



A Vision for a Bright Future of Our Breed

President's Message

By Eddie Martin



The Directors of the St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. have a vision to reinforce our breed's bright future. We have learned from study, advice and experience that we cannot

solely dwell on the past to be the most helpful to you, to be the best managers of our flocks and the best stewards of our breed. Let's use this analogy: Who has ever purposely tried to drive their car down the road at the speed limit while only focusing on the rear view mirror? Answer: Not a single soul who either "enjoyed" the blunder or survived the ride! In the same way, we cannot breed our best sheep of today and tomorrow while only dwelling on the past. No doubt we need to know what is behind us and around us, but the future should be our primary focal point.

The stewardship of our breed between the first imports to the present time is a

concern. We have been told that some traits and characteristics have changed or have been suppressed to the detriment of the whole of the breed. There are current warning signs of inbreeding in some flocks, and our breed is faced with a limited gene pool. In recent times the slight tweaking of the breed standards allows the chance that some of the suppressed genes, which appear to be lost in the general population, will have a chance to express themselves again for the betterment and strengthening of our breed's future.

This is not to discourage any individual member who feels that they should continue to breed St. Croix sheep in their flock based on cosmetic selection. The Directors all agree that there never has been and never will be a restriction against those long held methods.

We as breeders, and St. Croix as a breed, have a bright and expanding future ahead of us but only if we are active stewards of a living breed and not acting as museum curators of a past breed. We want people to hear about and see this

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President's Message, continued

future and strengthen this vision as they join with us. What will it take? Nothing out of the ordinary:

☛ Just being ourselves and using common sense in our breeding practices of a meat sheep breed.

☛ Being ethical breeders who support and encourage others.

☛ Accepting the strengths and limitations of our breed and using that knowledge to place our sheep in the industry and in the markets in the correct places and at the right times.

☛ Learning from scientific research and specialists.

☛ Selecting only the highest quality sheep to register and sell as breeding stock.

☛ Recognizing our past and serving as active stewards of the present while envisioning and improving the future as active members of the St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. **NV**

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St. Croix Membership

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All membership dues will be collected by Associated Registries. A membership application/registration/transfer worksheet can be found on our web site at www.stcroixsheep.org. Call the registrar for clarification or to ask a question concerning registration or transfer. Please mention our association name and ask for Barb.

Raising St. Croix for Fun and Profit

Submitted by Billy Hearnberger, Eastern Director

The thing I'll first I tell you is the first part of that comes much easier for me than the latter. We bought our first St. Croix in March of 2010, so we're still new at this. We're getting better at both the fun and profit part but still have plenty of room for improvement when it comes to cutting costs and becoming more efficient. Before we had sheep, we had cattle for many years and goats after that. Raising these sheep has by far been the most enjoyable and profitable venture of the three, and I believe that as long as I have my health I'll continue to raise St. Croix.

I start most every day with a strong cup of coffee and a walk outside to check the sheep and check in with my 6 Great Pyrenees. I do this regardless of the temperature. When the weather is cold it takes more effort, but without exception once I'm dressed and out in the elements I realize that the reward is worth the effort. My morning time outside with my sheep and especially my dogs is nothing less than a spiritual experience for me. It gives me time to be close to mother earth, meditate and collect my thoughts, and without fail leaves me feeling energized, optimistic and ready to meet the day.

I talk to my dogs. Don't laugh, you know you do it too! I ask them if anything exciting happened during the night and thank them for once again protecting those who are unable to protect themselves. My wife accuses me of having sheep just so I have a good excuse for having my dogs. I assure you there's not a kernel of truth to that (smiley face). Truth is we learned early on that raising sheep in East Texas in the middle of the Sabine National Forest would prove to be very challenging, not only due to the problem that some experience with parasites but

more so to the problem of coyotes. We started with two then three and finally found ourselves with six livestock guard dogs before finally eliminating our predator problems. For those of you who have suffered predator problems, you know how disheartening it is to find your sheep in the field dead with their undersides ripped open and hardly a sign that they even had entrails. Not only does that take away from the fun part, but has a huge impact on the profit part too. Without our dogs we could not have our sheep. It's just that simple. I've now been two years with no loss to predators so yes, I talk to my dogs every day. And they talk to me but that's a subject for another time.

Parasites have never been a problem for us, and in fact we have never lost a sheep due to parasites. I do not worm and have never wormed a single head. I knew from some of my neighbors' experiences that if I were to be successful raising sheep, St. Croix would be the breed that I would need. We raise our sheep with very little intervention from us. I know the way we do things here is not what works for most breeders,

but it works for us and makes it fun for us. We pasture lamb and rarely jug. I will jug if I think it's absolutely necessary to save a baby, but I've found that it is rarely necessary and when it is it is usually a first time mom.

The past two years I, like most other breeders, controlled my breeding and bred for spring lambs. I've never used controlled breeding in my commercial herd and have not experienced the

problems that one might expect. Left to Mother Nature I've found that ewe lambs have not gotten bred too soon, ewes have not bred back before they were ready and stay in acceptable condition. Some of my ewes will lamb nearly twice a year and some will not but it gives me a good opportunity to know

**I talk to my dogs.
Don't laugh, you know
you do it too!**



One of my guardian dogs will not leave this ewe that has a broken leg.

Raising Fun, continued

which ewes offer the best in genetics when it comes to production, fertility, and conditioning. This year I did not pull my ram off my full blood ewes and plan to leave a ram in with them also. I just don't like going out in the morning to find that three or four ewes lambing during the night and I now have babies everywhere that need to be tagged.

We also stopped trimming hooves routinely. I never seemed to have a sheep limp until I started trimming routinely. I've never trimmed my commercial herd, and I can honestly tell you I've never had one limp to any significant degree. I will trim if necessary, but since I've stopped routine trimming I no longer have limping sheep. I have my own idea about that but it's only speculation.

I'm often torn between wanting to be profitable and wanting to have fun. I want to be successful at both, but I'm not willing to give up the fun part just to be profitable nor am I willing to forego profit and efficiency just for the sake of having fun. It's a balancing act for me that I struggle with. I've been very fortunate so far here in East Texas, where demand for my sheep has far exceeded my ability to meet that demand. However, I started very small and I have both a commercial meat herd and a full blood breeding stock herd. If I had it to do over, I would begin with many more

I'm often torn between
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ewes than I started with. I've chosen to keep most of my full blood ewe lambs for myself, and growing from within with a very small start has been slow. I just never dreamed I would be getting so many calls for sheep. My problem has been that I just can't seem to tell folks no when they call wanting

ewe lambs. Just a few days ago while speaking with my wife, I reaffirmed my decision to not sell any more breeding ewe lambs this year only to get a phone call yesterday from

a very nice lady with a 7 year old special needs child she wanted two St. Croix weanling ewes for. Well, how do you turn that down? Anyway, between calls like that, babies who jump like popcorn, the satisfaction one gets from animal husbandry, and dogs that are willing to lay down their lives to protect their charge, I'll have to admit that what I get from the fun part far exceeds what I get from the profit part. I'll work on that . . . maybe. **NV**



Your Dues \$\$ at Work!

Prepared by Malia Miller, Southwest Director

Your association, the St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc., is now advertising in a variety of publications that are enjoyed by a wide range of people who enjoy lifestyles that include raising livestock. Below is a list of those publications.

All advertising is either a Breeder's/Stockman's/Livestock Directory or Classified type line ad. All pricing is for a year's worth of advertising.

4 issues a year:

Small Farmer's Journal \$130 Classified

6 issues a year:

Hobby Farms \$240 Classified

Sheep Magazine \$40 Breeder's Directory

Countryside & Small Stock Journal \$60
Breeder's Directory

Small Farm Today \$100 Classified

Grit \$200 Livestock Exchange

12 issues a year:

The Shepherd \$40 Breeder's Directory

Stockman Grass Farmer \$640 Stockman's Directory

Chef Sings Praises of St. Croix Sheep

Page 10 The Livestock Conservancy News, Summer, 2013

By Ryan Walker

As many Livestock Conservancy members know, heritage breeds are becoming increasingly popular with chefs across the country for their unique and exquisite flavors. I recently had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with John Bobby, Executive Chef at Noble's Grille in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to discuss his experience adding St. Croix sheep to his restaurant's menu.

We met at Stauber Farm, located about 20 minutes northwest of the restaurant, along with St. Croix breeder and farm owner Charles Taft.

My first impression of John indicated he was a confident, albeit humble man who had a deep passion for cooking food the right way. He arrived at the farm to meet with Charles and me between dropping his child off at daycare and picking up some of the St. Croix meat at the processor, joking that he spends as much time commuting as he does cooking.

John's road into local cooking

After we introduced ourselves, John jumped right in and started answering my questions because one stereotype is true – there isn't much down time in a chef's schedule. John moved from Houston, Texas, to North Carolina at an early age, and although he has no personal farming experience, he grew up in a rural area and was surrounded by a community growing much of their own food.

After discovering his passion for cooking at the age of 20, he attended Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Orlando, Florida. His next seven years were spent in Florida, finishing school and gaining restaurant experience at The Ravenous Pig, where he developed a deep interest in working with local, seasonal products and ingredients and with heritage breeds.

John meets Charles and the rest is history

Although John had experience with and enjoyed cooking heritage breeds, his partnership with Stauber Farm was not initiated by him, but



Chef John Bobby poses with sheep at Stauber Farm in Pfafftown, NC. Photo by Ryan Walker.

developed from a comment made by Charles while he was having dinner at Noble's Grille one night.

Charles knew that the restaurant embraced local and sustainable foods, but he could not find any heritage breeds on the menu. After he mentioned the prospect of adding heritage breeds to the menu to the wait staff, Charles and John were soon discussing the logistics of supplying the restaurant with St. Croix meat, and the rest is history.

John immediately saw Charles' passion for his sheep and noted his devotion to taking good care of them. "Knowing that the animals were well cared for is important to my customers," said John.

Why St. Croix?

St. Croix are part of the Caribbean Hair Sheep family of breeds, meaning their coat is primarily made up of hair, rather than wool. This adaptation, shaped by the heat and humidity of their environment on St. Croix Island for over 400 years, makes them well-suited for meat production because the need for shearing is eliminated.

The addition of extremely strong natural parasite resistance, good lamb survivability, good mothering instincts, and good flocking make the St. Croix an ideal breed for many sheep producers.

When I asked John specifically about St. Croix meat, he had only positive things to say. "It has a mild flavor that isn't overpowering or overbearing," said John, referring to the strong mutton flavor many people are accustomed to when ordering lamb. John said when he first added St. Croix to the menu, a couple of customers asked for mint jelly to counter the

"Knowing that the animals were well cared for is important to my customers"

Chef, continued

mutton flavor to go with their dishes before trying them, but after tasting the terrific flavor of the meat, decided to finish their meals sans jelly. John also noted that the meat is easy to slice and there isn't as much waste when preparing head-to-tail due to its high carcass weight with smaller bones and less fat than some mainstream breeds.

Conservation Perspectives


From a conservation standpoint, John said he sees the importance of saving breeds like the St. Croix. By taking advantage of each breed's unique history and passing the farmer's passion for raising them along to his customers through their food, John is experiencing the excitement of working with (and therefore saving) heritage breeds first-hand. This excitement came to fruition earlier this year when John was crowned the Got To Be NC Competition Dining Series "Fire In the Triad" Champion.

As our time with John came to a close, he asked Charles if the figs were ripe, referring to the giant fig bushes at the edge of the garden. We

then proceeded to pick the ripe ones for use at the restaurant and Charles grabbed a couple dozen fresh heritage chicken eggs to complete his order.

Full circle

As John said goodbye and headed up the road to pick up the St. Croix meat from the processor, I experienced one of those transcendental moments where everything seemed to be in perfect balance. A breed perfectly developed for its market, offering an unrivaled dining experience.

A small farmer raising that breed sustainably and supplementing his sheep business with fresh eggs and produce from that very same farm. And a chef who sees the value in local and sustainable food helping to support conservation by using his passion for cooking to reintroduce heritage breeds to patrons at his restaurant. I think we may be onto something here... 

Ryan Walker is the Marketing & Communications Manager for The Livestock Conservancy. He can be reached at rwalker@albc-usa.org.


Colorado Flooding Affects Livestock

Even in normal times, weather is the unknown factor in raising livestock. Recent years, however, have been anything but normal. Some forces of nature take their toll gradually; others bring destruction before our eyes. or several years, large portions of the U.S. were devastated by long spells of drought, forcing many to lose their operations and everyone in affected areas to make adjustments in their management practices. This year the extreme weather came in the form of flooding. Director Malia Miller of Colorado faced the fury that the torrential rainfall produced. Here is her story:

Here in my part of Colorado, we had three separate rivers flood and severely impact lives in September; the Cache La Poudre in Fort Collins, the Big Thompson in Loveland, and the St. Vrain in the Longmont/Boulder area. The damage began on the eastern side of the Rockies and flowed to the eastern part of our state. 17 miles of the 22 mile long Big Thompson Canyon are gone or severely damaged. The river flowing through the canyon comes out within a couple of miles of where my sheep are kept. The worst I personally experienced is that half of the barn my sheep are in flooded some; a few inches of water, due to the incessant rain. The worst others in the state experienced is loss of whole herds of cattle due to the flooding. Others had to



swim horses out of engulfed pastures, like the man who swam out, hopped on one and led them out through shoulder high water. A pasture I drive by every day on the way out to my sheep is fencepost high mud/silt now; I haven't yet found out the fate of the two horses kept there.

Friends, family and fairgrounds in the areas all took in livestock from the impacted areas. Coyotes in our area that normally would stay away from barns and corrals are coming in, primarily at night, although we are seeing them earlier in the evening, as some of their normal food sources are gone. Others in the area are experiencing the same situation. My livestock are all inside the barn at night and being guarded by a big black dog-hating Morgan mare! 

Mark Your Calendar!

Think St. Croix, think North Carolina, and think sensational annual meeting!

When: The dates are June 6-7, 2014, so start planning now to attend.

Agenda: Hosted by Charles and Lamar Taft, the agenda is shaping up to be the best ever.

Location: The meeting is at Dr. Taft's farm in Bethania, NC. You can see your destination for this memorable event at (<http://www.stauberfarm.com/>).

Attractions: Charles has reserved the Alpha Chapel in the village of Bethania for our business meeting Saturday morning, June 7. There is also a nearby historic school house in Bethania that will be available for our meetings Friday, June 6. Friday will be a day for farm tours and more formal presentations by professionals involved in animal research and nutrition. Charles also asked Chef John Bobby to prepare a dinner at their farm on Friday evening for the group, and he was excited about the prospect.

Travel: Geographically, and as far as airports are concerned, it is 88 miles from Charlotte/ airport or

about 35 miles from Greensboro. It is about 9 miles from the town of Winston-Salem.

Lodging: Charles is looking into a range of lodging options, from standard mid-priced hotels to bed and breakfasts.

Updates and details will be posted regularly on the association chat site (<http://chat.stcroixsheep.org/>) and in newsletters.

North Carolina is lovely in June, and the area is replete with exceptional dining and sight-seeing. Make the annual meeting a family vacation and opportunity to visit with other St. Croix breeders.

What a combination: great people, great location, great sheep, great time! (NU)



Some of the Ways Your Association Works for You

Newsletter

Your membership dues provide you with many services and benefits. One of them is the publication of this newsletter, which gives you information about the St. Croix breed and fellow members in this association.

Your stories

We invite you to share your stories, ideas, or photos with us so we can pass them along in future newsletters. Please send your contributions to Kathy Bennett at rbr15863@hughes.net.

Web site

The St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. website is also designed to promote your sheep to the widest possible audience. www.stcroixsheep.org

Breeder's List

One feature is the Breeders' List, which provides contact information, if you request it, listed by state for potential buyers to access.

Chat Site

The chat site portion of the website connects you to other members as you share ideas about St. Croix sheep, keep updated on the Board of Directors

meeting summaries, and advertise your sheep or livestock dogs. <http://chat.stcroixsheep.org>

Register your sheep

The registration and transfer of your sheep are services that allow you to sell your sheep with confidence. Registration forms document their parentage and characteristics such as being white, polled, colored, or scurred, providing valuable information to potential buyers.

Update please!

As you renew your membership dues January 1, 2014, please check your listing on the Breeders' List to be sure it is correct. Has your email address changed? Has your phone number changed? You can make the corrections on the membership form, and your listing on the Breeders' List will be corrected, providing potential buyers with the most accurate contact information for you.

It's That Time...

Your membership dues will be due January 1, 2014. The timely payment of dues allows this association to continue to provide services to you, benefitting your sheep operation. (NU)

Landrace Hair Sheep for Meat Lamb Production

HAYPENNY STOCKWORKS

Many think of St. Croix as being suitable for only tropical to temperate climates, but Christie Ketrings' flock are thriving about as far north in Wisconsin as you can get without diving into Lake Superior. Living on a non-stop 24/7 dairy farm, she doesn't have a lot of extra time, but already knew exactly which sheep would fit her requirements because she had worked with hair sheep in the Virgin Islands. One doesn't raise sheep for their pastoral aesthetics on a working farm, and Christie is a poster girl for a successful commercial meat lamb operation utilizing her low-maintenance flock. For a closer look at this diverse endeavor, visit her website at haypennystockworks.wordpress.com. Her story:

Submitted by Lynne Vanderlinden, North Central Director

Haypenny Stockworks was established in 2010 when my partner decided the best way to keep me interested in the family dairy was to buy some sheep. The St. Croix ewes made their home quite nicely in an old low dairy barn that was not well enough ventilated for cattle. The sheep bedding only needed to be removed twice a year, unlike cattle that required weekly cleaning. Needless to say, the minimal management of this flock fit well into the limited time we had to spend away from the dairy herd.

Prior to moving to northern Wisconsin I worked in the Virgin Islands from 2006-2008. My B.S. in Animal Industries Management gained me a position supervising the University of the Virgin Islands research sheep flock, composed of St. Croix, Barbados and Dorper/St. Croix crosses. It was my time recording the production of the St. Croix that lead me to appreciate them.

My flock has 30 commercial ewes that are grazed in the summer and lamb year round. I focus on St. Croix ewes that are shorter in stature with larger muzzles and barrels, as they show increased feed capacity and prolificacy. I also select for full shedding coats to reduce flock maintenance. They are excellent mothers and need very little assistance. I use St. Croix ewes to cross with white Dorper rams;

I like replacement ewes that are only 3/4 or less Dorper. I have found that purebred Dorper mothers do not compare to the St. Croix. The St. Croix also fit very well into my accelerated lambing program; I have several who come back to lamb every 7-8 months. The St. Croix cross lambs are finished and wholesaled to a local grocer, as their mild and tender meat has impressed many customers. I also have interest from small land holders to finish their own lambs which they purchase from me in the spring. I believe the St. Croix cross is perfect for beginning lamb finishers as they require no special attention and can be finished on grass in the fall.

My flock's strong desire to graze actually started in a negative way. The first two years the ewes would get out on a weekly basis, crawling under the fence of the paddock when grass (in their opinion) became inadequate. Once escaped, they would frequent the grain bins and my mother-in-law's garden (who once exclaimed that a "rabbit" had eaten her entire garden one spring). I felt overwhelmed at the thought of adding sheep wire to all of the dairy pastures.

Last summer a group of ewes that were housed separately from the main flock for quarantine started letting themselves out in the morning and putting themselves up at night, like chickens. I checked them daily and, unlike the main flock, they never



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Color and Horns in St. Croix Sheep

*Most of you know of the decades of good and restoring work accomplished by the **American Livestock Breeds Conservancy**. They have given our breed support and guidance, and we do not know of another more dedicated and trusted organization that cares for the minor breeds including our St. Croix sheep. They have just changed their name to **The Livestock Conservancy**, and we want to congratulate them on their foresight to see the need to change and do it in order to help members and breeds alike. We encourage St. Croix breeders to support **The Livestock Conservancy** by joining this fine organization. Please enjoy an article by their technical advisor concerning the role that the St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. has in assuring that the St. Croix breed can be restored and strengthened for many more decades to come.*

By D. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD

St. Croix sheep have two interesting occurrences within the breed: nonwhite sheep and scurred sheep. The usual controversy is whether or not these should be registered or not. This is an important question, and gets right to the core of “what is this breed?” which is a very good question that all breeders of purebred livestock should ask themselves.

What does “St. Croix” mean?

The answer to “what is this breed?” is more philosophical than anything. There is indeed no “one right” answer, but rather a range of options are open to the breed. None of these answers is inherently right, none is inherently wrong, but each takes the breed in a different direction.

A look at how color and scurs are inherited is probably a good first step.

In St. Croix, as in most sheep breeds, white is dominant to other colors. This means that other colors can lurk in white sheep as recessive variations in color.

These will pop out occasionally as surprises when carriers are mated. This happens in nearly all breeds of sheep, so is nothing unusual. The usual “nonwhite” options in St. Croix sheep are either the blackbelly pattern, or are black. Either of these colors can occur as solid colored sheep, or as spotted sheep. The spotting is independent of being white or colored, but obviously the white spotting is only noted on those sheep that are colored because a spotted white sheep is just that much whiter!

Scurs also appear to be due to a recessive gene. This means that polled sheep can indeed produce scurred sheep on occasion. This happens in many breeds of polled sheep.

Against the backdrop of these basic genetic phenomena, the issue on St. Croix needs to be considered. Basically, do the sheep on St. Croix exhibit these characteristics? I have only been to St. Croix once. On that trip I saw several sheep as we toured around the island. Most were white, several were blackbelly or blackbelly spotted, and a few were black or black and white. Colored sheep were common among the various flocks. I did not see any scurred sheep, but that does not mean there were none, as we did not see every sheep on the island and were not all that close to them anyway. As a side note, I had a wonderful black and white

ram at one point that came from purebred white St. Croix parents here on the mainland.

More specifically...

One answer to the “what is this breed?” question is “hair sheep from St. Croix.” If that is the decision of the breeders, then the recessive

color variants should be included in the breed registry and standard. These variants are indeed part and parcel of the gene pool on St. Croix, and penalizing them only acts to remove sheep from the breeding population. In this breed, as with all hair sheep, the color has little or no economic value. The same cannot be said of all wool sheep, but certainly does hold true with hair sheep that are destined for meat. Once that leg is roasted, the color of the sheep is a trivial detail.

Continued, next page

By opening up the mainland registry to the variation that is present on St. Croix, the breeders have assured its genetic integrity on into the future.

Color and Horns, continued

A different answer to the breed definition question is “hair sheep from St. Croix that meet certain criteria.” In this case, restricting the registration to a certain color (white) makes some sense. It does not, though, include the range of variation on the island, and so must be undertaken with that fact in mind. Essentially, the breed in North America then becomes a subset of the genetic pool on the island, and does not represent the entire gene pool. The registered breed, by this definition, is only certain variants of the Island sheep, and not all of them. This is valid, but takes the breed in a different direction than the more inclusive approach. It also denies the variation that is in the breed’s original homeland.

St. Croix small gene pool

With small gene pools it is usually best to include as much variation as possible in order to have long-term breed viability. An argument can be made to hone down a breed’s variation so that the breed is recognizable, and this does have some merit, but can also lead to mistakes. So, for example, the blackbelly sheep from St. Croix are often called “Barbados Blackbelly Sheep” when in fact they have nothing to

do with Barbados even though the color is identical.

Scurs are a separate issue and have no easy answer. They strike me as somewhat trivial to the use of the sheep as meat sheep, and if a superior ram had scurs it would make sense to use him.

By defining the breed as “hair sheep from St. Croix” the breeders do open up the gene pool to more variation than was once allowed in the mainland flocks. It is still likely that most breeders will still prefer polled white sheep, and nothing prevents those breeders from keeping and enjoying this part of the breed. Keep in mind, though, that this earlier breed definition was imposed on the breed by carefully selecting the sample that was originally imported from the island rather than more broadly sampling what is actually down there. **The St. Croix breed, with all the variation that occurs on the island, is important. By opening up the mainland registry to the variation that is present on St. Croix, the breeders have assured its genetic integrity on into the future. This is an important and valuable step, and one that other associations can learn from.** (NV)

D. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD is Professor of Pathology and Genetics at Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

St. Croix Shepherd Spotlight: Michael & Joyceline Pitkin of Deary, ID

By Yates Colby, Northwest Director

I met the Pitkins when I arrived at their farm to purchase a couple of ewes and swap rams in 2010. They are a “mature” couple that have raised St. Croix since the 1990s. I have asked loads of questions on topics ranging from ewe bloodlines, black hooves, Scrapie Codon testing to how old can you get good meat from a SC wether (Mike says it is always good!), as well as some of the history of the registries.

There is nothing wish-washy about Joyce, and it shows in her sheep! With the help of family members, the Pitkins have remained true to a breeding plan that works very well for them. Joyce is a firm believer in staying true to the ewes that exhibit and produce her broad-based vision of what a St. Croix sheep should be. The Pitkins bring in new rams every year or two to use on their ewes. Most of the ram lambs, if not all, are wethered at an early



age and make very good custom butcher lambs. Ewe lambs may be kept or sold depending on the market and the need for replacement ewes.

I have had the fortune to get some ewes from the Pitkins that have become a foundation line in my flock. I call them my “solid citizens.” Pitkin 0312, “Naomi”, will be 11 years old this coming lambing season. In spite of having a broken mouth and some arthritis in her feet, she has raised twins on her own every year I have had her without losing much weight and with no deworming. What more can you ask from a ewe? Just ask Joyce. I am sure she could add something to strive for. (NV)

Send Catchy Phrase...WIN!

By Yates Colby, Northwest Director

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! The SCHSBI is looking for input from the creative minds of our membership. Your Association is looking for a **CATCHY PHRASE** to connect to our wonderful St. Croix sheep in the minds of the consumer and future producers.

Examples

There are many examples of such on the National Sheep Improvement Program website:

Border Leicester: Tough Enough
Columbia: The All-American Breed
Dorset: The Breed of All Seasons
Hampshire: Selected for Excellence!
Katahdin: A Breed Whose Time Has Come
Polypay: Tomorrow's Sheep Today
Rambouillet: The Dual Purpose Breed
Suffolk: Benefiting the Entire Sheep Industry
Targhee: Made in the U.S.A.



Landrace Hair Sheep, continued from p. 8

appeared in the farm yard or the garden. One afternoon I walked out to the pasture where this small group grazed with our Holstein heifers. As I came closer, they fanned out slightly and in the center sat a young coyote. The ewes did not seem concerned with his presence and he trotted back to them three times after being chased off by our cattle dogs. This summer those same ewes have taught the entire flock how to "free range" throughout the dairy pastures and hay fields and wait at dusk to be put up in the barn every night. They stay out of the farm yard and off the highway, probably due to their ability to graze the freshest and tastiest of grasses. (W)



We can do better

I think our membership can come up with something better than those!! Your Board of Directors has tossed around some ideas trying to emphasize traits that are desired and significant to our St. Croix breed: parasite resistance, aseasonal breeding, no shearing, easy birthing, excellent maternal traits, multiple births, no need to dock tails, good flocking instincts, desirable dairy qualities, high carcass ratios, mild tasting meat.

Hmm, how do you put ALL THAT into one **CATCHY PHRASE**? We are hoping YOU can come up with a good one (or two or three)!!!

Here's How

Your suggestions will be placed on the website chat forum for you to vote for/give feedback on. (Please contact Kathy Bennett if you would like her to send you that list via e mail or snail mail so we can get your feedback too.)

Prizes

You can win "BIG" prizes for your ideas. If one person sends in the top pick, he/she will get \$10 off of 2014 dues or registrations. If more than one person suggests the top pick, they will each get \$5 off of 2014 fees. The top 3 runners-up will get \$5 off of fees as well. Credit will be given in the News and Views to all participants. It is a WIN/WIN for our members and our breed!

Deadline

Suggestions must be in by January 1, 2014. They will be put on the chat site as they come in and all comments written by February 1, 2014 will be reviewed by the BOD. The Top Pick will be chosen and announced March 1 on the website/chat forum and in the next News & Views. These conditions & dates are subject to change due to participation, discussion and feedback.

Please send **CATCHY PHRASE** suggestions to your Regional Director or to Yates Colby at hairsheep@live.com or (509)688-5168 (Pacific Time).

News and Views

St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. Newsletter

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www.stcroixsheep.org

- Easy Care
- No Shearing



First in Internal Parasite Resistance

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Sheep That Work Better For You!