



SCHSIA NEWES

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ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting was held in Indiana this year and from the reports I have seen and heard it was the best ever. Not a lot of people there which is all of our loss. I am going to skip over the meeting itself and the extra activities and just concentrate on the educational phase. (The whole report is available on the website.)

One of the speakers was Dr. Larry Mrozinski, a nation sheep show judge and ruminant nutritionist, who spoke on nutritional requirements and structural characteristics. The other speaker was Dr. Bob Godfrey from the University of the Virgin Islands and researcher on St. Croix sheep.

Dr. Mrozinski started by explaining the digestive process of sheep and the interdependence of water, fuel to produce energy (forages and fiber), and the importance of protein. He also stressed the importance of minerals and vitamins, and food additives. He concluded that portion with a discussion on feeding market lambs and the importance of feeding the ewe flock.

The second half of his presentation was developing a structural goal for our flocks. He started with mouth anatomy and explained the difference between a sound and unsound mouth. He described normal mouth vs various problems, teeth and age differences, spreader and broken mouth sheep. Eyes and eye problems were covered and then he finished on anatomy of legs and feet. He covered the anatomy of the normal foot and leg then went on to describe some bad features such as overgrowth of the inside toe which causes the leg to rotate. This he felt was something that should be culled because of the constant need to be trimming the hoof. He highlighted knock-kneed and splay footed sheep along with bent legs and cow hocked sheep. Then he outlined the attributes of the correct foreleg (straightness from front and side view) and the importance of a 45 degree angle of the shoulder bone. From there he covered the rear legs which should not be cow hocked or post legged. He said there should be a straight line

from the tail to the hock and down the cannon bone to the ground. Again from the rear the legs should be straight.

Then he briefly covered the male reproductive system, the ewe's udder, and finished with hernia, rectal prolapse, vaginal prolapse, and abscesses. Because of the angle of the pelvis on St. Croix sheep versus other breeds, the ewe often has easier births and fewer problems with prolapse.

Dr. Godfrey began his portion with a discussion of his research on late weaning. He typically breeds to get three lamb crops in two years and his ewes usually last to about 8 years if age. He tried weaning at 60, 90, and 120 days with no adverse effects on the ewes body or future productivity. However, milk production was down 63% at 120 days and production costs increased.

Later, he covered the results of his research project "Gastrointestinal Parasite Resistance of Hair Sheep Breeds". He said that the St. Croix were resilient to the parasite rather than resistant. That is that they recover from parasite development for various reasons when the larvae and eggs develop within their bodies. He also covered signs of worm infestation – bottle jaw, fecal egg counts, hematocrit readings, and FAMACHA eye lid testing to determine the level of immune deficiency. He quickly covered different types of common parasite deterrents, such as: wormers, copper wire, nematode trapping fungi, and certain forages. He worms his ewes 9 days post-partum and his lambs at 7 and 27 days. Another project was on evaluating the parasite burden on lambing ewes. They were evaluated at 63, 90, and 129 days using FAMACHA testing and concluded that there was impact from the parasite load.

As you can see, those of us who didn't go to the meeting missed out on a lot of great information. My thanks to Dr. Ed Barnes who sent me the report.

ELECTIONS

The annual election of officers is coming up at the end of this year. The slate of officers is as follows:

President – Brent Van Sickle

Vice President – Kaleb Kahl

Secretary – Laurie Fields

Treasurer – Gary Keibler

Eastern Director – Susan Brooks

Southwest Director – open

South Central Director – Rob Bass

Notice of the election and ballots will be mailed by the Secretary, probably in November.

THE PREZ SAYZ

Thank everyone for allowing me to be President the last two years. It has been a fun and educational time.

For those who did not attend the annual meeting this year, you missed a wonderful time. As well as missing out on great information about the St. Croix. The board works very hard to make sure to have an educational day along with the annual meeting.

My theme for these last two years has been ‘Tell your story’. I encourage everyone to keep telling their St. Croix story. By doing this you are getting the attributes of the St. Croix breed to the public.

I would also ask that you get involved with the association.

MOTHER EARTH NEWS FAIR

Mother Earth News had a fair down the road about 60 miles and invited the St. Croix breeders to show some sheep. Since Vicki and I were the closest, we said we would go, but had no idea what to expect. Let us just say we were pleasantly surprised. The first thing was that the animals were inside on a polished concrete floor, but they provided enough shavings so they were deep enough in the pens that the sheep had no problem. But the day we moved in it was hot and there was no air conditioning or fans to cool the animals. We had plenty of room to put our farm sign and the association sign plus tables and chairs to set out our brochures, cards, etc. In addition to our sheep they had some Nigerian pygmy goats, Hereford hogs, Dexter cows, and a Dale pony. All small animals for small acreages.

The next day they had big water cooled fans to keep the animals, and the visitors, cool. There were a lot of people came through and were interested in the sheep. Many of them already

knew about the sheep. Instead of just passing through, like they do at the state fair, these people would talk for 15 minutes and a few came by more than once. Time will tell whether we sold any sheep or not but we definitely had some interested people talk to us.

Sunday it was a lot slower, but still interested people. It was good exposure for the breed and we gave out all the brochures we took, both association and farm.

OREGON STATE FAIR

Another fair is behind us and we have all been in the recovery mode, except for all the work that piled up while we were at the fair. There were four breeders represented – JMS Farm, Mindy and Sam Fenwick; Dorsey Lee St. Croix, Ed and Linda Barnes; Tanner Farms, Christy Crawford; and Dreamfield St. Croix, John and Vicki Hamstreet – with about 35 head of sheep. All our sheep were competitive except for the Barnes who walked away with the first of most everything. We all had some blue, red, and white ribbons but Ed and Linda had the most. They also took premier breeder. But to pay them back, they had to get their sheep cleaned up again because they had to compete for the Grand Champion on the last day. Compete is probably not the right word since going in everybody knew that unless you had Suffolks, Hampshire, Romney, or Dorsets you were not going to win no matter how good your sheep were. However, there were some Border Leicesters that the judge really liked and placed in the top five in almost every class.

Probably the only breed that came close to us in number was the Katahdins. They had, I think, five breeders showing. It is interesting that 20 years ago when we first started showing, as a breed, there were very few of us and we weren't really accepted and welcomed by the other breeders. But that has changed. Now we are regarded as just another breed of sheep, as are the Katahdins, and we are shepherds just like the others. I don't know whether it is because we are all such wonderful people, those showing the St. Croix, or whether it is the fact that we bring so many sheep, or whether over time the other breeders have seen that the hair sheep are here to stay. I think that when the Wires showed in California that they had no problem being accepted.

So I would encourage all of you who have the opportunity to show your sheep at any kind of a local or regional fair to do so. Even if you just go to exhibit the sheep and not compete it will be worth your time because you never know which of the people you talk to will call you up in a week, a month, a year, or longer and want to buy some sheep. Vicki and I have been asked, while we were at the fair, if we would show our sheep at Ag Fest, which is a large agriculture show sponsored by the Oregon Women for Agriculture, and is held at the fairgrounds, to show people in town all the different aspects of agriculture here in our area. OWA is a part of

American Agricultural Women which is a good group to get involved with if they are in your area.



TOTAL ECLIPSE

We were dead center in the path of the eclipse so in addition to watching the eclipse I was also curious what the sheep were going to do. Basically, the sheep ignored the eclipse. They were out grazing and continued to do so as it got darker and darker. Finally, just a couple of minutes before total eclipse the dogs decided something wasn't right and got up and started barking. Don't know what they said but all the sheep came up around the barn and laid down. They were still unconcerned about the eclipse but did what the dogs told them to do. After the sheep were all up the dogs stopped and never made another sound. As it got lighter and lighter they just stayed where they were. So I guess if you are a sheep an eclipse is no big deal but if you are a dog it is something to worry about.

Barking Dogs

From Statesman Journal, Salem, OR, September 1, 2017

Since most of us have guardian dogs for our sheep I thought this article might be of interest. I am leaving out a lot of it and there is some stuff missing from the article but you will get the idea.

“An Oregon court ruled a couple must have their dogs surgically debarked after causing their neighbors several years of disruption.” In addition, they must pay \$238,000 in compensation to the neighbors. The neighbors claim they have had to put up with the barking of six or more dogs for over 10 years and they start as early as 5 AM. They claim it is so bad the children dread coming home. The defendants claim the dogs bark when predators are around and are needed to protect their sheep and property. They feel the debarking will endanger their flock since they had to have a dog debarked several years ago and a cougar got six lambs in a week.

It seems to me that they should be complaining of the dogs barking at night not during the day. The only time our dogs bark during the day is when the cougar is in our area. But they do bark a lot at night. I also wonder where any sheep farmer is going to get \$238,000. I also have to wonder, what good the dogs are going to be if they can't bark and warn the predators away. Our dogs talk to our sheep and do a lot controlling them just by sound which debarking would destroy. I think if they were my dogs I would rather get rid of them or have them killed than debarked.

In Oregon we have a right to farm law which supposedly protects us from suits like this. But this is just to remind you that these people are all around us and we need to be aware.



Sheep Romance by Mary Campbell

Member questionnaire for newsletter

Name : Ed and Linda Barnes **City:** Portland **State:** OR

Farm Name : Dorsey/Lee St. Croix Farm **Number of Acres:** 20 but only 9 acres of pasture

Number of Breeding ewes: 20 senior breeders, 8 junior (3 fall ewes 2016, 2 spring 2017, 3 fall 2017)

Rams: 3 senior breeding rams, 5 junior rams (3 fall 2016, 2 spring 2017, 1 fall 2017)

Other livestock: 3 horses, 3 dogs, 1 llama, 2 cats, 9 chickens

Have you had sheep before St. Croix? Yes, mixed wool breeds for awhile. Hard to find shearers, foot rot problems, domestic dog kills stopped that process.

How long have we had St. Croix? Since October 1989. **Why did you get St. Croix?** A Dental patient of mine had them and invited Linda and myself to see them in Carson, Washington. Bob Menig showed us that we didn't have to shear them, they were foot rot and parasite resistant and easy to take care of. They seemed interesting. Sometime later, Bob's wife Dottie, called us and said Bob would like us to buy his small herd as he was dying of leukemia. We started with 2 breeding rams, 3 ewes, and 2 young ewe lambs plus a wether (which we ate and it was the best tasting lamb we had ever eaten).

Short biography: Linda was instrumental in starting the Open St. Croix Sheep Show at the Oregon State Fair with 2 other lady St. Croix owners. At that time the rules for obtaining a full show were to exhibit the sheep for three years and then on the fourth year a full show with premiums would occur with 5 breeders and 35 sheep present. The year 1997 marked the first show. In 2001, we were honored by being the "feature breed" at the fair. We had 9 breeders show 96 sheep that year. In 2016 the St. Croix Breed was awarded our second "feature breed" show and was combined with the Annual Membership Meeting and attended by member breeders across the USA. 2017 marked the 20th year for the sheep show. This has been the greatest promotional boost for our program and helps explain the high number of breeder owners in the State of Oregon.

Originally, the St. Croix registry was run by Cole Evans of Utah State University. A group of breeders of St. Croix took over the registry and data base and St. Croix Hair Sheep International Association was born. Dr. Ed Barnes was the first President and held the position for 4 years. Since that beginning, either Ed or Linda has held a position on the Board or as an officer to this day. We have registered over 450 St. Croix in the 28 years we have owned this breed and birthed many more. Some went to commercial breeders, some went to the dinner table and some went to homes as pets or grass mowers. Most all of the registered sheep are sold as breeding stock. We love the personality and easy care that these sheep require.

Over the years, we have attended all but one of the Annual membership meetings put on by the Association across the United States. These meetings have generated a wealth of knowledge in helping raise our St Croix with educational programs plus allowed us to meet other breeders to discuss mutual problems and make some wonderful friendships.

THE EDITOR SAYZ

As you can see the newsletter is still a work in progress. I write things as they occur to me so they are not always in the same style but I am working on that with my wife's help. If anything happens to her the newsletter will come out in pencil on a Big Chief tablet. For those of you who read all of the last issue, no you do not have an idiot for an editor, I don't think, but you do have one who doesn't always think about what he is doing and has trouble proof reading his own stuff. That is why I asked you to contact me with comments, pictures, stories, etc. and never put my name or contact anywhere in the newsletter. You will notice this month it is in the letterhead. Do not send me anything in a box because I can't change it. But please let me hear from you so I know I am not writing all this for myself.