

American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association

March 16, 2008



Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Export From Oogie McGuire

Inside this issue:

*Management of Your
Rare Breed Flock* 2

*No Beneficial Effect of
Treatment—Tapeworms* 3

*A Day With a Sheep
Shearer* 4

*Breeder Spotlight, Becky
Beamus* 5

Regional Report, Canada 6

Desert Weyr, LLC recently completed the export of 11 purebred registered Black Welsh Mountain rams to Canada.

In North America all Black Welsh Mountain sheep are descended from an original importation in 1973 of 3 rams and 13 ewes by Mr. Tom Wyman. Unfortunately 1 ram and 4 ewes did not leave any offspring so the entire population is descended from 11 founder animals. As a comparison there were fewer Black Welsh Mountain sheep than there were California Condors when they were pulled from the wild for captive breeding.

In the late 1990's several US breeders worked to import semen from 2 rams from the UK. The rams were chosen by the UK Breed Council and were from the top 10 rams at

that time. Unfortunately one ram was the grandsire of the other so while we did get needed genetic diversity it was not as wide as we had hoped for. Later a third rams' semen was imported and that represents the entire genetic background for all the North American Sheep.

Sheep were exported to Canada in two groups. The first consisted of 5 ewes and either one or 2 rams in 1987 direct from Mr. Wyman.

The next importation was of 3 ewes and 2 rams in 1999 also direct from Mr. Wyman's flock. There have been no other documented importations of purebred Black Welsh Mountain sheep into Canada. In Canada right now there are a total of 80 ewes and 39 rams registered.

It was clear from the records

that the Canadian sheep were in a critical inbreeding state.

With the new regulations allowing the export of breeding sheep we started working with Canadian breeders to try to provide enough animals to rescue the breed in Canada. The new rules are completely unworkable for the shipment of breeding ewes. Even though we are certified scrapie free and have been in the Flock Certification program for many years and even though we have had a vet inspect every sheep that died on the farm and samples taken from nearly all sheep we could not meet the 30 animals slaughtered and tested rule to verify export status. There is no way a rare breed can afford to kill 30 animals. The loss to the breed is unworkable and we have also

(Continued on page 7)

Officers Needed From Oogie—yahoo group list

Everyone will note that ballots haven't been sent yet for the 2008 officers. That's been because we did not have candidates for all positions.

After 2008 Robin Morse has rescinded her acceptance of the nomination for President and also resigned as a BOD member (her term was due to expire end of 2008 and as newsletter

editor.

This Association needs people to help run it.

In terms of Officers, The following BOD members have terms that expired the end of 2007

Claudia Pettis, Stanley Ward, Jerry Jones

Of those Jerry and Claudia said

they'd run again.

Our current VP Steve Sands has said he will not run for 2008 as VP but would run for a BOD position.

Becky Bemus is willing to run for a BOD position.

So we still need a President and VP candidate.

The biggest job is Secretary/

Treasurer/Registrar and I have already said I want to start training someone in it this year with an eye to nominating them for next year. It isn't really possible to split the 3 jobs up, they are too tied together so someone has to take on all of it to do it right.

Come on folks, people need to step up and start helping.

Management of your Rare Breed Flock



“ If you won’t identify your animals from birth on then you should not have rare breeds where knowledge of the pedigree is critical. “

There are two absolutely critical things any rare breed flock owner must do. If you are unwilling or unable to do these 2 things then you should not have rare breeds at all. There is a third item that is important but can be done over time. If you take nothing else home from this newsletter take these 2 items and do them now!

The most important thing you can do for your flock is to have good documentation of who you own. This means that every single sheep must be properly identified and that a stranger coming in to your farm must be able to positively identify every single sheep on your farm from your records. It doesn’t matter whether you use tags, tattoos or microchips you must ensure that someone who does not know your sheep can place every sheep with its name and pedigree. This includes this years lambs and the old ewe or ram that everyone knows. I’ve now been involved in 3 separate flocks where the owner who could identify all the sheep by sight died very unexpectedly and because not all animals could be identified (even by spouses who worked with the sheep) we lost some to the breeding flocks. If you won’t identify your animals

from birth on then you should not have rare breeds where knowledge of the pedigree is critical.

The second most important thing you must do is have a well defined breeding goal. This goal should be written down and ideally will include both subjective and objective items. The more detailed you can make this goal the better off you will be when doing your individual sheep evaluation. You may not achieve every item on your goal but you should be working towards them all.

The third thing that I strongly suggest you do is have a written plan for the future. What are your plans for the lambs from this years’ matings? How are you working to keep bloodlines intact? What do you expect your flock to look like in 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 years? While less important than the identification and breeding goals it is important to think about how your flock fits into the larger picture for your breed and area and just writing down some thoughts will affect how you make the day to day decisions about your flock.

These 3 items don’t have to be complicated, a simple spreadsheet kept up to date with tag or chip data will suffice for identification. A paragraph or two can define the breeding goal and a 1 page document can describe your long term goals for the next 500 years.

So sit down now and make sure you have full identification of every single sheep on the place and a written breeding goal and get started on long term goals for your flock.

Eugenie (Oogie) McGuire
oogiem@desertweyr.com



Resources for Identification Products

Allflex—
www.allflexusa.com—1-800-989-TAGS

Dalton USA—
www.daltonusa.com—920.563.2446

Ketchum Mfg. Co., Inc—
www.ketchummfg.com—1.800.222.0460

Premier One Supplies—
www.premier1supplies.com—1.800.282.6631

Temple Tag—
www.templetag.com—1.800.433.3112

Y-TEX Corporation—
www.y-tex.com—1.888.600.YTEX

No beneficial effect of treatment

From Susan Shoenin—Shepherd's Notebook

Opinions on the importance of tapeworms (*Moniezia* sp.) to sheep (and goat) health and growth are controversial. Researchers in Germany used two flocks of sheep and several breeds of sheep to determine the effect of treatment (with praziquantel) for tapeworms.

Individual fecal flotations were performed (using a combination of zinc chloride and sodium chloride). Lambs were assigned to treatment (n=117) or control (n=117) groups. The treated animals received a commercial 2.5% solution of praziquantel at 3.75 mg/kg orally, repeated every six weeks for up to 4 treatments. All lambs, treated and control, received oral moxidectin on the same schedule, at the labeled dosage, to remove possible effects of nematodes on lamb health.

At the beginning of the trial, in June-July, 28 to 45% of lambs were positive for tapeworm eggs. The percentage dropped off markedly in both the treated and untreated lambs, such that 0 to 7% of treated animals and 0 to 9% of control lambs had detectable eggs at the last sampling before slaughter, up to 140 days after the beginning of the trial. There was no significant differences in body weight between the groups. In fact, the animals that remained infected with tapeworms were often heavier than the average of the uninfected lambs.

Reinfection presumably occurred on pasture as 11 of 22 lambs last treated 30-36 days before slaughter had juvenile tapeworms in the intestine as did 5 of 45 necropsied up to 29 days after the final treatment. 29 of the 67 control lambs

contained juvenile tapeworms.

In this study, the researchers found no clear evidence for pathogenicity. A beneficial effect of treatment for tapeworms could not be demonstrated in this trial.

Source: Wool & Wattles, AASRP Newsletter, October-December 2007.

This article is reprinted with permission from Susan Shoenin, originally appeared as part of Shepherd's Notebook blog, January 11, 2008.

<http://mdsheepgoat.blogspot.com>



About praziquantel

Praziquantel is considered to be more effective at removing tapeworms than albendazole (Valbazen®), which is more effective than fenbendazole (SafeGuard®).

Praziquantel is marketed in the U.S. primarily for cats and dogs as Droncit®. Some horse dewormers contain praziquantel: Zimecterin® Gold Paste, Equimax™ Paste, and Quest® Plus Gel.

FAMACHA

FAMACHA is a system now taught world-wide to evaluate small ruminants for anemia. Although it does not seem as effective (in my personal experience) on our dark pigmented sheep, it is a place to start in educating shepherds on the importance of parasite management.

Many extension offices are now offering this course in

conjunction with an IPM (integrated parasite management) unit. Microscope use, fecal analysis and egg counts are introduced.

Contact your local extension office to see if FAMACHA instruction is available.

If you are in the MD/PA/VA/WV area, contact me for the workshop I am planning for May at the farm. - Andrea

thatcomputerchick@hughes.net

Remember—All off-label treatments must be with a valid veterinarian/client/patient treatment and documented in writing. Many dewormers are not approved for food animals. Please adhere to all slaughter withdrawal times.

A Day with a Sheep Shearer *Claudia Pettis*

March 7, 2008

Whidbey Island off the Coast of Washington State

Profile: Welshman, married, landowner near the town Talgbont-on-Usk, Brecon, county of Powys in Wales, sheep/cattle raiser, previous #8 flanker Rugby player, 2 children, 48 years old. Favorite food: American beef steak. Pastime : European travel and going to Rugby games. Name: Eifion Morgan.



*Eifion Morgan shears a ewe at BankSide Farm
Picture courtesy of Stafford Mores*

On Friday, March 7 I joined Eifion and his brother-in-law Joe, to visit local sheep farms and watch Eifion shear. The 6 farms were located in about a 60 mile radius around the Northwest near Seattle. I had offered to write about the day for the ABWMSA newsletter assist in any way I could. Eifions wife's family are long time Whidbey Island residents and started one of the first movie theatres and art houses on the Island.

Eifion's farm in Wales at one time had 325 Welsh ewes and 75 yearlings. The ratio of ram to ewe was 1 to 50. They also had about 30 head of cattle. They used to drive the sheep with neighbors' flocks into the highlands in summer, over 1,000 sheep. They would be brought down in fall and sorted to return to the individual farms. A mountain means 3,000 feet in Wales. The last strays would be found as they were divided by ear tag back to their farm of origin. This system is not used as much now as the market demands a much better quality sheep than ever before and the highland feed is often sparse and not as fattening as the supplemental feed a farm can provide. Customs

have changed over time to suit the marketability of the sheep.

At present a pipeline is being run across Wales to Gloucester. The farmers are being paid to use land for a 4 foot pipe staggered over rich farmland, to run petroleum product (frozen propane) from ships from Russia, then piped as a liquid to Gloucester. The farmers he said are being well compensated. Will Workman, past president of the Black Welsh Mountain Association in Wales, and visiting guest at our first Black Welsh Biannual Meeting at Tom Wyman's in Maryland, is acting as liaison, between government agency and farmer.

Daryl and Samia Staehle's Circle B Ranch was the first farm we stopped at in Arlington. Toby the foreman is now managing their flock of Black Welsh Mountain sheep acquired from my flock and more recently from Oogie McGuire's shipment of sheep out west. Their ram is the offspring from Joanie Livermore's insemination efforts in Oregon and purchased from my flock one year ago. I gave CDT injections, but Eifion was shearing faster than I could fill my needle. The 13 sheep were sheared in half an hour. The Staehle's complex of stables and barns are new, and dedicated to Samia's horse training. She jumps horses competitively and was away acquiring another horse at the time. The buildings and gravel drives speak to the Northwest's nod to English gentility, fine farm management, and beauty. Toby, their foreman asked good questions about their approaching lambing. Two yearlings appeared to be preg-

nant.

The rest of the flock had only recently come to the farm. Daryl saved the wool which was premium to be sent to processing and end up sweaters for both he and his wife.

We left Daryl's in half an hour and were on our way. Eifion noted that Britain had an outbreak of Foot and Mouth this last year. It was the night before the 250 year old Brecon Agricultural show, The Oldest agricultural show in Britain . Many sheep were already there and many more in transit. The British ministry shut down all sheep movement in the country, including all of Wales. By midnight everything was shut down. Some animals and other complete flocks were destroyed to contain the outbreak. The losses totaled 28 million US dollars and 13.8 million to Wales. The source of the epidemic, an embarrassment to the British ministry, was a government run laboratory in Britain. That year the floods had apparently soaked areas around the lab and drove microbes into down water land and into fields. The sheep surrounding this area were contaminated. There was no contamination in Wales but unfortunately Wales was also shut down during the search for the source.

In Wales the pay per head for shearing sheep is 1.60 US dollar. There is no set up fee, no travel reimbursement. The price for fuel in Wales is 8.80 for diesel and 8.40 for gallon gas. The taxes drive the BP price high, although Eifion noted BP Petroleum is making a record profit.

(Continued on page 8)

Breeder Spotlight—Becky Bemus

Editor's Note—Each issue I am trying to spotlight a breeder member and a board member.

How long have you had Black Welsh Mountain Sheep?

We are lambing so our numbers are changing but seeing as they are all rams, it won't matter much in the end! Lost triplets yesterday which included 2 ewe lambs so that was a very difficult thing. They would be our first lamb losses that were natural. The mom is doing well, but very depressed. I was hoping the other girl would

lamb today and have a triplet for this one, but only twin rams last I checked. It was a very sad day and will be a very sad lambing report I am afraid, but a good year to push the meat market I guess.

How many sheep do you have?

As for number of sheep, my latest flock report says we have 29 animals, but really there are more rams than ewes. We have 11 ewes, and 2 ewe lambs. One ewe is barren and is keeping our 10 year old Wye Heights L-61 ram company. 9

ewes are bred to lamb in March and so far we have had 13 lambs including the 3 still born lambs, our sex ratio would have been 9 rams and 4 ewes, but live births we are standing at 8 and 2. The ewe lambs and one ewe are hopefully bred to one of the new imported rams from Oogie and would be due to lamb in early July.

We have had Black Welsh for 4 years now but this is only our third year lambing. They have been wonderful and I just can't say enough good things about them.

I am hoping to be able to bring the Canadian perspective to the association since coming together and coordinating the farms involved in the import we have become friends and are all hoping to continue to work together to promote this breed in Canada in the future.

Any other breeds or livestock that you raise?

We also keep a small herd of Irish Dexter cattle for breeding stock and freezer meat sales as well as for our personal use and leather/hide production.

From editor—hopefully Becky can tell us next newsletter about her Cashmere/Spanish goats and what her fiber plans are!

Board Member Spotlight—Jerry Jones

1) How long have you had Black Welsh Mountain Sheep

10 years

2) How many sheep do you have?

At the moment about 40 Black Welsh Mountain Sheep

3) Any other breeds or livestock that you raise?

Romney sheep, Boer goats, Chickens (Black Minorca, Speckled Sussex, Aracauna, Silver Laced Wyandotte, Buff Orpington), dogs (6 - Border Collie, Rat Terriers, Boston Terrier, Chocolate Lab, Springer Spaniel), cats

4) Why did you choose to own Black Welsh Mountain Sheep?

I wanted a rare English breed, and started out looking for Hebridian, but couldn't find them in the US. The next choice was Black Welsh Mountain Sheep. I started out with 10 ewes and a ram. I then obtained 3 Romneys because

the owner is extremely knowledgeable about sheep; has been and still is a great resource. We now have more Romneys than Black Welsh.

5) Anything else interesting/significant about you, your farm, history, board position, do you show, etc?

We have a historic farm in the rolling hills of southern PA just north of Baltimore that we have been restoring for 36 years. I am an avid grower of vegetables, flowers, and trees.

I am donating a Black Welsh yearling ewe to the MD Sheep and Wool Festival Youth Conservationist Program for young people to learn about rare breeds.

I won the award at the 2007 MD Lambing and Kidding School for the oldest participant!

I have a strapping 11month old grandson that can almost say "baaa" and is a promising future shepherd!

M.G. (Jerry) Jones

Of Note

2/15/08 - As of today the current living population of Black Welsh Sheep is as follows

Registered	Birth	Notified
Rams	290	91
Ewes	855	51

Wethers 3 (were registered as rams then castrated) 7

We do not register wethers but we will keep as registered animals who were first registered as rams then castrated .

I am still getting in flock reports that show some deaths, some registrations and some castrations so these numbers will continue to change but that is what they are today.

Total living population of purebred in North America is 1297 sheep.

— from Oogie—Blackwelsh Yahoo Group

Regional Report—Canada—Marketing Fiber From Heather Morrissey

I would like to talk about marketing Black Welsh wool. I have a textile background on a industrial level for over twenty years. I built garments and hosiery programs with Eco friendly Organic & natural colored fibers. I saw my first Black Welsh Mountain sheep some twenty years ago at the Michigan Festival. It was love at first sight—it had planted the seed of the dominant black sheep (Hand Spinner's dream). The tough attributes of these sheep as a no fuss no muss type of breed, that basically fend for themselves was very appealing to me. I raised Angora goats for over twenty years and they were not low maintenance especially in our climate in Canada.

Most sheep in our area are commercial flocks that had to pay their way by meat, not wool. We never had a wool subsidy in our country so we needed to keep breeds that paid in other ways.

In Canada we have very small markets for hand spinners not like the USA's very focused one. Out of necessity I learned by marketing my fiber as added value. I financed my R&D projects and recouped the financial investment with small products that would

sell readily.

Most people in Canada want to know how much they can purchase, and what is the best price & are educated consumers. Quality ranks high on the list for higher priced pairs of socks, mittens, hats or scarf. Fair trade and raised humanely is another aspect we educated our consumers about. My company has religiously commanded a good price for the fiber - in return I would offer producers special rates to help them capitalize on the finish product. Business is about building solid relationships. You can count on win-win situation that way - this was a lesson my father drilled in my head as a young entrepreneur some years ago.

I have done my research -In my location in Southern Ontario we have may cultures that eat lamb and mutton. We are 45 min. west of Toronto. There are 3 million people - with cultures from India, Greece, Italy and every other culture in between. Our market for lamb is a very strong one.

The Wool market is another story. We are very lucky to have 6 mini mills here in our province to process fiber into yarn. I have recently ventured out to visit Rovingwinds Farm in Cold-

water Ontario—an hour and 45 min away. I have dragged along 3 lamb fleeces I purchased from Oogie. We took samples from the fleece and discussed the texture of the wool. We compared Ontario to Colorado grown.

Points we compared were:

- was there more oil or lanolin than Ontario wool
- what types of crimp are in each the fleece
- influence of environment and diet, coated sheep to uncoated and other influences - not to mention genetics

I am currently working with some mills to develop yarn for a rug project using Heritage breeds of sheep. Starting with Black Welsh and Scottish Black Face. I will be posting pictures in our next news letter of what we have developed.

Becky and Phil and Becky's mother, Ray were very hospitable to my youngest son Jeremy and I . We were able to talk fiber with each other—and about the science of measurement - microns & histograms and different types of fleece the Black Welsh Sheep have here in Canada.

Becky and I have come to a

consensus that micron and measurement with the Black Welsh Mountain Sheep should be done if we are to breed to a standard and breed for good fiber . We both recognize the fact that we need to breed to the standard & for uniformity of the breed . The fiber measurement should be playing a big part. We can establish a benchmark by using this process as a tool. I also raise Alpacas and purchase fiber from larger producers in Canada and I have done core sampling (a form of micron measurement) before they ship fiber to me. This is a bench mark of acceptance I use in my business.

Becky and Phil raise Cashmere goats so both Totem Farms (our Farm) and Rovingwinds Farm have used this tool as a benchmark in the breeding programs, along with fiber purchasing. Perhaps others might consider using this tool to assist in their own breeding programs.

Editor's Note: Next newsletter will be a list of micron testing resources, and hopefully a bit more information from Heather about this process.

Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Export, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

been informed that because our sheep are much smaller than typical commercial sheep the live animal third eyelid testing is not likely to work. The only option left to us was to try to export as many rams as possible in one batch and spread them across the Canadian flocks.

Accordingly we started the process of trying to export some sheep. Initially I developed a list of 12 rams that represented as big a variety in pedigree as we could provide. I started asking in August what rams I could send. One was a ram sired using the imported UK semen and I kept trying to get an answer whether we could sell him or not. To use the UK semen we had to sign a contract with the USDA that we would not sell any F1 offspring except to other US Scrapie Flock Certification program flocks. Obviously no Canadian flock is going to be in the US program but Canada has a much more restrictive transport and tagging system than we do so the goal of being able to track where the sheep was until it died would have been simple. The regulations have changed several times since we signed this contract but no one was willing to go on record to give me either a yes or no answer. I even asked my federal representative for help but never got so much as any acknowledgement that I had a problem from his office.

Eventually we decided to only send the 11 US sired rams, 8 ram lambs and 3 adults. This caused problems later when the import permit from Canada listed 12 sheep but our export health certificate only had 11 listed.

Meanwhile the Canadian breeders started working to-

gether and agreed to treat their combined flocks as one for determining breeding decisions. Of the flocks who are working cooperatively in this venture they collective own 67 ewes and 32 rams.

Dr. Sponenberg was kind enough to evaluate the pedigrees on all the Canadian sheep and the US rams we planned to send and provided detailed breeding suggestions so as to best use the new rams. One potential problem when new genetics are added to a small population is that they become widely used and the national flock becomes homogeneous again resulting in the same genetic bottleneck you had to begin with. The recommendation is to develop lines of more closely related sheep so that flocks can do line crossing within the breed. Dr. Sponenberg was instrumental in helping us sort the Canadian flocks into groups of related sheep and then selecting US rams to go to specific flocks for further development of distinct lines.

The paperwork was incredible. The official health certificate must be typed not hand written, all the sheep must be tattooed in the right ear with USA in letters 1 cm tall or larger and there are additional statements that the vet has to attest to before the certificate can be sealed. To get across the border the original health certificate must have a US Federal Vet signature and official seal. Our local office is in Denver. Things were touch and go until 14th December when we finally had the final US paperwork in hand. This after faxing a copy for approval, getting verbal approval, sending the real certificate, having it rejected, fedexing a replacement, having to send additional certifications and so on. And that was just the US side, the Canadian side also required signifi-

cant work. Becky Bemus is the Canadian member who did all the paperwork on her end. By this time the hauler was already committed to the trip and on the road on the way to pick up the sheep. On our end we had to tattoo all the boys as well as double tag. We did successfully get official approved paperwork and in spite of the problems all 11 rams were shipped to the Canadian border in mid December.

The Canadian import papers are valid for 90 days but the US side is valid for either 2 weeks or 30 days. The regulations are unclear so we had to work on the assumption that we had to have the sheep presented at the border within 2 weeks of the date on their certificate and with all the fedexing of papers back and forth to Denver we had less than a week to get them across or have to start the process all over again. By now it was close to Christmas and we were under a time crunch to get the boys across the border before Friday 21 December because the Canadian vet inspection was going to shut down for Christmas and not re-open for a week.

The commercial hauler could not go across the border so one of the Canadian people, Lois Heslop drove down and collected the rams and made the final border crossing. The sheep were already on the trailer when the hauler had vehicle trouble in Utah and it was knuckle biting time to see whether he would make it to the border in time to transfer the sheep to Lois so she could get across before the holiday. If she got stuck at the border the US export paperwork would expire and we'd have to start over. She did make it, by keeping the Canadian vet in the loop via fax and phone calls she was able to get him to

come back and stay late to inspect the sheep so they got across before everything closed down. Her phone call saying they were in Canada as they pulled out of the border station was one of the best things that I've ever heard.

From her farm rams got scattered from Victoria, BC to Coldwater, ON and points in between. Some were moved by truck and one was flown across the country to his new flock. At this time two are still in not at their final destination but are spending some time resting at an intermediate stop until roads clear and it becomes easier to travel.

This historic importation will provide a much needed boost to the Black Welsh Mountain flocks in Canada but it was extremely expensive and stressful for all involved.

American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association

Robin Morse, President

Steve Sands, Vice President

Oogie McGuire, Secretary/Treasurer

Andrea Minicozzi, Editor

The brochure for the association has been updated to include the Breed Standard.

It is a 3 column version so it will fit in a standard business sized envelope.

If you are unable to download it from the web, please contact Oogie so she can mail you one.

A Day with a Sheep Shearer, cont.

(Continued from page 4)

I asked the question about the culling practices in Wales. He said most sheep are sold at or before 5 years. I mentioned that several of my ewes are over 10 years old and their white noses make them stand out in anything but the whitest snow flurries. His reply was that you would not keep a ewe that long in his flock. It is too hard on the older ewes moving them into the mountains and the grass too hard for those without the best teeth to efficiently raise lambs. That is one of the reasons you see very few grey woolen noses on the Black Welsh Sheep in Europe.

The second stop to shear was Jeff Roger's flock of 33 Clun Forest sheep. This is also a sheep breed from Britain-- the Clun Forest region, a medium build white sheep with light chocolate to deep brown face and legs. The wool was very nice and the ewes fat with lambs, prelambling udders. Eifion was dripping with sweat after the 10th sheep and noted that was because he was out of condition. I laughed as he worked like a finely trained athlete at a competition - easy, even and FAST. The Clun Forest were fat and were moved into the barn by trained Border Collies. However, Eifion and Joe moved them onto the shearing board and then guided them out the back gate to another waiting enclosure when done. Jeff trained his own Border Collies.

Eifion said he learned to shear

from his older brother when he was 14. His brother was 23. His brother however was left handed and Eifion had to reverse all his instructions to make them work for him. He said you could see which was his shearing and which sheep were his brothers by the direction of the cuts. He has always used electric shears.

We briefly stopped to shear 6 sheep and then headed to Robin and Stafford Morse's BankSide Farm in Duvall. The landscape looked rural, green and private—yet many who work in the Bellevue software industry live in this valley and commute. Robin's flock consists of one fine conformation mature ram, two yearling rams, and about 9 ewes; most of the flock are from the best of the AI genetics from 3 Black Welsh ram semen imports used by Oogie McGuire or Joanie Livermore. They were brought to Eifion from the various new paddocks or led by hand. The fences were newly built last year. Fences are trenched about 6 inches deep and have barbed wire along the top at about 6 feet. There had been cougar sited, but not dangerously close to their farm. Eifion commented somewhere along the drive that the farms he goes to in the US often have a pet mentality and he does a more concentrated shearing then he would in Wales. I saw only a few cuts in the entire day and they were minor. It is impressive to watch a very experienced shep-

herd not only shear, but catch, rotate, and move sheep around. There is an ease and confidence that I think even the sheep respected.



He was dripping sweat by the finish. Robin's Guinness beer and croissants were our lunch and a welcomed offering. Later in the day I realized that Eifion was more into shearing then eating and this was the only food that day. Joe commented that Robin was one of the most gracious people he had ever met. She guided us by car to the next farm-- Andrea Evans-- 2 sheep.

The Evan's Dayspring Farm raises miniature horses sold in US and Europe. Her 20 acre farm situated in a wooded area with abundant grass pastures has produced several National Top Ten Champion Stallions and 2 time National Top Halter stallion. She had recently lost several new born colts and this is a devastating loss for this quality of breeder. She was not at the farm and we had her sheep sheared and were packed up ready to go by her return. I get the sense that Eifion shears like he played Rugby, fast, no breaks, no food—his body and

arms are constantly moving over the sheep. No time for other thoughts. The loud noise of the motor of the shearing machine drowns out voices anyway. He said in New Zealand many of the shearers do it by hand and he noted that the sounds were different--clipping sounds and the bleating of a few sheep.

The next farm owned three Shetlands and was well on our way up the pass into the mountains near Fall City. We came back down the pass road to head to the ferry, now backed up with commuters. It was after 6 PM. We had spent 12 hours either on the road, setting up, or shearing.

Eifion will also go to Colorado to shear more farms in this coastal area during his 3 week stay in the Northwest. I did not shear, and only assisted moving a few sheep, watched Joe dragged by an energetic ewe, and yet was exhausted when I finally got home about 7:30 PM. I would not venture a guess to think how Eifion felt with jet lag from his arrival a few days before, and bending for hours at a time. He had another full day of shearing the next morning. I on the other hand, would sit and enjoy my flock.

Claudia Pettis—Mutiny Bay Farm

www.mutinybayfarm.com

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