

St. Croix
Hair Sheep
Breeders,
Inc.



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www.stcroixsheep.org

News & Views

PRESIDENT'S RAMBLE *WHEN LIFE HANDS YOU LEMONS...*



We've all been there: too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, sickness in the family, financial issues, or the unexpected. How about the depression of 1929? What happened then? From some reading and re-reading this winter, some of the best lines and most useful Angus cattle developed during the post-depression "hard times". Emulous and Big Elban lines, the Wye plantation herd and many more efforts brought the Angus breeds to new acceptance and levels of usefulness. The same happened in other breeds and other species. **But how did that happen when the times were bad?**

(Continued on page 2)

UBER FOR SHEEP

So, the St. Croix sheep you fell in love with would be in another state or across the whole US. Heavy sigh. It is too far to drive, even though he/she/they has a great pedigree and he/she/they seems to have that extra something you could use to produce better lambs. Have no fear, Uber is here...for sheep. Well, not quite Uber, but there are quite a few livestock haulers that can assist you in making your dreams come true.

I have used a few haulers to move my sheep (and Kunekune pigs and Livestock Guardian Dogs). Most of them go to the east coast

(Continued on page 3)



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Ramble.....	1
Uber for sheep	1
Don't Worry	2

NEWS & VIEWS

News & Views is the membership newsletter 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)

Have you ever thought that the soup we all enjoy today was originally invented by an ancient cook who only had one pot? Or that our favorite casserole was invented by a cook that only had oven space for one dish? The hard times, and not the good times, define us. They define our character as in the proverbial



questions of “If you were on a deserted island what would you ___?” or

“If your child was sick and you had no money what would you do?”

When we hit snags in our sheep plans: disease, weather, personal restraints, marketing issues, (you name the pitfall), ... many throw in the towel. **That is a pity** with a breed with a small gene pool. I have had a 2019 of something similar. My wife has been sick, the weather “turned against me”, the markets for cattle during the drought was dropping, I did

not have time or place to set up all of the breeding groups of sheep I wanted and I had made a commitment to sell a fairly large group of sheep prior to the drought and then had to supplement them to maintain my promise some months later.

None of us live the easy life 24/7. Don't count yourself out and don't get on the pity train. Adjust, change, adapt and keep the dream alive. I walked out to look at the sheep and cattle or to tend to them in recent days and the reality that the numbers dropped to meet the crisis shocked me. But I am still “in the game”, used the data and individual animal information I had to keep the “best”. I want to be clear; **the best = the best fit to the environment, the animals most ideal to the goals, the animals with the least faults and not the biggest, the heaviest or the total outlier.** A great circus used to only need a few elephants and a lot of other animals. We are not in the freak growing business with St. Croix sheep.

I'm hoping for a great 2020. I hope that you have one, too.

Eddie

DON'T WORRY, THEY'LL HAVE IT WHETHER YOU GO OR NOT

My late father in law was the king of dry wit and one liners. I still miss him for that and much more. But when his kids were small they would say, “Dad, Dad...”, there is a circus in town, a ball game ready to start, a movie they wanted to see, a sale on something or something they thought they needed to see or do and his answer would always be, “Don't worry, they'll have it whether you go or not”.

“The St. Croix influence will need less care, less worming, less handling, less input costs and less labor.”
(See Page 6.)

(Continued on page 5)

UBER FOR SHEEP...

(Continued from page 1)

and back to the west coast using north and south routes.

Brian Gorman, Blarney Heights Farm Transportation, 406-544-9219

Paul Briggs, The BullShipper - 435-790-4885

Jerry Howard, J & W Livestock Hauling, 661-817-2940

Bob May Livestock Hauling 530-200-0866

One small livestock hauler I have not used, but gets great reviews is **Amy Sporna - 5 Star Livestock Transport. 630-962-8737**

All these fellows I found by word of mouth and on Facebook. There are a couple of Facebook groups where you can post what you need hauled where and when (5 sheep from OR to IN within the next month). Haulers will respond if they can do it and will offer to give you a price quote and a time frame in a private message or by phone call. It is often less expensive per animal if you can fill one of their stalls/sections with animals being transported. Some horse haulers will carry smaller livestock as well.

Facebook groups: *Sheep Transport, Livestock Hauling and Transport, Livestock Hauling Connection*

Be sure to ask if the hauler will be expecting to meet you at a location near a highway or will load and deliver at the farms. If you have a very difficult place for a 30-foot goose-neck trailer to maneuver in or miles and miles of pot-holed, gravel road, agree-



ing to meet elsewhere is often safer for the loaded animals, the driver and the equipment. Some haulers will stay to a predetermined route and meet you at a place near the highway that has a big parking lot. This arrangement is more difficult for the seller/buyer, but it keeps the transport moving forward instead of sideways on the trip so the animals on board get to their destinations just a bit faster.

WORD OF WARNING-If a hauler you have never used or heard of before responds to a transport request, ask if they have a bond, insurance and a DOT number. The Livestock Hauling and Transport Group has a few files downloaded. One is a White Hat List (the good guys) and one is a Black Hat List (the bad guys) where people share their experiences with haulers they have used. It is well worth looking at the lists if an unknown hauler contacts you about offering a ride.

Another hauling method often used is for haulers and sheep people to gather at a big event. The Midwest Ram Sale in Sedalia, MO is held in June or the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, KY is held in November. There are often private sheep

(Continued on page 4)

UBER FOR SHEEP...

(Continued from page 3)

owners from your area that will bring an animal home for a nominal fee. Those Facebook groups are a great place to look or advertise if you can manage to want sheep in June or November. LOL!

Buyers-yes, it does cost money to move animals. Is it worth it? That depends on you. If all you want is a couple of sheep to eat the weeds, probably not. If you are looking for a high-quality animal with specific traits that can enhance your St. Croix breeding program, then yes.

Sellers-yes, it does cost money to move animals. It may be worth it to you to give a small discount to a buyer that wants to purchase several sheep. That way, your bloodlines will now be proven in another area of the country. Hopefully your sheep will make a positive difference in someone else's flock and your flock reputation will be enhanced.

A Certified Health Inspection (CVI) from a veterinarian is required when crossing state lines with sheep and other livestock. All certified veterinarians can do the health inspection and give you the documentation to go with the sheep. Most of the paperwork is done online these days and your veterinarian can attach the documents in an email. Some states require tests, such as brucellosis, to be performed prior to import into that state. It is easy to find out by calling your state veterinarian or by looking it up online. All states require sheep to have a Scrapie tag as identification when moving them.

I know it sounds like a lot to arrange, but it gets easier the more you do it. Feel free to contact me if you are interested in taking this step and I will be glad to help.

Yates



DON'T WORRY, THEY'LL HAVE IT WHETHER YOU GO OR NOT ...

(Continued from page 2)

The commercial sheep industry in the USA will continue whether the St. Croix breed gets into that type setting or not. There is no implications for guilt or innocence, not a matter of need or squander, it will not change the direction water flows nor the major events of history. The question for you and me right now is, **“Will St. Croix sheep ever be recognized and successfully be used on a wide scale in the commercial sector?”**



There are a lot of older studies of how our sheep worked in research settings of crossbreeding. Just like the Romanov that got incorporated into longer term studies and crosses, the St. Croix sheep were studied as pure and crossed sheep. But it seems that time moved on and the studies have been forgotten or ignored. Universities and research farms changed strategies and especially change funding methods to cause them to disperse a lot of the research flocks. We have to accept that and move on. But it leaves us, as breeders and an association, with more responsibly to get the word out.

The universal issue: We all face marketing pressures. Maybe you avoid typical markets by selling direct or only to ethnic markets. I've done some of that but the ethnic buyers still check muscling and weights. And let's face it- Direct marketing is not very profitable if the yield of meat is low. In the general sale barn setting we have to be careful on how the sheep look: full, poorly conditioned, healthy, dirty ... and the list goes on to either help or slam our paychecks. This bothers me; a lot of St. Croix flocks have started and stopped in the past because the overall demand and price did not work out for the breeders. That is a crying shame in my book.

Back to the commercial sector profit formula: the dollars earned per ewe minus the labor and feed costs needs to increase if many folks will consider starting a flock, think about adding a flock to a beef cow operation, look at St. Croix genetics or expand their current flocks. Most of these folks will not want to sell or breed registered sheep. If they have a skill and mindset as commercial producers we need to have commercial answers in the form of acceptable commercial quality sheep. Like it or not, **they will be commercial sheep producers without ever considering St. Croix sheep** if we do not let them know about us and have something to offer.

Commercial sheep answers for all of us:

A St. Croix crossed ewe is a bit smaller (to eat less) than most wool sheep, lighter weight than a Dorper or a Katahdin sheep but has the hybrid vigor and the package of “female instincts” to make pasture lambing and easy keeping sheep a closer reality. Sure, they can use pure St. Croix ewes to start but help them by letting them know that the breed is a valuable building block to their success in a crossbreed ewe based flock.

(Continued on page 6)

DON'T WORRY, THEY'LL HAVE IT WHETHER YOU GO OR NOT ...

(Continued from page 5)

St. Croix sheep, in general, have that angular shape that is synonymous with higher milk production. Some folks choose to milk St. Croix sheep and St. Croix crossed sheep for that very reason. If you doubt their milking ability, pour the feed to them when the lambs are born and see the weaning weights double. Been there, done that! Honestly, I could not afford the feed bill. But bottom line, they will milk more for their body weight or size than some will give them credit. That is a plus for the breed.

A St. Croix ram is going to be an easy lambing type breeder. Muscle and bone make for great feeder lambs but when it comes to lambing out yearling ewe lambs – go St. Croix. Their ewe lambs can be the better crossbred ewes described above.

A St. Croix ram can tighten up the type in an existing flock of mixed commercial ewes. The look of the flock are a key issue to many as the odds and ends and the pee wees and the giants are not so desirable. When the lambs from later matings look more uniform, the buyers will not have to pick and choose.



Life can be easier. The flock with St. Croix influence will need less care, less worming, less handling, less input costs and less labor. That really catches my eye. And it is true.

“Big deal! I raise registered sheep.” Ever heard that? Like it or not, **the commercial breeder sheep value actually sets the overall dollar value for our sheep**. It is worth repeating; **the commercial breeder sheep value actually sets the overall dollar value for our sheep**. A few sheep can be sold as registered stock for high prices known as “funny money”. Even fewer can be sold as show animals. Many can be market lambs but at market prices for the day. But, mark my word, we have not ever seen the true value of St. Croix sheep, as a whole, because the potential commercial demand has never been developed. Feel free to argue and tell me about the few you sold as high dollar breeders to a registered flock. But please remember: **the commercial breeder sheep value actually sets the overall dollar value for our sheep**. It is a market reality.

We need to do more to get the breed and the benefits into the eyes of commercial producers. Please, tell any of the directors where you think commercial producers would spot an ad from SCHSB. Do you need a flyer, a booklet, some promotional help, a polished ad or an article for a magazine? Please let us know and we can help you get that done. As members of SCHSB, the sole progressive breed association, we need two things for current success and expansion:

DON'T WORRY, THEY'LL HAVE IT WHETHER YOU GO OR NOT ...

(Continued from page 6)

1. The right sheep - a supply of both commercially acceptable registered St. Croix sheep and St. Croix crossed sheep
2. An audience with the commercial sheep producers.

Try to begin to collect flock data or take the plunge into NSIP to have verification of what we know to be true while others might pass us by. **I am not discounting the preservation of the breed.** I'm all for it. The preservation of a breed is not merely about preserving the genes but also includes preserving the purpose. The St. Croix always had a use on the island of St. Croix. Let's not forget the full efforts of preservation.

Just remember - The commercial US sheep industry: they'll have it whether you go or not.

Eddie

DIRECTOR?

Ever thought about being one or know of an active member you would like to recommend to the Board of Directors? Please get their permission first and then either just email or call a current Director and let them know that you or your friend might be willing to put a name in for the election which will take place before the end of 2020. Director positions have staggered years of filling and/or reelection so that there is always connectivity with the ongoing activities. Either way, please give it a thought!

HELP!

We need your help! This is a volunteer organization and we need to receive your ideas for articles to include in this publication. If you have an idea or want to write something, please let us know. We'd also be delighted to get pictures of your flock for inclusion. Just send an email to secretary@stcroixsheep.org.

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 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	3.5" x 2"	\$15	\$40
Quarter Page	3.25" x 4.5"	\$30	\$75
Half Page	7 x 4.5" or	\$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 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.