

American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association

Fall 2010 Newsletter

Photo by L. Mizner

Time for your annual Lambing Report

You should be thinking about getting those 2010 lambing reports ready, if you have not done so yet. These reports are due in the year of the birth of the lambs. You may birth notify and register at the same time, or register Birth Notified lambs after evaluation for registration purposes. We need all birth notifications of all lambs produced dead or alive, registered or not so that we can report accurate population data to the American Livestock Breed Conservancy

There is a birth notification form available, which you need to record full date of birth, birth type (single/twin/triplet), sire and dam registration numbers and names. Birth weight and other information is optional. Again, the association is *required* by both the bylaws

and Federal requirements, to record and keep records of *all* births of *all* member flocks – both live births and still borns. There is **NO CHARGE** to Birth Notify and it is required. For those of you who purchased bred ewes, remember that the registered farm name of the lambs will be the farm where they were conceived.

Birth notifications are done on the Excel Spreadsheet for record keeping. We are tracking stats on fertility and fecundity so it is necessary to know the parents, dates and tag numbers of all lambs, not just total numbers. Spread sheets can be sent electronically to be recorded at the registry. Please send to secretary at oogiem@desertweyr.com. Should you want to register lambs at a later date it is easily done.



Meurig Davies commissioned this captivating painting of his ram.

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Events, Assoc. Update, Recipe

Art & Industry Join for Display at Old Opera House Heiler Gallery

Charles Town, WV September 9th -19th

Andrea Minicozzi and Katherine Cimaglio have joined forces and talents to present the artistic and practical aspects of natural fibers, wool and mohair, from production to design.

This unusual show features not only paintings of sheep & goats, but the practical and artistic tools used to turn raw fiber into creative, colorful and functional works of art. The show will offer viewers a “hands on” opportunity to sample fleeces and fibers and get an up-close look at some of the delicate, graceful and functional tools used to turn fiber into art.

MINICOZZI, her husband and two children, live on a small farm in Berkeley County where she oversees her stock of Black Welsh Mountain Sheep, Bluefaced Leicesters (sheep), Tennessee (Myotonics) Fainting Goats, New Hampshire Red Chickens, some friendly hogs, senior citizen horses and two adopted, Angora Goats.

Minicozzi also manages A Rare Breed, LLC, her company which encompasses her heritage breed program and fiber production and sales.

Her fiber artistry has won awards at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.



CIMAGLIO, known locally for her acrylic paintings and artwork, also lives on a farm in Berkeley County where she and her husband manage Cider Mill House Bed & Breakfast and watch over their New Hampshire Red Chickens, Guinea Hens and her herd of 7 Pygora goats. Pygoras, a cross breed of Angora and Pygmy goats produce lovely soft mohair/cashmere fiber valued by hand spinners for its softness and warmth. Cimaglio gained her skills in spinning and weaving at the Chicago Historical Society.



For information Old Opera House productions, contact the Old Opera House at 304-725-4420.

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Check out Katherine's blog at <http://artzkat.blogspot.com/> See what's happening at: <http://www.cidermillhouse.com>
<http://www.katstudioart.com>

My Road To Black Welsh Mountain Sheep

By education and training I am an engineer, brought up in Great Britain in a family with a passion for pure bred animals. Even at a young age I was comfortable with pedigrees and the impact of genetics, and wanted to own animals and a farm. My wife's interest in farming was based on her being raised in a small town in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Besides loving animals she is a nurse, which brings invaluable skills to a farm breeding animals.

While living and working, as a consultant, out of Massachusetts in the mid 1980's I started to look for a farm. I didn't find a farm I could afford in Massachusetts but was lucky enough to come across a farm in New Hampshire with 70 acres (35 acres of wood land and 35 acres of open land). Although I had very strong feelings about living on a farm, I was less certain about what I was going to do with the farm as both my wife and I still had full time jobs, and I was out of town most days of the week. Sheep, cattle and even an apple orchard were considered, but when a flock of horned dorset sheep came up for sale just five miles away, the choice was made.

The Horned Dorsets were a good introduction to sheep, and we learned about feeding, worming, lambing, and fencing. Mostly I learned by reading a lot, especially when we had problems. One case of hands on learning, however, occurred when I came home and found my mother-in-law sitting in front of a large hole in my new woven wire electric fencing. Apparently, the ram had caught his horns in the fencing, and my mother-in-law not knowing how to switch it off, had used scissors to cut him loose. I no longer use woven electric fences with horned rams.

At this time I was not totally sold on sheep, so I thought I'd try breeding Polled Herefords. Although they are beautiful animals, and the ability through AI to improve ones stock intrigued me, the damage that these beasts can do around a farm is more than I wanted to put up with, so back to sheep.

My real love for sheep developed during this next

period of raising livestock, when I chose Polled Dorsets. I found a cohort of breeders in my area to expand my knowledge and improve my flock. Although I didn't show, I would attend sheep shows, and sales in New England where I could study and buy sheep that had been judged to be correct, and appealed to me.



My introduction to BWMS occurred about fifteen years ago. While attending a local show and sale, another buyer, because of my welsh name brought up the topic of BWMS. After the show he later sent me a copy of a paper discussing the breed. For years I kept this paper, which would show up whenever I was digging around

looking for farming information. Naturally when I needed it to reference in this paper I couldn't find it. This was a three page reproduction with beautiful rams head on the front - inexpensive but sold me on the breed. Do any of the long time association members remember this flyer? (Last year at the Royal Welsh show I was given a shiny promotional paper on BWMS, but with no where near the impact of our associations early release)

The next time I came across BWMS was approximately 5 years ago at a New England show where a young girl as a 4H project was showing in the color class of sheep. She was a great ambassador and introduced many people to the breed. Unfortunately she recently stopped breeding them, but my guess is that she will be back.

After eighteen years of breeding sheep using the exhausting (for sheep and shepherd) Cornell Star System I decided to sell my sheep. (For those who don't know, one splits the flock into three groups, and breeds each group in succession at two month intervals, i.e. this allows you to breed each ewe more than once per year).

With this system, and some ewes that would drop triplets, over five years the ewes would average nearly

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BW Breed Standard in Brief

AMERICAN SHEEP INDUSTRY ASSOC.

www.sheepusa.org/

Black Welsh Mountain sheep were first imported into North America in 1972 by Thomas Wyman of Easton, Maryland. The U.S. breed registry was established in 1990, adopting the standard and rules of the British Society. It includes animals that are descendants of the Wye Heights flock and other registered British sheep.

Related to the Welsh Mountain, the Black Welsh Mountain is the product of approximately 100 years of selective breeding. Introduced into the U.S. in 1972, they are a small breed standing only 20" to 24" tall. They are a hardy, self-reliant breed with a long, wool-covered tail and blue skin. Their black wool is short, dense and without kempy fibers.

Ram 100-125 lb. Ewe 75-100 lb.

Staple Length 3-4"

Micron Measurement 29-36

USDA Wool Grade 44's-54's

Fleece Weight Ewe 3-4 lb. Yield - 50-65%

UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL SHEEP ASSOCIATION

<http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/>

Hardiness and self-reliance are the outstanding features of this ancient breed. Hill flocks of this breed, in normal conditions, require no supplementary feeding, they thrive on the short rough grasses and herbage of the unploughable uplands.

The wool is pure black with the tips bleaching to a reddish brown. It is dense, fairly fine and soft. It is a medium length. The naturally dark colour has been popular throughout the ages. The fleece is most suitable for weaving into a cloth that is durable, light and warm. Used with white wool it can produce attractive checks and patterns.

Ewe weighs 45kg Rams 60-65kg

Staple Length 8-10cm

Micron Measurement 35-28

Bradford Count 48-56

Fleece Weight 1.25-1.5Kg .)

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four lambs per year per ewe. Besides being prolific these sheep produce big lambs. The last ram I bought was from California. I kept him in the horse stall where he could, while with four feet on the floor, rest his chin on the 4' high gate. Even with all these qualities I was still not able to make a profit.

About three years ago, after I retired, I would step out side in the morning and the stillness of the farm reminded me how empty it felt without animals, so we started to discuss getting sheep again. Now that I'm getting older nostalgia becomes more important in my decision, this together with the fact that BWMS were small made us look at them more closely. We decided that we were keeping sheep just for fun with no expectation of making money; we would have just a few; we would lamb late enough in the season so that we could pasture lamb; and buy good handling equipment (still not done).

We have now owned BWMS for a year and currently

have three rams, and thirteen ewes (including lambs). Our impression so far is positive, I find them attractive and friendly, and they needed no help during this first lambing season. A surprise is how little pasture they need - less than I had set up for them. I had not taken their smaller stature into account, but I'm still waiting to see how much this grazing requirement changes as the lambs grow and the summer grass growth slows.

Where am I going to go from here? I'm trying to determine what is an optimum flock size for me. As this is intended as a recreational endeavor, I don't want it to feel like work with too large a flock. However, I will get pleasure from improving my flock which I believe requires having sufficient lambs to allow regular culling for improvement. As I said previously we currently have thirteen ewes. In the past we had about sixty ewes. We have decided at this time that thirty five ewes sounds about right, but will update you in the future.

Meurig Davies

6/20/2010

The Royal Welsh Show 2010

Tucked away in the lovely countryside of Mid Wales, The Royal Welsh Show has been . A permanent showground at Llanellwedd has been the home of the Royal Welsh has come a long way since those early days of its society's formation (in 1904) and has become an important event in the Welsh calendar.

A record breaking crowd attended this year (over 230,00). They came to see the agricultural competitions, exhibits and 1000 trade stands. The figures were boosted by the contestants and their supporters from 28 nations taking part in the World Sheep Shearing Championships which returned to the Royal Welsh for the first time since 1994. For an extensive list of sheep categories and winners please visit:

<http://www.therwas.f9.co.uk/results/rwas/2010/Live20101-SHEEPWinners.pdf>



Clockwise from top left: Gwawr and ram walking the ring; Gwawr with ram before judging begins; Being judged; Receiving score and ribbon. Photos courtesy of Meurig Davies.



Working Trip To England and Wales

In early August I traveled to the UK to continue training to become a qualified judge of Black Welsh Mountain sheep. I spent the first couple of days visiting the Beavan's outside of Abergavenny. The Beavans are the family that was featured in the British TV show "Lambing Live" and I got to stay with them for a couple of days and help them work their commercial sheep flock.

As everyone knows who heard Will Workman or Ted Williams talk to us the most critical thing for a sheep are the 3 Ts "Teeth, Toes and then either Tits or Testicles". What we were doing was checking the teeth, feet and udders of the ewes and deciding who was cull or keep for this next breeding season. We also sorted out ram lambs and selected some ewe lambs as replacements for his commercial flock. It was a great opportunity to work with a large commercial flock of sheep.

After visiting the Beavans I headed off to the Brecon county show where I was a cadet judge. I wasn't able to take as many pictures of the show as I wanted because I was working. Chris Garn had the top female exhibit and Ed Williams had the top Male and top group.

After the Brecon show I traveled to Lyn Cockerill's farm to attend the Black Welsh Open day and judges training.

At the open day I was able to meet up again with many of the breeders I had met in years past. It was fun to catch up with them and talk about sheep.



This is Chris Garn and his First place ewe of any age who also went on to take reserve breed champion.



Some of the sheep we had to judge as part of our training.

There was a demonstration of alpaca shearing, one on show fitting for Black Welsh Mountain sheep and one on horn turning in rams.

If we import semen from the UK again this will be something we need to be aware of. Turning horns is allowed there but is questionable here. We do need to know if a ram has had his horns turned before deciding whether to import semen from him or not. Most of the people who turn horns will only do so if the tip of the horn is the problem and that should be ok.

For the judges training we were all timed and had a limited amount of time to judge 3 classes, ram lambs, ewe lambs and adult ewes. Then we each were brought back individually and had to give our oral reasons in front of a panel of approved judges. Because I was staying at Lyn's I had to go last, which gave me plenty of time to get totally flustered.



E.O. Williams had the Champion ram and also the top group, so went on to the interbreed competition.



E.O. and Lyn Williams turning the horn on a ram lamb.

This judging was much harder than my first one. At the first one there was clearly an excellent sheep and then the rest had problems. At this judging every sheep to be judged had one or more faults and the issue for me is how to decide between the faults. I still do not know how I did in the official judges training but for the judging contest open to everyone who came I was the only person who got all the placing correct. The open contest was judging a pen of ram lambs and one of ewe lambs and I got all 8 places correct.

At the October council meeting the council will



Jim Beavan is checking the teeth of one of his ewes.

determine whether any of the cadet judges have qualified as official judges. While I am hopeful it is of course going to be difficult because I cannot practice judging shows in the UK like all the other candidates. During my visit I did get to do a few touristy things, I got to visit

the Big Pit coal mine, see the Abergavenny tapestry in it's Tithe Barn home and also visit the Sherborne Abbey. Along the way I got to see farm shops and talked to butchers and other people involved in local food issues in both Wales and England.

I was again grateful to my Welsh and English hosts for driving me around, allowing me time to work with their sheep and giving me lots of pointers on selecting both good commercial Welsh Mountain sheep and top Black Welsh Mountain sheep.

Oogie Mcguire

September 2010



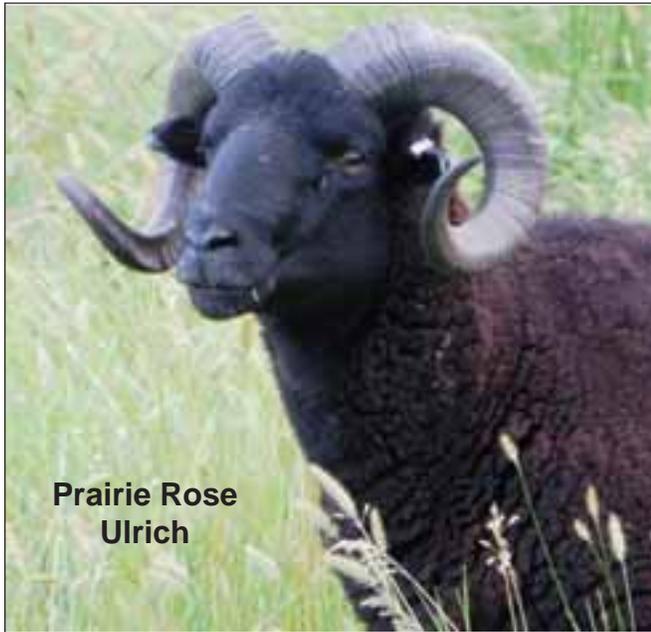
Right - The BW Flock mowing grass.

Below - Guard dogs with flock.

Cover photo - Black Welsh in the mist.



**Greetings from Chengwatana Farm
Palisade MN**



Prairie Rose
Ulrich

Photo by L. Jensen

Fall 2010 Events

November 5 - 14, 2010 - The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair at Exhibition Place, Toronto, Ontario Canada. For info: <http://www.royalfair.org/>

November 11 - 13 - The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy Annual Conference will be held at the White Eagle Conference Center in Hamilton, NY. More information will be available soon on the ALBC website. For questions, contact albc@albc-usa.org or call (919) 542-5704.

November 22 - 27, 2010 - Canadian Western Agribition will be held at Evraz Place, Regina, Saskatchewan Canada. This is the celebration of "40 Years of Excellence". For more information visit: http://agribition.com/show_information/schedule_of_events/



Association Updates

Registration/Lamb Count - If you haven't already made a current list of lambs and registered them please do so. See details on front page.

Volunteers - Consider putting your name forward to participate and be a board member for a two year term or run for an executive position. Your participation and input are important. All participation can be done by internet and email so this means that your location is not an issue.

Dues - Please remember that your dues need to be paid by the end of this year.

Current Board of ABWMA 2010

President—Jerry Jones, Rockbridge Farm, 717-235-5097 rock-bridge@cyberia.com

Vice President—Steve Sands

Secretary-Treasurer—Oogie McGuire, Desert Weyr, 970-527-3573, oogiem@desertweyr.com

Immediate Past President - Suzanne Corriera, Fire Ant Ranch, 512-281-4496, Suzanne@fireantranch.com

Board Members

Andrea Minicozzi	Melanie Grimster
Val Fiddler	Kendra Jones Mabon
Becky Bemus	Heather Morrisey
Tim Wyman	Steve Sands

Newsletter Editor Val Fiddler, please email your articles and photos for future newsletter to: bvranch@sasktel.net

LAMBS' TAILS WITH POTATOES

So many of us like Oxtail Soup, but who thinks of Lambtails? Here's a recipe that would perfect with the long, thick tails of Black Welsh Mountain Sheep. Try to remember the next butcher time, and save those tails. An old English favorite from "Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management" 1909.

*3-4 sheep tails - cut in pieces at joints
4 slices of bacon
1 onion and carrot, sliced
1 bouquet-garni - parsley, thyme, bay leaf
8 pepper corns and salt
stock of your choice
1/3 pint brown, tomato or other sauce
mashed potatoes*

Blanch and dry the tails. Place the vegetables, herbs and peppercorns in a stewpan, lay the tails on the top, and a little salt and pepper and cover with bacon. Add stock to nearly cover the vegetables, put on the lid (which must fit closely), and cook gently for 2 hours, adding a little more stock from time to time.

Serve in a border of mashed potatoes with the sauce poured over the meat.