



SCHSIA NEWS

March 2015

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RAMblings

From EWEr President

Fellow SCHSIA members, I want to first thank you for the privilege of serving as your President for this past year. 2014 was a banner year and many exciting new things are planned for 2015. Some of the highlights are as follows:

- As of March 1st, there are **109 members** all of whom are up to date on their dues. I try to call each new member to welcome them into our association and ask for their feedback on how our board can better serve them. I welcome your feedback at any time . So, please feel free to contact your regional manager or any of the officers at any time. We are all listed on the web site www.stcroixhairsheep.org under the “Directors” tab.
- Our “ member friendly” **By Laws** have been approved by the membership and are posted on the web site under the same “Directors”

heading.

- We have successfully transferred our data base and the registry to **Premier Registry** . If you have any questions or comments please contact Elisha at registrar@stcroixhairsheep.org or call 641-466-3614.
- Your board is planning an **annual meeting** this year. A committee has been established with VP Jason Pelzel in charge. Plans should be finalized by the end of April. If you have any input please let Jason know.
- The **web site** continues to expand . Please explore the **pedigree data base** which now lists almost 3,000 animals and is a valuable tool both for researching sheep and breeders as well as helping fill out your registration applications. The **“Classified”** section now includes both **“Wanted”** and **“ For Sale”** sections, so please utilize it.
- At our February meeting , the board adopted a **Junior Membership** category for ages 9 to 18. The cost is \$10 and the junior member will have all regular member privileges except voting.

Once again, thanks for your support of SCHSIA and feel free to contact me by email at info@stcroixhairsheep.org or by phone 502-386-1648 . I welcome your feedback.

Respectfully,
Gary Keibler



Springtime Christmas

By Laurie T. Field, Three Sisters Farm, Canby, OR

We all love Christmas as a child or another special holiday where we have a special surprise waiting just for us. For sheep owners, I believe lambing season feels like that! We hurry like crazy to get to the barn and see the special surprises that a ewe has laid before us. Whatever the outcome, what a joyous time!

It has become a popular attraction at our house for our many friends, and their friends, who bring their children and grandchildren to see and hold the lambs. Taking pictures and posting them on Facebook is almost an attraction itself! I love looking at all the pictures and telling people about wonderful St. Croix Sheep! I may never sell any of my sheep to these parents but I feel I am planting a seed with their children. Lambing for us is a time of teaching: teaching about sheep and about agriculture on a small scale.

Our St. Croix ewes have in turn taught us so many life lessons over the years. Every year I learn something new about sheep in general. I will tell you "the good ALWAYS outweighs the difficult". This year, we had a ewe that was delivering quintuplets! Not all made it, but the ones who did are thriving and healthy. That is where my focus starts and stays! I look at my pasture and see

lively, bouncy lambs with attentive mothers and it makes my heart happy. Typically, the least amount of help you give to a St. Croix ewe during lambing, the happier she will be.

We are on year 14 and with over 300 sheep registered and fed out as market lambs, this still captures my attention. I have a grand time deciding who will be bred to which ram with the intention of improving my flock, but the real fun is when lambing time comes around and I see the results of my decisions. I am always at 200% or above with my St. Croix lambing numbers, and I credit the ewes with that.

In my opinion, St. Croix are the perfect small farm sheep! Each lambing time brings in new prospective members and the lambs are the welcome wagon. Happy Lambing!!!



Lambing Wisdom

By Professor Steve A. Wildeus, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA

Lambing season is an exciting time! Pasture lambing can be a great way to utilize nature while reducing labor, feed, and facility costs. However, preparations must be made and precautions taken to ensure the best success possible for your lambing season. Before ewes are ready to lamb, ensure their diet includes adequate amounts of calcium and selenium. Especially during late gestation, ewes need additional nutrition to support their growing lambs and produce milk. In fact, 70% of fetal growth occurs that last 4-6 weeks of pregnancy! Proper nutritional support is necessary and even more so when ewes are carrying multiples. Lack of proper nutrition can lead to pregnancy toxemia, lower birth weight, and/or poor milk production.

St. Croix sheep are generally good mothers, and human intervention should be minimal to allow proper bonding between ewes and their lambs. However, daily checks should be done to check for any ewe experiencing difficulty with labor. At times, fetus(s) will not present properly, the cervix may not dilate sufficiently, or the second stage of labor exceeds two hours (usually a sign of trouble). Such situations may require help from a shepherd and/or a veterinarian.

After lambs are born, be certain to check if the lamb(s) is breathing on it's own. Lambs should begin to nurse within a couple hours. It's a good idea to express some milk from the ewe to ensure no milk plugs are clogging the teets. Dip the lamb's navel in iodine to prevent infection. Then, sit back, and let the mother do her job :)

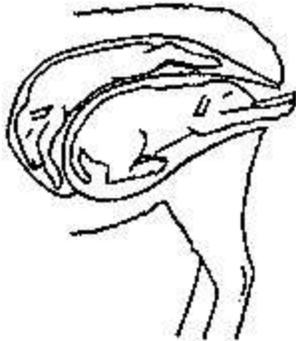
In times of lambing difficulty, it is a good idea to be educated on some situations which can occur and how you can help the ewe in such times. Here are some positions which could occur and cause difficulty with lambing:



One leg back



Both legs back



Front and back



Elbow lock



Breech



Head back

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2012 Dolly & Triplets

GOODBYE DOLLY: A EWElogy

For many of us, raising sheep is a joy and blessing. However, we must sometimes say goodbye to those animals we love. Dolly arrived at Hemmer Hill Farm in July 2006, a newly weaned lamb and one of our 8 starter Ewes. She was first bred in the Fall of 2007 and was the first to give birth (to twins) on her second birthday, March 28, 2008.

mammary glands, and distinctive voice, thereby earning the name Dolly (after one of our favorite country stars).

She was a wonderful Mom to those twins and over the next 7 years would produce 6 sets of triplets all of whom she loved and protected .

We sold Dolly last year to a loving and caring family . However, the consecutive harsh winters and wear and tear of birthing 20 lambs finally took it's toll and she died giving birth to her last set of triplets, on March 2nd this year. The first (ewe) lamb, named Dolly II, will help us all get over the loss.

Dolly leaves behind her sad owners but also many wonderful memories of both the hard work and the bountiful joys of lambing seasons gone by . The new Dolly, along with her many other offspring, will no doubt bring the same joy to St. Croix breeders for generations to come.

Dolly , may you enjoy your well earned retirement in the land of eternal green pastures and under the care of THE Good Shepherd.

Love,

Gary and Joyce Keibler

Ewer Pics









Beginning Bloopers

By Shannon Vansickle, Goose Creek Farms, Trafalgar, IN

New to raising St. Croix, we were excited to begin our adventure of lambing season. At the end of June, we introduced our ram, Hairy, to our ewes. We had used a breeding harness, and everything seemed to be on track for lambs by Christmas. Christmas came and went, as did New Years and even Valentine's Day: no lambs. My husband and I had figured and re-figured potential dates so many times, we started to think perhaps our unproven ram was sterile. Just as we began investigating testing options for our ram, we welcomed two beautiful lambs at the end of February-just in time for the *colddest* weather of the season. (Due to negative temperatures and required bottle feeding, we ended up with lambs in our kitchen for two weeks!) Five more lambs followed, born mid-

March. The good news is our ram is working just fine, and we have happy healthy lambs running around. As it turns out, hot weather can reduce sperm count in rams. Although rams can often breed a sizable flock within 60 days, we learned first-hand, it can take a lot longer too! We are hoping to plan for lambing in warmer weather next time! We hope you are enjoying a wonderful lambing season :)

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