeces, Pasture Lambs, Sheep Cheese

Pennsylvania cont.

Deb Olschefski
Finnegan's Flock
 3937 Ridgewood Road
 York, PA 17406
 717.840.7316
 Finnegansflock@comcast.net
 www.Finnegansflock.com
 SFCP Enrolled Status; Flock ID: PA0185
 Purebred Finnsheep. Entire flock tested negative for OPP & CL in 2011. Excellent flock health; Bred for maternal traits and fleece; White, black and pied; Fleece, roving and yarn. Grass fed lambs for sale.

Heidi Trimbur
Trimburfield Farm
 58 Biting Road
 Alburtis, PA 18011
 610.845.3607
 htrimbur@dejazzd.com
 www.trimburfieldfinnsheep.com
 Flock Prefix: TRIMBUR
 Flock ID: PA3781
 SFCP Enrolled Status
 Purebred & RR composites; ASI SSQA Program Participant; PA Preferred Farm; Varied genetics from AI and imported rare lines. Premium wool in all colors; excellent herd health, established breed improvement program.

Virginia

Joe & Naomi Smith
House Mountain Finnsheep
 1765 Jacktown Road
 Lexington, VA 24450
 540.463.6062
 Flock ID: VA17; SFCP enrolled 1999
 Farm established in 1985 in the Blue Ridge Mountains for Virginia
 Purebred Finnsheep; flock of 100 breeding ewes, mostly quads and quints. Bred for size, multiple births, mothering ability and structural correctness. Glen Avon and Root bloodlines. Rams available for cross-breeding

Finnsheep Breeders' Directory

Virginia

Linda Witt
Misty Mountain Farm
 154 Quail Call Lane
 Amisville, VA 20106
 540.937.4707
 info@mistymountainfarm.com
 www.mistymountainfarm.com
 SFP Flock #: VA26
 Purebred Finnsheep
 Hand-spinning fleece, roving and batts

Washington

Dan & Leanne Hughes
Triple L Finnsheep
 89202 N. Harrington Road
 West Richland, WA 99353
 509.539.6745
 danlea23@msn.com
 www.TripleLFinnsheep.com
 Flock Prefix: 3L
 Flock ID: WA2252; SFCP Certified
 Purebred Finnsheep since 1982
 We raise white, black, gray, brown, fawn, and
 pied animals. We raise for productivity, size,
 milking ability and quality. Fleeces available.
 Lambing records available to 1982.

Robert & Sandra Willford

Solace Farm
 30119 N. Spotted Road
 Deer Park, WA 99006
 509.276.7160
 Solacefarmfiber@yahoo.com
 www.solacefinnsheep.com
 SFCP Flock ID: WA2167
 Purebred Finnsheep & Finn x Romanov Quality
 fleeces, roving and handspun yarns. Start-
 er flocks available in spring ABCA Border
 Collies

Wisconsin

Tracy Sengupta
Firefly Fields Finnsheep
 4110 W. Plymouth Church Road
 Beloit, WI 53511
 608.345.8555
 tracy@fireflyfields.com
 www.fireflyfields.com
 Flock Prefix: FF
 Flock ID: WI1990
 SFCP Certified Status
 Purebred Finnsheep
 Authentic Finnish Landrace Sheep as a herit-
 age breed. High percentage Finnish genetics.
 All breeding stock micron tested. Jacketed
 hand-spinning fleeces.

Brian Stichter

422 US Hwy 14
 Arena, WI 53503
 608.753.2713
 Stichter@charter.net
 VSFCP Flock ID: WI456
 Purebred Registered Finnsheep in white,
 black and brown. Finn x North Country Chevi-
 ot Commercial ewes and ewe lambs, fleeces
 and raw wool available.

After a year of service, FBA Director and Secretary, Deb Olschefski, has given notice that she is no longer able to fulfill the positions of FBA Board Director and Secretary. Due to the economy and recession, Deb's fulltime job has taken on more responsibility and she does not feel she is able to fulfill her commitment to the FBA. Deb's resignation is effective 10/16/2011.

Prior to the 2011 FBA annual meeting, contact Clark BreDahl or Deb Olschefski if you are interested in this position.

FBA Registry:

15603 173rd Avenue
 Milo, Iowa 50166
 Phone: 641.942.6402
 Fax: 641.942.6402

Were on the Web!

Visit Us at:

www.finnsheep.org

FBA Secretarial Office

Deb Olschefski, Finnegan's Flock
 3937 Ridgewood Road
 York, PA 17406
 717-840-7316
finnegansflock@comcast.net

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 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