

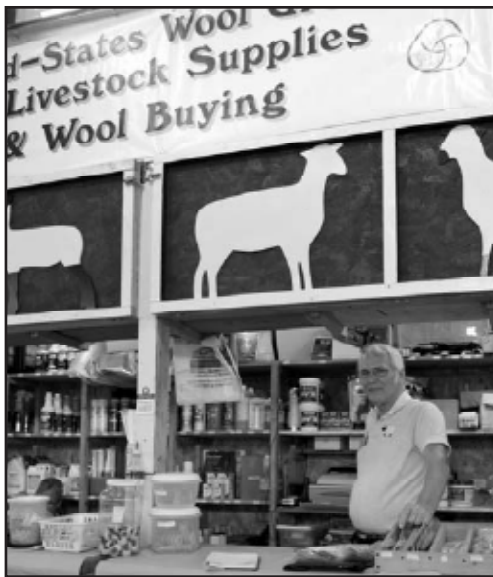
LAMB & WOOL

Volume #9

A Newsletter for the Iowa Sheep Industry

September 2017

Inside the State Fair Sheep Building: Gary Erickson: a Retrospective



For twenty seven years, Gary Erickson has set up shop in the Sheep building at the Iowa State Fair. Gary is also the Director for this region's Mid-States Wool Growers Cooperative Association, which includes: Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.

I spoke with Gary and here is what I learned:

ISIA: What changes have you seen in the sheep industry in your lifetime?

Gary: Today sheep farming is run more like a business; there used to be a lot more small flocks around. Iowa once led the nation in sheep numbers: over a half a million sheep with five to six million pounds of wool produced per year. The sheep at that time were less diverse, breed wise, than they are today, and the sheep were shorter and blockier.

We used to buy lambs from all over the west, there were hardly any sheep east of the Mississippi years ago. I grew up in Humboldt County and lived about four miles from the Rutland Stockyards. My family would buy feeder lambs in the spring from the stockyards and trail them home along the road, what a sight that was! Back then, there were fences around the fields, so the sheep did not stray from the roadside. The county was quite happy to let the sheep "mow" the ditches along those four miles. At one time there were 2500 head of lambs being fed on the farm.

ISIA: What changes have you seen over the years in the products you sell at the shop?

Gary: There have been many improvements in the designs of items such as marking harnesses and hoof clippers.

We now carry a nice variety of wormers, twenty seven years ago there were fewer wormers available and they really worked, but are no longer on the market today.

The show products have expanded, there are dozens to choose from and there are different products for different areas of the body, for instance: specialty items for the face, the feet or the fleece.

There is one product that is still used today, for more than just sheep: Orvis soap. There was no need to improve that!

The canvas coats for sheep haven't changed much, and now we also carry "wether tubes" and goat covers.

ISIA: How has the Veterinary Feed Directive changed what you offer?

Gary: We no longer sell anything that is added to feed that requires a veterinary prescription. Over the counter injectables are still available, and we do sell some of those.

ISIA: You mentioned improvements in the marking harness, what has changed there?

Gary: Originally there was a pouch of marking fluid on the harness, today there is the marking crayon. Years ago, we used powdered paint and grease mixed together and applied to the ram's brisket. One year I had 900 ewes. Every night for two heat cycles, I mixed the paint and grease and put it on the briskets of the eleven rams I was using. That was kind of fun, and a lot of work. Any ewe that was unmarked after the two cycles was culled. Powdered paint and grease was good then and is making a comeback. Today's product, Flockmaster Marking Fluid is easier to use, no mixing required, and is fully scourable and weather proof.

I once had 600 ewes lamb in the month of March in a 28 x 60" barn. I kept the ewes and lambs together in a jug for at least one day, then moved the family to a lean-to. I sold the ewes with lambs at side through local sale barns, there used to be a barn every couple of towns back then. People bought the sheep and used them to clean up in groves and eat the weeds around the buildings.

ISIA: What is the perfect bag of commercial clip wool?



Gary: For the small flock owner with diverse breeds, the best way to bag the wool is to start with the white faced, for instance: Columbia, sheep first. Put a plastic garbage bag on top of all that wool. Next, shear the black faced sheep, the Hampshire sheep, and pack that on top of the white face. Remove all the belly wool and tags from the fleece; leaving those in will cost you \$0.05 per pound. Colored wool should be done last, and not added to the white wool, as it has little/no commercial value.

Thank you, Gary!

Lined up for Lamb:



There were record numbers attending the State Fair this year, the Lamb Food stand is a great draw! I heard a customer ask to speak with the cooks, and he was directed back to the grill. The customer said, "I had the Greek pita sandwich, I want to let you know that this is the best lamb I have had in years!"

Our compliments to the chefs!

Thank you to Chuck, Carolyn and CJ Johnson, the Sprouse family and all the volunteers who worked at the food stand.

September News from Dr. Dan Morrical

Educational Resources available! ASI has funded many webinars that are useful for producers trying to improve the bottom line of their sheep operations. Those webinars are on the ASI webpage at http://sheepusa.org/Growourflock_Resources_EducationalWebinars. One can also find fact sheets on various key inputs to improve the Lamb Crop in the United States. This effort is part of the Road Map goal to increase the United States lamb crop to 150%. They are most easily found on the American Lamb Board webpage at <http://lambresourcecenter.com/production-resources/best-practice-resources/>. As one reviews the fact sheets it becomes apparent that producing a high lamb crop takes year round input not just during flushing and lambing.

Optimism for Industry Strong

In the last month I have attended two seedstock sales. The Center of the Nation Sale in Spencer on July 29 had a good crowd of enthusiastic bidders. Premier 1 again sponsored the online bidding services

provided by DV auctions. It is very interesting in my career how much impact the internet has marketing seedstock. The sale averaged just under \$800 on 133 lots. \$2500 was the high selling ram consigned by Brenda Reau on a Suffolk ram with excellent EBV's across the board. Several other sheep sold in the \$1500 to \$2000 range, so one would say the sale was steady and strong throughout. The new Eastern NSIP sale held in Wooster on August 12 also had an excellent crowd. I have not received the full sale report on this sale so the exact details are unknown. Last night I watched the Iowa Club Lamb Association sale at the Iowa State Fair. That sale also had a great crowd. This sale has a very strong presence and loyal following. I would estimate the sale averages were up on both ewes and rams.

Concerns with the Lamb Market

In the last month or so the lamb market has softened by \$30-\$50 per cwt depending on how high you think the lamb got in late June early July. I received calls from several

producers wanting to know what happened. Historically the supply of fair lambs has been blamed for this drop. I doubt if Iowa total lamb supply from county fairs adds up to 35,000 lambs and we have one of the largest youth lamb project enrollments in the country. Yes fair lambs do add some to the supply. In most cases many of those lambs are not market ready and are fed for 30-60 days to get them up to market weight. In reality the lamb market is always weak in July and August as the summer temperatures weakens the interest in eating protein as a nation. The second aspect is the low proportion of a lamb carcass that can be grilled. Would we all like higher prices, yes! However, current feed costs adding value to the sheep enterprise is very positive with feeding lambs to market weights of 130 and up. While at the state fair I visited with young couple who have increased their flock to 500 ewes. I also recently discussed a new 2000 head flock between a father and two sons. So growth is happening in Iowa sheep numbers.

AmericanWool.org Launches to Educate Consumers

For More Information Contact:

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DENVER -Wool is the only fiber crafted for the purpose of meeting any purpose. With versatility matched only by the diversity of the wearer, wool is the perfect fiber for any season, any occasion. With that in mind, the American Sheep Industry Association and its American Wool Council have launched a multi-faceted campaign to take wool's incredible story straight to the consumer, including a new website at AmericanWool.org.

A new American Wool logo was launched in 2016 to kick off renewed promotional efforts. The website will work in conjunction with a variety of social media sites to tell American wool's narrative in a multi-media fashion that includes stories, photos and video.

"What we found is that consumers are not aware that wool is a high performance fiber," said ASI Director of Wool Marketing Rita

Kourlis Samuelson. "A lot of consumers don't understand how modern-day wool differs from grandma's scratchy, old sweater. We saw a need to educate the consumer about American wool, and the new website is the best way to reach an audience that is ready to embrace products made with natural fibers such as American wool."

One fiber, four seasons. Moisture wicking and protecting. Always breathable. Thermal comfort. Consumers can learn about these high-performance traits of American wool on an in-depth basis in a way that's never before been compiled into one convenient location. Get started at Wool 101, which covers tips for the care of wool products, the types of wool, the science of wool and animal care.

The types of wool section will get you up to date on each step in the process of creating wool garments. Learn about woolen and worsted garments and the difference between the two. Take a look at variety of wool fabrics, from 18.5 micron wool that would be used in base layers to 24.5 micron wool that is common in outerwear.

American wool provides natural protection from the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays, is anti-allergen, flame resistant and odor resistant. It is nature's magic fiber, and AmericanWool.org will help those in search of such benefits find the perfect fit.

A shopping section will link consumers with companies offering American wool products ranging from clothing to blankets. Whether you're in need of that perfect hiking sock, a winter coat or a blanket for use around the campfire, AmericanWool.org has you covered.

In addition to using the website as a resource, consumers will find more information on American wool by following along on social media. Check out the following companion pages to AmericanWool.org at:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/experiencewool/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ExperienceWool>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/experiencewool/>

Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board Minutes

Thursday, August 3, 2017
9:00pm Conference Call

Kevin Goeken was present and later approved as District #1 director. Margaret Thomson attended the meeting on behalf of the Iowa Department of Agriculture. The Iowa Sheep Industry Association was represented by Regina Frahm.

Bookkeeper, Sally Good, moderated the meeting and called it to order at 9:00pm. Barb Clawson moved to approve the agenda, Janna Feldman seconded, motion carried.

Jim Vermazen moved to approve Kevin Goeken as director of District #1, Barb Clawson seconded. Motion was approved. No other nominations/recommendations for directors were made. District 4 and District 8 remain as open seats on the board.

Barb Clawson moved to elect Carl Ginapp as Chairman and Dan Smicker as Vice Chairman, Wayne O'Brien seconded, motion carried. Barb Clawson agreed to stay on as Secretary and Wayne O'Brien agreed to continue as Treasurer.

Meeting minutes from April 13, 2017 were reviewed. Barb Clawson moved to approve the minutes, Dan Smicker seconded, motion carried.

Financial reports for fiscal YE June 30, 2017 were presented. Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss, Detailed Receipts and Check Register were reviewed. Balance in the checking account as of June 30, 2017, was \$49,763.26. Board members were asked to review receipts from their corresponding districts to make sure that checkoff is being remitted. Wayne O'Brien moved to approve the financial reports as presented. Barb Clawson seconded, motion carried.

Proposal #692 – a request for \$100 was received from Jasper County Sheep Producers for the Fair Free Supper. Jim Vermazen moved to approve the proposal. Barb Clawson seconded, motion carried.

Proposal #693 – a request for \$250 was received from Iowa Farm Bureau Federation for sponsorship of the state fair cookout contest. Wayne O'Brien moved to approve the proposal. Dan Smicker seconded, motion carried. Barb Clawson will put together gift packs for the 1st and 2nd place winners.

Follow-up reports were review for proposals #690 – 4-H Lamb Workshop held by T&M Club Lambs and #691 – Boone County Sheep Committee lamb

dinner.

Directors reviewed proposed minor changes to the Guidelines and Policies for fiscal year July 2017 through June 2018. Barb Clawson moved to approve the document with suggested changes. Jim Vermazen seconded, motion carried.

An update on the activities of the Iowa Sheep Industry Association was given by Regina Frahm.

Sally Good announced her departure as bookkeeper for the organization following the October 2017 meeting.

Dan Morrical provided an update on Iowa State University and the possibility for his replacement upon retirement. He encouraged the board to commit \$50,000 as funding for the position.

The next conference call board meeting will be scheduled in October 2017 according to Carl Ginapp's schedule.

Wayne O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Good

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Please contact any member

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Sheep and Equipment Exchange

(8/17) For Sale: For Sale: Registered Dec-Feb Suffolk ram lambs with growth and ultrasound records available. Kimm Suffolks, Dysart, IA 319-290-8997

(8/17) For Sale: Polypay ram lambs. RR. Large-framed and thick. Detailed records and weights on all. From a 230% lambing flock. February-born and ready to breed. Dave and Julie Hofland, Hartley, Iowa 712-348-3518

(7/17) For Sale: Dorper and White Dorper rams: registered and commercial; also Ile de France and X sheep. Hardy, easy care, well muscled, out of season breeding, excellent growth on forage only. Guardian dog puppies. S Mitcham, 3061 160th Street, Sumner, 563-578-5665, sam@netins.net; www.ccdorpers.com; FaceBook Crane Creek Dorpers

(7/17) For Sale: Registered Suffolk Rams and ewe lambs. Structurally sound, fast growing. Both show quality and Rams for commercial breeders. All Rams RR. Stewart Suffolk, Newton IA. Barb.stewart.56@gmail.com 641 521 7981

(6/17) For Sale: February and March Polypay ewe lambs, nice stylish twins and a few singles. (2) 2 year old commercial Polypay rams, used last year, big and meaty, halter broke. Call 712-758-3762 (farm) or 712-301-7727 (cell) Ocheyedan, Iowa

(5/17) For Sale: Registered Suffolk ram lambs—Take advantage of 30+ years raising commercial Suffolk sheep. Kimm/McCauley breeding, NSIP enrolled. Please call Michael &

Debbie Jensen, Moonshadow Farm, Castana, IA. 712-353-6599, cell: 712-420-2181

Sheep & Equipment Exchange is a free listing for ISIA members. Ads are placed in the Lamb & Wool Newsletter and in this online listing. One ad per membership, which must be limited to 50 words. Ads may run in four issues of the Lamb & Wool newsletter (date in parenthesis indicates first issue) and may be re-submitted for an additional four issues. Send ad information along with name, address, phone and email to Claudia Putnam at: info@iowasheep.com by the 15th of the month for publication in the following month's newsletter. Newsletter is published 11 times/year with a July/September issue.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 7-10 - Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival - Jefferson County Fair Park - www.wisconsinssheepandwoolfestival.com

Sept. 16 - World Wide Spin In Public Day. There will be a fiber-arts demo/display booth at the Ames Main Street Farmer's Market 8-12:30.

Sept. 16 - New Shepherd's Clinic - Hettinger (N.D.) Research Station - Travis Hoffman at travis.w.hoffman@ndsu.edu or 701-231-2222

Oct. 3 - Let's Grow Webinar on Ewe Selection and Culling of Underperforming Ewes with Maryland's Susan Schoenian - Details TBA

Nov. 3-4 - Ozark Fiber Fling, Steelville, MO - ozarkfiberfling.com 573-245-6851

Nov 30th - Dec 2nd 2017, 23rd Annual Dairy Sheep Symposium, Estrimont Suites and Spas, Orford (near Sherbrooke), Quebec. www.dsana.org

Not All Knitting Yarn Is Created Equal...Why?

By Janette Eason-Savage, Briar Patch New Zealand Ltd www.briarpatch.co.nz

Have you ever wondered why two skeins labeled “wool” are sometimes so different – yet they are both labeled wool? Not all wool is created equal.... why?

Breed



Sheep's wool is a natural product grown by our wonderful sheep friends. However, did you know that worldwide there are over a thousand different breeds of sheep – all with unique qualities – some black, some white, some with horns (up to six of them!). Susan Schoenian, Sheep and Goat Specialist at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research and Education Center has developed a fantastic website called Sheep 101 which includes pictures and information of hundreds of different types of sheep from all around the world. It is one of the most comprehensive sites on sheep I have ever seen. www.sheep101.info/index.html

But what does this mean for the knitter?

Micron (Diameter)

The biggest factor as to whether a particular wool is soft or harsh to the touch is the diameter of the individual fibres. The measurement used for this is called a micron (or micrometer). One micron is one millionth of a metre, or one thousandth of a millimeter.

Sheep's wool can range from 11 microns to well over 40 microns depending on the breed and the age of the sheep. Younger sheep will have finer wool – the fibres get thicker as the sheep ages.

The scientists have determined that wool which is thicker than 30 microns is strong enough to press on human skin and excite the nerve receptors just below the skin – this is the main cause for what we all know as THE WOOL ITCH.

Those of us over 40 will well remember the wool itch – those jerseys lovingly knitted by our Mothers and Grandmothers – but oh so scratchy!

A few things have happened since then which can help us choose the right type of wool for our knitting projects:

Scientific Fibre Measurement.

The development of objective testing for fibre diameter – the IWTO (International Wool and Textile Organization) sets and standardizes testing standards for fiber diameter worldwide. Wool tested under

IWTO standards in the USA, Europe, Australia or New Zealand will all be tested to the same exacting standards. In the old days wool testing was very subjective – the wool buyer would visually and physically assess the wool and make their best guess – now it can be measured exactly. For next to skin – stay below 30 microns. The rule of thumb is the lower the micron the softer the wool.

Improved Genetics/Breeding for Wool.

Many sheep breeders in New Zealand have specialised in breeding specifically for good wool. In New Zealand we love our sheep and wool and a really good example is the Emmerson Family of Forrest Range Merinos – in the late 1980s their merino wool measured an average of 18 microns – today there is nothing above 15 microns. Daughter Anna Emmerson won the worldwide Loro Piana challenge for finest bale of merino in 2009 and 2012 with a stunning 10.9 micron average! (Sorry ladies and gentlemen we won't be seeing that fineness in knitting yarn – in fact it is just too fine for knitting yarn. However ask your local tailor about the world class fabrics made in Italy and England out of ultra fine New Zealand Merino wool – have the perfect pair of trousers or skirt made to go with your next knitting project!)

Identify the Breed of Sheep.

Ask what breed of sheep the knitting yarn comes from. We at Briar Patch New Zealand breed and farm the sheep our wool comes off – and can tell you the exact qualities of each breed and what type of knitting projects it is suitable for:

Always check the label.

Wool is so precious and special that sometimes the name is “borrowed” – or even worse – “stolen”. Double check the label and the fine print – to check you are really buying wool. The reason I started Briar Patch New Zealand was because I was tricked – it was only after I finished my beautiful project that I discovered the “wool” I bought wasn't wool at all!

Spinning Method

There are three main spinning methods used for hand knitting yarn:

- Woolen
- Semi-Worsted
- Worsted

Woolen yarn is bulky, soft and resilient. It is the only method of spinning for shorter wools such as lambs wool. The finished yarn is fluffier than other spinning methods.

Semi-Worsted was originally developed for synthetic fibers and is best suited to longer and stronger wools. The finished yarn has medium bulk and resilience. The main feature of **worsted** spun yarns is that the fibers are lined up in parallel – it produces a low bulk yarn with firm handle and can be spun to a much finer yarn count.

Only Wool is Wool!

Sheep's wool is a natural fiber – if you put each

fiber end to end a single sheep grows a kilometre of fibre every day.

Once or twice a year all the sheep come in for shearing and, just like us humans after a haircut, bounce happily outside again afterwards.

New Zealand sheep eat natural field grass to grow their wool – they are fuelled on grass. Their wool consists of natural keratin proteins – similar to our own hair.

Did you know it takes over five liters of oil usage to produce one kilogram of nylon finished fabric (four liters for acrylic and over three for polyester) but less than one for a kilogram of finished wool fabric? And even less for wool knitting yarn. (Source IWTO publication: Wool Change to a Healthier and Safer Environment)

What would like your next knitting project to be fuelled by? Grass or Gas?

As soon as a sheep is shorn it will start to grow a new crop of wool – it is renewable and sustainable.

Wool comes from the wonderful sheep – a friend of mankind since our earliest existence. The humble sheep has both fed and clothed us since time began. Thanks to our woolly friends mankind has been able to expand the areas in which we can live comfortably – loin clothes in the snow would only be for the very hardy!

Did you know that:

Wool is flame resistant – it requires more oxygen than is available in the air to become flammable and will not melt, drip or stick to the skin. Your garment will be safe around open flames – and might even save your life in the case of being caught in a car, plane or house fire.

Wool has a natural ability to breath and can absorb up to 35% of its weight in water vapor. As it releases the water vapor back into the atmosphere it generates heat. This provides comfort from perspiration, warmth and no nasty body odors sticking to your garment.

Wool provides natural UV protection for the wearer.

Wool can trap and neutralize toxic chemicals in the atmosphere.

Wool fibers can be bent 20,000 times without breaking which explains why wool garments are so long lasting.

Wool is naturally 100% biodegradable in soil without harm to the planet and the environment.

The natural qualities of wool are stunning – sheep have evolved to survive in a wide range of weather conditions – from searing heat to snow blizzards the sheep's wool keeps them comfortable in all weather conditions – they wouldn't survive if they only wore polyester!

So why would you want to knit with anything but wool?

Quality and comfort is remembered long after price is forgotten.

Created Equal continued...

Comparison of Fibre Properties

(Source IWTO publication: Wool Change to a Healthier and Safer Environment)
(Ratings: 1 = Excellent, 2 = Very Good, 3 = Good, 4 = Moderate, 5 = Poor)

	Wool	Polyester	Nylon	Acrylic
Appearance				
Drape	1	3	3	2
Texture	1-2	3	3	2
Colour	1-2	3	2	1
Crease Retention	2	1	2	3
Wrinkle Recovery	2	1-2	2	3
Comfort				
Moisture Absorption	1	5	4	5
Elasticity	1-2	2	2	3
Permeability	1-2	4	4	4
Insulation	1	4	4	4
Performance				
Water Repellency	1-2	2	2	3
Abrasion Resistance	2-3	1	1-2	2-3
Laundering	1	1	1	2
Drycleaning	1	3	2	4
UV Stability	2	1	3	1
Safety				
Fire Resistance	1-2	3	3	5
Anti-Static	1	5	4	5
Acid Resistance	1-2	1	4	1

Anthelmintic Resistance On Sheep Farms In The Southeastern US

Susan Scheonian

Last year, the American Sheep Industry Association's Let's Grow Program funded a project to determine anthelmintic (dewormer) resistance on thirty commercial sheep farms in Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia.

The DrenchRite® test was used to determine resistance. It is a labor-intensive laboratory test that determines resistance to all dewormers and dewormer "classes" simultaneously from a single pooled fecal sample. The University of Georgia is the only place where the test is performed (in the US).

In 2016, samples were submitted from 26 farms. Four more farms will be sampled this summer. The project cost-shared the test for farmers interested in testing for resistance. The test costs \$450. The project paid half.

While a fecal egg count reduction test quantifies the eggs in a sample and compares it to a pre-treatment or control fecal egg count, the DrenchRite test lets the eggs in the sample hatch into larvae. The worm species can be determined from the larvae. Larvae is put in wells on a special plate. The wells contain doubling concentrations of the drugs. Critical well values which correlate to fecal egg count reductions are used to determine resistance.

Resistance is present if the percentage reduction in fecal egg count is less than 95 percent. As the percentage decreases, the dewormer becomes less and less effective. At <50% it is no longer effective as the sole treatment.

The worm larvae most commonly identified in the twenty-six samples was *Haemonchus contortus*, better known as the barber pole worm. On average, the samples contain $82.1 \pm 3.8\%$ *Haemonchus*. All but two farms had more than 50% *Haemonchus*.

The percentage of farms with resistance to benzimidazoles (SafeGuard®, Valbazen®), avermectins (Ivomec®, Dectomax®, Eprinex®), moxidectin (Cydec-tin®), and levamisole (Prohibit®, Leva-Med®) was determined to be 100, 92.3, 84.6, and 42.3 percent respectively.

Resistance to moxidectin and levamisole was lower on Maryland farms, compared to farms in Virginia and Georgia. Resistance to avermectins was similar. All farms had resistance to benzimidazoles. All farms had resistance to one or more anthelmintics, but there were differences between farms and states. For effective control programs, farmers need to test for anthelmintic resistance and implement treatment protocols which maximize fecal egg count reduction.

A New Blog About Worms:

A blog has been added to the web site of the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC). The purpose of the blog is to provide producers with the most up-to-date information on internal parasite control in small ruminants. <http://www.wormx.info/blog>

Worminfo: a New Listserv

WORMINFO is the name of a new listserv. A listserv is an electronic mailing list. Subscribers to WORMINFO will receive an email when new information has been posted to the web site (wormx.info or acsrpc.org) of the American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (ACSRPC). The list may also be used to distribute general information about internal parasite control in small ruminants. To subscribe to the WORMINFO listserv, send an email message to listserv@listserv.umd.edu. In the body of the message, write subscribe WORMINFO.

State Fair 2017 Sheep Exhibits

Claudia Putnam



Duane and Pat Sprouse and their granddaughters prepare for the ICLA lamb auction. Duane and Pat serve in the ICLA as secretary/treasurers.



Member Melissa Wubben, Oak Creek Farm, had very successful exhibits in the fleece show.



The Seelow Sheep farm brought Maynard back to the fair for reserve biggest ram. I noticed that this friendly ram had many admirers.

Congratulations and thank you Iowa Sheep Industry Association members!

If you want to share photos and announcements from the State Fair, please submit them to the ISIA at info@iowasheep.com.

There's An App For That!

By Susan Schoenian

An app is software used on a mobile device such as a smart phone or tablet computer. There are millions of apps available for download for iOS, android, and other platforms.

As with other industries, there are many apps that are useful for farmers, including sheep and goat producers. Some are free. Some are available for purchase. Some have annual fees associated with their use. Some paid apps have free or trial versions.

Compared to desktop software, apps tend to be significantly less expensive, although that's not always the case. Some desktop programs have companion mobile apps. FlockFiler (Flockfiler.com), one of the better record keeping programs (for sheep), has a mobile add-on for iOS devices.

Many apps are very simplistic in the information they provide. For example, University of Minnesota Extension has an app called HayCalc that converts the per bale price of hay to a per ton price, allowing users to compare and choose the most economical hay for their animals.

There are several simple apps for doing Pearson Square calculations. The Pearson

Square is used to balance simple feed rations containing two ingredients. There are also several apps for calculating due dates for livestock and tracking body condition scores.

One of the most useful apps for sheep producers is ASI Market News (sheepusa.org), which provides national and auction market reports from across the United States. New Holland (PA) is one of the reports included in the app. The app also includes a breakeven calculator.

Many apps serve as references. VetGRAM is an app of the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database (FARAD). It provides withdrawal times for drugs, especially extra label. There are several databases of animal drugs. The Merck Veterinary Manual is available as a paid app. Oklahoma State University has an app that provides information about toxic plants.

New Mexico State University has an app that 4-Hers can use to keep records on their livestock projects (<http://apps.nmsu.edu/4h-livestock-record.html>). Livestock Weights (livestockweights.com) is an app written by a Maryland 4-H

volunteer. It helps to monitor the weights of 4-H market animals. There are several apps that calculate scores for judging contests.

My primary interest is in apps that can be used for record keeping: breeding, birthing, treatments, sales, etc. There are many to choose from. Several allow you to synchronize data across devices. Some accept electronic ID (RFID). HerdBoss (herdboss.com; iOS only) is a nifty app with an easy-to-use interface.

Goat Book (goatbook.net) and Sheep Book (sheepbook.net) are relatively new apps that deserve a look. Livestocked (livestocked.com) is an app for multiple species of livestock. It seems to have the most potential for those interested in using an app for performance record keeping. I have been providing input to its developer.

A list of apps of interest to sheep and goat producers can be found on the Maryland Small Ruminant Page at www.sheepandgoat.com/apps.

U.S. Sheep Industry Makes Major Economic Impact

By Mark Dorenkamp
Brownfield Ag News
08/22/17

New data shows the U.S. sheep industry had a more than \$5 billion dollar impact on the nation's economy in 2016.

The study—commissioned by the American Sheep Industry Association—found that of the \$2 billion invested annually in sheep production, the total economic benefit nearly tripled. Association executive director Peter Orwick says the findings come at an opportune time with 2018 Farm Bill discussions underway.

"We are trying to do some risk management animal health programs in the Farm Bill. I think this (study) is helpful, particularly for the members of the Committees that maybe aren't in large sheep-producing areas. I think it helps them in considering doing livestock programs specifically for sheep."

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