

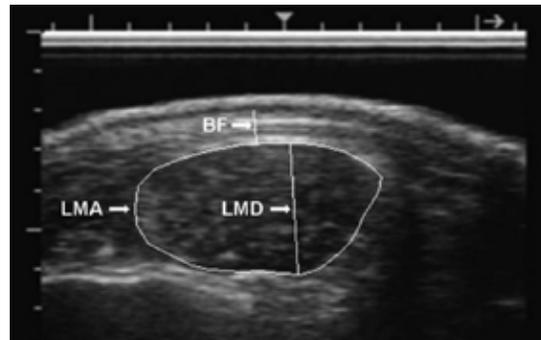


The Festival: It's more than just wool

When you think of the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, you might think of rows and rows of vendors with wool and yarn in a rainbow of colors and a gamut of textures just begging to be touched. Or maybe you think of the fleece show and sale, which has become one of the premier places in the country to buy and sell handspinning fleeces—more than 600 fleeces changed hands last year alone! Perhaps the sheep shows come to mind, where over 800 sheep from a variety of wool breeds compete to be selected Supreme Champion Ram or Ewe.

But if you raise meat sheep, what's in it for you? Plenty!

A number of Festival events target the meat sheep producer, and other offerings benefit all sheep



The lamb carcass and performance contest allows producers to obtain loin eye ultrasound data on their live lambs. [Image from <https://www.animalsciencepublications.org/publications/jas/pdfs/86/11/0863203>]

► *Continued on page 11*

Festival ewe sale expands to all breeds, rams

The Ewe Show and Sale featured on the Friday prior to the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival returns this year with some important changes.

The sale has expanded to give you the chance to buy or sell yearling ewes, fall ewe lambs, and spring ewe lambs of any registered breed, including meat breeds. And this year, for every two ewes consigned, a ram or ram lamb also may be offered for show and sale.

The pre-sale show will be at 7 p.m. on Friday; this year the sale moves from Friday to Saturday (6 p.m.)—giving Festival visitors a chance to purchase fine breeding stock after a day of watching shows and chatting with breeders. The consignment fee is \$30 per animal; the sales commission is 10 percent.

If you are a breeder, you know the success of any sale depends on promotion. We invite all producers to help us promote the sale far and wide—first by offering the finest quality of

stock, and then by helping us spread the word to potential buyers.

If you are looking to expand your flock, help us grow this sale by taking a close look at the ewes and rams that producers offer as additions to your breeding program. And invite your fellow shepherds to the sale.

Animals purchased at the auction may leave the fairgrounds immediately following the sale. Health papers (required for sheep sold to a farm different from the one they come from) will be supplied.

For entry information, visit the Banner Sale Management website (bannersheepmagazine.com/saleentry.html), or contact Mara Mullinix at 301-865-4224. The entry deadline is March 15. A complete sale catalog will be available at www.bannersheepmagazine.com as well as in the April issue of *Banner Sheep Magazine*.



The featured breed at this year's Festival is mothering breed extraordinaire, the Finnsheep [finnsheep.org]

In This Issue

- 1 It's More than Wool
- 1 Festival sale expands
- 2 President's message
- 3 Warm winter pasture management
- 4 Fescue topic of conference
- 4 Winter webinar schedule
- 5 Maryland grazing mentors
- 6 Dairy symposium
- 8 Westminster auction rises from the ashes
- 9 Maryland shearing school
- 10 Shepherd of the Year
- 10 Sewing with Wool School
- 10 Make It with Wool winners
- 11 MS&WF News
- 12 Youth spinning competition
- 12 In Remembrance: Michelle Reilly



President's Message

Lee Langstaff
2016 MSBA President

Greetings and Happy New Year! As I write this we are approaching the shortest day of the year, and the strange warm early December weather seems to be waning as winter approaches. The many celebrations associated with this time of year will have unfolded when this is being read,

and we will have arrived in 2016 along with our flocks.

My thoughts wander to how much we can be warmed by being mindful of the things for which we are grateful.

For me at this juncture this includes: plenty of nice hay in the barn to get us through 'til the grass is up; a sturdy barn that provides shelter for our ewes, their soon-to-be lambs and ourselves as we midwife in the cold of January and February; a new back-up pair of insulated coveralls; running water and a frost-free hydrant in the barn; crutched ewes; the tractor and snow blower greased up and in good working order; frozen colostrum in the freezer from last year; a supportive family who finally exclaim how much they love drinking in the smell inside the barn in winter; and the community of shepherds and others who are always ready with a helping hand, wisdom, and sympathetic support and cheer through lambing season that sweeps us into spring; and of course, the proximity of Sheepman's Supply!

Which leads me, understandably, to express my gratitude to Bob Dinsmore for his last two years as President of MSBA. Bob has passed along to me, as the new President, an MSBA that is sound and active and looking forward. We have an excellent Board of Directors and it's an honor to work with this group of lively individuals who are earnest in their desire to seek ways to improve the organization for the benefit of its members. Thank you, Bob!

By the time the next (Spring) issue of Maryland Sheep News comes out, most of you will have finished lambing, spring shearing will be done, or well under way, and the 2016 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival will be upon us. Let me thank, in advance, the many, many of you who will be soon engaged in the great human-powered machine that makes the Festival possible. I feel like right now is the top of the hill and the snowball is just about to roll.

I hope your barns are warm and dry, your ewes healthy, and that your lambs will abundant. See you in the spring!

—Lee

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See the complete sale catalog online and in the April Banner!



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The MSBA Board meets on the following dates in 2016: February 1, April 4, June 6, September 12, December 5, at 7 p.m. The date of the Annual Meeting & Dinner is tentatively set for October 21. Locations TBD. All members are welcome to attend. Meeting minutes are available on request: jha111@verizon.net.

In December tourists in Washington, D.C., enjoyed an unseasonable display of cherry blossoms in the Tidal Basin; in home gardens forsythia bushes and pussy willows bloomed, petunias and geraniums blossomed, while dandelions continued to flower and set seed in lawns.

Pastures too responded to the warmest December on record. Here are two perspectives on how those temperatures affected our mid-Atlantic pasture plants.

Should my pasture management be different when winter...well, isn't winter? Mild weather in winter does make things interesting and we do need to adjust some of our practices but it also gives us opportunities.

First and foremost, our cool-season grass were still growing in late December, although not as rapidly as in April or October. So on the plus side, our grazing season was extended for our established pastures. But for new seedings, these temperatures can be a double-edged sword. The new grass may grow too much and smother if we get a heavy snow.

If growth is in excess, flash grazing is acceptable—but remember that flash grazing is just that quick. Do not overgraze, and do not allow animals to “pug up” pasture soils (which happens especially when soil is too wet).

These temperatures also give us an opportunity to start renovating those worn-out paddocks. Over-graze them and pug them up. Also feed hay on these paddocks. Then in the spring, disk and



Unless you have been living under a rock for the past couple of months, you've probably noticed we've been having some unusual weather in the mid-Atlantic region. Rain and temps in the 60s and 70s almost are beginning to seem like the norm this winter. Recently, I received a few questions about how all this warm, mild weather might affect pastures. Below is my take on a few of these issues:

How do our common pasture species respond to this kind of “winter” weather? What is happening to grasses, clovers, and forbs presented with spring weather in what should be early winter?

The simple answer is: not much. Despite all the comparatively warm, wet weather, you probably



Image by Barbara Klein, of Nancy Cox Starkey's Kep

seed with either an annual grass or oats, or seed a perennial grass along with oats as a nurse crop. If you choose an annual grass or oats, follow it with millet or sudangrass in early June and then reseed with a perennial grass in late summer or early fall.

Jeff Semler is a Maryland Cooperative Extension educator based in Washington County. jsemler@umd.edu

This weather does give us good conditions for lime to be translocated

into the soil. So if your pasture's soil test is calling for lime, apply it now. Also, plan now and book your fertilizer needs, so you can apply these nutrients as soon as spring temperature and moisture allows. With the warmer early-winter temperatures, nutrient uptake and growth may have used more nutrients during the cold months than normal, and early

fertilizer application may pay off with better spring green-up and growth.

We know that farming involves a lot of moving parts; there are few hard and fast rules. Be flexible and proactive, but also be prepared to be reactive when circumstances change. You know they will. Wishing you green grass and good grazing.



WHAT IS PUGGING?

The weight of livestock animals has its impact on the soil and the feed growing in that soil. The indentations of the animals' hooves into soil, especially damp or wet soil, are called pugs. Soil structure can be dramatically altered by pugging. The pug holes are areas where seedlings and regrowth have been smashed back underground. Also buried by hooves pressing into wet soil are weed seeds.

noticed that pastures haven't grown much. Most of our cool-season forage plants go dormant in winter in response to cold temperatures and shorter day lengths. Although it has been pretty warm recently, day lengths are still too short to break dormancy. Cool-season plants like fescue, bluegrass, and clovers mostly are 'long-day' plants, meaning they don't start really growing until day lengths get longer in the spring.

That is part of the reason we usually end up with such a surplus of forage that time of year. In terms of growth though, one important thing that happens to grasses and some legumes in the fall is new bud formation. These axillary buds grow near ground level will be used for shoot growth next year. So, an extra-long fall like we are having this year should allow for plants to

Benjamin F. Tracy is associate professor of grassland ecosystem management at Virginia Tech. bftracy@vt.edu.

Management Calendar

Jan. 26-29

Winter Forage Conferences, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at each location. \$50. Virginia Forage & Grassland Council, vaforages.org/events

Feb. 4 - Mar. 10

Winter Webinar Series, 7 p.m. Thursdays. Toxic plants, EBVs, vitamin/mineral nutrition, sericea lespedeza, alternative dewormers, internal parasite control. U of Md. Extension, www.sheepandgoat.com/#!webinars/cu81

Apr. 15-16

Sheep Shearing School, Uniontown, mdsheepshearing.school@gmail.com

put on ample buds and maybe add some extra leaf area. Both of those factors should be good for forage growth come spring.

What's happening with the plant's annual cycle with this sort of weather anomaly (nutrient storage, etc.)? Does top growth this time of year affect future growth (storing of sugars or other reserves of energy) come spring?

Yes. Although the amount of solar energy that reaches the earth's surface is greatly reduced during winter, some photosynthesis should occur when it gets warm enough. That's generally a good thing, since any extra sugar/energy generated from photosynthesis will probably put into storage below ground. The extra sugars in roots will help support vigorous growth early in the spring (weather depending, of course). Another good thing is that extra sugars will help boost the cold-tolerance of plants. So when the cold weather ever returns, these plants should be in good shape to handle it.

Are there special management practices shepherds (or any graziers) should consider?

Probably not anything special. In my view, it is still most important to maintain a good canopy cover on your pastures this time of year—at least 3-4 inches if possible. That amount of canopy should allow for enough leaf area to maintain some photosynthesis during mild weather, which again should be a good thing. Most pastures are also pretty wet now—optimal conditions for soil compaction and disturbance from hoof traffic. So unless you have a lot of stockpiled forage, trying to graze off any extra pasture growth now is probably just not worth it overall.

I probably would recommend checking your soil fertility now. I suspect most soil pathogens and winter annual weeds are loving this warm, wet weather. Maintaining good soil fertility levels, especially pH and potassium, might help forage plants cope with potentially higher disease and weed pressure down the road.



image courtesy <https://lagill6.wordpress.com>

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council invites producers to the 2016 Winter Forage Conferences in January. This year's conference theme is "Tall Fescue in the 21st Century: Understanding and Managing Tall Fescue in Grazing Systems."

The conferences will commence at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m., and will be repeated at four locations across the state of Virginia:

- January 26, 2016 Blackstone
- January 27, 2016 Wytheville

- January 28, 2016 Weyers Cave
- January 29, 2016 Brandy Station.

Speakers will include Dr. Glenn Aiken, (ARS Lexington, Kentucky); Dr. Craig Roberts (University of Missouri); Dr. John Andrae (Clemson University); Mr. Pat Burch, (Dow AgroSciences); Mr. Matt Booher and Mr. John Benner (VA Cooperative Extension); and local producers at each location.

Registration information is posted at vaforages.org.

The fee for the conference is \$50.

Fescue topic of forage conferences



Lamb updates her Facebook page as she waits for webinar to begin. [Image from kaibabmd.org/node/499]

Maryland Extension Winter Webinar Schedule

Date	Time	Topic	Speaker
Feb. 4	7 p.m.	Toxic Plants	Jeff Semler, University of Maryland Extension
Feb. 11	7 p.m.	EBVs for Dummies	Susan Schoenian, University of Maryland Extension
Feb. 18	7 p.m.	Mineral and Vitamin Nutrition	Dr. Dan Morrill, Iowa State University
Feb. 25	7 p.m.	Sericea Lespedeza	Dr. Tom Terrill, Fort Valley State University
Mar. 3	TBA	The Big Five (Internal Parasite Control)	Dr. Gareth Bath, University of Pretoria, South Africa
Mar. 10	7 p.m.	Natural Parasite Control	Dr. Dahlia O'Brien, Virginia State University

Each webinar will last for about one hour. Additional time will be allotted for questions. Interaction will be via a chat box. Preregistration is not required; Participation is open to the first 100 people who log on. A high-speed connection is recommended. Log-on instructions are shared via a listserv. To subscribe to the listserv, send an e-mail to listserv@listserv.umd.edu. In the body of the message, write subscribe sheepgoatwebinars. All communication pertaining to the webinars is done via the listserv.

The beauty of having a mentor is knowing that there's someone on the other end of your call or text. Just ask Ginger Meyers. When Ginger and her husband started their farm, they took on leased land, and worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service on

What's it like to have a grazing mentor?

Rachel Gilker

Ginger says that having someone you can reach out to with a question about a sheep at 7:30 on a Saturday evening is priceless.

The Maryland Grazers Network mission is to help farmers become graziers. The program focuses on a partnership between farmers, with an experienced person sharing knowledge with someone new to the grazing business. Ginger's mentor is David Greene, who farms sheep. He is a retired county agent, and he really likes being able to spend one-on-one time with the folks he's trying to help out. As a county agent, he could never work too intensively with any one farmer. Now, he expects plenty of regular calls from new farmers, and speaks to them regularly for several years.

Greene explains that mentors sit down with their farmers to talk about goals for 1, 3, and 5 years from now, and to build a business plan. They also hook farmers up with other experts. "We have other resources through the network we can utilize. Marketing people, for example. We have experts in that area. We have people that are able to help set up a farm business plan, based on what you want to do and the market available to you."

fencing it, and with other specialists on where to put what and how to size pastures. They've been part of the Maryland Grazers Network program for two years, and

They started by evaluating on-farm resources, and David came in to help establish priorities. But that doesn't mean he told them what to do. Ginger says, "We will sort everything out and plan everything, and then David will say 'you'll just have to try it to see how it works for you'. Maybe it doesn't rain, and that puts you off the planned schedule. It's still a little trial and error individually. Both sides have to be prepared for that. There are a lot of variables that require you to tweak it a little bit."

Ginger suggests reaching out to a mentor for help sooner rather than later, and her one wish is that she had started to work with David sooner. She says that having a mentor is like the idea of measuring twice and cutting once. For example, if David had been involved in the field planning, he would have brought in the animal perspective more, and then they could have avoided "the second painful cut," she says.



David Greene, well known to shepherds in the region, has shared his knowledge of sheep and wool widely and generously. [Image from onpasture.com]

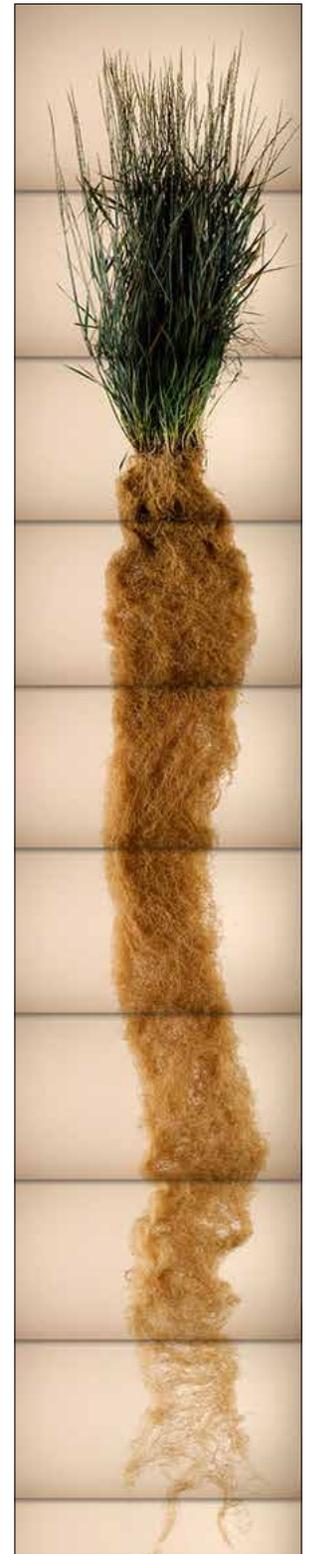
Ginger and David have covered the gamut of what it takes to manage livestock on pasture: foot problems, breed selection, handling yearlings separate from older ewes, setting up training for fencing and more. And she's not ready to stop learning from him. "There could be a time frame on this, but it's not like it's a six-month timeframe and everyone's done.

I'm not sure when we're going to be done with David."

Ginger and David continue to communicate through email. He emails each quarter, even after two years, to see if they have concerns or problems. While they could talk on the phone, Ginger appreciates email because it leaves a written trail that she can reference later.

Mentoring could help a lot of us accomplish more and be more successful. With that in mind, stay tuned for next week's article to learn more about the ins and outs of good mentoring as discovered through the Maryland Grazer's Network's efforts.

This article is reprinted with permission from OnPasture.com. The editors of OnPasture.com aim to provide farmers with access to the latest research and farmer experience "written in plain English and focused on turning ideas into farm-ready practices."



National Geographic photographer Jim Richardson's images of shoots and roots grown by agroecologist Jerry Glover can be seen at proof.nationalgeographic.com/2015/10/15/digging-deep-reveals-the-intricate-world-of-roots/

More Webinars: Using EBVs to advance American sheep productivity

The American Sheep Industry invites producers to increase the quality and profitability of our industry by using Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). You'll find links to the webinars at sheepandgoat.com/#!/webinars/cu81

Topic	Speaker
How the sheep industry can benefit from NSIP	Dr. Robert Banks
How, when, and what data to collect	Cody Heimke
How to enter and submit data.	Chris Schauer
Producer panel	

Our Far-Flung Shepherds



Colleen Histon
makes cheese at Shepherd's Manor Creamery in New Windsor. She also is MSBA treasurer (in her spare time)

At dairying symposium, fermentation of ideas as well as curds the product

If you have to be in Wisconsin in November, it's always nicer if the temperatures are in the 60s. And so it was during the 21st Dairy Sheep Association of North America's Symposium in Madison. More than 120 attendees spent three days enjoying a tremendous educational experience on the University of Wisconsin campus, with ample time to socialize with fellow sheep dairymen and women from across the nation.

The symposium is organized and sponsored by the University of Wisconsin Department of Animal Sciences, the Dairy Sheep Association of North America (DSANA) and the companies serving the North America dairy sheep industry: Spooner Agricultural Research Station, Premier 1, Carr Valley cheese, Dairy Connection, Inc., Biotic Industries, Inc, Land O Lakes Animal Milk Products Co., Hamby Dairy Supply, and others.

This year's agenda dealt with subjects related to the challenges in the sheep industry, launching a cheese business, survival perspectives in the dairy sheep industry, milking machines, marketing, non-GMO (genetically modified organisms) labeling, lamb rearing, management practices and labor laws, comparative nutrition practices, developing and maintaining a healthy flock, estimated breeding values which predict future performance, and the effects of breed and hybrid vigor on lamb survival.

There was an opportunity to join a one-day sheep cheesemaking class hosted by the University's dairy on the day preceding the symposium start, where 30 of us made a soft cheese, a camembert, a cheddar, and a manchego. And we enjoyed the tasting of the famous Wisconsin's cheese curds!

Symposium participants enjoyed a first-night traditional cheese tasting, with products



Colleen and Mike Histon with "Alice in Dairyland."

from their own operations (what better way to mingle and taste with peers?). The second night's annual banquet included a talk by "Alice in Dairyland," a state competition winner who then spends a year as a Wisconsin Department of Agriculture staff member representing all agriculture-related forums.

Tours of local sheep operations filled the third day of the symposium. The first destination was about an hour northwest of Madison in Plain, Wisconsin, for a tour and tasting at Cedar Grove Cheese, a processor of sheep's milk cheese.

This is an environmentally sound production farm: working in concert with nature is an important part of their business. Production of a wide variety of OCIA certified organic cheese, a "Living Machine" to clean wash-water in a beautiful biological way, and recycling and energy reduction programs are the farm's way of keeping up a commitment to the environment.

Next we headed further north and west, to Hidden Springs Creamery in Westby, Wisconsin.

The operation maintains a flock of about 500 ewes, of which 250 to 300 milk 8 months out of the year, and 150 milk the remaining 4 months of the year—giving them year-round milk production. This is not an easy feat, but is possible with the correct management and planning of lambing. During the peak season, Hidden Springs sells their weekend milk, allowing a better cash flow and time off from cheese making.

Brenda Jensen is the cheese maker; her husband Dean is the shepherd. At one point, they sent their lambs to a neighbor to be raised, bringing the ewe lambs back after rearing and selling the ram lambs at one day of age. They now raise all their lambs, to give their employees an 8-hour shift. Their biggest obstacle is retaining quality manpower with dedication to the operation—growth depends on competent staff and proper





Dairy Symposium in images: Page 6, bottom right: the cheese-making facility at the University of Wisconsin. This page, clockwise from top left: the skylighted room of the university's Dairy Room, cutting curds, havarti cheese in the making, and dairy sheep feeding at Hidden Springs Creamery.



management. They have strength in the fact the Brenda makes award-winning cheese. Next year's plan for the symposium will take us to

Quebec, Canada! If you have an interest in sheep dairying, mark your calendar. Let's hope for those 60-degree temperatures again!



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Westminster auction arises from the ashes

Among the bright spots in 2015 for Maryland livestock producers was the reopening of the Westminster Livestock Auction in February, closed for 14 months of restoration, rebuilding, renovation, hand wringing, and teeth gnashing after a January 2014 fire. As luck would have it, the grand reopening was on an evening of inclement weather that dampened attendance and livestock sales. It was a slow start, but the owners, Earl and Victoria Gouker, allow they have worked too hard to begrudge a gradual return to their role as the regional epicenter of livestock sales and grassroots commerce.

The Westminster Livestock Auction was an important cog in livestock sales since it was first established in 1935 on Johns Street in Westminster. Sixty years ago, regional sale barns like those in West Friendship, Westminster, Frederick, and Hagerstown were the backbone of the cattle and dairy business. Today the economy has evolved, and the West Friendship and Frederick markets are long since gone. The dairy industry in Maryland is a shadow of its former self, and the bigger operations often truck their animals directly to processing or seek out the aggressive buying atmosphere at the Lancaster Auction or on the Eastern Shore.

The Westminster Livestock Auction moved to its present location in 1965. In 1985 there also was a fire, and in the process of rebuilding it was taken over by Jim and Barb Starliper. After a good run it was sold to Jim Horak in 2004. A few years later, the Goukers bought it. Earl and Victoria have since breathed energy and fresh life into an institution that was in danger of becoming irrelevant.

West-of-the-Bay Maryland was once heavily dependent on cattle, with sheep, goats, and poultry (a marginal afterthought). As large cattle and dairy operations have converted to crops or subdivisions, smaller farms with sheep, goats, and poultry have risen to pursue agricultural lifestyles and take advantage of a locavore and ethnic demand for their product that the population centers had hitherto not experienced. The Westminster Auction has cultivated this market and has actively courted both seller and

buyer. Often volume and prices are higher in Lancaster, and Hagerstown favors beef, but for many the shorter drive to Westminster and the smaller conviviality make it the preferred choice. Many who attend do so for entertainment and camaraderie.

By the time of the second fire, the Westminster Auction was comfortably on a trajectory towards continual improvement and an ever-increasing following. The auction on the Tuesday evening before the fire went on as usual. Late that night a backup battery overcharged and caught fire. The fire climbed wiring and spread to the wood structure. Cars on Route 31 saw flames and called 911. The fire was skillfully extinguished but not before destroying the heart, brains, and soul of the venerable structure. Computers, paper records, electronics, the office, the cantina, the produce mart, and part of the show ring were all gone and there was extensive heat and smoke damage. Because of swift response and no driving wind the pens, chutes, and holding stalls were largely undamaged.

In a perfect world the nature of the fire would warrant insurance coverage. Funds would be made available and the operation would be reconstructed back to its previous state. The insurance company stepped up but everything else got messy. The auction sits on the only commercially zoned land for miles along Rt. 31. It resides alongside a water treatment plant and within sight of suburban developments that have sprung up like mushrooms in the last 15-20 years.

Property adjacent to the auction has options held by McDaniel College either as investment or expansion. In short, the land is worth more without the untidy presence of an old-time livestock auction. Despite the Goukers making their mortgage payments and being good customers to the loan industry, they were encouraged to abandon efforts to rebuild and return the property to the bank. In addition to swimming against that current, simply repairing the structure wasn't an option. Earl and Victoria were looking at transforming a 19th century building to 21st century codes and standards. Fortunately, they didn't see the thumbscrews and waterboarding that awaited them on their path from one set of codes and demands to another. Fire, HVAC, health, safety, handicap accessibility, and building considerations are all worthy pursuits, but in this modern era no one wants to sign off on an inspection with "good enough"; it has to be by the book.

To better oversee construction and because he knows the trade, Earl chose to be his own contractor. Week in and week out, he and



Earl Gouker, in the auction showing [Image by Michael Elben, Carroll County Times]

Victoria had the pleasure of dealing with the demands of county and state inspectors as well as subcontractors and suppliers. Designs and dimensions were insisted upon by officialdom—only to be rescinded after installation. Plywood, drywall, and steel roof trusses were delivered, but didn't match written orders. If one took a weekly pulse, it always seems a likely bet that the Goukers would have their perseverance beaten out of them.

During the immediate aftermath of the fire, the entire auction's function was shut down. The insurance company deemed the loss total, so no business could take place on site.

Later, a livestock buying station was set up by Boyd Beegle. It was rudimentary compared to the auction in full steam, but it provided an honest venue to buy and sell cattle, goats, sheep, and hogs. It allowed some operations that were dependent on the auction to remain in business.

In time, the weekly hay sale resumed as well as other sale events that could take place on the grounds.

To the question "when will you reopen?" the response was a rueful roll of the eyes, a litany of woes, or overly optimistic dates that came and went with reconstruction still in full swing and punch lists un-punched.

Fortunately, on the evening before the fire, a stack of receipts was taken home by an employee for processing. These were the only lists of client phone numbers that survived the disaster. In late January Earl went through the list and called patrons to announce the re-opening in February.

It is wonderful to have the auction back in action. Even though the region becomes more suburban every year, there is a strong tradition of rural life and agricultural pursuits throughout central Maryland. Before the fire, the auction was addressing the needs of livestock and produce growers as well as seasonal garage cleanings and used machinery sales.

With its new reincarnation it will rise to fulfill traditional roles and meet new challenges. The Goukers have demonstrated strength, agility, commitment, and steadfastness. Congratulations to them and good luck. —Peter Austin



This year's Maryland Shearing School will be April 15 and 16, 2016, at the Ridgely Thompson Farm, near Uniontown. During the two-day workshop participants will learn:

- Shearing school set for mid-April**
- the New Zealand method of shearing sheep,
 - how to adjust and care for hand-held shearing machines,
 - how to set and adjust blades on these shearing machines, and
 - how to properly handle wool after shearing.

Each registrant will receive an ASI Shearing Notebook and instructional DVD.

The school is open to anyone 16 years of age or older who possesses "a body and mind with the strength and willingness to learn to shear sheep," with preference given to those who own sheep or have a desire to become a commercial shearer. The registration fee is \$100 per person, which must be paid at time of registration.

The school fills early, says school coordinator Aaron Geiman, an agriscience teacher in Carroll County, so apply early. The registration deadline is April 1. Geiman, who learned to shear in college at Oklahoma State University while working at the college's sheep farm, will be

assisted at the shearing school by professional shearer Emily Chamelin.

Contact Aaron at mdsheepshearingschool@gmail.com, 429 Hook Road, Westminster, Md. 21157, for an application, or download one at sheepandwool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/16-Shearing-Registration.pdf.



Marketing Calendar

Feb. 1

Sheep sale. 2 p.m., Farmers Livestock Exchange, Winchester, VA, 540-667-1023, www.farmerslivestock-va.com; farmerslivestock@hotmail.com

Feb. 15

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival Sheep Shows online registration begins. sheepandwool.org

Mar. 15

Deadline for entries, MS&WF Banner Sheep Sale. Ewes and rams. bannersheepmagazine.com/saleentry.html

Apr. 1

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival Sheep Shows entry deadline. sheepandwool.org

Emily Chamelin shears a Merino ewe.



Maryland news

Shepherd of the Year

Each year, the Maryland Sheep Breeders Association recognizes an individual or couple for their distinguished work within the industry; their unique contribution to the organization itself; their dedication to volunteerism.



Lee and a friend. [Image by Dan Ross, mocoalliance.org/?s=growing+legacy]

The individual we chose for recognition at our October 23, 2015, Annual Meeting was actually the first person who came to mind.

When I became an MSBA board member, this year's honoree was a current board member and was actively volunteering for additional duties above and beyond the board position with a positive voice and positive input.

She currently holds a very active and challenging executive position with the board.

MSBA and the Festival recently had a few organizational concerns. This individual worked diligently with professional mediation skills to help facilitate the two groups back to a solid working team. This person shares a positive and unbiased attitude which allows growth and forward movement for the organization.

She came into breeding sheep from the recommendation of a local shearer who believed her flock was worthy of exhibiting. She immediately began volunteering at the festival's fleece show and sale and pursued a certification as a wool classer. She is one of the few level two certified classer in the region. She eventually took over the job of running the wool show at the festival. It has grown and succeeded under her guidance and direction. She also actively volunteers at the Wool Pool.

She is eager to share her knowledge of sheep, fleeces, and shepherding with everyone. She is always excited at their successes and offers positive, kind words when things perhaps do not work out. If help is needed, she steps up to offer her time, energy, and knowledge to assist in any capacity.

Her attention to her own flock is exemplary. Their wool has improved with dedication to genetics spotlighting the value of sheep products. Her natural colored longwools are making an impact in the show ring.

MSBA is a collective group of shepherds engaged in the volunteer spirit to promote the sheep and wool industry. We are here to encourage, educate, and shepherd not only our sheep but our also our fellow shepherds and the general public. Our chosen recipient exemplifies the meaning of what it means to be a true Shepherd.

For these reasons, this year's Shepherd of the Year is Lee Langstaff.

—Colleen and Mike Histon
2014 Shepherds of the Year

2015 Maryland MIWW winners, from left: Amanda Clougherty, Talbot County, Adult Winner; Kiandra Strickhouser, Frederick County, Preteen 8 to 10 Winner; Caroline Boone, Carroll County, Preteen 11 to 12 Winner; and Wendy Watkins, Harford County, Junior Winner, who competes in Scottsdale, Arizona, this month



The Maryland Make It with Wool committee has scheduled its third annual Sewing with Wool School for two Saturdays, March 12 and 19, in the Baltimore/Howard County area. Youth and adults interested in sewing with wool fabrics are invited to participate. Basic machine sewing skills are needed; wool projects will be assigned by skill level. Participants will be coached by MIWW experts.

Sew with Wool in March

Participants will use their own sewing machines—cleaned and in good working order. Fabric, pattern, some supplies, handouts, and lunch will be included in a registration fee.

Email Maryland MIWW Director, Judy Williamson, judy10503@aol.com, for additional information, including registration materials (available in early to mid-February).

► *continued from page 1*

producers. Just in case you don't have time to read your Festival catalog from cover to cover, here are the highlights of a few.

CLUB LAMB SHOW & SALE. The Club Lamb Show and Sale is where club lambs weighing between 45 and 100 pounds are judged and compete for placings based on meat and muscle quality through a live animal evaluation. These same lambs are then auctioned off according to their placings. Buyers are looking for 4-H/FFA projects or are interested in feeding out for either replacement stock or for the freezer. Entries for this event close April 10.

CLUB LAMB JACKPOT. The club lamb jackpot is a club lamb show where the exhibitors pay a set entry fee and the winner gets the bulk of the premiums (the jackpot). A judge determines the Grand Champion, the Reserve Champion, Class Winners and the Best Maryland Breeder Award.

LAMB CARCASS & PERFORMANCE CONTEST. The purpose of the lamb carcass and performance contest is to recognize producers of superior lambs; to allow producers to compare their lambs with other breeds and producers; to provide producers with carcass data to make breeding and selection decisions; to demonstrate the use of real time ultrasound technology to determine carcass characteristics of live lambs; and to educate producers and the public about lamb production. Contest lambs will be scanned using real time ultrasound to estimate carcass characteristics. Results will be sent to contestants after ultrasound data is evaluated by a professional lab. The entry deadline for this contest is April 19.

SALES AND PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR LAMB PRODUCTS. Do you sell cuts of lamb at a farmers' market or from an on-farm shop? Did you know you can do the same at the Festival? The Home Arts Building provides a venue for sheep producers to sell or promote their locally raised lamb products. For information about booth size and fees, contact Nancy Greene at 410-329-6241 or email greelamb@gmail.com. Lamb cuts are also on the menu at the Festival Farm Market near the main gate, which made its debut last year. Email Jeff White at chestnutcreekfarm@gmail.com if you are interested in having a booth.

ALL BREEDS SHEEP SALE. Initiated in 2014 as a ewe sale, this sale gives you the chance to buy or sell yearling ewes, fall ewe lambs, and spring ewe lambs of any registered breed, including meat breeds. New for 2016, for every



two ewes the consignor is eligible to sell a ram or ram lamb. There will be a pre-sale show on Friday at 7 p.m., with the sale itself starting at 6 p.m. on Saturday. Entries close March 15. See www.bannersheepmagazine.com for entry information, or contact Mara Mullinix, DVM at 301-865-4224.

SHEPHERDS' SEMINARS. This year's seminars will benefit the intermediate to advanced shepherd. Some of the sessions in the works are: seminars on parasitology and ovine reproduction taught by veterinarian Andrea Loar; seminars on reducing the risk of OPP infection and using crossbreeding to improve your flock by Dr. Greg Leymaster; and a seminar on nutrition for wool production by Martin Dally. Complete details and registration information will be posted on www.sheepandwool.org in February.

SHEEP EQUIPMENT AUCTION. Do you have equipment that you no longer use, or do you have your eye on some special equipment but hesitate to buy it new? The answer is our consignment auction for sheep equipment and supplies, shears, feeders, lambing pens, show equipment, etc. Consignments will be accepted on Friday from noon to 4 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon, and Sunday from 9 to 11 a.m., with the sale starting at 1 p.m. on Sunday. The commission on this auction is 20%, which goes towards the operating expenses of the Festival. For more information contact Joe Frey, 301-991-5826, freysheepfarm@aol.com, or George Harkins, 443-504-9188, blacksheepam_i@hotmail.com.

Watch www.sheepandwool.org for information on the above events as well as all of the other Festival activities. Information for the 2016 Festival will be updated to the website by the beginning of February. The Festival catalog, which will be mailed free of charge to all MSBA members in mid-March, will also contain complete details.

—Kris Thorne, MSWF Office Manager

Special shows at 2016 MS&WF: National Bluefaced Leicester Show, Regional Romney Show. [Images from Rob Collins via Flickr, and romneysheep.co.nz]

Dates to Note

Feb. 14. Sheep Show online entry begins.

Feb. 14. Fiber Arts and Shepherd Workshops online entry begins.

Mar. 15. All Breed Sheep Show & Sale entry deadline.

Mar. 30. 6:30 p.m. Committee dinner

Apr. 1. Sheep show entry deadline.

Apr. 19. Lamb Carcass & Performance Contest entry deadline.

Apr. 27. Fleece Show & Sale entry deadline.

May 1. Set-up day

May 7 & 8. Festival!

May 25. 7 p.m. Wrap-up meeting

For more info: office@sheepandwool.org



Last year at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, the center stage held over a dozen youngsters each armed with either a spinning wheel or a drop spindle, and a batt of carded Romney wool.

Spin on! Youth explore the craft at festival competition

This competition has shrunk and grown over the years; I hope to make it grow each year from here on out.

Fact is, I believe very firmly that teaching youngsters the crafts our forefathers (and foremothers!) worked hard at are worth keeping alive today. How many kids under the age of 18 know what it takes to raise a flock of breeding sheep, properly care for them, shear them, and process the wool? I know several who do and am happy to teach others. I think it's that important.

Each year at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival we gather these youngsters and guide them through the competition, encouraging them, and providing verbal advice. The spinning is up to them. I am amazed at the amount of quality yarn they can create in just 15 minutes.

The yarn they make is skeined, measured, and judged in several categories from finest to fattest to lumpiest, and of course, lengthiest!

The best part of this competition is no one loses. All leave with knowledge, advice, and perhaps some leftover wool.



Amber McKay competes in her first junior spinning competition at the Festival.

We spinners know that spinning is not a dying trade (or craft or art—call it what you want). But few in our ever-more-urban world know what it is, or where yarn comes from, or how it can be made by hand instead of at the mill. When I mentioned to someone that I was teaching a spinning class they looked at me and made the motion of bicycle pedals. Um, definitely not! While the yarn that comes from some of the area mills can be lovely, it's not handspun—and handspun yarn is special indeed!

As this year's festival approaches, I would like to encourage any youngster who is raising a flock of wool sheep or is just interested in the process of taking raw fleece and turning it into yarn to contact me. I can try to pair you with a mentor in your area and teach you this lovely craft so it stays alive for the next generation at least.

—Patricia Sanville

Patricia can be reached at 240-357-1437.



Michelle Reilly, 61, owner of Triple R Farm and its registered Romney sheep, and a founding member of the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, died suddenly from heart failure on Friday, October 9, 2015, at her home while caring for her horses.

A beloved ceramics arts teacher at Frederick High School for more than 20 years, Michelle filled the rest of her life teaching children many skills.

She was active in the U.S. Pony Club and the Mounted Games Association of America. She was an assistant softball coach, active with FFA horse judging. Michelle's MSWF booth full of Romney fiber and yarns was an anchor point in the exhibition hall.

Michelle leaves behind her husband, Jack Maurer, two children, Gabriel Reilly and wife, Kristen; and Christine Mariano and husband, Jason, and seven grandchildren.



Maryland Sheep News is published four times a year by the Maryland Sheep Breeders Association, Inc., and is sent to MSBA members. See back page for membership application.

Ad Rates

Size	Specs (inches)	Price
Full page	7.5 x 9.5	\$95, \$320/year
Half vert.	3.3 x 9.5	\$60, \$200/year
Half horiz.	7.5 x 4.25	
Third	7.5 x 3	\$45, \$150/year
Quarter	3.3 x 4.25	\$30, \$100/year
Biz card	3.3 x 2	\$15, \$50/year
Classified	230 characters	\$10

Acceptable formats: PDF, jpeg.

Issue deadlines for ads and copy:

Winter Dec. 15 Summer June 25
Spring March 25 Fall Sept. 15

Send copy to :

Martha Polkey, Editor
sheep@budiansky.com

Send payment to:

Treasurer, MSBA
1126 Slingluff Road
New Windsor, MD 21776

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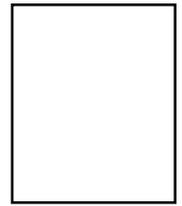
Ex Officio

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Maryland Sheep Breeders Association
1126 Slingsluff Road
New Windsor, MD 21776



Maryland Sheep Breeders Association:
marylandsheepbreeders.org

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival:
sheepandwool.org

like us!



The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association meets every other month (see page 2 for dates). Meetings are open to members. For minutes of meetings and meeting times, contact the MSBA Secretary, Peter Austin, jha111@verizon.net.

Membership application MARYLAND SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please include me in the MSBA Breeders Directory.

Web URL: _____

Breed(s): _____ No. Ewes: _____

What do you offer?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breeding stock | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-H club lambs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lamb for the freezer | <input type="checkbox"/> Ram leasing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fleeces | <input type="checkbox"/> Roving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yarn | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Finished products & wearables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shearing services | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (attach details) |

Send form and \$25 check made payable to MSBA to Kris Thorne, Membership Chair, 1130 Martin Drive, Westminster, MD 21157

Join *the*

MARYLAND SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

...and become part of an active organization that sponsors the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival—the premier event of its kind in the nation—the Maryland Wool Pool, Sheep Shearing School, various youth activities, and a variety of educational functions.

Here are sponsored events and activities for 2016:

- April 15-16: Beginning Shearing School
- May 7-8: MD Sheep & Wool Festival (Check out the free Shepherd Seminars and Shepherd & Fiber Arts Workshops)
- June 15: Maryland Wool Pool (Timonium, State Fairgrounds)
- October 21 (tentative): Annual Meeting & Dinner

As a member you will:

- join an active and friendly community of shepherds.
- receive the quarterly *Maryland Sheep News* and keep up on events, get educational articles, and have a local place to advertise.
- pay a reduced commission on all fleeces sold at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival Fleece Show & Sale.
- be mailed a free copy of the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival catalog.

Annual membership/subscription fee: \$25. (If you bring wool to the Maryland Wool Pool, membership in MSBA is deducted on wool sales over \$40.) The membership year runs from October through September. Dues for membership received prior to June 1, 2016, will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2016. Dues received on or after June 1 (including dues deducted at the Maryland Wool Pool and the MD Sheep & Wool Festival) will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2017.