

St. Croix
Hair Sheep
Breeders,
Inc.



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www.stcroixsheep.org

News & Views

PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE



Well, a drought based hello from South Carolina. Did I mention drought? We are experienced with many past droughts and dry periods but the sheep and cattle do well in spite of the weather. There is something pleasing when we see animals with environmental fit or adaptation to the environment. We are blessed to have a breed that is not going to need propping up when things get tough for a while. Never the less, it has been an expensive year as pastures did not stockpile, armyworms ate the last of the fall vegetation and hay has been shot in our area.

The following tale from Louisiana is true...

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SCHSB DIRECTOR POSITIONS

We had two people volunteer to be nominees for a position(s) as a Director. Please read their biographies, make a decision if you think that they are qualified and if you would like to vote for them. Votes can be submitted my email by the deadline of Feb 28, 2017 to Yates Colby at secretary@stcroixsheep.org. When you email your vote, please include your name as shown on your membership application and your flock number. Thank you to all who vote and participate. Special thanks to Matt and Caleb for their willingness to serve us.

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NEWS & VIEWS

News & Views is the membership news letter of the SCHSB, published three times per year.

If you are not a member and are interested in becoming one, please contact us using the information on the back cover.

HAPPY READING!

PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE...

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I don't know if my stories create fun or boredom so let me know. A fellow in rural Louisiana years ago would hang around the country store for "bull sessions" but had nothing to add to the conversations. He felt left out yet felt compelled to say something. He thought up a wise saying and figured that his one statement was good enough and he never varied from it for decades. When the conversations would lull, he would always say, "It always rains after a dry spell". So with that, it is time for a return to normal rain pattern around here!

Some members of the singing group, "The Drifters" were from South Carolina. So building on that stray thought, some of us got "Sand in Our Shoes", by attending the SCHSB annual meeting at Orange Beach, AL in August 2016. Our meeting was a small part of the 9th Annual Small Ruminant Conference on August 27 and 28, set up by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The topics and speakers could not tie in any better with St. Croix sheep and SCHSB. I am sorry that not many could attend but we learned a lot and renewed old friendships and made some new ones.

"...I will not let one setback stop our efforts to progress and grow as a breed or an association."

But you are not reading to see what is going on here as much as what is happening overall. One unseen effort SCHSB made in 2016 was to submit a proposal for a grant from ASI in the ASI Let's Grow program. Demand for the available funds were probably 10 times of the actual dollars on hand and we did not get selected in this round. Being toughened by droughts and such I will not let one setback stop our efforts to progress and grow as a breed or an association. The Board of Directors is dedicated to continue the improvements of records, member input options, member payment options, website function, flock data tools and sheep selection tools. If we sit on the sidelines of the sheep industry or only repeat the mistakes of the past for the breed we will be just like stale and moldy bread. No thank you, I'll go for the fresh baked taste and aroma! We'll try again.

We regretfully accepted the resignation of a founding Director, Lynn Vanderlinden, as Director and VP in June. I will always be indebted to her as a supporter, worker and friend of us all. Another founding Director, Malia Miller, is stepping aside after the 2017 election. We are going to miss her, too. She has lead the efforts of media exposure and advertisements for SCHSB, staying active even after having to make the hard decision to sell her sheep. Both of these folks will be missed but not forgotten. A public and sincere "thank you".

A big thank you for your time and response to all members who were contacted by the various Directors in June 2016. You freely told us your needs, concerns and views. We listened and changes are underway. If you see ways to improve services from SCHSB, do not hesitate to get in touch. One member who

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WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS FOR SCHSB MEMBERS

I hope the New Year has started off well for each of you and that you are enjoying shepherding your St. Croix sheep. I'm sure many of you are soon to be lambing, if you aren't already. The coming spring on the farm is always a fun and busy time. The dull and dreary get replaced by the bright sun and greening of fields, dotted with little lambs bounding about.

As one of your directors, I have had the opportunity to test an exciting new feature, that will soon be available to you on our website, www.stcroixsheep.org. We are going to be able to go online and submit, and pay for, membership applications and renewals, work orders for registrations, transfers, and duplicate or corrected certificates. I can tell you first hand, you will be amazed at the simplicity with which it will work. Instead of having to individually fill in (by hand), on paper, for each lamb registered, all the info like animal ID, birth type, sex, dam, sire; you will log-in to the program to find drop down options in each field, requiring simply the click of a mouse. Your personal info will already be there, as too, all of the animals you have registered in our system.

For example: you want to register twins, naturally born, white and polled and date of birth 4-1-17: all of those options will be point and click. You assign a flock ID number and when you get ready to enter dam and sire info, in each field, there will be a drop down showing all of your animals and you simply point and click on the one you want. No more long handed written entries! When you get ready for the second of the twins (or third of the triplets, etc) you have an option to add another animal using this same data. The process is easy, it's quicker, and less likely to transcribe a number wrong if writing by hand! Of course, if you prefer, you can still go at it long handed and fill out the form for ewes, the form for rams, membership renewal, etc. and mail them to our registrar.

We expect this to be available mid February to early March, so check the website often.

Happy farming to EWE all,
Matt Morgan
Director SCHSB

PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE...

(Continued from page 2)

has been doing just that for a number of years is Rene Vera from southern Louisiana. He and I discuss our progress, setbacks, breeding and sales when we talk. He is realizing the power of St. Croix sheep in his environment, is selecting for environmental fit, building ewe numbers, tweaking his feed management and is enthused about the breed. Many thanks for his special words of encouragement and vision. Rene and others of you like him are the future of the breed.

For new members or those wondering what happens behind the scenes at SCHSB let me ramble a bit more. As a small organization we are scattered across the US, including your Board of Directors. We all have family, jobs, activities, other animals and time consumers just like you. SCHSB is not about Directors spending a bunch of your money. We look to hold down costs and have few needs other than services to you. So how do the necessary jobs get done with minimal costs and the biggest bang for the buck?

Board of Director meetings, discussions and decisions are via email. Conference calls have been used in the past but are expensive.

When we needed accurate records, great member services, sound computer guidance and work, the registrar function was shifted to George and Lynn Morgan at Morgan's Computer Rescue. They have become "one of us" in spirit and are 100% team members. They are like friends that I have not met yet. We value them and I hope you enjoy the smooth services and nice interactions with them.

The website is A-1 and we get a lot of great and positive comments on it – I mean a lot! Richard Pomeroy is the daddy of the website

and really knows how to do, what to do, when to do. Not like me who is website illiterate! A past Director, Richard and Liz were able to attend some of the annual meetings so that I was privileged to meet them and call them friends that I have met.

We realize the News and Views has gotten the short end of the stick. Not enough spare time for Directors to get it out like we should. I personally apologize for past issues that have not gotten to you. After discussing costs and content with several potential editors, Richard and Liz are now heading it up now. All details of publication dates, ads etc. are on the back page of this newsletter and on the website.

News and Views will now be emailed when published. If you do not have an up-to-date email address on file or listed on your 2017 membership renewal form, please submit one ASAP. I recently called all members with no email address listed in SCHSB records. There was only one member who did not receive messages and did not get to return a call. Sending via email is a basic money saving issue. If you want a paper copy, it is \$15 annually.

We are looking into possibilities for the 2017 annual meeting. Please let us know your ideas, locations, thoughts or suggested dates. The parallel with the already planned educational conference in 2016 was excellent, giving us access to world class speakers and experts. I believe this potential gives us the best advantages to both learn and meet each other.

I see 2017 as being a great year for SCHSB and the St. Croix breed. Thank you for being a part, and a member. Until next time, let's keep up the good stuff and hope that "It always rains after a dry spell".

Eddie

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU: "KEEP THE BEST AND EAT THE REST"?



*"Breed the best,
eat the rest."*



My sheep friends and I often discuss this phrase as it pertains to our sheep, what we keep, what we cull, what we eat, what makes the grade as breeding stock, etc. I've often wondered how we collectively, as breeders, steward our St. Croix. Do we register every single ewe that we have? ram? I hope not. Do we individually have within our flocks a set of parameters for which we are breeding? I hope so. Muscling? Growth? Twinning? Pasture based, unassisted lambing? Are we rigid about our culling practices - do we cull anything that has to be wormed and isn't expressing parasite resistance? slow growth rate? poor muscling? or only produces single births? Are we collecting birth weights, weaning weights, 6 month or yearling weights?

The answers to these questions, I'm sure, will vary among all of us, but my hope for the betterment of the breed, my challenge perhaps, is that if we aren't already thinking about these things, that we do. I am a firm believer that to improve this breed, we have to be willing to implement some selective management criteria, first on the level of the individual flock, and hopefully, across the board as a group of breeders within our SCHSB association. This will mean a willingness to acknowledge that not all sheep can make the grade. Be willing to sell a few sheep from time to time to the sale barn, not every sheep should be represented as a registered animal, nor should every sheep be sold as breeding stock. By the same token, when we cull, we shouldn't sell those sheep as breeding stock to other breeders. Doing so, hurts us all. When we keep the best, we sometimes need to also sell our best. There is benefit to all of us when we do that. There is benefit to the breed.

As we progress into 2017, the Board of Directors for SCHSB has been working with a programmer to develop a flock management software that will hopefully help us all, and allow us to quantitatively address many of the above questions. If we can uniformly measure our sheep, and breed for measurable data, comparative data, then we improve the breed for all of us. The sheep will be better, our flocks will be better, and the breed will be better. I encourage each of you to embrace a management philosophy that will make a difference. Breed your best, not only to keep, but to sell as well. Also, be willing to cull.

Regards,
Matt Morgan
Director, SCHSB, Inc.

SCHSB DIRECTOR POSITIONS...

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CANDIDATE 1: MATT BREWER



Hello my name is Matt Brewer and together with my wife Ulandi, I operate Megaluno Ranch in Hardy, Arkansas. My wife and I were missionaries in South Africa for eight years and when we felt the call to return States side we began to research livestock. I had grown up a city boy with a country heart and felt strongly that we were to farm upon our return but had little to no experience with domestic animals. During my research I ran across the St. Croix. Everything I read fascinated me from its parasite resistance to its proficiency and hardiness. I compared it with other breeds of hair sheep including Dorpers, Katahdins, Black Bellies and a few other wool breeds. And while every breed has its place and use, I determined

that the St Croix was right for us. They have not disappointed!

We returned to the USA with nothing but eight boxes of clothes and keepsakes and a big dream. One year later and we started our farm, nestled in the Ozark Mountains of North East Arkansas. Our neighbors thought we were crazy because the only things that grow well here according to them are rocks and ticks, besides, this is cattle country... Two years have come and gone and we have a thriving flock of purebred registered St Croix Sheep and while I have lost a couple to rookie mistakes over that time our flock is strong and growing. Our aim is to produce consistent quality breeding stock and good quality meat for our local markets. We currently have 30 head of breeder ewes and 2 stunning breeder rams and are well on our way to our goal of 100 head by the end of next year.

We love the St Croix and are ourselves a testament of its hardiness and ability to thrive even in less than ideal conditions. It is our firmly held belief that this breed has a strong place in the US sheep industry and not just to fill a nice' for hobby farmers. It's inherent parasite resistance and overall proficiency make it a great choice for crosses in commercial flocks around the country. I also believe if we as an organization commit to improving the breed by only keeping the best and eating the rest we can position this breed as a premier and much sought after sheep in all corners of this great country.

SCHSB DIRECTOR POSITIONS...

CANDIDATE 2: CALEB CUNNINGHAM

I was born and raised at Redhill, a 500 acre farm and former plantation in southern Logan County, Arkansas. Logan County, located on the cusp of the Arkansas River Valley and the Ouachita Mountain Range, is a county of cow calf operations and commercial poultry farms. However, St. Croix sheep have been a part of our farm from my very early days. In the 1990's my granddad maintained a flock of 300 or more ewes in addition to our commercial cow herd. Rams, not mutton, were the primary product of our program. We hauled hundreds of our best rams to the West Texas sheep ranchers to use on their stout Rambouillet ewes. Wool was worth less than the cost to shear, and the commercial sheepmen were breeding it off as quickly as they could. As it happened, one such customer approached Granddad for the whole flock. They haggled back and forth, came to an agreement, and a truck came to haul them all away. We put together another herd of hair sheep, these roughly St. Croix and half Kathadin, and we used a couple of our best rams from our previous flock to re-establish ourselves. This flock grew to be as large as the last, and it was dispersed to one buyer also from Texas. Commercial sheep ranchers desired our stock because we were commercial sheep ranchers.

I graduated with honors from Arkansas State University where I received a Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture, specifically Animal Science. I immediately returned to manage the farm and care for my aging grandparents who are in poor health. I began to build my own herds and flocks. The farm now boasts a herd of registered Red Poll Cattle, a flock of registered St. Croix hair sheep, and some Duroc swine from an old bloodline. There are common, philosophical threads running through the selection and management pressures placed on all stock here at Redhill. The primary of which is selection for maternal qualities.

I believe it is time that seedstock producers go to work for commercial producers and begin to kick some of the crutches from under our stock to see which tribes have true potential to serve our industry. For that reason, everything at Redhill is managed under low input conditions. I want my cattle and sheep to harvest the majority of their food themselves. To this end, I practice high density rotational grazing with the use of portable electric fencing. This allows the stock to graze fresh forage while limiting their access to resting, dunged pasture. This limitation is principal in the management of parasites which is so crucial to the success of any sheep program this far south.

I am developing parasite resistance in all my livestock. Nothing causes more financial loss to small ruminant producers than internal parasites. One expert in the field humorously stated that the only thing that killed sheep and goats was *Haemonchus contortus*. If a predator killed a sheep, it was only because the worms had caused them to be too weak to outrun the predator! Parasites are not going away, we might as well select individuals who can tolerate their presence.

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SCHSB DIRECTOR POSITIONS...

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Longevity is another key attribute. I don't know of another trait so undervalued in livestock production. The largest cost you will put into a female in your program is the cost to raise her. In cattle, it takes roughly three calves for the cow to "break-even." How much more profitable then is the cow that produces well into the twilight of her teens? The average cow-calf producer culls between the ages of eight and ten because the average cow of today simply won't last much longer. Longevity is key.

Mothering ability is another important trait. Again, I'm a commercial stockman with registered herds raised under commercial conditions. I don't jug my ewes. They are expected to lamb in the pasture unassisted. A New Zealand sheep breeder once advised that the best time for a serious shepherd to vacation is lambing season. He went on to quip that in two years that shepherd would have the best maternal flock around. That is precisely what he did, and it is precisely what happened.

I hope that this brief diatribe has given you a taste of the goals I have set for my bloodlines. I have scoured the country for the foundation animals to achieve these ends and am well pleased with the beginning of the journey.

Agriculture and stock breeding has always been my passion. I have spent countless hours researching the techniques of the great stockmen of the past: Bakewell, Bates, the Colling brothers, Gudgell and Simpson, Bonsma, Lassater, and Jim Lingle. It would be my great pleasure to put this passion and knowledge to work for you. I humbly request your consideration for director.

GLOSSARY OF SHEEP TERMS

This is a new section of the News and Views. There are some great words used around sheep. Some are funny, some strange but all can be useful. Let us know your favorites.

Bolus: a pill that is given orally to a sheep

Mastitis: inflammation of the udder

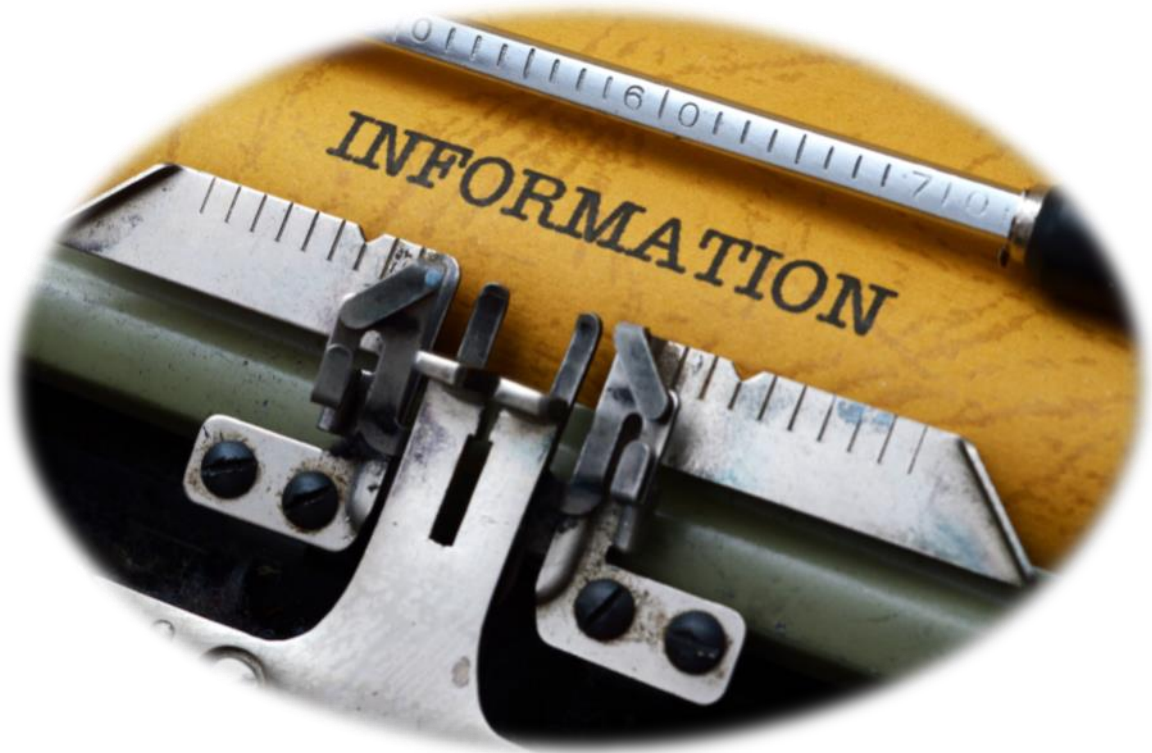
Blue bag: gangrene of the udder, this is the most severe stage of mastitis

Accelerated lambing: management schedule in which ewes lamb more than once per year

Flehmen or Flehman "lip curl": a behavioral response of rams consisting of lip curling and head raising after smelling a ewe in estrus

4 parts to a sheep stomach: rumen, reticulum, omasum, abomasum

OBTAINING PERTINENT INFORMATION



Information is much easier to obtain in this day and age than 50 years ago, 25 years ago or even 10 years ago. There are MANY resources available for anyone involved with St. Croix sheep. The things we need or the answers we seek can be found locally or across the country; in books & catalogs; on the internet or on social media.

One of the best resources for someone new to St. Croix sheep is a mentor. A mentor has extensive knowledge and experience with sheep and their husbandry. A mentor is willing and able to share with other people. A good mentor is open to new ideas and better ways of doing things. The person you select as a mentor may be local to your area or long distance. It may be someone that has St. Croix or another breed of sheep, but still has a lot to share about sheep and their care, in general.

Another local resource for you would be a veterinarian that is familiar with ruminant livestock. Depending on where you live, this may be hard to find. Keep on looking. Perhaps there is a veterinarian open to working with sheep, even if they are not usually part of their practice. There are several places online one can find veterinary information or even veterinarians that will answer your questions via email. If you are looking for veterinary resources online, be sure they have true credentials that can be cross referenced in a browser search.

Books. Do not hesitate to purchase a few good sheep reference books that deal with main-

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Happy Lambing To You All!



OBTAINING PERTINENT INFORMATION...

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taining and raising sheep. There are also some excellent books available that address the medical problems you may encounter. So if your power and phone ever go out, God forbid, you can look things up right on your shelves. If something is going to happen to a sheep, you can bet it will be at night, on the weekend or on a holiday.

Social media such as Facebook groups can provide answers from many people at once. It is great to know other people out there have St. Croix sheep-more than you may think. These groups are a great place to see and share pictures and experiences with like-minded individuals. Often there are some very knowledgeable people on the group that can answer questions you may have. It is a great place to learn how other people keep their sheep and what works for them. One caveat: The information available on these groups should only be used as suggestions. If you feel you have a difficult medical situation, contact a veterinarian or a local shepherd with lots of experience with sheep in your location. Often, with a medical problem in a sheep, there is not a lot of time to be wasted on looking for answers that may or may not be appropriate.

“If something is going to happen to a sheep, you can bet it will be at night, on the weekend or on a holiday.”

There are also some supply companies that specialize in sheep and other small livestock. The two that come to mind first are Premier 1 Supplies (www.premier1supplies.com) in Iowa, and Pipestone Veterinary Services (www.pipevet.com) in Minnesota. Both of these companies offer loads of things you will want to have for your sheep. On their websites, they include lots of other resources for gaining knowledge about your sheep. You can also sign up for informative email newsletters from them.

This article just scratches the surface of what you can find out there about your sheep. Network with other sheep owners, buy some books, do research online, join a social media group, and develop a doctor/client relationship with a veterinarian. In the meantime, enjoy the St. Croix sheep you have on your property.

I will be including a Resources Section in future News and Views. If you have a favorite book, website, or supplier, please share with me at: secretary@stcroixsheep.org or give me or any of our directors a call. We would love to hear from you and share your ideas and insights with other St. Croix owners and breeders.

Yates

SCHSB MISSION STATEMENT

Establish a central organization (within the United States) to register, promote, and develop the growth of the St. Croix breed of sheep.

Define the distinguishing characteristics of the breed and establish specific minimum standards for registering individual animals

Insure that individual animals meet specified criteria in order to be registered as members of the St. Croix breed

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ADVERTISING

All N&V publications are emailed to every member on the dates below. You have the option to purchase a mailed copy of N&V (3 editions per a year) for \$15 if you prefer.

Publications will be sent on 2/1, 6/1 and 10/1. Cut off dates for articles and ads are: 1/15, 5/15 and 9/15.

The full color ad sizes available for the publication are as follows:

Name,	Size(s),	Single	Year (x3)
Business Card	3.5" x 2"	\$15	\$40
Quarter Page	3.25" x 4.5"	\$30	\$75
Half Page	7 x 4.5" or 3.25" x 9.5"	\$55	\$140
Full Page	7" x 9.5"	\$90	\$240

Please note these prices assume you have acceptable artwork available for publication. If you do not have artwork available one can be created for you for free (business card text format only) or a fee (see below). Artwork should be one of the following formats: jpg, tif, tiff, png, pdf, ai, cdr, doc, docx, pub, eps. Art should either be in vector graphics format or stored with at least 300DPI. The publication is in color and images will be converted to RGB for web publication and CYMK for paper production. There should be no passwords on any files submitted. We do not accept any responsibility for any errors in your artwork. **Scanned ads are not acceptable!**

You have a couple of ways to request ads. You may use the online form available on our website. This is the easiest way as it also allows you to pay online using check, debit or credit card via Paypal (you do not need to have a Paypal account). The form is located at: <http://stcroixsheep.org/ad-request>.

Alternatively you may send an email to ads@stcroixsheep.org with your request and artwork. If your artwork is too big, we have a Dropbox that you can use to upload your file. When you request an ad by email you will need to send a check and will receive a reminder to do so (with the correct address) via email.

Creation of Artwork for Ads

We can prepare your artwork for you for a fee. Artwork for a business card sized ad will be created for **free** if you only want text. There will be no images and we reserve the right to edit your text to fit. You have room for a short phrase or sentence to describe your business along with your farm name, your name and address a phone number and your email. If your text is too long we will edit it as necessary without contacting you.

If you want a business card ad with images or a larger sized ad created, then there will be a one off charge. Just let us know you want artwork created (using the ads@stcroixsheep.org email or [online form](#)) and the editor will contact you to discuss your requirements. The artwork created can be used as many times as necessary without another charge (even in other publications). The additional one off fees are as follows (Prices may vary depending on your requirements with the additional fee being charged separately):

Ad Size	Cost
Business Card	\$40
Quarter Page	\$75
Half Page	\$140
Full Page	\$240

Our editor also provides website creation and hosting for farms and businesses at a reasonable fee. If you have any questions about these services please contact them directly at richard@chventures.com.