

St. Croix  
Hair Sheep  
Breeders,  
Inc.



Volume 18  
Issue 1

[www.stcroixsheep.org](http://www.stcroixsheep.org)

## News & Views

### PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE



"I have come to believe the phenotypic selection criteria self-governs the level of inbreeding or degree of prepotency..." Larry Leonhardt

Do you ever think that we work with a breed that probably had less than 100 direct ancestors imported into the USA? The world would generally refer to our breed as inbred. Males and females, all in a small number, a limited amount, a small genepool, a situation that can lead to high levels of inbreeding; all kinds of terms to use but how do we and how will we make it all work in 2018 and beyond?

The first step is to understand the type of the breed and set a rea-

*(Continued on page 2)*

### ANNUAL MEETING—2017

The St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. held their Annual General Meeting on December 10, 2017 per the By-Laws via Online/Conference Call in hopes of encouraging more members to participate due to accessibility. There were two guest speakers; Karissa of the American Lamb Board and George Morgan of GLM Registry.

Karissa Maneotis of the American Lamb Board spoke about their new lamb meat advertising campaign. Their website, [www.americanlamb.com](http://www.americanlamb.com) is full of vivid color pictures, loads

*(Continued on page 6)*



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Ramble.....	1
Annual Meeting .....	1
What If? .....	3
Old Dogs, Sheep Tricks.....	5
Notice From SCHSB .....	6
Articles From Members.....	7

### 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...

*(Continued from page 1)*

sonable and balanced goal for the average animal based on genetic ability. That is what we have called the “Breed Standards”. If we do not consider the worst of the sheep and if we do not consider the extreme best of the sheep but we focus on the average ewe and the average ram in the breed, then we have identified the norm of the population. This is what we would define as a “phenotypic selection”. These individuals should all fall within the defined ranges of the Breed Standards. For example: A rabbit looks like a rabbit, eats rabbit food and acts like a rabbit in a rabbit situation while doing rabbit stuff. That is a phenotypically described rabbit. A St. Croix sheep looks like a St. Croix sheep, produces like a St. Croix, functions like a St. Croix and can do St. Croix sheep stuff when given the chance is the phenotypic normal St. Croix sheep of a population or the breed and easily fits into the definition of the breed in the Breed Standards.

### **2) Avoid true outliers for undesirable changes.**

Our goal should be to make our sheep to be stable, useful, purposeful and predictable. The term “predictable”, when talking about the genetic potential for sheep or a species to produce the next generation within a given acceptable range of usefulness, is called “prepotency”. Prepotent animals are the best: you know what you are going to get. If we keep a high level of quality in the breed by controlling inbreeding regression then we will have a great chance to raise and promote the next generation of St. Croix sheep which will be near average on predictable usefulness.

What if every time you bet a dollar and rolled the dice you knew that you could win five dollars? That is prepotency in breeding stock. You set a type, breed for it, maybe improve some desirable traits along the way in your flock or population, the type becomes common in all of your sheep and suddenly 5 or 10 years later you have immediate success! J

---

*“What if every time you bet a dollar and rolled the dice you knew you could win five dollars? That is prepotency in breeding stock.”*

---

“I have come to believe the phenotypic selection criteria self-governs the level of inbreeding or degree of prepotency.”

With our limited base of genetics, inbreeding has occurred and will occur. It is inevitable. It is not a death wish or a hurdle to climb. The trick is to keep the breed phenotypically true to the St. Croix breed standard. Another way to say it is:

### **1) Avoid the regression caused by inbreeding,**

We (hopefully) cull the bottom end, slow growers, poor doers; these will include the sheep exhibiting inbred regression. But guess which other part of the lamb crop or flock has the potential instability of gene combinations that might not replicate truly in the next generations? Are you sitting down? It is the cream of the crop, the one like no other, the whopper, the exception, the glean in your eye, the one(s) that might have gotten a one-time random mix of genes that make them excel

*(Continued on page 4)*

## WHAT IF?

What if you have a new crop of lambs and you want to register them but are not sure if the ram lambs should be registered as polled or scurred? How do you know? My experience has been that scurs can generally not be seen on a young ram lamb but can be felt in the two locations of the head where horn buttons would be on a horned animal. These look like little indents on the head of the lamb. Scurs apparently can be quite different as some are movable, some might have a tiny sharp point and there are different sizes. The oddest thing to me is that some scurs develop later in life for rams and seem linked to scars from fighting on some individuals.

---

*“...registered as polled or scurred?”*

---

There are some St. Croix rams that might even have horns. As you know, those should not be registered. It would be good to note the ancestors and study the pedigree and try to decide if one or both parents have an ancestor that might be contributing these recessive genes to the horned lambs. And the unseen; all half brothers of the horned animal might be polled or scurred and still be carrying one gene for horns while all half sisters of the horned animals might be carrying one or two genes for horns.

A picture and discussion of one ram with a full curved set of horns recently surfaced on the SCHSB Facebook page. To be honest, it is a nice looking sheep. It was registered by the International association and also originated in their breeding lines and flocks. Even though a horned ram might look ele-

gant, unusual, virile and attractive, it is best to not pursue breeding them as many commercial buyers do not want horned animals in their flock. In west Texas, I asked a long term sheep-man and he said that flies and fly strike were an issue on horned sheep. Other folks discuss safety concerns of the horned sheep.

SCHSB does **not** allow the registration of horned animals to maintain the usefulness of the breed for a wide range of locations and uses. But if one ever is born here in our flock, I will try to find someone who does like horned sheep or wants to breed sheep for a hunting preserve to buy him as a commercial breeder.

So, use a manual check on the lambs to know what is there. As the SCHSB data base is enlarged we will all be better equipped for the future with our compiled information .

*Eddie*



## PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE...

*(Continued from page 2)*

over all others but also a mix of genes that might not remain stable for more than one generation. The genetic bottom end (due to regression) is part of the genetic outliers and the top end can have the same problem. Does that dog suck eggs or what?

Two issues to mention:

### **The bottom end of a group of lambs or in a flock:**

We can get in a stew and “not see the forest for the trees” to use an old phrase. Not too many years ago there was a discussion in the breed that hinged on “white was right”. What I saw and others saw from experiences was that not all white sheep were superior sheep (could not meet the Breed Standards) or even could stay in the middle of the quality of the flock. Some of it was inbreeding regression exhibited in smaller, lighter weight and thinner muscled sheep that needed additional care. In a small population, expect regression from inbreeding but cull it out, too. Efforts to not cull good sheep were implemented in that past discussion and SCHSB has a bright future with a stable population of sheep.

I will not say more but be sure, be sure, be sure that your sheep have breed purpose before you either keep them or sell them to others. That covers the entirety of the Breed Standards and not one issue. Merely being a white sheep does not directly equate to being a useful sheep. A meat sheep breed need to have meat and growth. A maternal sheep breed needs to have good maternal traits and function. The St. Croix sheep straddle both of these categories. Never forget either side of the breed in the entire Breed Standards.

### **The top end of a group of lambs or in a flock:**

I will be honest -This can go two ways. The problem is that we do not know the outcome at the time we select the next set of breeders. Select for useful sheep and things will generally improve. Maternal traits are less heritable so maternal progress is always slower as you improve your flock. Paternal or terminal (your choice of synonyms) traits are moderately to highly heritable so growth and carcass traits can be improved fairly quickly. But, **never assume that a standout individual can transmit the entire package of goodness to the next generation.** Trial and learn but don't bet the farm on the one great unproven breeder. A great unproven breeder can do one, both or none of two things: breed back toward the original flock average or have genetic differences that will change all future offspring.

“But Eddie..., but Eddie..., that is how the livestock industry has been improved over 100's of years,” you say? That's what EPDs and EBVs are all about: numerically identifying individual animals with greater potential, isn't it?

Amen, brother, pass the plate. Now I ask the question: is every animal identified by top flock ratios, higher numbers in EBVs or better ratings in indices able to transmit the goodness to all of their offspring? The answer is “no”. They can express their genetic potential but they may not have the prepotency to pass it on to the next generation. EBVs and EPDs derived from parents and originally ascribed to lambs are inherited averages expected and not individually data proven.

**CAUTION: .....**

*(Continued on page 7)*

## OLD DOGS, SHEEP TRICKS

For those of you, like me, that provide self feeders for your dogs and struggle to have something that allows dogs in, but not sheep. here is something that works for me.

I have an old dog with bad hips that can't get too low or too high. I need something that young pups can get through and something that large dogs can get over. And I need this to keep all sheep out. This does it all.

You will notice I have it offset and facing another fence which tends to discourage entry. I trained my dogs to use the entry, but sheep are reluctant to go through because the gate faces the other fence.

Measurements are not as important as design and you will want to adjust sizes to fit your particular needs.

*Billy*



Bad hips? Not me!

## ANNUAL MEETING—2017...

*(Continued from page 1)*

of information and recipes. Another resource Karissa enthusiastically shared about was the Lamb Resource Center, <http://lambresourcecenter.com/> Yates Colby invited the American Lamb Board to participate and share at our AGM in an effort to let our members know that our St. Croix sheep are part of a much bigger picture with information and resources that we can each gain from, even if you have a very small flock.

George Morgan of GLM Registry also spoke during the meeting. George is the genius who created our registry software program and updated our database. He was key to setting us up for user friendly online transactions through the SCHSB website. George shared about the flock management program he is building for the SCHSB. His work is still in progress and he is very open to ideas and suggestions about what our members would like to have in a flock management program they would use. There were questions and discussion during the meeting about this project. George can be contacted by the SCHSB phone number in Oregon.

Billy Hearnberger gave the treasurer's report. The SCHSB is on solid ground financially.

It was disappointing to have only one member family join us for this online AGM. The Board of Directors is interested in hearing from the membership about whether they got the email notices announcing the meeting; if they read it on our Facebook Page or Group or read it on the SCHSB website. It is difficult to set up a physical meeting for the AGM when there is such low participation. The Board has considered the idea of having the AGM in conjunction with another event and bringing sheep to sell/trade in the interest of spreading pockets of genetics.

*Yates*

### NOTICE FROM SCHSB!

From the standpoint of overall breed stability and to potentially save a significant number of registered sheep and a progressive flock...

There is a flock of over 50 registered St. Croix ewes that need to be sold due to immediate family needs. The sheep have been selected for weaning weights and twinning rates and are in a program of record keeping and linebreeding for flock improvement. The owner deeply desires that the buyer(s) maintain the registered status of the sheep for the long term good of the breed. The owner would be willing to work with the buyer(s) to make this possible and would also like to be able to buy back breeding stock or decedents in the future to reestablish their flock after the crisis has passed. If this is something that you would consider, in whole or in part, please contact Yates Colby for more details. Thank you.

## ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS

SCHSB welcomes member submitted articles. Please feel free to submit and share any interesting tidbits, learning experiences, pearls of wisdom, management philosophies that work for you, etc.

Please send your document with any appropriate high resolution pictures to: [secretary@stcroixsheep.org](mailto:secretary@stcroixsheep.org).

By sending us this information, you are acknowledging that the article and images are yours to send and that you approve the use in this publication and on our website.

## PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE...

*(Continued from page 4)*

..... Faster selection for **only** terminal/paternal type traits (carcass, growth, mature size), if that is the current selection tool in your flock and you push for it, will change the entire flock over time to a terminal/paternal type, larger mature size, more muscular type sheep: in both of your males and females. It may or will reduce maternal goodness depending on your efforts. Terminal/paternal selection, alone, is not the breed standard for St. Croix sheep.

Bottom line: improve but do not ruin your sheep. Balance is good. Avoid and remove regression and keep and enjoy prepotency.

*Eddie*



#### 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

#### CONTACTS

**President:** Eddie Martin  
theebenezerfarm@gmail.com  
(864) 296-0454

**Vice President:** Vacant

**Secretary:** Ms. Yates Colby  
secretary@stcroixsheep.org  
(509) 688-5168

**Treasurer:** Billy Hearnberger  
treasurer@stcroixsheep.org  
(936) 269-3839

**Director:** Matt Brewer  
matt@megalunoranch.com  
(870) 994-7816

**Director:** Caleb Cunningham  
redhillstockfarm@gmail.com  
(479) 849-4089

**Director:** Matt Morgan  
morganmatt@aol.com  
(502) 827-6145

**Registrars:** George & Lynn Morgan  
registrar@stcroixsheep.org  
(541) 825-8580

**Ads:** CHVentures  
ads@stcroixsheep.org  
(417) 261-2537

**St Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc.**  
19508 Tiller Trail Hwy  
Days Creek, OR 97429-9760  
[www.stcroixsheep.org](http://www.stcroixsheep.org)



## 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 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 listed (Prices may vary depending on your requirements with the additional fee being charged separately):

*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](mailto:richard@chventures.com).*