



Maryland sheep news

Newsletter of the
**MARYLAND
 SHEEP BREEDERS
 ASSOCIATION**

WINTER 2017

Festival to charge admission after 43 years

The MSBA board of directors voted on January 17 to begin charging an admission fee for the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.

“We are proud that for 43 years we have been able to provide the Festival experience free of charge to the public,” said MSBA President Lee Langstaff. The continued growth and increasing complexity of the festival, even with the generous voluntary donations of the past several years, pushed the board to approve the request from the Festival Committee.

“We’ve been teetering on the edge of overwhelming our dedicated volunteers, who are the heart of the festival,” said Festival Chair Gwen Handler.

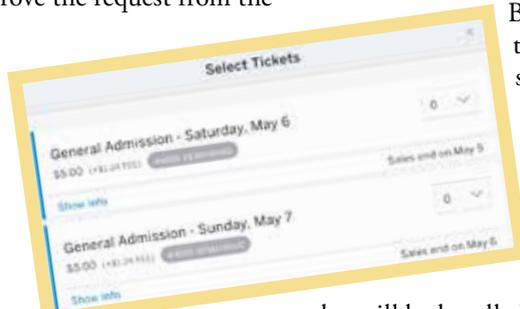
Important things to know:

- The admission fee is \$5 per day (adults only); everyone under 18 will be admitted free.

- Exempted from the fee will be MSBA members, volunteers, Sheep Show exhibitors, vendors, and other individuals as determined by the Festival Committee.

- Gates will now open at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday. This will be strictly enforced. Early entry will no longer be permitted.

- Gates will open at 7 a.m. on Sunday to accommodate those wishing to attend the Breakfast Buffet and Sheep-to-Shawl Contest. The official start time will still be 8:30.



- Tickets may be purchased in advance at <https://sheepandwool.eventbrite.com>. A processing fee of \$1.24 per ticket will be added. (Class registrations also will be handled through this site.)

- Cash or checks only are accepted at the gate.



Romneys will be highlighted in the Featured Breed Showcase Tent in May. The American Romney Breeders Association is donating prize money for Best Romney Skein, Best Romney Skein by a Junior, and Best Romney Knitted Article awards (Skein & Garment Competition), as well as the Best Natural Colored Romney Breed Class Fleece and Best White Romney Breed Class Fleece in the Fleece Show. There will be a National Romney Sale as part of the All Breeds Sheep Sale on Saturday evening. [Image by Gretchen Frederick, Solitude Wool]

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President's Message

Lee Langstaff
2016-17 MSBA President

So here we are in 2017, and to say changes are afoot in the world would certainly be an understatement. Close to home changes are afoot for MSBA as well. I'd like to highlight two key changes that are particularly significant for us:

First, I want to report a recent decision by the MSBA Board of Directors to accept a proposal from the Festival Committee to initiate an admission fee at the 2017 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival. This has been bandied about on and off for several years, and was a difficult decision.

While there have long been arguments in favor of doing this, we've been proud of the fact that for 43 years the Festival has been free. Voluntary donations for the past several years have provided critical support and we are very grateful for the generosity of those who have chosen to contribute.

But the continued success and growth of the Festival have made the job of "putting it on" bigger and more costly, even with the enormous and dedicated volunteer corps who are at the heart of it.

We believe that a modest admission fee of five dollars per adult (18 and older) will enable us to deliver and continually improve the Festival for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone involved. Watch for more information on the Festival website as we work out the details.

Second, as was presented at the Annual Dinner in October, we are looking at changes for the Maryland Wool Pool. The Board of Directors voted to suspend the Wool Pool for 2017 while we take some time to consider the best role for MSBA in helping producers connect with wool buyers.

Our Wool Pool director for the past 3 years, Emily Chamelin-Hickman, is resigning (see her letter in this issue). She has done a great job, and has brought to our attention the need for change. We would welcome the involvement of any of

you who have an interest to join a small group or Committee to look at this question and develop recommendations. You may contact me or any MSBA Board member to indicate your interest in participating. Stay tuned for next steps.

In addition, I want to note that the new MSBA website is very close to being ready to go! There will be a member directory on the site—and any member who chooses to can post their profile on the site. The directory will be searchable by name, products, sheep breeds, etc., and can include photographs and your own logo or avatar. It will also be possible to join or renew memberships online. We will notify all members directly as soon as it is ready to go live.

Finally, I want to thank outgoing MSBA 2016 Directors, Dawn Richardson, Gwen Handler, and Michael Histon (Jeff White has stepped up to be our Vice President), and welcome our 2019 Directors Larry Fisher (former vice president), Laurie Hynson, Andrew Keller, and Anne Shroeder. I'm confident that the current Board will do us proud.

Meanwhile—happy lambing to those of you in that mode. May your rams, ewes and lambs be healthy and your fleeces gorgeous!



"A handful of hay for you, a handful for you...." It's always fascinating to see fashion photographers' idea of barn chores! This one's from the Woolrich catalog.



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.

Contact the editor for permission to reprint articles.

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.

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Send copy to :
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1126 Slingluff Road
New Windsor, MD 21776

The American Forage and Grassland Council's annual meeting came East to Virginia in January, and brought with it a speaker with a powerful message about collaboration between ranchers, farmers, and conservationists that is helping transform fragile landscapes in the West.

Former archaeologist and Sierra Club activist Courtney White says he "dropped out of the conflict industry" in 1997 to co-found the Quivira Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to building bridges between ranchers, conservationists, public land managers, scientists, and others around practices that improve land health.

Decades of pitched battles over natural resources and land use on public lands have given way to cooperation to implement models of sustainable use of public and private lands; the shift of conservation and scientific strategies from "protection" alone to include restoration; and the expanding role of cooperative efforts to move beyond resource conflicts.

This transformation has been led by what White calls "the radical center," which began with a 2003 meeting of 20 ranchers, environmentalists, and scientists: "We met to find a way to make ourselves worthy of the land we all love," White said.

Many of the projects that have come from the coalition are broadly applicable to Eastern



landscapes as well: low-cost structures to reverse erosion of stream and riverbanks, and use of targeted and rotational grazing to revitalize soils, increase plant diversity, and sequester carbon.

The use of "induced meandering" slows down the flow of stream water, widens incised channels, deposits sediments, broadens floodplains, provides seedbeds where riparian vegetation can take root, and raises water tables. Controlled grazing on public lands has improved soil health and plant diversity.

Today, White's work focuses on building economic and ecological resilience on working landscapes, with a special emphasis on "carbon ranching" and the new agrarian movement. His books *Grass, Soil, Hope: A Journey Through Carbon Country* and *Two Percent Solutions for the Planet* describe how these progressive ideas are being put into practice across the nation.

Grass, Soil, Hope: A 'radical center' for environmental improvement

The image for the Coalition's 2012 conference theme: "Using food and stewardship to build soil and fight climate change." [Image from the Quivira Coalition]

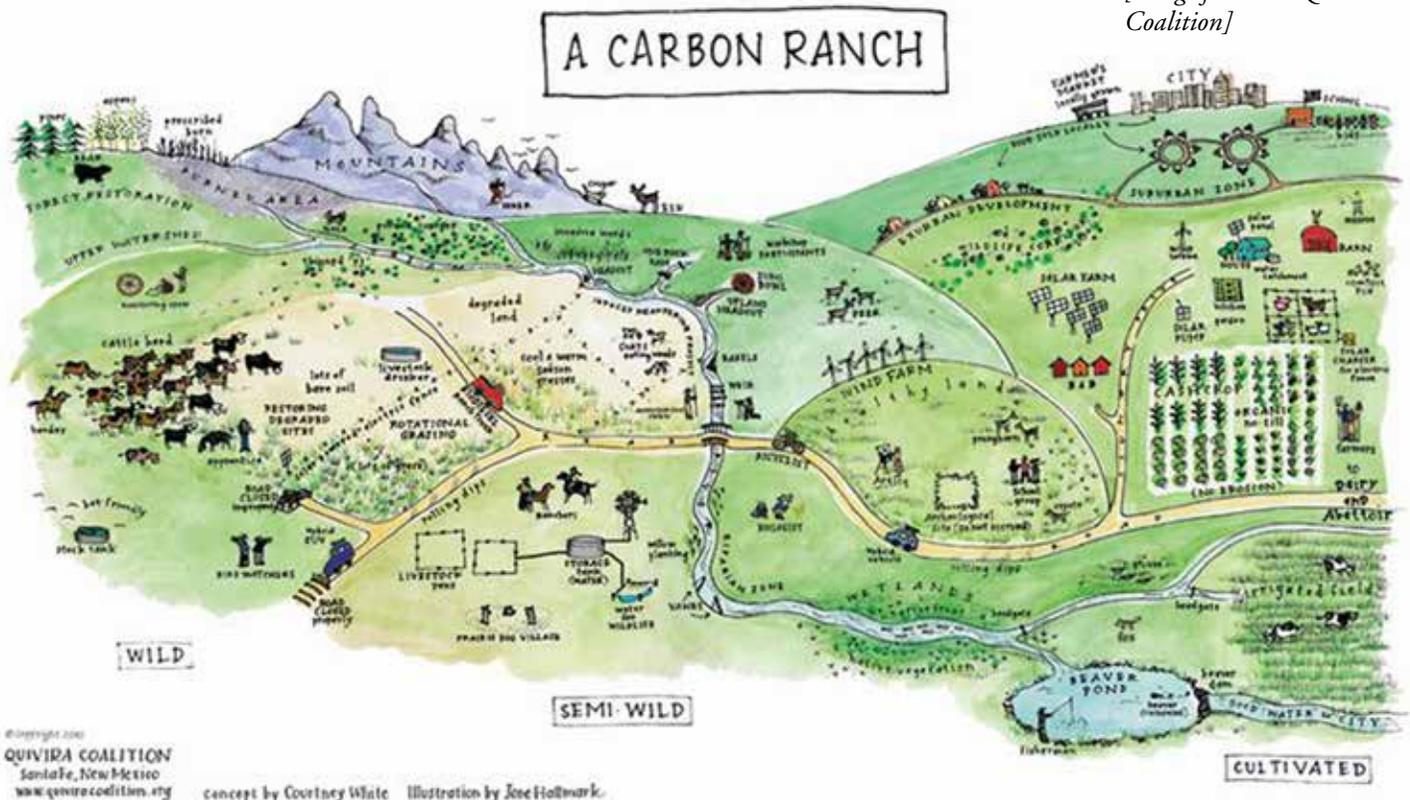




Image by Barbara Klein, of Nancy Cox Starkey's Kep

Grazing solar farms

In 2007 North Carolina became the first state in the Southeast to enact a mandatory renewable energy and energy efficiency portfolio standard (REPS) into law. It is now a leading state in the development of solar electricity generation facilities, frequently called “solar farms.” Many landowners, including farmers, are leasing land to solar companies for construction of solar farms.

Maintaining vegetation under the panels reduces their environmental impact, but this resource must be managed. Because mowing is an expensive option for the solar companies, many have hired shepherds or offered free leases to graze these facilities.

Free grass, a good perimeter fence, and shelter—what could be better? Former Cooperative Extension animal specialist and farmer Johnny Rogers told attendees at the American Grassland and Forage Conference in Roanoke about the challenges that come with the opportunity.

First, many shepherds must travel a considerable distance to the solar farms, so hauling animals and equipment is a cost.

Second, a water source is not always available, so hauling water or digging a well is another cost. (Some solar companies assist shepherds with this expense.) Rogers leases a farm adjacent to the solar farm his sheep graze on, so was able to install hydrants just outside the perimeter and pipe water to troughs at several locations inside the fence.

Gathering and handling sheep on a solar farm poses challenges, for sheep will move under and between panels when being driven. (Don't forget the well-trained border collie, and/or well-trained sheep.) And, you'll need to set up handling facilities to work the flock.

There are things beyond the shepherd's control—one of them being solar company personnel. Forging good relations and establishing good communication is vital. The company may want to know each time you visit the flock on site, and you will want to know when they plan maintenance or other activities there.

Solar company employees are not graziers, and devising a coordinated plan for establishing a productive greensward that effectively suppresses tall weeds (that may shade parts of the panels) and using best pasture practices is important.

The size of solar farms varies (15–1,000 acres); many are in the 30- to 50-acre range. Shepherds must carefully determine the appropriate stocking rate—which will be considerably lower than regular pasture systems, Rogers notes.

If the area is on the large side, rotational grazing of subdivisions can be achieved with temporary fence, but fencing around solar panels can be a challenge and will increase labor costs.

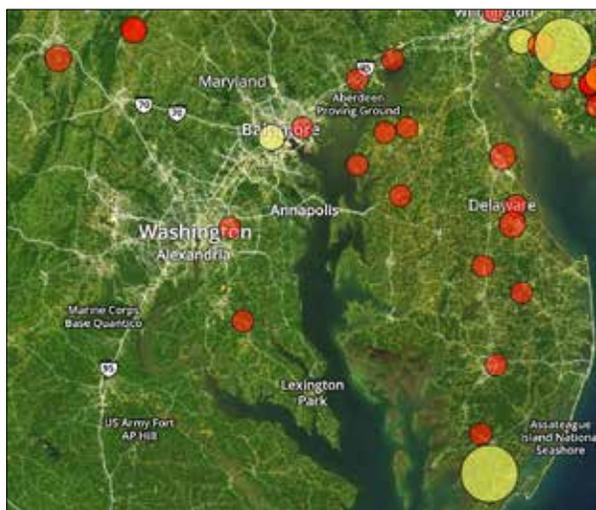
While tall perimeter fences are constructed to keep out "unauthorized personnel," Rogers says, predators may not be reading those posted signs, and shepherds need to be watchful about the potential for predators tunnelling under those (often chain-link) fences.

Sheep grazing solar farms is a new wrinkle that shepherds can consider as an option for expanding their operations, as another way to convert solar energy to productive use. Rogers looks forward to more research to determine best management practices for this production system.

—Martha Polkey

Below left: Solar farm projects in Maryland {Image from Solar Energy Industries Association, <http://www.seia.org/map/majorprojectsmap.php>} Red dots are operating; yellow are under development.

Below right: Rogers's division of the farm for rotational grazing. Blue dots show water sources.



Hundreds of years ago on what we now call the Eastern Piedmont, fires regularly burnt the understory (some set by native Americans), grasses grew, bison and deer came through to graze upon them, tearing up some small trees but leaving large ones, and the result was a savannah-like landscape that made for a balanced ecosystem.

Then came European settlers and the advance of modern agriculture and a controlled system of open pastures to maximize sun exposure for pasture species. “Nobody puts trees in their pastures,” said John Fike, associate professor of crop and soil environmental sciences at Virginia Tech, four years ago. “The producers have been working for 30 generations to clear those trees.”

Fike and graduate student Gabe Pent have been working since 2013 to prove that trees on grazing land—“actually how nature prefers to be,” says Pent—is a very sound agricultural practice.

Silvopasture, the purposeful integration of trees and forage, whereby both are managed to optimize system outputs, is of growing interest in the mid-Atlantic region. Existing pastures can be converted to silvopastures—and existing wooded areas also can be converted to silvopastures.

Such integrated systems offer opportunities to address several production and environmental issues at once. They can:

- increase productivity and resource use efficiencies in pasture systems,



*Sheep in the shade on a hot summer day, under black walnut trees at a Virginia Tech research station.
[Image by Gabe Pent]*

- improve the value of timber stands in degraded/unmanaged woodlots,
- mitigate stress to livestock, buffering animals and forages alike from climatic extremes,
- address environmental concerns, because trees can capture additional nutrients lost from cool-season forages and sequester carbon, and
- reduce livestock use of streams and surface waters for cooling purposes.

In spring, forages grown under trees often “green up” sooner because trees buffer the environment by reducing wind speeds and

**Silvopastures
— what nature
intended?**

Nudging nature toward watershed restoration in the West

The watershed improvement tools the Quivira Coalition has employed come from retired U.S. Forest Service biologist Bill Zeedyk, “reincarnated as a riparian restoration specialist.” His book (coauthored with Van Clothier), *Let the Water Do the Work: Induced Meandering, an Evolving Method for Restoring Incised Channels*, lays out the science behind the techniques.

The tools include:

- one-rock dams/weirs – grade-control structures composed of wooden pickets or rocks that are literally one-rock high and simulate a ‘riffle’ effect in creeks.
- baffles/deflectors – wedge-shaped structures that steer water flow.
- vanes – a row of posts that project upstream to deflect water away from eroding banks.
- headcut control structures/rock bowls – to slow or stop the relentless march of erosion up a creek and trap water, so vegetation can grow.

An article on Zeedyk’s work is at <http://www.resilience.org/stories/2014-03-06/thinking-like-a-creek>. A presentation on some projects and their results can be viewed at <http://>

quiviracoalition.org/images/pdfs/1025-Leaving_It_Better_Presentation-Zeedyk.pdf

*Bill Zeedyk at a stream restoration project
[Image from the Quivira Coalition]*



Management ►

increasing temperatures around the forage canopy. In summer, trees can have energy-sparing effects on forages (e.g., cooling from shade reduces costs of maintenance during periods of excessive heat or during large swings in temperature), and this can reduce the summer production slump effects that are often seen in cool-season pastures. So the effects of lower light can be partly offset by the reduced stress on forage plants. Lower temperatures can have positive effects on forage nutritive value and digestibility.

silvo - a derivation of the Latin *silva*, woods or forest.

pasture - acreages on which are grown plant species for grazing.

SILVOPASTURE: actively managed tree-forage-livestock systems.

Much more information on silvopasture systems is available at <http://www.ext.vt.edu/agriculture/silvopasture.html>

Trees can also improve nutrient cycling in pastures by moving nutrients deep in the soil up to the surface via root exudates and leaf drop. They also increase the system's nutrient-use efficiency by capturing nutrients such as nitrogen that are readily leached below the forage rooting zone; this, in turn, supports more rapid tree growth.

Adoption of these systems has been slow in the past, partly because producers lack information regarding design, management, productivity, and economic impact—and have had few places to view its implementation, says Fike. “Our team is working to develop research and demonstration sites around the state and to partner with innovative first-adopters to show producers and land owners how these systems might be assembled and managed for greater economic and environmental outcomes.”

At a Virginia Tech experiment station and other locations in the state, research on two silvopasture systems—black walnut and honey locust trees—has been underway for the past 4 years. Walnut trees, late to leaf out in the spring, early to drop foliage in the fall—allow good growth of cool season grasses before the heat



A forested area converted to silvopasture. [Image from www.paulsmiths.edu/people/files/2016/06/Photo-Guide-to-Northeastern-United-States-Silvopasture-1lmctmt.pdf]

of summer. The walnut crop provides another source of income for the farm in the shorter term, and in the longer term provides a timber harvest.

The small leaves and airy habit of honey locusts produces light shade that allows forage plants to grow continuously. This leguminous tree fixes nitrogen in the soil—and improved thornless varieties produce an abundance of nutritious pods that are consumed by livestock in the fall. (These cultivars, which include Millwood, Calhoun, Hershey, and Ashworth, are not those sold by nurseries as lawn trees, which are selected to produce few or no pods.)

Research by Fike and Pent shows that providing pasture shade means lambs graze longer—like sitting longer at a sidewalk café under an umbrella on a hot day. “If they have shade, they stay in it, they move with it,” said Pent. “This study showed that the shaded sheep gained about a third more weight than the control group.”



The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council is offering four "fencing schools" in March and April. The cost for the day-long event is \$30 and includes lunch and materials.

The workshop covers basics for woven wire, high-tensile, wood, and electric fencing, needs for different species, economics, and options

for rented land. The majority of the day will be hands on, with participants working in groups on layout, post-driving, bracing, knot tying, splices, insulator installation and more. The workshop closest to Maryland is April 5 in Berryville. For registration materials go to <http://vaforages.org/event/2017-fencing-school-stuart-va>.

Training for FAMACHA® scoring, an effective tool for assessing anemia due to barber pole worm infections, is now available online, through a Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant awarded to the University of Rhode Island. The certification can be obtained through a four-step process:

1. View the 2-hour video on Integrated Parasite Control and the 30-minute video, “Why and How To Do FAMACHA® Scoring” at <http://web.uri.edu/sheepngoat/video>, and complete an online video summary afterward. Email project staff (see bottom of page for contact information) to obtain the link to the summary and to notify when you have completed it. Project staff will review responses to the online post-video summary and follow up with producers if any clarification is needed.

2. Practice the COVER, PUSH, PULL, POP! technique demonstrated in the online video, Why and How To Do FAMACHA® Scoring. This technique allows you to correctly use your FAMACHA® card for anemia scoring.

Need a refresher?

Did you take a FAMACHA® course a while back but need a refresher on the technique? The 30-minute video at <http://web.uri.edu/sheepngoat/video> provides a good review of the “cover, push, pull, pop” technique for exposing the eye membrane.

3. Make and email project staff a video demonstrating your mastery of the COVER, PUSH, PULL, POP! technique following the instructions below. If the video file is too large to send in an email, project staff will set up a temporary share folder to upload the file to using Google Drive or Dropbox, etc.

4. Project staff will follow up through phone and/or email, as needed, to discuss and ensure proper technique. Live video sessions using Skype™ or FaceTime can be used when needed.

When you have completed the four-step online training program listed above, you will receive a certificate of competence in the use of the FAMACHA® anemia scoring system. The certificate will enable participants to purchase a FAMACHA® card through the University of Rhode Island. There is no charge for the course, the card costs \$13 (but the price can change).

A PDF with complete instructions for the online course is available online: http://web.uri.edu/sheepngoat/files/Online-FAMACHA-Scoring-instructions_1.10.2017.pdf. Email urisheepngoat@etal.uri.edu for more information. The project is led by Dr. Katherine Petersson, animal scientist and project leader at the University of Rhode Island’s Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Science (401-874-2951), with the assistance of research associate Holly Burdett.



Scoring sheep alone and don't have three hands? Use a hole-punch and elastic cord to keep your card right where you need it.

A recent study at Clemson University showed that ewes consuming Kentucky 31 tall fescue seed in the third trimester of gestation had reduced uterine, placental, and lamb weights.

The endophyte in this fescue produces ergot alkaloids that decrease reproductive rates, milk production, growth rates, and weaning weights of livestock.

In the study 36 Suffolk ewes carrying twins at 35 days of gestation were assigned to one of two treatments: endophyte-free tall fescue seed or endophyte-infected seed from the 35th to 85th day (second trimester) and/or the 86th to 133rd day (third trimester) of gestation. Caesarean sections were then performed.

There was no difference in placental or overall fetal weight based on feeding toxic fescue in the

second trimester. But ewes receiving endophyte-infected seed in the third trimester had 14% lower uterine weights and 23% lower total placental weights. Overall fetal weight of those ewes’ lambs was 10% less than the lambs of ewes fed endophyte-free seed.

The study also showed that uterine, placental, and fetal weights of lambs of ewes receiving endophyte-infected seed in the second trimester but endophyte-free seed in the third trimester were minimally affected.

Source: Duckett, S., Britt, J. L., Miller, M. F. Jr., and Andrae, J. G. (2017). Impact of Fescue Toxicosis During Mid- to Late Gestation on Fetal Growth. *Proceedings of the American Forage and Grassland Council*. www.afgc.org/proceedings/2017/Andrae_J_OSFL16_IS.pdf

Recent study quantifies late-gestation fescue toxicosis effects on lambs



A small world of U.S. dairy sheep

Colleen Histon is MSBA Treasurer, and with her husband Michael operates Shepherd's Manor Creamery in New Windsor. They sponsored the 2012 DSANA conference.

U.S.-produced sheep's cheese represents a very small slice of the cheese world as we know it. Visit a dairy case in your local grocery store and the few sheep's milk cheeses you find are likely to come from Spain, France, or Italy. Why is that?

Until several decades ago, few Americans had ever considered milking sheep to make cheese. There was little information here on producing sheep's milk, and even less available equipment—unlike in Europe. France is well known for the cheese made in the town of Roquefort, as well as Tomme cheeses made in the French Alps. Spain produces the best Manchego, Italy the Pecorinos, and Greece the best Feta cheese.

Within the United States there are few sheep dairies. Early on—22 years ago—they joined together to found the Dairy Sheep Association of North America (DSANA). The organization represents a fair number of U.S. sheep dairy farms—about 125 dairies, broadly distributed throughout the nation. Only a small number of those make cheese; the rest produce and sell the milk to the cheese-makers.

The Spooner Research Station at the University of Wisconsin–Madison has been the backbone of DSANA. The station has helped sheep dairies with clinical trials and other research. Each year at the symposium, the center's researchers have made presentations of their work to help farmers better the nation's dairy sheep husbandry.

Sheep's milk producers reacted with sorrow and concern at the news last year that the University announced it would no longer fund the research center or aid DSANA; the center was closed down.

DSANA is working to find other financing and research facilities to continue this very important support to the nation's dairy sheep industry. Of critical importance is continuation of the effort (coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture) to import semen from France to bring new genetics to the United States—approved a few months ago. No matter what, we as dairy sheep farmers know that the future of DSANA is still in good hands due to the dedication of many enthusiastic dairy sheep farmers.

In the state of Maryland, cheese makers also are joining forces.

Several years ago I met Alicia Clugh, whose love for home cheese making inspired her to initiate a cheese-making contest at the Montgomery County Fair. She sought me out to enter her small contest. It was my first year at cheese making, and I was certainly curious about how one of the few cheese wheels I made that year would be received. One judge was from a local cheese shop and the other a judge for the American Cheese Society. Their feedback was invaluable.

From that a relationship was forged. Alicia attended our yearly shearing days and learned more and more about our world of dairy sheep. Last year together we arranged for a group of interested folks to merge together and form the Maryland Cheese Guild (www.mdcheese.org). The guild is moving forward to engage all Maryland cheese makers to join together in an organization that celebrates the art of cheese—some of them commercial operations, some hobbyists, and some just appreciative of a home-grown cheese plate. We welcome individuals, business owners, chefs, wineries, and anyone who would simply love to be a part of this group.

We are currently planning a tour of Maryland dairies, and also forming cheese-making classes. The Montgomery County Fair's contest takes place the last Saturday afternoon of fair week. It's in the Home Arts Building and is a great way to experience cheese making on a small hobby level.

Also, for the past two years, during the third weekend of September, dairy farms that represent the Maryland Cheese Guild have gathered to share and sell their cheeses at the Maryland Wine Festival. We are all together under one tent representing the finest cheeses of Maryland. This offers a great way to experience many different cheeses in one location and speak with the cheese makers. Another great experience for the cheese lover!

The guild aspires to gain as much enthusiasm and momentum locally as DSANA has brought for the past two decades!

All of the events will be posted on the website in the coming months and we encourage all who are interested to join us. —Colleen Histon

Is Sheep Milk Production in Your Future?

This upcoming webinar is at 8 p.m. on March 14. The presenter is Dr. Dave Thomas, retired professor of Sheep Management and Genetics from the University of Wisconsin. The host is Jay Parsons from Optimal Ag. The sponsor is ASI's Let's Grow Program. To register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2962937926909717505>.

A national perspective

An article in the December 27, 2016, *New York Times* considers the national challenges U.S. sheep cheese producers face, competing with international genetics and economies of scale. Access the article at www.nytimes.com/2016/12/27/dining/american-sheep-cheese.html?_r=0

Working with Your Meat Processor is a new publication available through the National Center for Appropriate Technology's ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture program.

Getting the best from your meat processor

In a podcast introducing the publication (go to <https://attra.ncat.org/> audio and scroll down to the title), author Linda Coffey (who raises sheep and goats)

says the impetus for the publication came after she forwarded a producer's query on the Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network listserv to a group of processors.

Coffey says she sees these complaints often—"I didn't get all my meat back." She quickly had about 20 responses from processors—and "they were passionate!"

The processors expressed frustration with producers' lack of knowledge about how the cuts they choose and the quality of the animal they bring for slaughter affect the yield of the meat products they receive. The publication's aim is to increase producer knowledge of processor operations, with tips on building a good relationship with that service provider. The publication can be downloaded free from <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=567>.

Another publication with clear and detailed information on assessing live lambs is *Putting a Hand on Them—How to Tell When Your Lamb Is Finished* (<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=459>)—and for visual learners there's a video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbBrR3UGvsY.



Dates for the graded sheep sales at the Farmers' Livestock Exchange in Winchester, Virginia, have been set (<http://farmerslivestockva.com/index.php/schedule>).

- February 6
- April 10 (Easter and Greek Orthodox Easter are April 16)

- Graded sale dates**
- May 22
 - June 19 (Ramadan is May 26-June 25)
 - August 21

- August 28 (Eid al-Adha is August 31)
- September 4 (Ethiopian New Year is Sept. 11)
- December 18

A promising development: "In Appalachia's Foothills, a Leaner Textile Industry Rises" tells the story of Catawba County, North Carolina, a former textile production powerhouse decimated by offshoring, which is enjoying a renaissance fueled by innovation, high-tech materials, automation, and custom work. Textiles (with fewer jobs) are coming back.

"The state-of-the art plant in 1990 had line shafts with a leather belt running the knitting machines. Now we have robots closing the toes and that eliminates half the plant," says Dan St. Louis, executive director of the nonprofit Manufacturing Solutions Center, a division of the Catawba Valley Community College.

Mill revival in North Carolina

Read the article at <https://undark.org/article/catawba-county-fabric-textile-industry>

4TH ANNUAL MARYLAND SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL ALL BREEDS SALE

Featuring **NATIONAL ROMNEY SHOW & SALE**
Howard County Fairgrounds • West Friendship, MD

SHOW: Friday, May 5 • 7 PM SALE: Saturday, May 6 • 6 PM
JUDGE: Brian Faris, TX AUCTIONEER: Terry Jacobs, MD



Champion Lincoln & Top-Selling
\$1250 Ewe, Sold to J&D Fattoria, MD



Pine Lane Farm, MI Champion Karakul Ewe
Sold for \$400 to Yahya Dogru, NJ



2016
Little Hooves Romneys, NJ Champion Natural Colored Ewe, Sold to Sabrina Chester, VA for \$625



Mendenhall Wool Ranch, CA Champion Merino Ewe, Sold to Morgan & Anna Lawther, OH for \$500

ENTRIES DUE MARCH 15

Yearling Ewes • Fall Ewe Lambs • Spring Ewe Lambs • Rams
 (to sell a ram, you must enter 2 ewes)

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



Banner
Sale Management Service

Local Contact:
 Mara Mullinix, DVM
 301/865-4224
www.bannersheepmagazine.com

P.O. Box 500
 Cuba, IL 61427
 309/785-5058



Whatever the disposition of the 2017 Wool Pool, a list of sales options will be distributed to the membership in the spring. I am confident that wool sales options will be available to members and I am happy to discuss options with anyone with concerns heading into the spring.

With that being said I want to thank everyone who has volunteered at the Wool Pool and assisted me in the implementation of this program over the last few years. Operating the pool requires a lot of time and skilled labor and I am very grateful to the dedicated, talented and willing workers who helped make the pool a success every year.

I am looking forward to continuing to serve on the Maryland Sheep Breeders Board of Directors and in my new role as your official representative to ASI and a member of the ASI Wool Council.

Most of all, I want to thank all the individuals who have made the Wool Pool the great program that it has been over the past 59 years. So many great minds and a huge amount of labor has been invested in this program and our pool has touched so many lives. I want to thank every one of you who had a hand in it.

Please look to the next newsletter for a comprehensive list of nearby wool pools and wool buyers. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about how to market your wool clip (443-244-2702, aeriadairy@yahoo.com).
—Emily Chamelin Hickman

Wool pool director steps down

It has been such a pleasure and an honor to serve as the Wool Pool Director for the past few years. But time brings change, and this year brings a new change in my life brought about by finally buying some land and building a barn large enough to store wool in.

As a result of my expanding shearing business I feel the proper thing to do is to step down as your wool pool director so that I can better focus on my work and better serving my clients, including acting as a wool buyer on behalf of Groenewold Fur and Wool Company.

As was noted at the MSBA annual dinner meeting in October, MSBA is looking at options regarding the status of the Maryland Wool Pool for 2017 and beyond and how best to assist its members to connect to viable markets for their wool clips.



Ashley Hobbs in Louisville with her Grand Champion All American awards.



Montgomery County's own Ashley Hobbs was the first-place winner of the National Skillathon individual competition at the North American International Livestock Exposition in November 2016 in Louisville, Kentucky.

She placed 1st Overall, 2nd in Evaluation, 6th in Quality Assurance, and 10th in Identification. She earned the designation of Grand Champion All American at the National 4-H Livestock Skillathon Competition.

Ashley is the granddaughter of Steve and Joan Hobbs, who served on the MSBA and Festival boards for years.

Seventy-seven 4-H'ers competed in this year's contest representing 20 states; the highest number of teams to have participated in the National 4-H Skillathon Contest since the contest started in 1999. The Maryland team was Reserve National

Maryland youth lead the nation

Champion Overall and all four team members earned the rank of All American by placing in the top 20 overall as individuals. The team also placed second in Identification, second in Quality Assurance, and fourth in Evaluation.

The following stations were completed as individuals: breed identification, equipment identification, retail meat identification, a livestock management quiz, a quality assurance exercise, hay judging, and wool judging. The stations completed as a team were: a live animal quality assurance exercise, a live animal breeding scenario and exercise, a retail meat and carcass evaluation and exercise, an exercise evaluating performance data and a marketing scenario, and a livestock nutrition exercise.

Ashley is now helping Montgomery County 4-H Cooperative Extension agent David Gordon prepare the next round of 4-H'ers that will compete at the Maryland state contest March 4.

Winter Lamb recipes

Lamb is the most popular meat in the world, which provides us with a huge variety of recipes from many cultures, with flavors and ingredients from across the globe. Here are selections from China and England.



Some warm recipes for cold weather.

Crispy Lamb with Cumin, Scallions, and Red Chiles

from *The New York Times*

This stir-fry of lamb with dried chilies, made fragrant and crunchy with cumin seeds, is a legacy of the nomadic Mongols who long ruled Central Asia, carrying spices on horseback along with their arrows.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 T egg white | 3 T vegetable oil |
| 1 T rice wine or dry sherry | 2 T cumin seeds, lightly cracked in a mortar or grinder |
| 2 t cornstarch | 2 whole dried red chile peppers, 2 in. long |
| 1 t salt, more to taste | 4 scallions, cut on diagonal 1-in. long |
| ½ t black pepper | Sesame oil, for seasoning |
| 1 lb. boneless lamb leg or shoulder, cut into strips about ½ by 2 in. | |

1. In a bowl combine egg white, wine, cornstarch, salt and pepper. Stir in lamb and set aside to marinate 1 hour.
2. Heat a large wok or skillet over high heat until a drop of water sizzles on contact. Swirl half the oil into wok and carefully add lamb, spreading it in a single layer. Let sear a moment, then stir-fry briskly just until lamb is no longer pink. Transfer to a plate. (If your wok is not large enough to hold all the lamb, do this in 2 batches, using extra oil.)
3. Swirl remaining 1½ tablespoons oil into empty wok, add cumin seeds and chiles and stir-fry a few seconds until cumin seeds start to pop. Press chiles against sides of wok to char their skins.
4. Add scallions and stir-fry 1 minute. Then return lamb to wok and stir-fry 1 to 2 minutes more until lamb is cooked through. Turn off heat, sprinkle with salt and drops of sesame oil, and serve immediately over cooked rice.

Shepherd's Pie

from *English Country Cooking at Its Best* by Caroline Conran

Those who snigger at the idea of good English cooking just haven't found the right cookbook! Here's the classic and authentic version of this day-after-the-roast-leg recipe.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 ½ lb roast lamb | 1 cup gravy or stock |
| 2 onions | ½ t dried thyme |
| 1 T vegetable oil | ½ t pounded dried rosemary |
| 2 T butter | Tabasco sauce |
| 3 T flour | 1 t tomato puree |
| 4 T red wine | Salt and freshly ground pepper |

For the mashed potato:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 ½ lb. potatoes | 1 cup hot milk |
| 4 T butter | Salt and freshly ground pepper |

Preheat oven to 350 ° F.

1. Cook the potatoes in well-salted water until tender; drain well and mash, adding butter and hot milk. Beat thoroughly and season well.
2. Chop or mince lamb. Peel and chop onions.
3. Heat oil and butter in large frying pan; fry onions until golden brown.
4. Add lamb; allow to brown in places. Sprinkle on flour and stir to brown.
5. Add wine, stir, and then the stock. Stir well, deglazing the pan.
6. Add seasonings and tomato puree; simmer for 10 minutes; add more stock if necessary.
7. Transfer to a deep 9-inch diameter dish; cover with small mounds of mashed potato. Dot top with slivers of butter. Bake for about 30 min or until nicely browned on top.



Lamb Day at the Maryland State Fair needs an infusion of new volunteers who can help promote the value of lamb and wool to the thousands who visit the Timonium Fairgrounds at the end of August each summer. This year's Fair is August 24 through September 4.

Help wanted: Lamb and wool promotion at MD state fair

"Greg Thorne and I have done Lamb Day for decades," says Laura Ingram. "Our combined efforts as well as that of Jeff Martinez have been successful."

Last year, when Lamb Day took place on Labor Day, the effort suffered from lack of support from the state's producers, Ingram says. She warns that if more involvement and participation does not occur, "this day will be given to another commodity—most likely beer."

Ingram hopes to see the formation of a committee to begin planning now for a revitalized presence of lamb and wool producers



Victoria Willis, 2010-2011 Lamb & Wool Queen, at the 2010 State Fair Lamb Day promotion.

at the next state fair. She asks that those who wish to help contact Nancy Greene (410-329-6241) and the superintendent of the Timonium Home Arts building, Bill Langlotz, (410-329-6320).



Shearing school set for mid-April

We are so sorry to have mis-identified two Maryland MIWW winners in the last issue. They are, from left to right: Courtney Patterson and Olivia Scuderi.

This year's Maryland Shearing School will be April 14 and 15 at the Ridgely Thompson Farm, near Uniontown. During the two-day workshop participants will learn:

- 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 will be assisted at the shearing school by professional shearer Emily Chamelin.

Contact Aaron at mdsheepshearing school@gmail.com, for an application, or download one at <http://sheepandwool.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/17-Shearing-Registration.pdf>.

Do you sell lamb or goat meat? Have \$75 to spend on a 10- by 10-foot booth at an event that draws tens of thousands of visitors (which need not be manned)?

The Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival wants to help connect farmers raising meat locally with the consumers who are hunting for it. Contact Home Arts Building coordinator Nancy Greene at 410-329-6241, greelamb@gmail.com for more information.

Market meat at the Festival

Maryland Cooperative Extension marketing specialist Ginger S. Myers says it's about time that more farmers started marketing their farm products online.

Internet marketing: here's help

In a recent article, "Selling Online, a 24/7 Opportunity," Myers notes that USDA's 2015 survey on local

food marketing practices (its first) shows that 167,009 U.S. farms sold \$8.7 billion in edible food directly to consumers, retailers, institutions, and local distributors. Consumers accounted for 35% of these direct food sales, and retailers, 27%.

But although 73% of all farms in the survey reported internet access, only 8% sold ▶

On the Australian radio broadcast "Ockham's Razor" (see explanation at right), university professor and part-time shepherd Peter Underwood describes his personal quest for that Golden Fleece, pursued in mythology by Jason and the Argonauts—a beautiful white Merino fleece worthy of recognition.

In "Creating an Exquisite Wool," Underwood describes the childhood experience of attending with his agricultural scientist father the Perth Royal Show, and coming face-to-face with the Supreme Champion Fleece at the age of eight:

"The wool glowed white, and was downy soft, and the tiny bands of crimping fibre sprung open to make a pattern of geometric symmetry and simplicity—yet this incandescent thing seemed to hum: it was alive."

He describes for listeners the qualities that such a fleece must have:

"The fibre diameter and certain other key characteristics of the wool, such as the variation of fibre diameter within a fleece and its tensile strength, can be measured accurately by a machine—together these make up the wool's so-called 'objective measurements.' But after this bit of scientific rationality, things become muddier. For also important to wool quality is what is called 'style'—and style can only be measured by eye and touch of experts.

"Here, colour is significant, and the best wool is a shining white: show judges have a lovely category they call 'bloom' to distinguish the lustre of the best fleeces. The observer assessing style must also analyse the pattern of crimp, or tiny crinkly

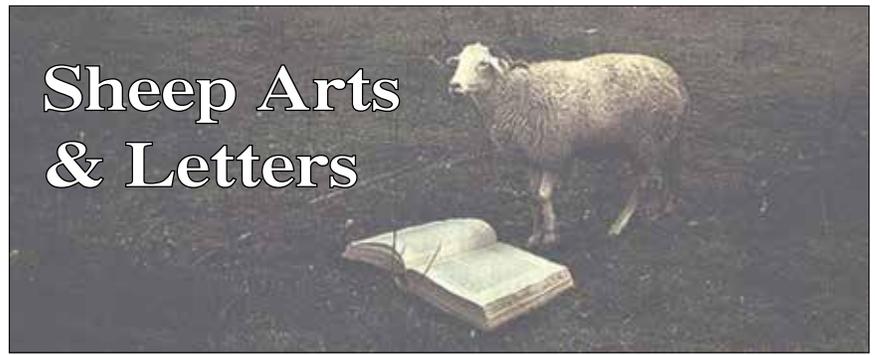
product via online market places. Myers's article walks producers through the steps to take in setting up online sales. Read the article at <http://extension.umd.edu/learn/selling-line-247-opportunity>.

And after you read that, you can to to <http://extension.umd.edu/agmarketing/>

[market-outlet-tools/maryland-niche-meats-poultry-working-group](http://extension.umd.edu/agmarketing/market-outlet-tools/maryland-niche-meats-poultry-working-group) to become a member of the Niche Meats & Poultry Producers Working Group. Then you can sign up to be listed on the group's online directory, and receive promotional materials that help you market your products.



Sheep Arts & Letters



curves of each slim staple, and their longitudinal and symmetrical alignment, as well as the 'feel' or softness of the wool."

Twelve years ago Underwood acquired a piece of land on the southwest coast of Australia, bought the best stock he could afford, and set about creating his own golden fleeces. He assiduously measured the four important criteria for excellent fine wool: its fiber diameter, the weight of the individual fleece, the fleece's coefficient of variation (the measure of the variation of micron in the fleece), and the sheep's body weight. He made tables and charts, with the plan of selecting only the animals at the top of his charts.

But he soon began to realize that the sheep with the best-looking fleeces ("of such swish and bloom they jump at you") were not necessarily those computer picked as tops. "One day, proudly, I was showing off the computer's No. 1 pick to my friend Jim King—a crusty type who knows and loves wool. Deftly parting the wool on the sheep's flank with his fingers, he snorted, 'I don't care what the computer says, to me this a cull!'"

Underwood realized that "as ever, beauty—here the wool's glow and pattern—remains largely in the eye—and fingers—of the beholder: to the computer, this little loveliness is beyond its ken."

"How then, so I'd asked, could you meld science with art, and grow more wool of greater strength and fineness, yet still display the will-of-the-wisp dazzle and pizzazz of the fleece that had enticed me, half a century ago?"

You can listen to how he modified his selection program—so that he now regularly is awarded first price in his local show and his mentor Jim King "was recently driven to the limits of his vocabulary of praise by muttering, 'Not a bad line of ewes those...'"—at the website (scroll down for the two-part series, "Creating an Exquisite Wool." <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/>

Creating 'Golden Fleece': The quest of an Australian farmer-philosopher



Figure of a ram, Egypt, 100 BCE–CE 100 [Image by Rémi Chauvin courtesy Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Australia]

"Ockham's Razor" the broadcast features short talks by researchers and people from industry "with something thoughtful to say about science."

Ockham's razor in the philosophy of science is the process of paring down information to make finding the truth easier—a principle first developed by the Franciscan friar and philosopher William of Ockham. It is getting rid of all the assumptions that make no difference to the predictions of the hypothesis.



Here is some news of interest about this year's Festival:

New Supreme Maryland Fleece award in the Sheep Show. All Maryland exhibitors with sheep entered in the Sheep Show may bring one animal to the supreme drive to compete for this award. The animal must be bred and owned by them and have been shown in one of the breed shows or natural colored or white wool divisions. Animals

This just in...news on the shows



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will be judged on excellence of fleece only. A monetary award of \$50 and a special ribbon will be given for the animal with the best fleece.

No surcharge in the All Breeds Sheep Sale.

The Festival is now waiving the sponsor's surcharge (2% of the gross price) that had been deducted from the seller's check in the past.

Important dates:

March 1. Registration opens for Sheep to Shawl Contest

March 15. Entries due for All Breeds Sheep Sale

April 1. MSBA membership must be current as of this date in order to qualify for the discounted commission at the Fleece Show & Sale

April 1. Sheep Show entries must be postmarked by this date. After April 1, a \$20 late fee applies

April 1. Applications for the Youth Conservationist Program must be postmarked by this date

April 2. Last day to reserve reduced rate rooms at Turf Valley – group code 2817GY

April 10. Late Sheep Show entries must be postmarked by this date.

April 10. Entries due for Grand Lamb Cook-off

April 13. Registrations due for Lead Line Contest

April 21. Entries due for Maryland Lamb & Wool Queen Contest —*Kris Thorne*



It is with great sadness that we announce that committee member Gail Willie passed away in January, in the comfort of her home surrounded by family, after a short period of home hospice care.

Most recently, Gail worked in the T-shirt sale building. Prior to that, she had Mary K's job of making sure all of us committee members were fed (and fed well!) during the Festival. Gail's husband, Adam, is on the grounds committee and has helped put up shelves in the T-shirt building on set-up Sunday. Gail and Adam also had a booth at the festival, Creative Woodcarvings, which sold Adam's wooden farm signs. Gail raised Leicester Longwool sheep.

Messages of condolence can be sent to the family at 1470 Florence Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771.

Maryland Sheep Breeders Association, Inc. Officers & Directors

Executive Committee

President Lee Langstaff 24020 Old Hundred Rd. Dickerson, MD 20842 301-908-9332 lmlangstaff@gmail.com	Vice President Jeff White 3610 Baker Road Westminster, MD 21157 410-746-5768 chestnutcreekfarm@gmail.com	Secretary Peter Austin P.O. Box 187 Ashton, MD 20861 301-774-7725 jha111@verizon.net	Treasurer Colleen Histon 1126 Slingluff Road New Windsor, MD 21776 240-388-6633 shepherdsmanorcreamery@verizon.net
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Ex Officio

American Sheep Industry Association Liaison	Emily Chamelin Hickman	3230 Eckard Road Westminster, MD 21157	443-244-2702	aeriedairy@yahoo.com
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Sheep & Wool Festival	Gwen Handler	935 Bloom Road Westminster, MD 21157	410-857-4387	gwenhandler@gmail.com
Make It With Wool	Judy Williamson	6924 Girl Scout Road Boonsboro, MD 21713	301-432-0281	judy10503@aol.com
Wool Pool	Vacant			

Board Members

2017 Directors	Sarah Dixon	10188 Matthews Bridge Rd. Waynesboro, PA 17432	301-529-7079	medicdixon@hotmail.com
	Emily Chamelin Hickman	3230 Eckard Road Westminster, MD 21157	443-244-2702	aeriedairy@yahoo.com
	Brad Humbert	717 Muller Rd. Westminster, MD 21157-8100	410-596-1276	blhumbert@gmail.com
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	Allison Seyfert	816 Ontario St. Apt. C Havre de Grace, MD 20178	410-804-0492	mistyrosefarm@rocketmail.com
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	Laurie Hynson	744 Berrymans Lane Reisterstown, MD 21136	410-833-7302	chickenmama61@yahoo.com
	Andrew Keller	28301 Clarksburg Road Damascus, MD 20872	410-676-6287	vistaviewfarms@gmail.com
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Maryland Sheep Breeders Association
 1126 Slingluff Road
 New Windsor, MD 21776



Maryland Sheep Breeders Association:
marylandsheepbreeders.org

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival:
sheepandwool.org

like us!



The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association Board of Directors meets every other month. Meetings are open to members. For minutes of meetings and meeting dates and 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 2017:

- April 14-15: Beginning Shearing School
- May 6-7: MD Sheep & Wool Festival
- October 13: Annual Meeting & Dinner, Dutch's Daughter Restaurant, Frederick.

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, 2017, will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2017. Dues received on or after June 1 will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2018.