

# American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association

Fall 2013 Newsletter



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*Jackie and Patty Harp of Res Ipsa  
Loquitur Farm in the winners  
circle with judge. Congratulations  
girls. Story on page 5.*

# Why does paperwork take so long to be processed?

As everyone has no doubt discovered I am way behind in processing births, registrations, transfers and other sheep association paperwork. I wanted to share a bit about the process and what I am trying to do to solve the problem.

Right now I process all requests in the order in which they are received. I am still working on requests that came in last fall so I have some things that are over a year old. Generally I plan on working on sheep association requests 6-8 hours a week. I work on a specific flock and their requests until I hit a roadblock or they are done. Then I move to the next oldest flock and so on. The one exception has been when I get requests from our junior members who require paperwork to be able to show their sheep. I drop everything to get them done in time if at all possible.

Roughly 90% of the requests I get have at least some missing or erroneous data. In some cases I do not know the data are incorrect until I try to enter it into the registry system. We have a series of checks and balances in the software to prevent entering in a ewe as a sire or a lamb out of a sheep that has died or been sold to someone else and many more details. These checks ensure that all odd cases are handled and that our registry is very accurate. Depending on what the problem is I can spend 15 minutes entering in a sheep and another 5 minutes to remove it when I hit a problem. This doesn't sound like much but adds up.

I know I've tried to explain what is required and when I need it but I am still not getting all the correct data. Clearly I have not managed to make the excel spreadsheet simple enough because even with that tool I still get requests that are missing critical and required information. What I am doing now is working on developing a written checklist that describes every piece of information I need for each type of transaction (birth notification, registration, death, transfer, or sale or slaughter for meat). Once those checklists are completed I will be sending them out to every person who is listed as owning registered sheep whether or not they are current members. When those checklists are completed I will not be accepting any transaction that is missing any piece of the required data. Instead of starting the processing of a request only to hit a roadblock I will not start until I verify that everything is in place. I will be returning to the breeders all requests

that are missing information I need for that request. The main reason is that I spend a lot of time backing out transactions in the registry database when I get part way through and run into a problem.

My plan to clear out the backlog is to continue to plug away as I have done while I am working on the checklists. Once the checklists are complete I will be applying them to the pending requests and sending back to the breeders any that are missing data I need to process it.

Another procedure I am looking into is whether we can have some on-line entry of births done by breeders. Concerns are that we still need complete data but at least I would not be typing it all in again myself. I have tried to use the excel spreadsheets as direct input but that does not work due to data entry issues with how people put data into them and what the registry software requires. Our registry software package does have a module that allows for breeders to do much of the data entry work and I will be asking the board of directors to approve the purchase of this additional module. I would then only be required to do error correction and final approval of transactions not all the data entry and that should speed up the process considerably.

I apologize for the delays and I assure you all that one of the reasons for the delay is that I am very meticulous about maintaining the accuracy of the data entered into our registry. I will not compromise the integrity of our data even if it means things take a lot longer than expected.

I thank you for your patience and I look forward to working with you all in the future to ensure we continue to have the most accurate and complete sheep registry database in North America.

Eugenie (Oogie) McGuire  
Desert Weyr <http://www.desertweyr.com/>  
Paonia, CO USA

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Dues are still \$20.00 a year. Many breeders are not current and are in arrears with their membership dues. *Please note* that your sheep will not be registered or transferred to new buyers until your dues are paid in full.

# Athenry Newest BW Flock in Alberta



It is a great pleasure for us to introduce ourselves to the American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association! We are Kristen and Andrew Ritson-Bennett. We live in the heart of beautiful Alberta, about an hour north of Calgary, Alberta Canada. My husband is a mixed practice Veterinarian in Innisfail and I am a ruminant nutritionist with Blue Rock Animal Nutrition. This past spring we bought a flock of Black Welsh Mountain Sheep from Val Fiddler of Newland Ranch (Webb, Saskatchewan Canada), thirty five animals in total! We first took notice of the breed this last winter while reading a book called "Beautiful Sheep" - we were hooked! We are most interested in conversion on grass, good mothering and the low maintenance required of the Black Welsh. We are very interested in being a part of conserving and protecting this rare breed.

Along with the purchase of our sheep, we got a Kangal pup - Rosie. For those of you who have not heard of Kangals, they are a Turkish livestock guardian dog. She was 4 months when we got her. She bonded very well with the sheep, and has a mean bark! She has served a very good purpose, we have not had any predation issues thus far...knock on wood. It seems as though we spend every spare moment fencing, I suppose that is the biggest job getting set up for a sheep operation. We started with rotation grazing, and have had great success with that. With the sheep, Andrew and I have had the opportunity to put our grazing skills to work. We believe that stewardship of the land is incredibly important to restoring healthy grasslands. We have participated in a number of grazing schools and work every day to learn



*Kangal "Rosie" and new flock are working well together.*

something new about managing grass effectively.

We are very much looking forward to this winter with the breeding season and lambing ahead. We plan to lamb on grass, aiming for June 1st lambing. We are open to suggestions, ideas, and flow of genetics north! Diversity is going to be one of our biggest challenges, as we are so far from many of you. I am sure there will be a few stumbling blocks ahead, but between the two of us, we should be able to figure it out.

If any of you are coming through Alberta, our gate is open! Please feel free to contact us if you have any suggestions for marketing wool and meat or exchange of genetics. We plan to have a small farm gate operation for meat and hopefully will find a niche market here in Alberta for our wool.

Take care! We look forward to hearing from members of the association! Here is our contact info!  
ritson.bennett@gmail.com 403 358 1674.

*Submitted by Kristen Ritson-Bennett*

# LambTracker System

Some of you know my husband and I have been working on implementing an electronic ID system for our sheep flock for about a year. We need a more accurate way to enter in ear tag numbers, lamb births and collect NSIP weight data for our own flock in part to reduce the transcription errors that creep in when we do data collection on paper and then try to send it in to the registry or to LambPlan for evaluation. We initially looked at what was available but rapidly rejected it as too expensive. Reader hardware costs \$750-\$1400 per device. EID tags in the US run \$3-\$7 each, Handheld computers to accept the data start at \$1700 and go up. The software to manage the EID tags and collect basic birth and weight data run \$750-1400 and have high yearly maintenance fees. A printer to print bar codes for labeling blood or semen collection tubes runs \$500. This is way beyond what we or any other small flock can afford. So we started looking at alternatives.

Our first project was designing and building inexpensive EID reader hardware. The design for a handheld EID reader that sends tag data to a handheld computer over bluetooth can be found free under an open source license on-line. The cost to build the reader is less than \$100. We did a proof of concept during this year's lambing with a sheep lookup using an Android tablet computer. The current system is targeting an inexpensive kids Android tablet, the Nabi Jr. that you can purchase from WalMart for \$99. The software most systems runs on is Windows and I am Mac based. So I have been writing both a database system and a data entry and display program under Java that runs on the Android program. We bought a \$79 label printer from Brother and wrote a utility program that will read an EID tag and print a blood tube label.

We also had to handle the high cost of EID tags. Not only are the ones in the US expensive they are not suitable for Black Welsh Mountain sheep ears, especially lambs. I worked with Shearwell Ltd in the UK that makes a very inexpensive ear tag that nearly every sheep breeder I know of in the UK uses. EID is mandatory in the UK. I bought tags and had them delivered to me for \$1.49 each for an EID tag. Adding a second visual tag will only cost an additional 13 cents. Shearwell tags are now approved as US official ID for the federal scrapie program both their visual and electronic tags. Ordering

information should be on their web site soon.

Then we tackled the database and software. The LambTracker database design is basically done. It has been checked and verified by a professor in computer science who designs and writes SQLite databases all the time so I am confident my design is a good one. While I have not implemented all modules I do have a plan for adding the data as I implement various modules and tasks.

So far we have 2 modules working and I am nearly finished with a third. The LambTracker Print Utility uses an Android tablet or phone and our handheld reader hardware. It will read an EID tag and print a label for a blood sample tube. The source code is not yet up on our GitHub site because I haven't had time to put it up there but I can provide the APKs to anyone who needs them. The second module that is working in a limited mode is EvaluateSheep. I evaluate our sheep yearly and give them scores on a number of important breed traits as well as taking weights and for rams measuring the scrotal circumference. I can take scores on 5 scored traits and 2 real data traits (weight, scrotal circumference, fleece weight etc.) and store the data into the database. I am still planning on adding additional scored traits but for now that is what is working. The third module that is nearing completion is ConvertToEID. This will allow the lookup of a sheep based on either farm or federal tag data. You can then remove one of the tags if necessary, add an electronic ID tag and document all the changes. My target date is to run it on our flock this month. The next modules to complete will be NSIP data gathering, wormer and medication records and lambing data. And of course I will be implementing a way for the data collected to automatically produce the required reports for sheep registrations.

LambTracker software is available under an open source license and is in current development. The web site for a presentation on LambTracker I gave at CO Woolgrowers Conference and our current status is [www.lambtracker.com](http://www.lambtracker.com)

The source code for all of LambTracker will eventually all be on my GitHub repository under OogieM. Eugenie (Oogie) McGuire  
Desert Weyr <http://www.desertweyr.com/>  
Paonia, CO USA

# Res Ipsa Loquitur Farm: Fun at the Fair

For 2013 at RIL Farm, we decided to show four of our best American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep. As usual, the months of show preparation from brushing up on ring positions to halter training seemed never-ending. Nonetheless, the 2013 Cass County Junior livestock show arrived. The Judge said they were very beautiful sheep, and told the audience about their rarity and their many positive qualities. However, the Grand Champion ribbon proved elusive due to the size differences of the sheep (90 lbs. Welsh vs. 250+ lbs. Hampshire). Even so, we did not leave empty-handed:

RIL Broderick (AOWB Ram Lamb): Breed Champion, Bred & Owned, Blue Ribbon

RIL Annette (AOWB Yearling Ewe): Breed Champion, Bred & Owned, Blue Ribbon

Patty Harp (10 years old) of RIL Farm is co-owner of RIL Broderick and this year was her first time in the show ring. She won the 2013 CCJLA Junior Reserve Champion Showmanship Award with RIL Braxton. The Judge was impressed with her extensive knowledge of the American Black Welsh Sheep, and poise in the show ring.

Since the sheep had such a great time at the county level, we all squeezed into the minivan and set off for the Missouri State Fair. We set up shop with a thought-provoking display complete with farm sign and awards from previous shows. So during the course of the week-long sheep show, thousands of people read the ABWMs breed standard and history, handled the yarn I had handspun for the display, and met the sheep in person. To top it off, we displayed a copy of Sheep! Magazine, and announced that these little black sheep would be

featured in the 2013 September/October issue in an article authored by Jacqueline Harp of RIL Farm. In fact, a few hand-spinners attending the fair purchased all the raw fiber I had in stock. They thought that all Black Welsh Mountains were still only found in England! Imagine their surprise!

Winnings from the Missouri State Fair 4-H Show:  
RIL Broderick (AOWB Ram Lamb): Breed Champion



Blue Ribbon  
RIL Braxton (AOWB Ram Lamb): Reserve Breed Champion Red Ribbon  
Pair of Ram Lambs: Blue Ribbon  
RIL Ann Chovy: Breed Champion Blue Ribbon  
RIL Annette: White Ribbon  
Pair of Yearling Ewes: Blue Ribbon  
MO State Fair Open Show: Premier Breeder, 4 red ribbons, 2 white ribbons, 1 pink ribbon  
Other: Big Sky Fiber Arts Festival MT 2013 Desert Weyr Mordydd (AOCWB) One Red Ribbon  
*Submitted by Jacqueline Harp RIL Farm*



The Harp girls found that the Grand Champion ribbon proved elusive due to the size differences of the sheep (90 lbs. Welsh vs. 250+ lbs. Hampshire). Even so, they did not leave empty-handed. See story on page 5.

## Changes to ALBC's Conservation Priority List 2013

Each year ALBC reviews its Conservation Priority List (CPL). We have a number of changes to the 2013 CPL, including for Black Welsh Mountain sheep. Black Welsh Mountain will move to the Threatened category (<1000 annual registrations in the US and estimated global population <5000).

The Black Welsh Mountain is one of several breeds whose status on the CPL is affected more by the global numbers than by the number of sheep in the United States. RBST reports an estimated adult breeding population of roughly 4000, and a declining trend, so with the information in hand we must place the breed in Threatened.

Black Welsh Mountain have so many characteristics that make them suitable for the homestead, and I know the American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association is working hard to promote the breed and emphasize the importance of registering breeding stock. As always, please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance, and be sure to let us know of any new initiatives.

*Alison Martin - Program Director  
American Livestock Breeds Conservancy  
P.O. Box 477 - Pittsboro, NC 27312  
919-542-5704 x105 - amartin@albc-usa.org*

**Current status** from ABWMSA of registered (and or annual lamb reports) Black Welsh in United States and Canada: **rams 449 ewes 1287**  
*Updates to records are ongoing. At this time there are approx. 300 deaths to process/remove from registry and approx. 100 lambs to add to registry.*

### The National Heirloom Exposition 2013

Northern California hosted the 2013 National Heirloom Exposition in early September, a three day celebration of pure food, held in Santa Rosa September 10-12. Among other activities, there were speakers, 4,000+ produce varieties on display, giant pumpkin contest, tomato and melon tasting, a Kid's Day, silent auction.

There was also a great Heritage Livestock and Poultry Show - goats, sheep, pigs, cattle, horse, a rabbit Fun Show, and an APA/ABA sanctioned poultry show! Participants helped to educate people about the importance of these rare breeds.

We are reaching out to the owners of ALBC listed rare breeds of Livestock & Poultry. Please help us locate other rare breeds owners by sharing this. *More info at [www.TheHeirloomExpo.com](http://www.TheHeirloomExpo.com)*

# Category Summary Report 1/1/2012 through 12/31/2013

Category	1 / 1 / 1 2 - 1 2 / 3 1 / 1 2
<b>Inflows</b>	
Donations Received	100.00
Dues Received	1,202.94
Interest Earned	15.31
Registration & Transfer Fees:	
Register Ewes	416.00
Register Rams	100.00
Transfer Fees	545.00
Registration & Transfer Fees - Other	78.00
<b>Total Registration &amp; Transfer Fees</b>	<b>1,139.00</b>
<b>Total Inflows</b>	<b>2,457.25</b>
<b>Outflows</b>	
Ads	1,316.80
Bank Charges	22.09
Miscellaneous	-10.00
Newsletter:	
Postage	104.35
Printing	503.55
<b>Total Newsletter Office</b>	<b>607.90</b>
<b>Total Outflows</b>	<b>2,807.99</b>
<b>Net Inflows/Outflows</b>	<b>-350.74</b>

## CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS

We encourage you to submit your name to ABWMSA to stand for a 2 year term on the Board of Directors. We need your name (or nominations) as soon as possible so we can have elections in December to form a 2014 Board.

Send your name to:

Eugenie (Oogie) McGuire  
Desert Weyr [http://  
www.desertweyr.com/](http://www.desertweyr.com/)

**New member or hesitant to participate?** Being on the board of directors is a great way to contribute to ABWMSA and be a part of the decision making process. Here's some info to help you make your decision: *What does a Board Memeber do? Time spent in service is very minimal, but makes a real difference in the decision making of the organization. All meetings and communication are done by emails and on-line group forum. This communication usually happens once or twice a year. Anyone with sheep registered with the BWMSA is welcome to participate.*

### Approved North American Inspector for the UK Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Assoc.

I am available to come inspect and consult with members on their flocks. I will evaluate every sheep in the flock with you and discuss good and bad points as compared to the UK standard. A written evaluation of every sheep can be provided.

Fees are \$20/day per flock plus all expenses. I am willing to travel all over the US and Canada to inspect sheep but I will need to time my travels to be after our own lambing dates.

Call 970-527-3573 or email  
[oogiem@desertweyr.com](mailto:oogiem@desertweyr.com) to set up an appointment.



# Upcoming Events

## Online sheep management courses

Registration continues until the middle of October.

The Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program is a sheep management education/consulting program offered by Minnesota West Community and Technical College located at Pipestone, Minnesota. The purpose of the program is to help sheep producers increase income and profit through the production of quality lamb and wool. To maximize the profit per ewe and realize the full potential of all sheep through use of modern management practices, new technologies and new approaches to marketing of both lamb and wool.

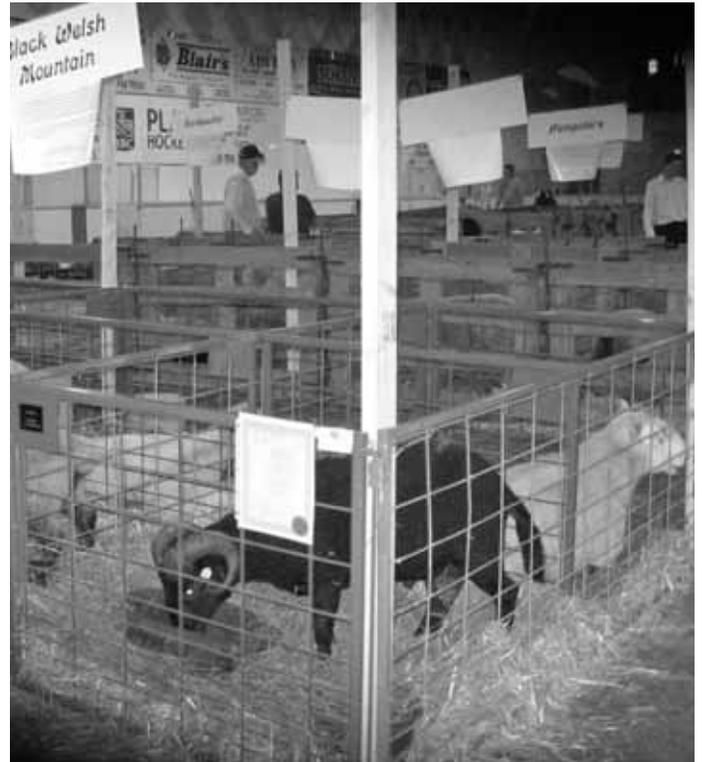
For more info - [www.pipestonesheep.com](http://www.pipestonesheep.com) or contact one of the Lamb and Wool instructors, Philip Berg, [philip.berg@mnwest.edu](mailto:philip.berg@mnwest.edu), (507) 825-6799 or Mike Caskey, [mike.caskey@mnwest.edu](mailto:mike.caskey@mnwest.edu), (507) 825-6808.

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## Canadian Western Agribition

November 11-16, 2013

Regina, Saskatchewan Canada - Largest Agricultural show in Western Canada - one of the many highlights is the Sheep Show and Sale hosted by Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board and Saskatchewan Sheep Breeders Assoc. For more info: [www.agribition.com](http://www.agribition.com)



Newland Xi participated in a Breed Display held during the Saskatchewan Grasslands Show & Sale, July 2012.

Newland Windermere was on display this year 2013.

## Your Stories and Photos Needed

Tell us about your life with sheep. Share your experiences!

Email to [newsletter/website editor- webmaster@blackwelsh.org](mailto:newsletter/website editor- webmaster@blackwelsh.org)



## Sheep For Sale

Top production Black Welsh Mountain sheep for sale. 10 Yearling ewes, \$500.00 each. 15 ewe lambs \$250.00 each. 2 yearling rams \$500.00 each and 25 ram lambs \$250.00 each. Varying bloodlines. All have NSIPEBV data available. Price does not include vet certificates or shipping from Colorado. All are double registered in both US and UK association. We pay all transfer fees for registered stock. Contact Oogie McGuire [sales@desertweyr.com](mailto:sales@desertweyr.com) or 970-527-3573 for details and info.

Eugenie (Oogie) McGuire

Desert Weyr <http://www.desertweyr.com/>

[www.desertweyr.com/](http://www.desertweyr.com/)

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