



# Columbia Basin Sheep Producers Newsletter January 2012

## **PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE—MIKE GARNEAU**

Greetings all and happy new year, Well as I write this winter has set in again. It makes it a little more challenging to care for our livestock and I cannot stress enough the importance of good feed and fresh water . It is also time to plan for lambing . On a day like today, it would be good to go over your supplies to make sure everything is up to date and serviceable so when lambing starts you will be ready.

The year a head has the looks of being a good one. I can't say great ,as it does look like we will be experiencing high sale prices, but also high feed costs and other inputs. That makes it all the more important to do what we can to increase our lambing percentage.

On the feed side it has become harder as Connell Grain Growers has shut down their mill due to cost of upkeep and bringing up to standards. I talked to them this morning to see if they were still going to handle the lines of bagged feed they had previously and management is still in the decision making process on whether they are going handle any feed or not.

Stay warm and take care, —*Mike*

## **Sheep Needed for 2012 Washington State Sheep Shearing School**

It is that time of year—Shearing School. I recognize that it is a bit early, but the planning for an educational experience and event of this size starts months in advance. This year with the award of the grant from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center, we will be offering two Beginners Schools—with the first taking place April 2-6 and the second starting on April 9 and concluding on April 13. The Advance School is scheduled for April 7. All Schools will take place at the Grant County Fairgrounds in Moses Lake. The interest in the school has been overwhelming, with

one Beginners' school full and the second over half full. We have more inquiries coming in daily, so if you or someone you know is interested in attending, please send in your registrations as soon as possible. Registrations are available at [www.animalag.wsu.edu](http://www.animalag.wsu.edu).

So we have the students—now I just need to find enough sheep for 32 Beginning students and 6-8 Advanced students! That is where you as area sheep producers come in. I will need between 800 and 900 head of sheep for the school. With the second school we need almost 400 more head of sheep to shear. To ensure efficiency of shearing, traffic flow, and a good educational process for the students, I am looking for producers with at least 10 head of sheep to participate in shearing school.

There is no fee to shear your sheep if you donate your wool to the CBSP or provide assistance with set-up and/or take-down of the shearing trailer, however, individuals retaining their wool will be charged \$1.50/head if a member of the CBSP and \$3.00/head if not a member of the CBSP. Owners retaining their wool are responsible for assisting in sorting sheep for shearing, skirting fleece, packaging their wool, identifying their bags, and storing their wool. Wool prices were good last year—so it might be in your best interest to keep and sell your wool yourself and pay the nominal fee. Wool pool information will come out in March.

Precautions are taken to ensure sheep and student safety, however this is a learning process for individuals just learning how to shear. So expectations of speed and smoothness must be set accordingly. Students are supervised to ensure that the quality and care of the animal represents the high standards that we have set for the school. Also remember your sheep not only represent your operation, but they also represent the school and the sheep industry. Please do not consider bringing any sheep that are sick or that cannot move through the chutes.

If you have more questions about the shearing school or how to enroll your flock in the school, please contact Sarah M. Smith at WSU Grant Adams Extension at 509-754-2011, Ext. 413 or [smithsm@wsu.edu](mailto:smithsm@wsu.edu) —*S. M. Smith*

## **SEND IN YOUR CBSP MEMBERSHIP**

**Send in your membership to the CBSP as soon as possible to help ensure you get all the benefits of the organization, such as; newsletter, wool marketing, and educational activities.**

### **YOUR CBSP BOARD MEMBERS**

Mike Garneau, President	509-766-9008
Todd Barth, Vice President	509-750-4355
Nina Richardson, Secretary	509-765-9735
Pat Thoren, Treasurer	509-765-7974
Mike Blakely, Board Member	509-787-2326
Mary Fadenrecht, Board Member	509-860-4077
Jim Michael, Board Member	509-246-0670
Linda Roberts, Board Member	509-966-5712
Mike Blakely, Past President	509-787-2376
Sarah M. Smith, Ext. Advisor	509-754-2011 Ext. 413

## Sheep Industry Buoyed by Strong Prices and Industry Policy

The sheep industry, with strong prices and an industry policy to grow the inventory, may be poised in 2012 to see its first inventory increase since 2006. A number of factors points to this. The 2011 live auction slaughter lamb prices at San Angelo, Texas have consistently remained above 2010 levels. Choice Slaughter lamb prices at San Angelo have remained in a fairly narrow range, between \$155-\$175 per cwt for the entire year. Though fourth-quarter Choice prices are forecast at the bottom of that range at \$155-\$156 per cwt, continued high prices could trigger a higher than normal rate of lamb retention as producers engage in herd rebuilding in anticipation of even higher prices.

At the beginning of the year the industry launched a "let's grow program" designed to encourage producers to increase their flocks. Indications are that this policy may be working, as producers appear to be holding on to their animals for longer periods. For the first three quarters of 2011, less than 54,000 head of live sheep (mainly older ewes) were exported, a decline of 58 percent from the same period last year. In 2010, the number of live sheep exports exceeded 150,000 head. Live exports for 2011 are expected to be significantly lower than in previous years.

Signs of increased retention can also be seen in the sharp drop in production. Although sheep inventory was about 2 percent lower on January 1, 2011, compared with the previous year, with similar percentage declines in both the breeding inventory and market lambs, lamb and mutton production has been down 8 percent in the first three quarters of 2011 compared with the previous year and is forecast to be down around 9 percent for 2011. Through October 2011, the number of sheep slaughtered was 11 percent lower than in the same period last year. Fourth-quarter

2011 commercial production of lamb and mutton is forecast at 37 million pounds. This is about 13 percent below the fourth quarter of 2010. Typically, distinct seasonal increases begin in the fourth quarter, but in November less than 12 million pounds of lamb and mutton were produced and December is expected to be below 2010. It is likely that high prices and increased retention could be contributing to the low production levels in 2010.

### Lamb and Mutton Trade Still Vibrant

Despite fairly strong Australian and New Zealand currencies relative to the U.S. dollar and a slow economic recovery during 2011, imports have been relatively strong, continuing to offset tight domestic supplies. For the first 10 months of 2011, lamb and mutton imports were 140 million pounds, up 6 percent from the same period last year. Imports for October 2011, though typically lower than most other months, were 16 percent above the same period last year. Fourth-quarter 2011 imports are forecast at 43 million pounds, 2 percent above the same period last year. Import increases are expected for the rest of 2011, as continued tight domestic supplies are expected to persist.

Lamb and mutton exports have shown strength and are forecast at 18 million pounds for 2011, up 12 percent from 2010. October exports were 1.6 million pounds, 80 percent higher than last year. Fourth-quarter 2011 exports are forecast at 4 million pounds, up 33 percent above the same period in 2010. —USDA, ERS Livestock Dairy and Poultry Outlook 12.15.2011

## Feed Availability and Outlook:

Even as sheep, cattle, and hogs reach record prices, producers are still faced with challenges of recognizing increased prices. 2012 will likely provide more opportunities to sell livestock at relatively high prices, but they will have to continue to manage input cost and improve production efficiency to take advantage of profit opportunities (i.e. the number, pounds, and quality of lambs produced per ewe or per acre needs to become a priority). Beginning in 2011 and continuing through the summer months, record feed prices had many livestock producers hesitant to expand or feed out animals. However grain feed prices have changed considerably since the summer months and hay prices are still holding strong.

Grain prices were all over the board in 2011. Corn prices hit record highs of almost \$8/bushel and now have backed off to about \$6/bushel. The decrease in wheat price and its availability in PNW have made it a competitive feed source in swine and beef feedlot diets. Grain prices are predicted to stabilize at current prices, because of increased global supplies and decreased demand. In addition corn future prices are being impacted by the expiration of the ethanol blenders' tax credit and import tariff, however the ethanol mandate of the Renewable Fuel Standards still remains in effect.

However, hay prices have remained strong throughout 2011 and look to continue to be strong in 2012. A poor growing season, limited supplies, and increased demand (domestically and globally) have resulted in record hay prices. Reports suggest that western states saw a 15% decline in hay production in 2011, the lowest since 1993. Despite record 2011 prices, western hay acreage is not expected to increase because of completion for acres from crops that are as or more profitable and not as big as headache to manage (i.e. weather and harvest requirements). However, depending on weather, even without increases in acres, some report that hay prices could stabilize as dairy producers decrease the amount of alfalfa hay in diets and some export markets push back on rising prices.

I will remind you all of what I wrote in May 2011, after listen to the Lamb & Sheep Market Outlook from the Livestock marketing Information . . . *None of us like to have to pay more for inputs, but we must remember that the cost to produce feed (seed, fertilizer, fuel, labor, etc.) are all increasing and that these agriculture producers need to receive increased prices to be profitable. Just like with the tight supply in the lamb industry, we don't want feed producers to be losing money where in the long run we will see even tighter supplies and increased volatility of prices. Basically, as lamb producers, we do not want to be receiving prices from 2001-2002 or even 2008 and 2009, so it is unrealistic for us to think that we should pay 2001 prices for feed and hay.*

I believe it is wiser, more profitable, and easier (management, labor, and the dreaded headaches of production) to increase production efficiency than try to cut corners with cheap feed that can't support the high level production of sheep at their most critical time—lambing and lactation. Remember we are raising an animal that not only gives us two crops, lamb and wool, but has the ability and should raise and wean two healthy fast growing lambs if we are managing to maximize our resource opportunities. Basically, it is wiser, more profitable and easier to manage a ewe to raise two healthy, fast growing lambs, than a single lamb or two lambs that are sick, slow growing, and/or die from birth to sale. By Sarah M. Smith, WSU Grant/Adams Extension



### Congenital Birth Defects at Lambing

Congenital defects are abnormalities of a lamb's structure or body function present at birth. These defects can be caused by genetics or environmental factors. Most defects are heritable, meaning that the gene is carried by the sire, dam, or both. There are more than 30 known or suspected genetic defects of sheep. Many are lethal. Others are semi-lethal, because the effect is crippling, but death is not inevitable, although a portion do die. Some common genetic defects are entropion (inverted eyelids), cleft palate, parrot mouth (undershot jaw), wry neck, cryptorchidism (one or both testicles retained in the abdomen), hernias, and spider lambs. The occurrence of undesirable traits in the flock requires that a careful review of the breeding records be conducted to identify animals or familial groups that may be associated with the problem. Carrier animals of defects should be culled so that defects don't become a common occurrence in the flock.

Other causes of congenital abnormalities include viruses, plant toxins, mineral deficiency, or chemical toxins. However, the cause of many of these defects are difficult to determine and do not usually contribute to major losses of lambs in the flock. Cache Valley virus (CVV), bluetongue virus, and border disease virus are the most common infectious causes of congenital abnormalities in sheep in the U.S. Pregnant ewes who consume locoweed, skunk cabbage, or certain other range plants may produce lambs with a variety of deformities. Deficiencies of selenium, copper, or iodine in pregnant ewes cause white muscle disease, enzootic ataxia, and goiter, respectively, in lambs.

This past lambing season, 2011, sheep producers in the Dakotas reported an unusual number of lambs born with skeletal and other development deformities. Diagnostics laboratories confirmed CVV infection in many of the lambs. Many of the defects were seen affecting the brain and central nervous system, but the virus also affects the skeletal tissue and muscle. Defects showed up as fused joints, curved or twisted spines, unusually thin and underdeveloped muscles and enlarged skulls. Most lambs are stillborn, but CVV lambs can also look normal, but be drowsy, weak, or unsteady. Typically all lambs within a set of twins or triplets will be affected. Ewes that are infected early in gestation, up to day 28, generally result in fetal reabsorption. The most critical period is between day 28 and 45 of gestation for infection that leads to birth defects. After day 45 of gestation, a CVV infection is not expected to cause abnormalities in lambs.

Dakota sheep producers also reported a higher incidence of open ewes and lower lambing rates, which maybe a result of embryonic death loss associated with CVV. CVV has no apparent affect on non-pregnant ewes or other classes of sheep. The virus is found throughout the U.S. and the impact is very low. Mosquitoes are the vector necessary to infect sheep with CVV. However, the disease is not

contagious between ewes during breeding or at lambing. In the Dakotas, mosquito populations remained high during the early breeding season (August through September) as a result of warm, wet summer. As ewes bred later in the fall after the active mosquito season, the number of abnormalities declined and flocks returned to normal lambing rates.

There is no vaccine for CVV, and since the cause of the birth defects is a virus, there are no treatments available. However, the severity of CVV infection on North Dakota sheep during the 2010 breeding/2011 lambing resulted in North Dakota Ag Commissioner Doug Goehring to issue a special local need for insecticide-treated tags (cattle tags) to be approved for use in sheep. Washington State Veterinarian, Dr. Leonard Eldridge, has asked if Washington sheep producers or veterinarians have seen an increase in the number of abnormal birth defects to result in Washington needing to look into special approval for insecticide tags. Sheep producers suspecting CVV should contact a veterinarian in order to rule out other causes of birth defects, miscarriages, or infertility. Diagnosis of CVV is sometimes difficult, but can be made in the laboratory by detecting specific antibodies against CVV in the lambs. Also, please let me, Sarah M. Smith, know at the Extension office, if you have increased concerns from lamb deformities, so that I can make sure that Dr. Eldridge is aware of it.

As stated early, sheep infected with bluetongue virus during pregnancy may abort or deliver malformed lambs. Bluetongue virus has been reported among sheep producers in the Columbia Basin. Bluetongue virus infection deformities include the brain and central nervous system, similar to CVV infected lambs. The only way to accurately determine if it was CVV infection is to have a diagnostic test done to identify antibodies.

Also, don't forget that benzimidazole dewormers, white dewormers, such as; Valbazen, Safeguard, and Panacur, should not be given in the first month of pregnancy to avoid abortions and birth defects. Birth defects affected the spine, jaw bone, spinal column, rectum, legs, head and kidney. Product label information recommends avoiding the use of benzimidazole in early pregnancy and some vets recommend use in any pregnant ewe. There are dewormers labeled for sheep, such as Ivomec, Sydectin and Levamisole, that are safe for pregnant ewes.

A good time to deworm ewes is in the lambing jugs after they lamb. The hormone change in the ewes body causes the worm larvae to come out of their dormant stage and become more susceptible to a deworming treatment. This would be a good time to use a benzimidazole wormer, especially if you are concerned with tapeworms. The best way to determine the type and level of parasite problems is to have your veterinarian conduct a fecal analysis.—Sarah M. Smith, WSU Extension, adapted from SID book, [www.pipevet.com](http://www.pipevet.com), and South State University

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**March 29-31, 2012**

**North Central Washington Jr. Livestock Show, Moses Lake**, Contact Scott Mortimer, NCWJLS President, 509-345-2541 or smortimer@wilsoncreek.org. Premium book available at www.animalag.wsu.edu

**February 18, March 31, and April 7 2012**

**Washington Lambing School.** One day lambing school will be offered in Mabton (February 18) and Lamont (March 31 and April 9), Contact Marcia Parrish, WSSP Exec. Secretary, 509-888-3003 or wssp@gmx.com. More information available at www.wssp.org

**April 2-13, 2012**

**Washington State Shearing School, Moses Lake**, Contact Sarah Smith, WSU Grant/Adams Extension, 509-754-2011, Ext 413 or smithsm@wsu.edu

**The Young Shepard's Column**

\*\*\*This column is designated to topics and activities pertaining to young people interested in the sheep industry\*\*\*\*

**A Point to Ruminare (think over deeply & slowly):** by Sarah M. Smith, Area Extension Educator, Animal Science.

**March 29-31, 2012—NCW Jr Livestock Show**

The 2012 North Central Washington Junior Livestock Show (NCWJLS) will be held March 29-31 at the Grant County Fairgrounds in Moses Lake. The NCWJLS is open to youth from throughout the Pacific Northwest. The 2012 event will include classes for market and prospect lambs, ewe lambs, yearling ewes, and fitting and showing classes by age division. A market livestock-judging contest will also be offered. Premium books are available by on-line at animalag.wsu.edu under "upcoming events".

**July 20-21—Northwest Jr. Sheep Exposition**

The 2012 Northwest Junior Sheep Exposition (NWJSE) will be held July 20-21 at the Grant County Fairgrounds in Moses Lake, Washington. This year's show will take place on Friday and Saturday, rather than Thursday and Friday, allowing the NWJSE to share more events and facilities with the Washington State Ram Sale that will take place on July 21.

Premium books and entry forms will be available by contacting Sarah Smith at 509-754-2011, Ext. 413 or by email at smithsm@wsu.edu.

**AREA LAMB AND SHEEP BUY DAYS or SPECIAL AUCTIONS**

**These were market opportunities reported in 2011. As soon as we have 2012 dates we will post in next newsletter.**

**Lewiston Livestock Market, Lewiston, ID** has a special lamb and sheep sale the last Wednesday of every month. If the last Wednesday falls on a holiday, the sale is moved forward one week. Sales start at 10:00 AM. The sale receives and sells lambs, cull ewes, and rams. For more information about Lewiston Livestock Sheep Sales, contact Tony Seubert at (208) 743-5506.

**Spokane Area Sheep Producers' Lamb Pool, Davenport, WA**, has held their monthly lamb pool the last Wednesday of each month from June until October at the Stockland Livestock Market in Davenport. Individuals wishing to sell lambs at the pool must contact Dave DeShiell, (509) 722-3033, at least one week prior to the receiving date to commit lambs.

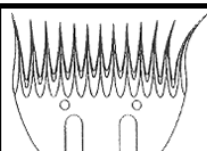
**Superior Farms' Monthly Washington Buy Days** were held from July through October at Shawn Bryan's facility in Moxee. This sale was for lambs only; no old/cull ewes or rams were accepted. Producers must commit the number of lambs they wished to ship the Wednesday prior to the buy day by contacting Superior Livestock Office in Dixon, CA at (707) 693-2321.

**Toppenish Livestock Market** accepts all classes of sheep every Saturday in Toppenish. The sale starts at 10:30 AM. For more information about Toppenish Livestock Sheep Sales, contact (509) 865-2820.

HIGHLIGHTS			
*Not Avg Prices (unless otherwise noted)			
<b>SLAUGHTER LAMBS</b>			
Choice & Prime 2-3			
Shorn & Wooled (130 - 180 pounds)			
Latest	Last Wk	Last Yr	
<u>San Angelo, TX</u>			
146.21	132.49	N/Q	
<u>El Reno, OK</u>			
145.54	N/Q	152.50	
<u>Ft Collins, CO</u>			
N/Q	N/Q	139.79	
<b>SLAUGHTER EWES</b>			
Good 2-3 & Good 3-4			
Latest	Last Wk	Last Yr	
<u>San Angelo, TX</u>			
N/Q	N/Q	66.62	
<u>St. Onge, Newell, SD</u>			
73.41	79.25	80.00	
<u>Ft. Collins, CO</u>			
80.84	86.46	68.05	
<u>Billings, MT</u>			
73.39	N/Q	N/Q	
<b>FEEDER LAMBS</b>			
Medium-Large 1-2 (90-110 pounds)			
Latest	Last Wk	Last Yr	
<u>San Angelo, TX</u>			
173.34	N/Q	178.00	
<u>St. Onge, Newell, SD</u>			
228.30	212.82	163.19	
<u>Ft. Collins, CO</u>			
N/Q	188.00	197.50	
<b>CARCASS LAMB</b>			
<b>FOB PLANT WT AVG</b>			
	Last Week	Latest	
45#-Dn	449.28	460.24	
45-55#	421.34	391.43	
55-65#	358.79	355.62	
65-75#	347.60	348.10	
75-85#	341.92	343.68	
85#-Up	331.00	328.75	
	Last Year		
45#-Dn	442.31		
45-55#	352.95		
55-65#	326.21		
65-75#	304.69		
75-85#	291.00		
85#-Up	269.00		

**USDA Weekly National Lamb Market Summary (1/20/12).**

You can download a complete summary each week: [http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMNpubs/PDF\\_Daily/frilamb.pdf](http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMNpubs/PDF_Daily/frilamb.pdf)



**SHEEP SHEARER'S TOOL SHARPENED:** Combs \$1.00 and Cutters \$.50. Must be clean! Send to: Jerry Richardson, 10091 Harris Rd NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837, 509-765-9735.

**COLUMBIA BASIN SHEEP PRODUCERS  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FARM NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_, WA ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

*CBSP Newsletters, Sheep Information Days, Right to vote in CBSP meetings  
Eligible to hold office in CBSP. Opportunity to sell wool in wool pool.*

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES - \$15.00**

Please send form and your annual dues to: Nina Richardson, Secretary 509-765-9735  
10091 Harris Rd NE  
Moses Lake, WA 98837

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**Please indicate specific articles or topics you would like covered in the newsletter:**

**Are you interested in attending a Sheep and Goat Information Day?**

Yes  No  Maybe

**If yes or maybe, please indicate the best time of year for event and what topics you would like addressed.**