



Newsletter of the
MARYLAND
SHEEP BREEDERS
ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2018

Fall MSBA Seminar Day draws praise

Saturday November 4 found us at the incredible setting of Linden Farm in Dickerson, Maryland, for the MSBA Fall Seminar Day. Linden Farm, built around 1883, is the site of one of only three gothic style roofed dairy barns in the country, beautifully restored. Currently leased by Montgomery County to the Sugarloaf Citizens Association, it is being used as a community meeting facility and agricultural center. It provided the perfect venue for our seminar day.

Our presenters represented the extraordinary depth of resources we have in our community. Sessions included: Basic Lamb Necropsy with Margi Dunlap and Rosalind Hain, with hands-on demonstration of process and techniques on two lamb carcasses; a session on Flock Filer, an affordable and user-friendly computerized management and record-keeping tool by its developer Tom Hays; and a session on preparing your wool for the mill by the owners of Singleton Fiber Processing.

Andrew Keller (MSBA Board of Directors) presented his research project for a SARE grant looking at rate of gain for determining need for parasite treatment using state of the

art management technology and a computer program; University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Educator Jeff Semler discussed evaluating hay, and conducted hands-on evaluation of hay brought by participants; Dr. Rosalind Hain shared her expert insights regarding the choice and use of the wide (and sometimes dizzying) array of over-the-counter treatments and medications for sheep. We concluded with veterinarian Margi Dunlap explaining and demonstrating (hands on) how to approach and conduct basic sheep evaluation when considering purchasing or retaining stock.

Participants included newbie shepherds and those who have been shepherding for more than 20 years. They came from Martinsburg, West Virginia, Philadelphia, and spots closer to home. Breeds represented were very many: Romanov, Texel, Leicester Longwool, California Red, Hampshires, Shropshires, and crossbred sheep.

Participant comments:

"I've been to sheep seminars for over twenty years. This is the best one I have ever attended."

"This was an awesome seminar."

"Everyone should be here!"

Look forward to more to come. We hope to make this an annual event. Feel free to provide suggestions for seminar topics you would find most useful!

—Lee Langstaff

Margi Dunlap discusses the process and results of lamb necropsies [Image by Lee Langstaff]

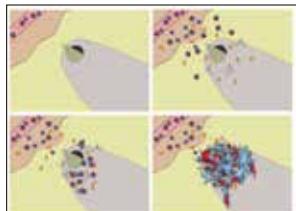


Banner image: The online shepherding community brings us this striking image of Norwegian Absalon Hansen's Spælsau ram.

In This Issue

- 1 Fall Sheep Seminar
- 2 President's message
- 3 Genetic parasite resistance research
- 5 Using gain to guide deworming schedule
- 5 Virtual grazing system uses GPS
- 6 Sheep and drones
- 6 Grazing school
- 7 Fencing Schools
- 7 Ag webinars
- 8 Marketing wool
- 10 Lamb in the Kitchen
- 11 NCWGA's 40th at MSWF
- 11 MD MIWW sells Wool Wax Creme
- 12 Shepherd of Year
- 12 Scholarship winners
- 13 New barn for Extension research
- 13 MIWW winners

A graphic novel just waiting to be written: "Attack of the Macrophages." See p. 3





Lee Langstaff
2018 MSBA President

President's Message

Another year in the MSBA "official" calendar has passed. It's still an honor to serve the organization as I embark on a third term as President.

I'm pleased to report that the work of our increasingly active team of Directors and Ex-officio and other players has helped to enforce and confirm the soundness, stability, and commitment of the organization overall. It's been a solid year:

- The long-awaited new MSBA website is up and running provides an opportunity for every member to have an online profile in a searchable directory. Take advantage of this member service!
- The 2017 Shearing School was once again over-subscribed – full to the brim with a waiting list to boot.
- The 2017 Sheep & Wool Festival was a great success, in spite of unseasonably cool weather and preceding rain and the new admission fee.
- Once again we received a \$1,000 Wool Outreach Grant from ASI which we used to support Maryland Make it With Wool and continued wool classing training.
- Various MSBA members have received accolades at fairs and shows all over the region with their sheep or fleeces.
- A successful Shepherd's Seminar Day was held in early November and was very well received and reviewed.

It's also been a year with some big changes. Two of these changes have been particularly wrenching, especially for longtime members and supporters: the suspension of the Maryland Wool Pool, and the initiation of an

admission fee for the Sheep & Wool Festival. These decisions were not taken lightly; both of them received a great deal of lively and sometimes challenging discussion within and beyond the Board of Directors, and were ultimately embraced as the right decisions for the organization at this point in time. I believe that these changes reflect our need to be aware of and responsive to the changing demographics of the Maryland and regional sheep scene, our organization, and its membership. In the case of the Festival, it reflects the scale of our success. And importantly, they highlighted the challenges presented by a shrinking availability of volunteer time (a challenge shared by many similar organizations). We are realizing, perhaps the hard way, how very much we have relied on and continue to rely on volunteers as we move forward.

These changes are genuinely hard; let's navigate them thoughtfully, actively, and inclusively in order to stay relevant and useful to our community of shepherds, our sheep, and the community of beneficiaries that our shepherding efforts both inspire and support. I am most grateful for the dedicated Directors and so many others of you who are engaged and supportive of MSBA now and into the future. 2018, here we come!



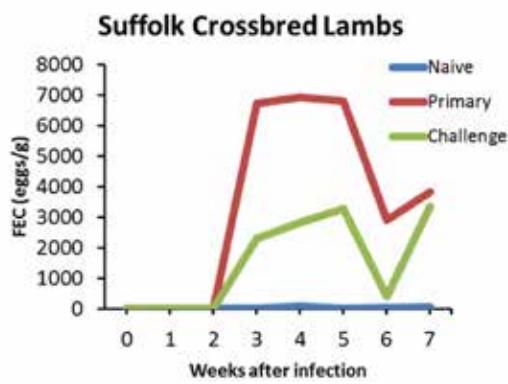
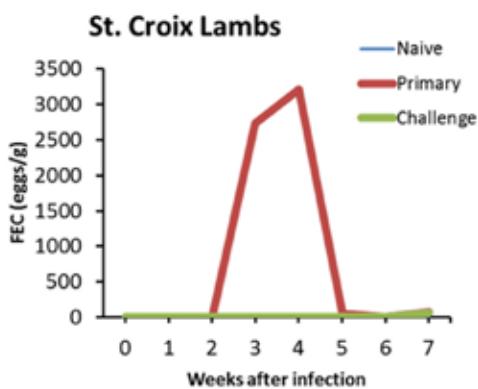
Top right, seminar participants consider important criteria for selecting sheep. Bottom right, Jeff Semler leads shepherds through some hands-on hay evaluation. [Images by Lee Langstaff]

Recent research at West Virginia University's Parasite Immunology Lab on different breed responses to parasitism provides a fascinating step forward for producers working to select sheep for resistance. Scott Bowdridge, associate professor of food animal production, presented some results of that work at the January Virginia Shepherds' Symposium in Staunton.

Dr. Bowdridge's basic research program is focused on identifying immune mechanisms necessary to clear helminth parasite infection using parasite-resistant St. Croix sheep as a model. To better translate this basic research in an applied setting, his lab recently acquired a flock of Texel sheep to determine differential immune response to the barberpole worm, *Haemonchus contortus*. The goal is to demonstrate how these sheep may be used in crossbreeding systems for producers interested in maintaining parasite resistance and the establishment of a fecal egg count estimated breeding value (EBV) for the Texel breed in the United States.

In his presentation to producers, Bowdridge described the three stages of immune response to infection:

- Recognition: Immune system cells recognize inflammation, or cellular stress, in the body.
- Response: Intracellular pathways are activated, and a broad range of molecules mount an attack on the source of infection.



- Resolution. Following destruction of the pathogens, the immune response is suppressed, and memory immune cells are formed.

The need for extra energy for the immune response ends.

The St. Croix breed is recognized for its ability to clear parasite infections rapidly through a strong immune response that attacks and kills adult worms as well as parasite eggs in the abomasum—before they can be expelled in dung. Typically, the response of wool sheep studied is much less robust.

Bowdridge's research with a group of "naive" (never exposed to parasites) St. Croix lambs showed that following a primary infection, fecal egg counts increased to more than 3,000 eggs per gram, but then fell sharply to negligible levels. When exposed again to parasite challenge, few eggs were expelled, showing that the lambs' response "memory" was strong and immunity was established.

Suffolk crossbred lambs exposed to the same primary challenge showed a rapid rise of egg numbers to 7,000 eggs/gram—parasite loads that persisted for three weeks before the animals' immune response was able to reduce egg numbers to under 4,000 eggs/gram—but with egg numbers then beginning to rise again. The second infection showed a lower peak number of eggs per gram, about 3,000, but following a plunge to a low level by the sixth week of infection, the egg counts once again showed a steep rise.

In addition, the Suffolk lambs were slow to "resolve" following the infection, meaning that extra energy (not being used for weight gain) is expended for a longer period.

It would seem then that St. Croix is the breed of the future. Except for its poor carcass traits—poor dressing percentages, poor leg and loin eye scores, poor yield grades. (Oh, that.)

Above left: Fecal egg counts drop dramatically in St. Croix lambs facing an initial parasite infection; response to a subsequent challenge is strong. Below left: By contrast, Suffolk crossbred lambs' initial and second responses are much less effective.

Research shows genetic parasite resistance also present in wool breeds

Martha Polkey

MSN Editor

Images courtesy Scott Bowdridge, West Virginia University Immunology Lab

Management ►

Crossbreeding was therefore the next step for Bowdridge's research.

"If parasite resistance has a high heritability, then we would expect that crossbred sheep would be intermediate in their FEC phenotype." Texel was the breed chosen.



The first tests of those crossbred lambs for parasite resistance were surprising. Instead of a parasite response somewhere between the massive one of the St. Croix and the flimsy one of a typical wool sheep, the Texel crosses showed a powerful response to *H. contortus* infection. In fact, the fecal egg counts were lower than in the challenged St. Croix lambs.



Closer analysis showed that the immune response of the Texel crosses focused upon attack of adult worms in the abomasum. Attacking cells massed at the mouths and

reproductive parts (vulvar flap and genital pore), preventing the adult from feeding or releasing eggs. One extraordinary image shows eggs hatching within the adult female.

Bowdridge's advice for producers, as this research continues, is to work to identify animals in their flocks that show resistance to all challenges on the farm.

"They don't squeak—they are problem free," Bowdridge states. They are:

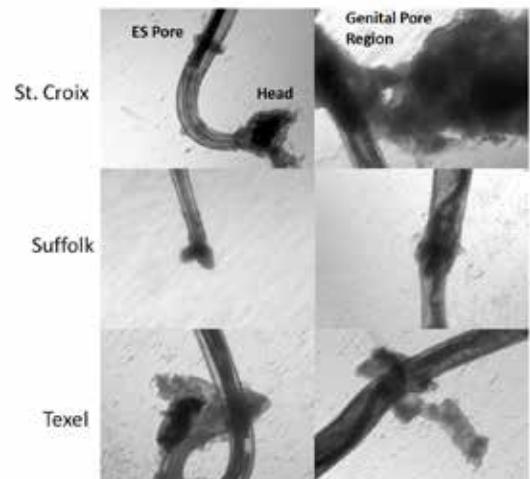
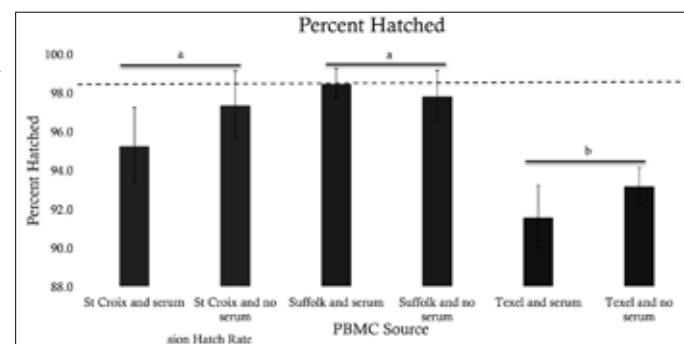
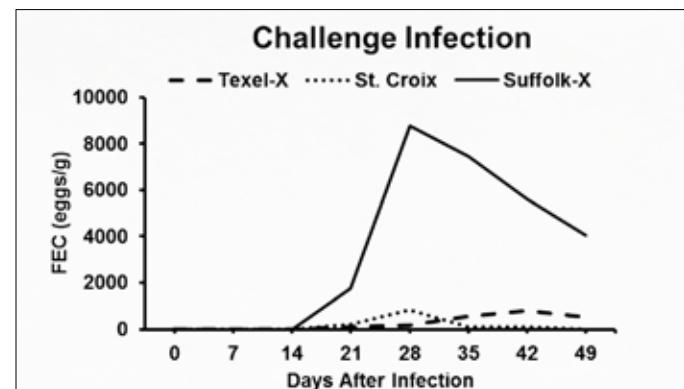
- first to breed
- first to lamb
- always have twins
- never require attention
- never need deworming.



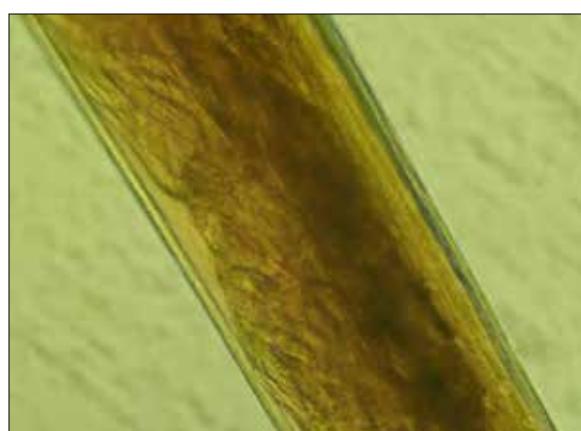
An understanding of the mechanisms of infection and immune response can help observant shepherds tap into their flock's genetic potential to overcome parasite challenge.



Left: Texel immune cells swarm the head and reproductive openings of H. contortus adults. Right: Parasite larvae hatch inside a worm unable to release eggs from a blocked vaginal opening.



Top: Suffolk crosses show huge fecal egg counts; St. Croix and Texel cross lambs mount effective defenses. Middle: Texel crosses show suppressed parasite egg counts. Above: the three groups show varying immune cell attack of parasite heads and reproductive openings.



Parasitic worms are a reality for any shepherd with sheep on pasture. In Maryland the barberpole worm, *Haemonchus contortus*, is the most prominent health concern in young lambs. But with anthelmintics losing their effectiveness in the face of resistant worms, genetic selection is becoming the predominant management tool for moving forward. The proportion of animals in a flock receiving anthelmintics is said to be the most important factor determining the rate of resistance development.

Using Lamb weight gain for targeted deworming
predominant management tool for moving forward. The proportion of animals in a flock receiving anthelmintics is said to be the most important factor determining the rate of resistance development.

Drenching animals based on need rather than on a schedule is still a relatively new concept. One of the challenges is knowing which animals need treatment. The gold standard to do this is the FAMACHA® method. I first learned of the FAMACHA® through a workshop put on by the University of Maryland sheep and goat specialist Susan Schoenian. As reported in the Winter 2017 *Maryland Sheep News*, FAMACHA® training is now available online. Anyone raising sheep should learn to use this system as one important tool in your shepherd toolbox.

As my flock became larger, checking each individual animal became a challenge. Drenching lambs based on production factors is the premise behind The Happy Factor™ Targeted Selective Treatment Program. This program used on some farms in Scotland uses 66 percent of the expected rate of gain as a cut-off to determine which lambs to drench. One reason that this program isn't readily adoptable is that a study had not been done in a region where *H. contortus* is the predominant parasitic worm.

Through a Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant I was able to compare using real-time-generated rate-of-gain with FAMACHA® scores to determine drenching need in Bluefaced Leicester lambs.

Thirty-five lambs were weighed weekly, and the FAMACHA® score also recorded bi-weekly. For the Bluefaced Leicesters being raised on pasture with supplemental hay and grain, the cutoff for drenching used was lambs gaining less than 0.3 lb/day. To obtain the rate of gain, all of the lambs were tagged with electronic identification (EID) tags. Using a Shearwell Stock Recorder and scale with a digital scale head, I could see the daily rate of gain for each individual lamb as they got on the scale.

The study had some promising results. Evaluating lambs for drenching took half the

time using the rate of gain method compared with FAMACHA® scores. The determination to drench using rate of gain was consistent with drenching animals with a 4 or 5 FAMACHA® score 70 percent of the time.

Reviewing the data, I've found a few changes in protocol are necessary to make this an ideal program for my farm. First, when lambs needed drenching, they tended to need two weeks to recover, so checking the animals every week would lead to excessive drenching. Ewe lambs were also drenched more frequently, sometimes corresponding with a FAMACHA® score of 3 or better, indicating that the cut-off value was too high and sex difference should be taken into account.

The last component reviewed was resistance in worms from a subset of the most treated lambs, to a subset of the least treated lambs. To compare the worms' resistance to anthelmintics, pooled fecal samples were sent to the University of Georgia for the DrenchRite Assay.

The results showed a lower egg count in the lesser treated group, but the same resistance profile for both groups. This isn't entirely surprising, but confirms that the worm population can be expected to be homogeneous among the co-located animals. This is just one example of how farmers can help evaluate different production practices and tools to maintain lamb health.



Andrew uses the Shearwell Stock Recorder readout, connected to the scale in the chute, to record current weights and add them to past records on each lamb.



TECHNOLOGY FOR SHEPHERDS

Ten years ago a group of Norwegian farmers and engineers began working together to create the world's first virtual fence system. Their goal: improve agriculture, animal welfare, and the environment all at once. As they describe in a 3-minute video (follow link to view all videos), they developed a solar and battery-powered GPS collar for pastured animals. The farmer maps an area for grazing on a mobile phone, and the boundaries set transmit to the animals' collars. The collar makes a series of beeps as the animal enters a "warning zone." If the animal doesn't turn around, the collar will give it a "weak but effective" shock.

They began by creating a collar for goats. Though goats are traditionally the most difficult animals to keep in a fence, a video shows how the system

'Virtual grazing' system uses collars and GPS

See the full article and access the videos at <https://onpasture.com/2018/02/26/virtual-fence-keep-livestock-in-pasture-without-installing-posts-or-wires/#comment-13874>

Andrew Keller

is an MSBA board member and owner of Vista View Farm near Damascus.

Management ►

works to keep them from straying outside the invisible boundaries set for them.



The NoFence video shows the electronic layout of a pasture plot.

Management Calendar

Apr. 4, 12

Virginia Forage & Grassland Council Fencing Schools. Louisa, Va., and Middleburg, Va. <https://vaforges.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-Fencing-School-Agenda-Registration.pdf>.

Apr. 20-21

Maryland Shearing School, Westminster. Preregister by April 1. mdshearingschool@gmail.com

Apr. 24-25

Virginia Forage & Grassland Council Grazing School, Raphine, Va. Register at vaforges.com

Jun 8-10

Jack Knox Border Collie Handlers Clinic. Davidsonville, Md. To register contact Debbie Collison, 410-956-2135

The company is now working on perfecting the system for use with cattle and hope to have a product ready in 2019. Another video shows the system in a cattle trial in New Mexico.

Will it work for your operation?

Will the cost for the collars and the monthly service fee for the web portal service combined with anticipated profits from access to more forage offset the material and labor costs of your current fencing? Follow this link to look at the costs (<http://nofence.no/en/>)

The idea of virtual fencing has been around for some time. In fact, On Pasture reported on Dean Anderson of the Jornada Experimental Range in New Mexico experimenting with collars to move cattle from pasture to pasture and to gather them (<https://onpasture.com/2014/08/04/fenceless-grazing/>). Putting together that product for widespread use wasn't possible at that point because of technology costs. But now, thanks to miniaturization, something like this could be made affordably. There are at least two other companies working on this technology, with products in testing now.

Researchers have found that sheep mostly ignore the presence of a drone after a time, allowing the technology to be used effectively on smaller farms. The study was one of several conducted by Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences on various applications of drone technology, from monitoring crops to sampling microbes in the air.

Study shows sheep learn to ignore drones

"Farms could use drones as a 'check-on' tool to ensure sheep are where they are supposed to be," says Dan Swafford, project associate for Virginia Cooperative Extension. "Drones can help farmers gain quick access to see if an animal is in need or injured, [or] to examine if a ewe has delivered a lamb."



Swafford worked with Andrew Weaver, a former graduate student in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science. Weaver was a natural fit as he had been working with sheep and had a private pilot's license.

"We kept a scoring system to see how flighty the sheep were." Weaver says. "They learned that it was okay, and with regular flying they got used to it."

Read the full story at <https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/agri-news/world/sheep-adapt-readily-drone-us-study/>.

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council offers a Grazing School April 24-25, 2018, at the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center, McCormick Farm in Raphine, Virginia.

Designed with beginning and experienced producers in mind, this two-day, intensive course will teach you everything you need to know to better manage grazing on your farm.

- Basic pasture management
- Grazing management
- Designing a rotational grazing system
- Fencing and watering options
- Strategies to extend the grazing season



April Grazing School in Raphine, VA

- Matching forage quality and animal needs

- Creating a forage budget

Participants will have hands-on opportunities to work with grazing tools, try out fencing materials, and practice allocating pasture to livestock.

Finally, put it all together for your farm. The last day of the school features a workshop where you can sit down with our instructors to begin developing a custom grazing plan.

To print the brochure and registration form go to: <https://vaforges.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-VFGC-Grazing-School-Brochure.pdf>.

Here are some upcoming Mid-Atlantic Women in Agriculture webinars, held at noon on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. The webinars are free; for the complete list and to register go to <http://extension.umd.edu/womeninag/webinars>.

April 11: Legal Implications of Pesticide Drift. Pesticide drift damage can not only have economic costs but can also result in litigation. Review the current state of pesticide drift litigation and what sprayers and producers need to be aware of if involved in litigation.

May 9: Avoid the Probate Process. Understand the process of probating a will and some of the negative impacts of probate, see examples of other farm succession/ estate planning legal

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council, in conjunction with Virginia Cooperative Extension, will again hold Fencing Schools across Virginia this spring. These schools, taught by industry professionals, are equally

Fencing schools in Virginia
beneficial to novice and experienced fence builders. During the schools, participants will learn about different fence types

(electric and non-electric) and materials, proper brace and fence construction, the basics of electric fencing and electric fence troubleshooting. The schools are limited to 30 participants and fill up quickly, so sign up if you are interested in attending.

March 28, 2018 – Page County (Stanley) – Stanley Volunteer Fire Department, 190 E Main St, Stanley, VA 22851

April 4, 2018 – Louisa – Louisa Extension Classroom, Louisa County Administration Building, 1 Woolfolk Avenue, Louisa, VA 23093.

April 12, 2018 – Virginia Tech Middleburg AREC (MARE Center), 5527 Sullivan's Mill Road, Middleburg, Virginia 20117.

The fee for the class is \$35 and includes lunch and materials. Find the schedule and registration form at <https://vaforges.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-Fencing-School-Agenda-Registration.pdf>.

Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring gloves, the class will be outside most of the day.

tools that can help farmers avoid the probate process if that is the best option.

May 23: Food Marketing Trends. Consumer food choices are constantly changing. See what food trends have surfaced so far in 2018 and how they may affect your product offerings and marketing strategies—and bottom line.

Women in Ag seminars

June 27: Facebook Promotions. Not everyone who likes your Facebook page sees your posts on their newsfeeds.

Typically, only 3-5% of your page fans see your content. The only way to assure maximum visibility is to promote your page, post, or events. But for very little money, you can really pack a punch.

July 11: Stress Management on the Farm. Explore a variety of self-care tips to protect your health and sanity as a farmer. Dig into practical and empowering stress-reduction techniques to incorporate into your weekly routine during the busy growing season.



FOLLOW THE HERD TO *The Mill at Meadowlands*

An Environmentally Friendly Fiber Mill
Working With Artists and Shepherds

410-916-5126

■■■■■ WWW.THEMILLMEADOWLANDS.COM ■■■■■



Marketing

Selling wool in today's market

Emily Chamelin

is MSBA's American Sheep Industry Association liaison, a shearer, and a wool buyer.

Wool handling students at work under the guidance of Lisa Surber.



The wool marketplace has experienced many changes in recent years. Regional wool pools have closed, and as those who did take wool to a state pool can attest, prices are low and continue to fall for all but fine wools (which are seeing a surge in demand). China is buying less, and no new uses for volumes of coarser wools have developed.

Some have viewed this as a reason to quit wool sheep altogether and transition to hair sheep, but as a wool marketer I see this as a huge market opportunity—and an opportunity for smaller yarn and craft businesses to be able to procure quantities of wool at reasonable prices. As we go into a new year and a new shearing season, be aware that prices for medium and coarse grade wools (Suffolk, Dorset and Leicester breeds for example) are lower. If you raise medium or long-wool breeds, consider all your options before selling.

You can:

- store wool until the market price rebounds.
- research and compare prices and then haul wool to different pools or mills to obtain the higher price.
- make use of online fiber art forums, raw wool groups, mills and small yarn shops to sell your clip in its entirety to someone who can take the time to break it down or process it and sell it again at a higher price.

Most flock owners have enjoyed the convenience of selling their entire wool clip through their shearer or to a pool/warehouse for a decent price these past few years. But with every small boom there is a bust, and we are now looking at new lows in the wool market.

My advice is to do research now, before you call your shearer, to figure out how you are going to market your

wool. Of course, you should have a handle on what it costs to produce that clip. Feed, shelter, shearing costs, medicine. It's a business, right?

Talk to your normal buyer and see what the expected price is for your grade of wool. If the price is unacceptable, it's a good time to reach out to other potential buyers. Could a local yarn shop direct you to hand-spinners and wool crafters as possible customers? Those closer to urban areas have access to spinning groups, fiber guilds, or wool festivals that might have connections and leads—and many fiber enthusiasts will spend money online for the quality of wool fiber that you produce, and would gladly pay \$1-\$3 per pound for a wool clip that may have only brought \$.70 per pound at a wool pool in the past few years.

This of course requires that you assume some of the tasks that the middlemen have done for you. What makes your clip attractive to buyers? Is it clean? Do you know the fiber diameter (micron count), staple length, and have you tested for likely yield (raw fiber weight minus the dirt, grease, etc., of the clip)? Have you removed the portions of the clip these buyers will reject? These are important considerations for wool buyers.

So pull out belly wool and bag it separately. Add to that portions of the fleece containing extreme amounts of vegetable matter—all that other stuff—bits of hay, seeds, burrs, etc., frequently found in the neck portions of the fleece. And throw in any fleece that stands out for its low quality—maintain the cleanliness and consistency of the clip. (On shearing day, use a tarp under the shearing boards to keep bedding from being inadvertently kicked onto the board and ending up in the otherwise higher yielding portions of the clip.)

It's all about good management, which will increase the value of your clip to private buyers as well as to warehouses and pools, should you not find other buyers.

Here's another option to consider to make your wool more valuable: Shift your shearing schedule. Fall and early winter shearing has the advantage of shearing before the wool is exposed to the contamination of feeding hay and lambs climbing on ewes. It will be cleaner and (and the lamb crop will probably be higher). Since it is an off-peak time for marketing wool, there is less competition and subsequently and historically the prices for wool are higher. Proper shelter and feeding can accommodate the needs of newly shorn sheep in cold weather.

Prices tend to drop throughout the spring and remain low all summer, as the market is flooded. Shearing and marketing your wool during

fall and winter has the advantage of demand. Competition is working in your favor. If you are marketing individual fleeces or smaller lots, crafters and spinners are more keen to stay inside and create (and shop online) during the winter months, so take advantage of that. And smaller mills also have discounted processing rates during their slow winter periods. Remind potential customers of this—or, if you think producing a farmstead yarn run might help your bottom line, this is the time to get the wool shipped and processed. Connect with your processor to fill the gaps in their processing schedules.

If you do decide to store wool until commercial prices rebound, keep in mind these tips to preserve the value of your clip.

- Keep the wool elevated (use wood pallets) to keep it dry. Allowing wool to sit on dirt or concrete floors will cause the wool to wick up moisture, encouraging mold and mildew. And the bag may rot and break when you try to move it.
- Pack your bags tight. That will discourage bugs and vermin. Mice and bees especially are drawn to the warmth and comfort of a wool nest.
- If you plan to sell your clip to a smaller mill or to spinners, wool texture and color will degrade overtime. The lanolin has a tendency to get crunchy and yellow with age, so the sooner you can market your wool the better.

Another advantage of early shearing is that you have your pick of shearers. The largest demand for shearing services is between March 1 and mid-April. If you have a smaller flock and you are competing with larger flocks for such services, you may not get the time frame you want or the shearer you want.

Many shearers will gladly shear year-round; if you shear during a less busy time you may have a better wool clip. Many quality shearers are frequently on the move, and if your favored shearer is passing through, you can get your sheep shorn on a schedule to your mutual benefit. The bottom line is to engage early with your shearer.

As we begin a new year, we all want to see our farms and animals remain healthy and profitable. The wool market is always in flux; follow the market, and consider new marketing options.

Keep supporting our industry by eating lamb and buying wool products. Network with wool consumers. Reach out to local fiber communities and connect with wool enthusiasts. Support the work they do in promoting our products, and help build a stronger infrastructure for future profitability and innovation.

The Frederick News-Post is partnering this year with Mother Earth News FAIR to offer the second annual Frederick Fiber Fest, the weekend of June 2-3.

Classes will be offered; a herding dog demonstration and fleece sale will be held on Saturday. The children's area will include pony rides, a petting zoo, and hands-on crafts. offers another marketing opportunity for vendors and fiber producers.

Fleece Sale information is available online and registration is open. Go to <https://frederickfiberfest.com/> to find out more and sign up. Contact Dawn Routzahn, droutzahn@newspost.com, for fleece sale forms.

◀ Marketing



Frederick Fiber Fest June 2-3

5TH ANNUAL MARYLAND SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL ALL BREEDS SALE

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

SHOW: Friday, May 4 • 7 PM **SALE:** Saturday, May 5 • 6 PM
JUDGE: Dr. Joe Haddock, VT **AUCTIONEER:** Terry Jacobs, MD



Liberty Acres, Top-Selling Lincoln Ewe Lamb sold to Annabelle Kruse for \$1250



Little Hooves, Champion Natural Colored Romney Ram sold to Michael Blair, OH for \$600



Locust Grove Lincolns, Reserve Champion Ewe was High-Selling going to Piccolo Fattoria, MD for \$1350



Liberty Acres, Grand Champion Colored Lincoln Ewe sold to Ashley Foster, MN for \$1200

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

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



Local Contact:
Mara Mullinix, DVM
301/865-4224

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

Lamb in the Kitchen

THIS TIME OF YEAR finds many shepherds very busy with a new crop of lambs, and those wee ones needing a little boost might end up in the kitchen in a makeshift pen on cold winter days. Very cute. But not my topic here!

I didn't taste lamb until my 7-year-old daughter, as a 4-H Clover, raised her first lamb as a market project.

I am a competent cook when it comes to beef, chicken, or pork, but my first attempt at cooking lamb chops those many years ago was not a success. It was overcooked, tough, and downright gamey. Ugh.

If this was what eating lamb would be like, I thought, then the future of lamb on the menu in my kitchen would be... nonexistent! But since it seemed that my daughter was set on raising 4-H lambs for many years to come, I resolved to come to terms with this meat and the cooking thereof.

Looking back (that is to say, a few decades), the choice of lamb cuts in your average grocery store was pretty slim. Some packages of Australian lamb took up a small portion of the meat case. My mother never bought and served it, and as a young married bride cooking for my family, neither did I!

Today, with the increased culinary diversity in much of the nation, one is likely to find a greater variety of lamb, and in more places. Most supermarkets carry lamb, as do many local butchers. One can also go to one of many nearby farmers' markets and generally find lamb, or buy a whole lamb from a local farmer. So there is no reasonable excuse not to have it on the dinner table once in a while.

Here's the skinny on nutrient value—as those of you selling lamb in those markets certainly know. Lamb is an excellent source of Vitamin B12, niacin, zinc, and selenium. In addition, 45 percent of the fat in leaner cuts of lamb is mono-unsaturated—which is the same “good” fat found in olive oil, avocados, nuts, and other foods. Lamb labeled “natural” is raised without synthetic hormones—and the American Lamb Board states that artificial or synthetic growth hormones are not used in the production of American lamb.

There are so many ways to cook lamb!

In those first years teaching myself to cook lamb well, my go-to method was grilling—whatever the season. The flavor that grilling brings out in the meat is amazing. Not only did I grill lambburgers, but I love sausage, chops, and even roasts prepared on the grill. Grilling roasts takes a bit more care and skill; my strategy is to brown all sides and then finish roasting slowly and with indirect heat. (And I love to

rub McCormick's grill seasoning on roasts and chops. It brings the flavors to a peak!)

On snowy days in winter, when even I find the prospect of standing in the cold next to a grill loses its charm, it's time to turn on the oven or the cook top. Roasting is my next choice. I like to marinate shoulder or leg roasts with a mix of olive oil, balsamic vinegar or red wine, a bit of Herb D'Provence (a mixed spice of thyme, rosemary, basil, marjoram, fennel, tarragon, parsley, oregano, and sometimes lavender), and garlic cloves.

As my first tough and grey lamb chops taught me, lamb is meant to be cooked just until medium rare. My technique is to roast it at 325 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes per pound. Some of the less tender cuts, such as shoulder cubes or shanks, are best braised first then transferred to the oven or cooked entirely on the range top, to get that fork-tender result. And of course there is always the crock pot and its latest iterations, Instant Pot, one pot, etc.

So what goes with that fragrant lamb you are ready to put on the table? Root vegetables such as carrots, onions, fennel, and roasted potatoes are favorite companions. Braised mushrooms in red wine or mashed red potatoes also meshes well.

And what about the wine? A chardonnay or sauvignon blanc go well with stews or cold salads. A pinot noir, which offers cherry aromas, does well with pastas containing lamb. The bolder red wines such as red zinfandel, syrah, bordeaux, and cabernet pair well with leg roasts and those slowly braised shanks. If you prefer good ale, pair pale ale with lamb chili and amber ales with lamb chops. Stouts and porters go back to those stronger braised cuts of shank, and the rack.

Lamb has become a favorite in my farm family, and it's now what I prefer to serve when company comes to dinner!

Below is a hearty recipe to enjoy on a cold winter night.

Mushroom and Lamb Sausage Soup with Pasta

Colleen Histon

2-3 T olive oil	5½ cups meat broth
1 each medium celery rib,	1 T tomato paste
carrot, onion	8 oz mild fresh lamb sausage
2 cloves garlic	12 oz rigatoni
1 T fresh rosemary	Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
12 oz brown mushrooms	

1. Finely chop the celery, carrot, onion, garlic, and rosemary. Coarsely chop the mushrooms.
2. In a heavy bottomed soup pot, sauté celery, carrot, onion, garlic, rosemary in olive oil for 4-5 minutes.
3. Add the mushrooms and stir for 4-5 minutes. Add the meat broth and tomato Paste. Bring to simmer, continue to cook on low heat for 10 minutes.
4. Grill or sauté the sausage to medium rare. Slice. Add to mushroom and vegetable mixture and continue to cook on low heat for 20 minutes.
5. Cook the pasta in boiling water. Drain. Add to the soup.
6. Salt and pepper to taste, and serve with the parmesan cheese.



Colleen Histon
is MSBA Treasurer.

The National Show of the Natural Colored Wool Growers Association comes to the Festival this May. This show is a special one—it's the 40th anniversary year for the association. The NCWGA board is pleased to celebrate this milestone at the Maryland Sheep & Wool

Natural Colored National Show; NCWGA's 40th

45 years ago in part as a way to connect natural colored wool producers with buyers.

And so of course there will be cake! As well as a meet-and-greet party, and the NCWGA annual membership meeting and awards presentation. A silent auction also will be held in the Featured Breed Display Tent.

NCWGA will award special premiums for Natural Colored Fine, Medium, Long, and Primitive/Dual-Coated classes in the Sheep Show and the Fleece Show.

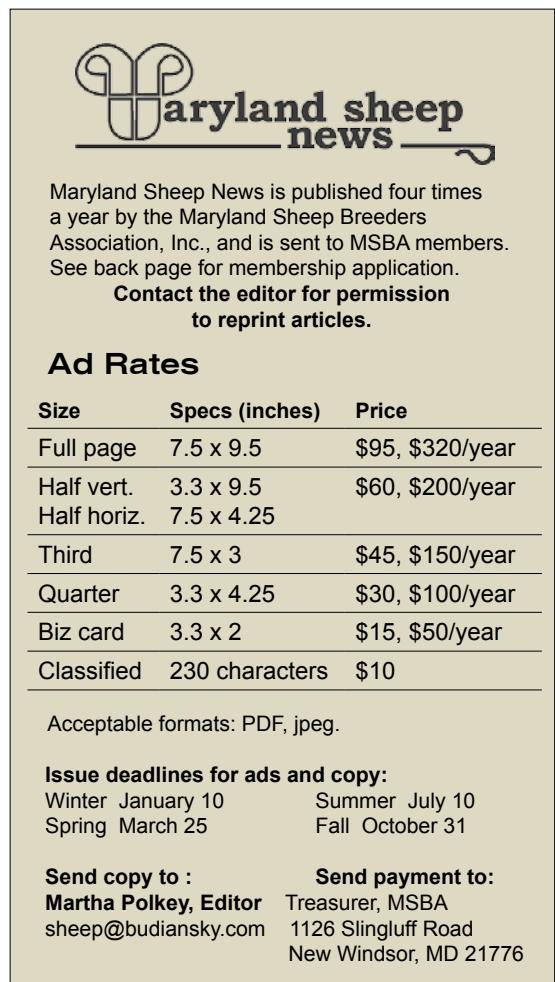
In the display tent look for an exhibit of textiles and items crafted from natural colored fibers. NCWGA invites vendors and other producers to lend an item for display (with farm name



and booth location if you are at the festival), breed from which the fiber came, and relevant details about fabrication or techniques used in its creation. Overdyed natural colored fiber is welcome!



This is the official call for items to display in the tent, and for volunteers to help set up and staff it. Please contact Martha Polkey, NCWGA Region 5 Director, at sheep@budiansky.com, 703-727-5604.



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:

Issue deadlines for ads and copy:

Send copy to : **Martha Polkey, Editor**
sheep@budiansky.com

Send payment to: **Treasurer, MSBA**
1126 Slingluff Road
New Windsor, MD 21776

Soft hands and support for MIWW

Enjoy soft, smooth hands and support the Maryland Make It with Wool program by purchasing Wool Wax Hand Creme. Made in Montana by sheep producers Ron and Eileen Devlin, the cream is great for dry, rough, or cracked skin (as many of us experience in winter months). It is greaseless—you can put it on and successfully turn a door knob. And it stays on through two or three light hand washings and will not harm fiber or fabric you are working with.

It's great for teachers, hostesses, needlework friends, stocking stuffers, and more.

Large 9-ounce jars are the best buy at \$8; 4-ounce tubes are the most popular at \$6; and 2-ounce jars at \$3 can be refilled from the large jar can be mailed to you.

Buy yours at the MIWW exhibit
at MSWF, or place your order by
emailing MDMIWW@aol.com. Once your order
and shipping are confirmed, you will be sent an
invoice which can be paid online.





Maryland News

2017 Shepherd of the Year

Each year it is the task of the three previous “Shepherds of the Year” to nominate, discuss and decide who will be the upcoming “Shepherd of the Year.”

This year, as in years past, the names of several deserving recipients were put forth.

The contributions of each candidate were discussed and when consensus was reached the selection was made.

This year's Shepherd of the Year winner is highly respected regionally and nationally, and known internationally.

He has been a pioneer in restoring his sheep breed's genetics through careful breed selection and the use of AI with imported Corriedale semen.

While conducting this restoration, he has brought a great deal of recognition to the economic impact good wool can have on the bottom line. Probably

Shepherd of the Year Geof Ruppert and Liz Cavey, last year's award recipient.



many of you have seen his wool pictures – beautiful and with exceptional value.

He has won virtually every champion or supreme fleece award too many times to count.

His excellence as a shepherd is hard to match. He has judged sheep on both the East and West Coasts. He encourages youth and shares his knowledge and enthusiasm willingly.

He is a veterinarian, a musician, a son, a husband, and a father.

We are proud to have him and his truly spectacular Corriedales in our midst to remind us what passion, steadfast love for a true breed type, and hard work can accomplish.

Please let me introduce and congratulate Geof Ruppert!

—Liz Cavey



The 2017 MSBA Scholarship recipients were announced at the annual meeting last October.

First is Aislinn Latham of Thurmont, the daughter of Kristen and James Latham. Aislinn is currently a senior at Ohio State University with a GPA of 4.0.

She has been involved with sheep since age 8. As a child she raised Suffolks,

crossbreds, and Border Leicesters, and currently has a small flock of Border Leicesters which she raises for meat and wool. She still shows occasionally, alongside her family, who also shows at county fairs, and participates in fleece shows.

Aislinn is still involved with Maryland's Make It With Wool competition. At Ohio State, her volunteer activities include peer mentoring and help with the Martin Luther King Day observance.

The second scholarship award went to Emily Michalski of Woodbine. Emily is a freshman at the University of Kentucky, with the intent to major in animal science and pre-veterinary studies. She graduated from Glenelg High School.

She helped her grandfather with his flock of Dorset sheep as a child, and went on to join 4-H, showing breeding and market sheep. She also was a member of the Dairy Club and showed leased cows from Maple Dell Farm at the Howard County Fair. She also helped 4-H Clovers learn to feed, care for, and show their project sheep.

Emily says valued 4-H for the patience, responsibility, and humility it taught her—as well as the friends she made.

Copyright Maryland Sheep News, Winter 2018

A new 40- by 40-foot structure at the small ruminant research site at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center in Keedysville is complete. It will provide cover for the handling system and shelter for the sheep.

The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association and the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival each donated \$1,000 toward the construction cost.

University of Maryland Extension Sheep & Goat Specialist Susan Schoenian has expressed her thanks to the organizations for their support, and provided details on plans for a new research project that will take place inside of it.

The study involves the evaluation of performance, carcass, and fertility traits of ram, wether and short-scrotum lambs. (A short-scrotum ram is one in which the testicles have been pushed up inside the body cavity and the empty scrotum is banded.)

The hypothesis is that short-scrotum rams will have similar performance as intact males since

they still have testicles), but without the behavior and fertility (since the testicles are too warm). It is also more humane to make a short-scrotum ram than to castrate a ram lamb using any method.



The first research project under the new structure begins this spring.

New structure for MD small ruminant research

Sixty lambs will be measured for growth (ADG) and carcass performance (ultrasound loin and fat depth). Fifteen lambs (one from each group) will be harvested to collect carcass data. Collaborators from Virginia State University will be evaluating

the behavior (libido), semen quality, and testicle characteristics of the lambs.

Susan is happy to answer questions about this upcoming project (sschoen@umd.edu).



Eighteen individuals wearing garments they created from wool fabrics participated in the October Maryland Make It with Wool competition.

Three young sewers (8 and under), impressed the audience with their creations. Participants included sisters Brenna and Charlotte Chamelin (Carroll County) and Annette Clougherty (Talbot County). Each received sewing baskets filled with sewing notions and a length of wool fabric.

Wearing a navy and white checked jumper with navy leggings and shirt, Caroline Clark of Frederick County was named champion in the Preteen Division (ages 9 to 12). Kailyn Donahue (Baltimore County) was reserve champion with a sleeveless dress created with fabrics received last year. Also participating in the preteen division were Estella Gover (Carroll County), MaKenna Steele (Carroll County), and Rachel Zimmerman (Frederick County).

For her champion selection, Caroline received a Baby Lock Rachel sewing machine, awarded jointly by Stitch In Time (Greencastle, Pennsylvania), and Maryland MIWW, made possible with generous donations. Kailyn was awarded a gift certificate from G-Street Fabrics,

Rockville. And, depending upon previous awards, each preteen participant received wool fabric, and either a sewing basket containing sewing notions; pressing equipment including a tailor's ham, sleeve roll and press cloth; or Gingher shears.

The Junior Division, ages 13-16, was the largest, with nine participants. Courtney Patterson, Carroll County, was selected champion, with a lined Chanel-style jacket with self-fringed trim and a plaid pencil skirt. Olivia Scuderi, Montgomery County was reserve champion with a machine-embroidered jacket, knit top, and jeans-style pants made from wool denim. Honorable mention awards were presented to Caroline Boone (Carroll County), Samantha Fielder (Harford County), and Karli Abbott (Talbot County).

Make It With Wool winners advance

Young sewers, from left to right: Annette Clougherty, Brenna Chamelin, Charlotte Chamelin.



Below: Preteen Division winners, left to right:

Kailyn Donahue, Rachel Zimmerman, Caroline Clark, MaKenna Steele, Estella Gover. **Bottom:** Juniors, left to right:

Sarah Stouffer, Samantha Fielder, Olivia Scuderi, Caroline Boone, Courtney Patterson, Kallan Latham, Payton Steele, Lynn Thomas, Karli Abbott. **Bottom right:** Division Champions, left to right: Adult, Amanda Clougherty; Preteen, Caroline Clark; Junior, Courtney Patterson.

Also participating in the Junior division were Kallan Latham (Frederick County), Sarah Stouffer (Harford County), Payton Steele (Carroll County), and Lynn Thomas (Baltimore County).

As Junior Champion, Courtney represented Maryland at the National Competition in San Antonio, Texas, during the American Sheep Industry Convention, February 1–3. Gift certificates from G-Street Fabrics, Needle and Thread (Fairfield, Pennsylvania), and Nancy's Notions (Beaver Dam, Wisconsin) were awarded to the honor group. Irons, Gingher tailor's points and thread snips were awarded to remaining participants. Each participant also received a length of wool fabric.

For the first time in recent years, there were no participants in the senior division (ages 17–24). But five of the junior participants will move to the senior division next year—we look forward to their creations!

Amanda Clougherty (Talbot County) was winner of the Adult Division (age 25 and up). Amanda is no stranger to Maryland MIWW, as she began participating as a preteen. And, she has represented Maryland at the National Competition in the Junior, Senior, and Adult divisions. Amanda's two-piece garment consisted of a lined, red plaid pencil dress with rolled collar and a navy cape with machine embroidered trim along the bottom edge.

Amanda will submit photos wearing her outfit, a video showing fit and modeling, and the garments for National MIWW judging. The first place National Adult winner will be selected to attend the National activity.

Amanda's awards include a gift certificate to G-Street Fabrics; a check toward video production, a University of Maryland basket, and wool fabric.

The 2018 Maryland MIWW Competition will be Saturday, October 13, at the Baltimore

County Ag Park. To receive information about Make It with Wool activities, email MDMIWW@aol.com.

We thank the Maryland Sheep Breeders Association for continued support of Make It With Wool by allocating a major portion of the Wool Outreach Funds to our program.



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 Angela Muller 406 Muller Road Westminster, MD 21157 443-536-3480 farmallgrr@gmail.com	Treasurer Colleen Histon 1126 Slingluff Road New Windsor, MD 21776 240-388-6633 shepherdsmanorcreamery@verizon.net	
--	--	---	--	--

Ex Officio

American Sheep Industry Association Liaison	Emily Chamelin Hickman	3230 Eckard Road Westminster, MD 21157	443-244-2702	aeriedairy@yahoo.com
Membership	Kris Thorne	1130 Martin Drive Westminster, MD 21157	410-848-6971	msbamembershipchair@gmail.com
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
Maryland Shearing School	Aaron Geiman	429 Hook Road Westminster, MD 21157	443-340-2322	adgeiman75@gmail.com

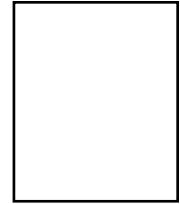
Board Members

2018 Directors	Carolann McConaughy	8253 Dollyhyde Road Mt. Airy, MD 21771	301-829-6950	stillpointfarmsheep@gmail.com
	Patricia Sanville	4637 Cap Stine Road Frederick, MD 21703	240-357-1437	patriciasanville@gmail.com
	Karren Sowell	10634 Old Frederick Road Thurmont, MD 21788	301-898-7796	akksowell@comcast.net
	Allison Seyfert	1860 Red Toad Road Port Deposit, MD 21904	410-804-0492	mistyrosefarm@rocketmail.com
2019 Directors	Larry Fisher	935 Bloom Road Westminster, MD 21157	410-259-2415	llfisher@verizon.net
	Laurie Hynson	744 Berrymans Lane Reisterstown, MD 21136	410-833-7302	chickenmama61@yahoo.com
	Andrew Keller	28301 Clarksburg Road Damascus, MD 20872	301-676-6287	vistaviewfarms@gmail.com
	Anne Shroeder	16760 Whites Store Road Boyds, MD 20841	301-755-8400	info@stargazingfarm.org
2020 Directors	Peter Austin	P.O. Box 187 Ashton, MD 20861	301-774-7725	jha111@verizon.net
	Liz Cavey	2640 Marston Road New Windsor, MD 21776	410-635-2459	elizabethcavey@gmail.com
	Rosalind Hain	201 Monroe Avenue Frederick, MD 21703	301-788-8271	rlh2@hotmail.comm
	Stephanie Scuderi	21808 Woodfield Road Gaithersburg, MD 20882	301-219-9629	stephanie@foxhollowfarm.org

Maryland Sheep News Editor	Martha Polkey	14605 Chapel Lane Leesburg, VA 20176	703-727-5604	sheep@budiansky.com
Website Coordinator	Kris Thorne	1130 Martin Drive Westminster, MD 21157	410-848-6971	msbamembershipchair@gmail.com



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



Maryland Sheep Breeders Association:
marylandsheepbreeders.org

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival:
sheepandwool.org



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, Angela Muller, farmallgrl@gmail.com.

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: _____

Send form and \$25 check made payable to MSBA to Kris Thorne,
Membership Chair, 1130 Martin Drive, Westminster, MD 21157.
She will contact you for additional information for the breeders
directory and online profile.

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), Sheep Shearing School, various youth activities, and a variety of educational functions.

You can join ad pay online at <http://marylandsheepbreeders.org>, and fill out your member profile page. If you prefer to register by mail, fill out the form at left and mail with your \$25 check.

Here are sponsored events and activities for 2018:

- April 20-21: Beginning Shearing School
- May 5-6: MD Sheep & Wool Festival
- October 26: 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.
- receive free admission to the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival and be mailed a free copy of the catalog.
- Be eligible for a free listing in the print MSBA Members Directory and a free profile page on the MSBA website.

Annual membership/subscription fee: \$25. The membership year runs from October through September. Dues for membership received prior to June 1, 2018, will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2018. Dues received on or after June 1 will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2019.