

WINTER
2014 / 15



Romney Ramblings

Newsletter of the American
Romney Breeders Association

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American Romney
Breeders
Association
website:
<http://americanromney.org/>



President's Message *by ARBA President Ron Andress*

What began as a bred ewe sale over 30 years ago, has turned into possibly the largest sheep and wool festival in the country. The New York Sheep and Wool Festival in Rhinebeck, New York, is where ARBA held its Annual Meeting and Banquet.

What a great weekend! ARBA members met at Foster's Coach House in downtown Rhinebeck. We all enjoyed a nice meal and each other's company. Our meeting was highlighted by some presentations and discussions about the high demand for Romney wool.

On Saturday, Romneys lead the way at the bred ewe sale. Twelve Romney ewes and ewe lambs were sold. To say prices were strong would be an understatement! I think Romneys set

some new records for the New York sale.

The remainder of the weekend was filled with sheep shows. Romneys stood near the top or on top in all the long wool classes. Like I said, it was a great weekend!

Plans are underway for our next great weekend – the 2015 National Show and Sale which will be held in Washington State, at the Clark County Fair, in August. If anyone is interested in serving on our National Show and Sale Committee, or willing to help out to make this a great event, please contact JoAnn Mast or myself. Look for details on our website and in upcoming issues of the Romney Ramblings. I hope to see many of you there.

RON

Consider Increasing Diversity in White Romneys

By JoAnn Mast

If you breed Romneys, you may be aware that there are various lines, styles and preferred uses of the breed. All have a place in the current market, and many have a vital role in the future of those

producers wanting to maintain a white based gene pool. Since a white Romney can carry colored genetics, but not express any difference in appearance from a white Romney that does not carry the genes for color, it makes it

harder for breeders to identify the b (black) factored animals in their flock.

Registration certificates may help identify white animals. Ewes are printed on ivory colored paper

Continued on page 12



Callie Burgess, 5, of Ohio, enjoyed a successful year, showing her futurity lamb which she purchased at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival. In July, Callie won Reserve Champion AOB Ewe and Supreme AOB Fleece at the Ohio State Fair. In August, she won Reserve Champion White Long Wool Ewe and Supreme Fleece at the Michigan Fiber Festival. In November, Callie took 2nd place at NAILE in the Youth Senior Ewe Lamb class. Showing in the Ohio Youth Extravaganza, and at the Michigan Fiber Festival, Callie walked away with 2nd in showmanship and champion in the costume contest. She enjoyed traveling and meeting new friend, and offers her thanks to Pitchfork Ranch, as well as all the other breeders, for consigning wonderful sheep for the futurity program.

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Deadline for application to 2015 Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School

The Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School will be held June 21-24 in Colorado. Tours will include visits to feed lots, a lamb slaughter and processing facility, lamb pelt grading, an ethanol and by-products plant, as well as other related industry information. Ron Cole, who holds a degree in Animal Science from Colorado State University and has worked in all phases of livestock, grain and meat reporting both at the local and national levels, will direct the 2015 Leadership School.

Applicants must be 20 years of age or older. Only 26 individuals will be selected. Couples may apply to attend; however, both must be involved in the sheep business and each must complete and submit an application. There is no fee to apply. Once accepted, a \$200 per person registration fee is required to secure placement. Applications must be received in the NLFA office by e-mail or fax no later than Wed., April 1, 2015.

Applicants will be selected following the cut-off date, and those selected will be notified soon thereafter. Participants are responsible for the cost of their own travel to and from the school.

During the school, NLFA will cover the cost of

meals, lodging and any tour-related expenses.

Visit www.nlfa-sheep.org/leadership.html for the application form and more details about completing and submitting. Or call or email the NLFA office at 503-364-5462, info@nlfa-sheep.org.

Fiber Tour set for April 25-26, 2015 in New York

The 23rd Washington County (NY) Fiber Tour, will take place April 25-26, 2015, at 15 farms and a fiber mill scattered throughout the scenic and farming country of Washington County, NY. Among the sheep, goat, rabbit and alpaca farms featured will be six farms

that raise purebred Romney sheep.

Washington County is close to Albany and Saratoga Springs, New York, along with Manchester and Bennington, Vermont.

For more information contact Mary Pratt at elihufarm@localnet.com



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Wamego, KS 66547



Find us on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Romney-Breeders-Association/104644142899461>

Romney Ramblings

The Romney Ramblings is the newsletter of the American Romney Breeders Association. The purpose of the Ramblings is to provide sheep industry news, highlight the efforts of ARBA, announce events and activities, provide an outlet for promotion of your sheep and wool products and recognize the accomplishments of the membership.

Advertising in the Ramblings Prices: color - black & white

Full Page	\$150	\$75
1/2 Page	\$90	\$45
1/3 Page	\$70	\$35
1/4 Page	\$50	\$25
Card Ad	\$25	\$12
Classified Ads—45 cents per word.		

Above rates are based on camera ready copy, sized to fit the space purchased for the ad. Ads prepared by the editor will be charged at \$15 per hour, with a minimum fee of \$15.

Send all advertising information and news to: Cindy Peterson
54656 Brady Road
Myrtle Point, OR 97458
(541) 572-5930
romneyeditor@gmail.com

Deadlines for Article Submissions & Advertising

Romney Ramblings is published in the spring, summer and fall. Deadlines for submissions of articles and advertising is the 15th of the month of publication—March 15, July 15 and November 15 (subject to change). Articles may be emailed or mailed to the editor—contact information above. Photo submissions of Romney events, awards and sales are encouraged; publication is subject to available space and quality of image.

From the Secretary's Desk

by JoAnn Mast

A year has passed since I took on this position, and it has been an interesting job and an opportunity to become acquainted with many members.

In order to make some of your work with the association more easily understood, some changes have been made to the membership process and the accessibility of forms on the website.

Now is the time to renew your ARBA membership. This reminder, the application in the newsletter and the postcard, are all intended to encourage you to renew your membership now, rather than later in the year. Memberships received now will appear in the printed directory that is distributed in March/April. Memberships, both new and renewed, are important to the work of ARBA and the support of the annual budget.

All membership applications are now coming to the secretary for

processing and posting to the listing on the website. This allows all edits to be made, so please make any changes on the application you submit this year. Also, please contact me if there is an error in the directory or the member entry on the website.

Registrations and transfers are still being managed by Associated Sheep Registry (ASR). There is a change in this process as well. The business is now located in Kansas, so please use the newly posted form when submitting requests. Also, be sure to include the work order with all registrations and transfers. New address: ASR, P.O. Box 231, 305 Lincoln St., Wamego, KS 66547.

Minutes from the recent board and annual meetings are posted on the website. Take a look at the work completed and the opportunities coming to you to become part of projects being done by committees.

From the Editor

by Cindy Peterson

In this season of giving, and sometimes excess, there's a phrase I came up with several years ago that keeps popping into my head: "Everyone could use a little want."

As a grandparent, I want to see that look of delight on my grandchild's face when they open their gift and find inside something they've been longing for. But I know how important it is for that child to not be overindulged.

So, how do you strike a balance? How do you bring that moment of joy without contributing to a spoiled child?

I often think of the stories I read as a child, such as *Little House in*

the Big Woods by *Laura Ingalls Wilder*. In that classic story the children are delighted to find a simple candy cane and orange in their stocking. Obviously that would not fly these days with the expectation children typically have of owning a video game console by the age of six, and a cell phone by the age of 10.

But I think there's something to be said for longing for, waiting for, and maybe never even receiving something we thought we wanted.

By not overindulging, I believe we are helping build character—determination, and appreciation, when things do finally come our way. A little want is a good thing!

Rambling Roads — Notes from District Directors

District 1

Romneys are rocking in New England! Our great breed is in demand for its fabulous fleece, meat, temperament and ease of production. Romney yarn, and other wool products, are in high demand. Locally produced meat is selling exceptionally well off the farm and at local markets. As Romney breeders, we should be proud and continue to raise those type of Romney sheep that produce excellence.

I attended many events this year – so many I can't remember a weekend at home! Starting with MDSWF in May, and ending at NAILE in November, Romney shows, sales and festivals were very well attended all year. At most youth shows in New England Romneys were one of the biggest breeds, if not the biggest, shown. Our numbers are growing again and Romney youth are doing a fabulous job!

In September, ARBA held a regional show at the Big E. Over 80 head of Romney were shown. We started the weekend with a potluck supper, and everyone in attendance received an ARBA gift bag. In October, ARBA held their annual banquet and dinner in conjunction with the show and sale in Rhinebeck, NY. The silent auction raised over \$600 for youth in Districts 1 and 2. We had a wonderful time, good food and great conversation. A big thank you to all who attended and helped to make the banquet a success.

I wish everyone a very happy and successful lambing season.

Hilary Chapin

hwchapin@hotmail.com

Phone: 603-767-8826

District 2

What a whirlwind of a fall this has been, and things are finally starting to settle down with ewes beginning to carry lambs for the spring.

First off, the annual meeting was a success at Foster's Coach House, in Rhinebeck, with a packed room. It was great to meet with Romney breeders new and old to talk sheep and discuss the future of ARBA.

New next year will be a Romney show at the Southern Adirondack Fiber Festival on September 26 and 27. The show committee is already busy at work planning a great show. We are hoping to have a strong junior presence. So,

if you are a junior exhibitor near Greenwich, NY, this would be a great experience for you and help and make this show's inaugural year a success.

Now for an update on the archives project. The process is moving, but at a slower rate since I have a higher course load this semester. However, all of the old ram paper records have been scanned into pdf files. I am almost finished with scanning the ewe records and will transfer all the physical records to the National Ag library in Baltimore once scanning is complete. However, typing the data into the format for ASR's database is the time consuming part and will continue for some

Continued on page 13



Tim Walker and Hope Mariacher with Tim's reserve champion black ewe lamb, junior show.

Calendar of Events

January 2015

- 2-4: Michigan Sheep Breeders Association Shepherd's Weekend, Lansing, MI. Email: info@misheep.org
<http://www.misheep.org/events.htm>
- 13: Illinois Certified Livestock Manager Training Workshop, Effingham, IL. 1-800-345-6087.
<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lfmm/clmt/>
Other trainings offered around the state in 2015
- 28-31: ASI/NLFA 150 Anniversary Convention, Reno, NV.
www.sheepusa.org. 800-648-1177
- 31: Indianhead Sheep Breeders Shepherds Clinic. Indianhead Technical College, Rice Lake, WI.
www.indianheadsheep.com

February 2015

- 7: Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference, Logan County Extension, Russellville, KY. David Ditsch, 859-257-9511, ext.286, dditsch@uky.edu.
www2.ca.uky.edu/rcars

March 2015

- 6: Shearing School, George Washington Carver Farm, Jefferson City, MO. Kesel, 573-681-5312. Email: CliffordRathertC@LincolnU.edu

March 2015, continued

- 21-22: Shearing School, Shepherds Way LLC, Locke, NY. Doug Rathke, 320-587-6094.
<http://lambshoppe.com/sheep-shearing/about-doug-rathke/>
- 28: High Desert Wool Growers Annual Fiber Market Day, Prineville, OR. <http://www.highdesertwoolgrowers.org/fiber-market-day/>

April 2015

- 25-26: Fiber Tour, Washington County, NY. See page 3.

May 2015

- 2-3: Forty-second annual Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, MD. www.sheepandwool.org
Email: office@sheepandwool.org or call 410-531-3647.

June 2015

- 19-21: Black Sheep Gathering, Eugene, OR.
www.blacksheepgathering.org

Submit events for publication in the Ramblings to: Romney editor, 54656 Brady Rd., Myrtle Point, OR 97458, romneyeditor@gmail.com, or call 541-572-5930.

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New Romney Sheep Show planned for 2015

A new Romney Show will take place Sunday, September 27, 2015, in conjunction with the 7th annual Southern Adirondack Fiber Festival at the Washington County Fairgrounds, Greenwich, NY. The event will feature combined Open and Junior Shows for both White and Natural Colored Romneys. It will be open to all in-state and out-of-state Romney breeders. Exhibitors may also want to enter the well-established Fleece Show and Sale, and the Homespun Skein Show.

The introduction of the Romney Sheep Show to the Festival will provide regional sheep producers and junior exhibitors a pleasant weekend venue to display their sheep to an interested public. It will give fiber-fanatic festival-goers who “wear the wool” an education regarding “where the wool” comes from. Several Romney breeders, festival vendors and fair staff are organizing the show under the co-leadership of Norma Johnson-Glacy and Karin Kennedy.

“We’ve wanted a sheep show since the very beginning of the Fiber Festival,” Norma explained. “Now it has grown enough that it can accommodate this show. With so many local Romney breeders, it was a logical step to choose Romneys for the first show,” she added. Karin and her son Devlin, a junior Romney breeder with many years’ experience, will be organizing the Junior Show, and look forward to welcoming other Junior exhibitors.

“We want to attract newcomers and small flock owners as well as

experienced breeders,” Norma explained. “To accommodate both, the show will offer some less common classes.”

In addition to the usual classes for lambs and yearlings, classes for aged ewe, daughter-dam, and get of sire will be offered. In the flock classes, exhibitors may combine white and natural colored Romneys.

The judge will select champions and reserve champions for both White and Natural Colored rams and ewes in both Junior & Open classes. Awards for the best fleece on Romney, and best-headed Romney, will be given in Open and Junior White and Natural Colored shows.

In summing up, Norma said, “Our goals are promoting the Romney breed, encouraging Junior activities, and welcoming all those interested in the foundation of the wool industry – the sheep!”

The fairgrounds is easy to reach from Interstates 90 or 87, about 45 minutes north of Albany, and 20 minutes east of Saratoga Springs. Those who plan to spend the weekend can find accommodations at several local inns and bed and breakfasts in the countryside or nearby villages. See www.washingtonnycounty.com for lodging, dining, and shopping options. Washington County is sandwiched between the Saratoga Springs area and western Vermont, both of which offer many opportunities for lodging, dining and touring.

Look for news at <http://americanromney.org> and <http://adkfiber.com>. For more information, contact Karin Kennedy at Ensign Brook Farm, 518-692-8769, karin.battenkillfibers@yahoo.com or Norma Johnson-Glacy at Crazy Legs Farm, 518-638-8132, njohnson53@care2.com.

RAMBLINGS DELIVERY

In an effort to allow your association to better manage funds, the Romney Ramblings will be sent via email to those breeders with an email address provided on their membership form. If you prefer to receive a printed copy, delivered to your mailbox, please indicate that below. If you have not provided an email, but would like to receive the newsletter in that format, also complete and return this inquiry. If the website posting meets your needs, indicate that as well and submit this form.

___ I have an unlisted email, but would like to receive the newsletter on-line.

___ I have no email and would like to receive the Ramblings in the mail.

___ I have no desire to receive the newsletter, but will use the ARBA website for Ramblings reading.

**Name _____ Sr ___ Jr ___
Email address _____**

Return this form to: JoAnn Mast, ARBA Secretary 58221 Lee Valley Rd. Coquille, OR 97423



scenes from Naile



Importing Romney Genetics

by Kim Caulfield, Heritage Genetics

We are all devoted to a breed with a small population in the U.S., but many purebred flocks in other countries. Importing new genetics is not for everybody, but it can be rewarding. It can also be intimidating and expensive, so it helps to think through some of the details.

At this time, importing live sheep is only possible from Australia and New Zealand. Most genetic imports are in the form of semen or embryos. Since bringing in live animals is a bit chancy (will they adjust to their new climate or their new hemisphere) many breeders prefer to bring in frozen genes. Besides, properly stored semen or embryos should survive for literally centuries! This opens up all sorts of interesting possibilities to a long term breeder. Embryos are usually less appealing, since they are very hard to collect and it is common to only get about half to successfully produce live lambs. Also, although ARBA policies do mention embryo transfer (ET), there is not yet a fully developed policy on its use. ARBA is accepting of ET as a breeding procedure, and the committee is willing to incorporate the approved paperwork to track ET breeding if a member desires to use this method. The committee should be contacted before beginning any embryo work. With semen, it is easy to collect large amounts, and it is reasonable to expect on average to get about 70% of the ewes you breed with it to settle.

There are two types of regulations to be aware of: government regulations and breed registry rules.

The USDA's import regulations tend to change frequently. This is mostly due to new health concerns around the world. It is a good idea to get a copy of the USDA's current requirements before making any other plans. The URL is absurdly long, so search for USDA import and you will get to the correct contact page. You will eventually need to get a permit for the specific import. This will show the exact name of the animal(s) to be imported, the owner's full address, your address, and all related veterinary certifications needed.

It is also a good idea to check with the government in the other country (Ag Canada in Canada, DEFRA in the UK, Ministry for Primary Industries in NZ, etc.) to see what their export requirements are. Yes, both governments should have the same agreed standards, but paperwork can get out of sync, and details can get confused.

When I brought my first Cotswolds out of Canada, I got the current rules from USDA. My vet got them from the state vet's office. The breeder in Canada got them from Ag Canada. They were all similar, but not identical.

ARBA has specified what is required for foreign animals to be admitted to our registry. There are also established rules for documenting semen or embryo imports for ARBA. Go to the ARBA website, (americanromney.org) and click on Member Services, then select AI Policies. Registries in other countries may have regulations governing export of semen, embryos or live animals.

Once you have looked through the paperwork, you can think

about the actual sheep. It is worth remembering that different countries have different priorities in how they evaluate sheep. What is considered spectacular in one country, might not be entirely practical in another. When I was in the UK looking for Cotswold rams, I was shown one that was generally thought to be stupendous. He was so wide that I could not span his loin with both hands, but he had less proportional length of loin than would be acceptable to most breeders in the US. Pictures and fleece samples are very helpful in choosing. You may want to consider traveling in person to pick out the animal that will best fit your flock and your market.

Think ahead about timing. Romneys are very seasonal breeders. For best results, you want to collect semen or embryos during breeding season. Remember that this may be an inconvenience to the flock owner, so you may need to work around his breeding requirements. Still, trying to collect from this breed out of season is probably a waste of your money.

The actual process of shipping semen or embryos is not too difficult. You will need to own or rent a shipper tank, also known as a vapor tank. These tanks have a sponge like material in their walls. When they are filled with liquid nitrogen, the LN is absorbed into the walls and stays there. This lets the tank stay super cold without having any liquid nitrogen sloshing around. This is safer for your semen, since the tank cannot spill, and airlines and courier services

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National Show & Sale in Washington, August 2015

The 2015 National Show & Sale will be held during the Clark County Fair in Ridgefield, WA. Entry day is August 6 and release day is August 11.

Showing will begin Fri-

day afternoon with classes for junior members and continue Saturday morning with open class divisions. An evening sale on Saturday will offer an opportunity to purchase

animals judged earlier in the day.

The annual dinner and meeting of the association will be held on the fairgrounds Friday evening.

Watch for further details following our January board meeting, and check out information about the fair on their website:

www.clarkcofair.com

Importing Romney Genetics, continued from page 9

do not usually consider vapor tanks to be hazardous, so they do not charge extra to carry them. Depending on the type of tank, these shippers can stay cold for two to four weeks.

When you import a tank, you will need an import broker to handle the appropriate paperwork and customs duties. I have found it particularly easy to ship with FedEx, since they provide this service as a standard part of international shipping. Otherwise, USDA has a list of approved airports for importing, and these each have a broker who can be hired to pick up your shipment, clear it through customs, and send it on to you.

So, is this worth the effort and expense? It certainly can be. If you choose the right animal for your situation, you may make great improvements in your flock. In the long run, this can be wonderful. You may be able to market many first and second genera-

tion lambs at higher prices because of their ancestry, but do remember that you will still have

some lambs that are less outstanding than others. AI and ET lambs taste just as good as any oth-

ers. It may be a couple of generations before your investment begins to pay back.



Please fill out this form and send to:
ARBA
58221 Lee Valley Road
Coquille, OR 97423

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Renewal

New Member

Date: _____

Please accept my application for membership renewal to the American Romney Breeders Association. I agree to abide by the Bylaws and Rules of the American Romney Breeders Association.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Junior Members Only: Age: _____ Birthdate: _____

Number of Romney breeding ewes:
White _____ Natural Colored _____

Fee: \$20 --- Regular \$10 --- Junior (under 21 years old)
\$25 --- After January 31

Please make check payable to ARBA

Seventeen exhibitors from six states show at BigE

By Charlene Carlisle

As always, I am just returning from somewhere and this time is no different. In September the BigE hosted our District 1 show where the Romney turnout was terrific. Eighty really nice Romneys went through the ring with more youth exhibitors (11) than open (6), for a total of 17 exhibitors from six states. The JR exhibitors were Katie Bombria (CT), Cooper Chapin (NH), El-lora Chapin (NH), Katie Cole (MA), Jamie Coleman (CT), Cadence Higgins (CT), Megan Higgins (CT), Catherine Hromis (NH), Teresa Hromis (NH), Nate Trojanoski (CT), and Tim Walker (NH).

Our youth did great, and provided a lot of help to the older generation. Many were seen throughout the barn helping carry water buckets, feeding, moving sheep, and most importantly, fitting their

own sheep. They helped others, in and out of the show ring, and it was most appreciated. At Hilary Chapin's suggestion, we had a slow cooker night, and what fun it turned out to be. Not only did it allow us to have a good, warm, home-cooked meal, but it also gave us time to sit, talk and laugh. Gift bags were given to all exhibitors, with fun things inside. Thanks Hilary, and your helpers, for putting it all together.

I am not going to list all the winners, but suffice it to say that there were many, and all well deserved. However, I do want to mention that the Romneys held their own against other breeds. In the fleece show, the champion in the Hand Spinning NC Long Wool Division went to a Romney, and a white Romney placed first in the White Longwool Handspinning Division. In the Supreme Fleece Show, the white

Romney was pulled out in the top five for consideration. In the Supreme Ram class, the NC Romney was pulled out in top 5 for consideration, and in the Supreme Ewe Class, the NC Romney was pulled out and then went on to be selected for Supreme Ewe. It was quite an exciting time for the Romney breed.

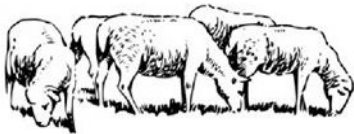
Last weekend brought many Romney breeders to Rhinebeck, NY, for the NY Bred Ewe & Lamb Sale, held in conjunction with the NY Sheep & Wool Festival where ARBA held its annual meeting with dinner at Fosters. It was lots of fun with delicious food and a silent auction where the funds went to the Jrs. The Rhinebeck show is different as Romneys are in a long wool class where you compete against other long wools, making it really tough. Once again, Romneys were at the top in all classes, with many champions and supremes by the time Sunday afternoon rolled around. Romneys topped the sale with the highest breed average, while breaking the Rhinebeck Romney record. Unfortunately, I don't have the number of Romneys that went through the show, nor the number of exhibitors, but it was a nice group of sheep (and peo-

ple). Many pictures can be found on Facebook, the ARBA website, and in the next Romney Ramblings. Feel free to send in any pictures that you have, either by sending them directly to ARBA, or by sending them to me and I will make sure they get to the right person. Once again, many thanks to Hilary and Chris, and their team, for getting this all together.

Show season is winding down, with only NAILE left for me to report on. Look for a blurb soon on those results. Depending on your management preference, the end of the breeding season may be wrapping up, or maybe it's just beginning. But whatever your plan is, more than likely lambing is the next step in the cycle. Lambing is my favorite time of the year because, if all goes as planned, each lamb crop should be an improvement from the previous year. Watching those lambs grow and develop makes all the work seem like it wasn't work at all. Sitting in the barn and, either patting yourself on the back, or kicking yourself slightly south of that area, is a personal conversation that no one has to hear, but it better be discussed!

As always, my coffee pot will be on in KY. Stop by to visit.

SHELTON ROMNEYS



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Featuring Natural Colored and Whites
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- ▼ Julian and Moore
- ▼ Little Hooves Romneys
- ▼ Southern Oregon Romneys

Consider Increasing Diversity in White Romneys, *continued*

Continued from page 2

and rams are printed on golden-rod colored paper. If those pedigrees show no registration numbers with BW or BB behind the ARBA number, the sheep should not carry color. If you have white sheep with registration certificates printed on pink for ewes and gray for rams, you should have colored genetics in your flock, and there should be visible BW and BB in the animal's pedigree.

As the number of breeders adding color to their flocks has increased, the percentage of straight white breeding stock has declined. This is due to the desire to produce both white and colored Romneys, and do so without

having two or three separate breeding groups and the space to manage them. It does not mean there are fewer white sheep, just fewer white sheep that do not carry color in their pedigree. Since ARBA registrations are accepted for white, white color carrying and colored, there is the possibility of trying to increase the number of straight white animals.

Why be concerned about keeping a white based Romney flock? Several reasons are important to me, and perhaps others share this idea. I sell breeding stock to commercial producers who are not interested in colored fleeces, but are very interested in a heavy, white fleece from a dual purpose sheep that will do well in lowland

pastures, foothills and mountain ranges. Since many of these commercial flocks are made up of white faced sheep that may be Romneys or Romney crosses that include Leicesters, Coopworth or Lincoln, there is the possibility of color coming into the flock. It must also be remembered that colored lambs can come from straight white animals, although it takes time and numbers for that to happen. Use the history of Romneys as a basis for the time needed to establish color.

In my attempt to find white Romney rams, not related to my flock, I have found the list to be quite short. My current ewe flock is based on swapping my rams between ewe lines, raising ram lambs, and then swapping one more time to try and avoid line breeding that impacts the future in a negative way.

If you have a flock of straight white ewes, consider helping enlarge the base of white Romneys that can be used to keep this option viable. If you have a blend of white and b factor animals, consider using a straight white ram before all ewes are color carrying or colored.

Based on show and sale information, there are plenty of color carrying white Romneys being produced, so that population will probably not suffer if a year or two is dedicated to raising straight white animals.

Just as there is great diversity in the colored Romneys, there is also great diversity in b factor white Romneys. I challenge us to revive the diversity in the straight white bred Romneys.

Southern Oregon Romneys

Left photo: Ewe lamb SOR 1200, Reserve Champion Romney Ewe in the New York Bred Ewe and Ewe Lamb Sale show held during the New York Sheep and Wool Festival in Rhinebeck, NY. Below: Yearling Ewe SOR 1154, Champion Romney Ewe and Supreme Champion Ewe at the Oregon State Fair.



Thank you to all our helpers and buyers in 2014. We look forward to offering breeding stock at sales and from the farm in 2015.

JoAnn Mast & Kathleen Zappelli

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Rambling Roads, continued

Continued from page 5

time. If anyone is interested in helping with typing into Excel, please contact me.

I also want to encourage any members that want to participate in helping the organization in terms of advertising, and other tasks, to get in touch with any of the board members to see where your help would contribute the most to ARBA.

As always, if anyone has questions, comments, or just wants to talk sheep, please feel free to contact me.

Chris Posbergh

District 2 Regional Director

cposbergh@gmail.com

District 3

Hello from Illinois. We've had a busy past few months. Our regional show was held at the Michigan State Fair. We had a very good show. You can see my full report on the ARBA website. Region 3 had good representation at the N.A.I.L.E., both in the sheep show as well as the wool show.

I know that I am speaking for our very own Willis Plank, who serves as superintendent of the Romney sheep show, that he appreciated everyone that had a part in the show.

We all have been getting ready for lambing season. I, for one, have been working on repairs to the barn and preparing for the winter weather that the wonderful weather people are predicting.

I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a great New Year. May God bless you all in 2015.

John Shelton

District 3 Regional Director

romneysheep@frontiernet.net

District 4

Hello from the sunny Willamette Valley. It has been unusually warm so far this month. The annual ryegrass is growing like crazy and even the clover has some growth.

I am sure that lambing time is fast approaching for many of our breeders. Hopefully the weather will hold out and not get as cold as it did last winter.

I am happy to say that we are making good progress on the National Romney Show and Sale that will be held at the Clark County Fair in Washington. Although we are still in the planning phases, I am sure the details will be announced once the committee has everything finalized.

I hope everyone has a good, safe holiday.

Karen Nichols

District 4 Regional Director

kswannichols@gmail.com

District 5

Most of our ewes should be bred by now, our pastures are pretty much dormant, and we are feeding hay. We are trying to keep the pipes thawed while we carry water. We are preparing our lambing facilities and stocking up on supplies. We have culled the appropriate animals to keep our costs down. The fair season is over and we are beginning a slow time. We get to come indoors and concentrate on holiday activities.

In late August and September, in Washington State, Romneys were shown in at least two fairs: our District 5 show in Monroe, and the Washington State Fair in Puyallup. Five exhibitors participated in the Open Class district show and two were Juniors. Those juniors also showed in our junior show. Rom-

neys were awarded Supreme Ram.

District 5 and 4 have begun teaming-up to conduct the 2015 Annual Show, Sale and Meeting. The events are planned for Clark County Fairgrounds on August 6 – 11, 2015. To date, our planning committee has begun to divide up the tasks. A meeting was held with the Clark County Fair sheep superintendent to identify a variety of aspects. It was agreed to expand the age groups for the lamb class to three, and to include "Best Headed" and "Best Fleeced" classes. The fair is planning to provide meeting facilities on the grounds and provide a BBQ lamb dinner on Aug. 8. Our Junior Show is planned for Friday, August 7, at 1 pm. The Open Class show is scheduled for 10 am on Aug 8. The sale is scheduled for 6 pm the same day. Since we will have to fund the Junior Show, we plan on using current youth funds, plus money from the silent auction and sponsorships from our members. The entry deadline is July 15, 2015.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to share information about activities going on in your area.

Al Schwider

District 5 Regional Director

al@thepinesfarm.com

District 6

The Tennessee State Fair Fleece Show had 230 entries. The overall Reserve Champion Ram Fleece, and the Tennessee Champion Ram Fleece, were won by Caulfield 1100W, an entry in the White Romney Ram Class. The Tennessee Reserve Champion Ewe Fleece was awarded to Caulfield 1125W, an entry in the Commercial Ewe Class. Overall, there were 23 Romney fleeces entered in a variety of

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Rambling Roads, continued

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classes.

The annual Fiber in the Boro Festival was held November 1st in Murfreesboro, TN. Several of the vendors highlighted Romney fleeces, which were popular with the customers regardless of whether they were offered as raw fleece, dyed locks or roving.

I would love to hear about Romney activities from our District 6 members. Please call or email me with news, or just to

chat.

Phone: 931-293-4466

Jane Caulfield

District 6 Regional

Director

jcaulfield371@mac.com

Director-at-Large

Greetings, and best wishes for a joyful holiday season, and a great start to your new year! Although most of us are getting ready for the holidays, and then the lambing season, there is a group of board members from across the country, led by Al Schwider, already working to plan

the 2015 National Show. Please stay tuned for details throughout the coming months.

The policy and procedures committee is working to collect, document, and update existing policies and procedures into one place, for reference and consistency. Our cur-

rent focus is on voting procedures and requirements, and board attendance policies. If you are interested in joining our work, or if there is a policy or procedure you would like clarified, please contact me at olympiafarm@att.net
Anne McIntyre-Lahner

NEYSS fun and informative

The 2014 North East Youth Sheep Show took place July 17-20 2014 in West Springfield, Mass. The weekend was a huge success, starting with the Quiz Bowl and Skill-a-thon competition on Thursday and Friday. On Saturday night the youth competed in fitting and showmanship, with Kaitlyn Remburger, Faustyna Jaracz, Ashley Hayward and Colby Clark winning their respective age groups.

The weekend concluded with the selection of the supreme champions where Austin Grace won Supreme Champion Ram on his Oxford yearling ram, and Lexy Grace won Supreme Champion Ewe on her Southdown Class I Junior Ewe Lamb and Ethan Kennedy won Supreme Champion Ram with his Romney (White) Flock. A list of all the winners can be found on our website, and pictures can be found on our Facebook page. Next year the show will take place a week earlier, following the All American which will also be held at the Eastern States Exposition the weekend before. Pens will be available to those wishing to stay the week. The show dates are July 9-12, 2015.



Windy Oaks Farm

Bucks County, PA
Ron, Sue & Justin Andress

White & Natural
Colored Romneys
Spinning Fleeces

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EWE!



Multi-trait Tracking *You Are Getting More Than You Bargained (Selected) For!*

By Maggie Howard

Unless you keep every ewe lamb and every ram lamb produced on your farm, you are practicing genetic selection each and every year. Every time you choose your keepers, you are—consciously or unconsciously—changing the gene frequencies on your farm. If some of your retained lambs are sold as breeding stock, you are also changing gene frequencies on your buyer's farm. Since we are already involved in genetic changes due to our keep/cull decisions, it would be best if we consciously embraced our role.

Facts are present that should encourage us to make these decisions using broad and multi-trait based evaluations. The reasons for this approach are several and are rooted in concepts coming from on-going genetic research. Basically, these concepts seem to counsel against the acceptance of a strict, Mendelian approach to genes. It appears that genetic organization is such that very few genes can be viewed as "single actors" - there are genetic interconnections.

Most of us have seen examples of these interconnections and, I think, have labeled them as anomalies (e.g. the commonality of a beautiful quality fleece on dink lambs while some of our growthiest sport Brillo; two lambs with identical alleles at the agouti location whose color expressions are wildly different). Given recent genetic research, these anomalies/oddities can be seen in a much different light.

Our Romneys are well known as sheep with soft temperaments that produce two valuable products: meat and fleece. Any individual Romney's success in the production of these commodities is the result of specific arrangements of 60,000-100,000 genes protectively cached within 27 pairs of chromosomes. Interestingly, but rather counter-intuitively, these genes occupy only about 5% of the chromosome's available space. The greatest portion of this space (95%) is occupied by two other items: 1) nonsense base pair strings that serve as periods (".") in the genetic sentences and 2) chromatin proteins.

The chromatin material is of great interest. It is a protective material but also can have a negative influence over gene expression. At times, chromatin goes beyond a merely negative influence and exerts a total silencing of a gene's expression. This is quite astounding. It is reminiscent of Ed's hegemony over color pattern expression. While our human selection practices influence gene frequencies, they have no effect on chromatin. However, help in the understanding of chromatin's role, and how we can work with it, is found in new research. This new research should push us toward a multi-trait evaluation model and can be exemplified by two general concepts: locus control regions (LCRs) and genetic linkage/association.

LCRs were found while using the sheep genome as an investigative

tool for human medicine, specifically concerning the oxygen binding portion of blood called hemoglobin. Sheep have six forms of hemoglobin and each of these types have several alleles. LCRs are clusters of genes that move together. These clusters are obligatory partners to genes found elsewhere and that are dependent upon the cluster's presence. These clusters must be present/transmitted in order for the downstream gene to express. This surely complicates a purely Mendelian view of genetic inheritance. Additionally, some LCRs can cause the chromatin shield to open. This action removes the chromatin's depressive or silencing affect on gene expression. Thus, it could be said that LCRs can allow for expression that would otherwise be silenced by the chromatin.

The concept of genetic linkage and genetic association is also very important. A linkage is said to exist if two or more genes on the same chromosome are transmitted together; an association is a tendency to affect or an expected relationship between genes/groups of genes from different chromosomes. Our fleece product provides a couple of good examples of this point.

Fleece is not a simple product. It is constructed of cylindrical keratin fibers. These fibers are a combination of intermediate filaments (IF) and keratin associated proteins (KAP). As we part our sheep's fleece—front, side and hip—we

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Multi-trait Tracking, *continued from page 15*

are seeing the result of eighty different genes composed of hundreds of thousands of base pairs. These eighty fleece genes are, in the main, distributed between two chromosomes: 3 and 11. Many of these genes appear to be linked or inherited together.

Of importance to our selection practices, it must be noted that not all of these linkages affect only the fleece. For example, some three hundred intermediate filament genes (chromosome 3) are associated with the functioning of the growth hormone genes, appearing in the animal as growth or size. For the most part, this association between growth and fleece quality is inversely proportional and establishes the fact of joint affects being produced from four different chromosomes: 3, 5, 11 and 15. One of the genes within this associative group—a keratin associated protein known as KAP6—has demonstrated that it affects the value of the sheep's fiber diameter (AFD). Recall that this associated group that contains KAP6 has great impact on size and growth. Recall also that growth rate and fleece quality tend to be inversely proportional. So, obviously, if we retain based upon a singular trait like growth slope, we can be, inadvertently, dropping the associates of a low average fiber diameter.

Another example involving fleece is an interesting genetic series that is referred to as the "MTs". This series produces cysteine-rich proteins that bind heavy

metals. Sheep have nine MT genes, each having several alleles. These MT genes can cause desired metals like copper and zinc to be held while, simultaneously, binding and detoxifying the dangerous oxidative metals. Following the concept of LCR location & function, one of these MT sets resides very near the keratin genes on chromosome 11. Others of this series are within chromosome 14—a chromosome containing the extension alleles that allow/promote pigment and agouti expression.

Thinking about these few examples confirms the importance of multi-trait tracking: if we look to evaluate based heavily upon one, single trait, we can inadvertently diminish other, equally important, traits.

I suspect that each of us share a perspective on our Romneys: they are beautiful, calm and work well for us. While we wish to improve in certain areas, we desire to maintain the progress we have already made and the basic character of the flocks we have built.

The flock we have worked to build is comprised of individuals, each the result of 60,000-100,000 genes. These genes have specific linkages, many with associated groupings. All of these have been well integrated over time to produce an individual with multiple traits. Given these facts, it would seem wise to move the flock as a whole through moving various multi-traits as groups of traits. For example, if I look to improve size,

the increases must be proportional in height, loin length and brisket/butt width as described by established breed standard. And I should not sacrifice my flock's established fleece quality for, simply, an increase in size.

If an integrated and totally heritable trait improvement program is to be successful in fleece improvement, I must make sure this "improvement" includes Romney fleece character and micron value as well as eschewing loss of the body size established in my flock. Realizing that "growth" and "fleece" share linkages and associations from at least four different chromosomes, I need to progress slowly enough that my flock's basic genetic profile is maintained while carefully integrating gene frequency change into the extant gene pool.

The idea was best expressed by Bolingbroke in 1716: "Truth lies within a little and certain compass, but error is immense."

IMPORTANT NOTICE regarding registries:

ARBA members who have received registration certificates from ASR since their move to Kansas – check them for blanks, accuracy, paper color and black and white notations. If there is something listed incorrectly, send the certificate and an explanation to ASR and they will make the corrections. This does not apply to previous work done in Iowa.

A Great Ending to a Great Year!

The Anchorage Farm tradition continues as we show and sell Romneys that have excellent breed character, fleeces and structural correctness. Our sheep work in the barn and show ring as evidenced by another great show season



- AF-1228 was Overall Supreme Fleece at 2014 NYS Sheep & Wool Festival. She was also 1st place White Long Wool Jr. Ewe Lamb class 2.
- AF-1275 had Champion Natural Colored Fleece at NYS Sheep & Wool Festival Fleece Show & Sale
- AF-1180 sold for a record setting price of \$1300, for a Romney, at 2014 NYS Bred Ewe Sale

Rhinebeck weekend was made even more special this year with ARBA holding its annual meeting and banquet there during the festival. We had Romney breeders from across the country in attendance. It was great to see many old friends and meet many new ones.

- AF-1228 was Champion Jr. White Romney Ewe Lamb and Best Fleece at 2014 Big E
- AF-1198 was Best Headed White Romney Ewe at 2014 Big E
- AF-1218 was Reserve Champion Jr. Ram Lamb & Best Headed White Romney Ram at 2014 Big E
- AF-1143 was Reserve Champion White Romney Ewe & High Selling Romney at 2014 Great Lakes Sale
- PF-729 was Champion White Romney Ram 2014 at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival
- PF-721 was Champion Black Romney & Best Fleece at the 2014 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, 1st White Pair Yearling Ewes and 1st White Flock at the 2014 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival

**Thanks to all the buyers at the farm and sales.
We appreciate your faith in our breeding program.
Call early for your 2015 Romney needs.**

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845-399-2379 - cell
www.anchorageromneys.com/
anchorage1@earthlink.net

Farm visits by appointment
Send Inquiries to
Graeme Stewart
Farm Manager

American Romney Breeders Association
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