



# News and Views

## President's Message

By Eddie Martin



**D**iversity is a highly discussed topic for many people these days. In a human and governmental view it has to do with differences of origin of people. But for a breed, like our St. Croix sheep, and people, like our membership, it has a whole different meaning. Have you ever thought about how blessed we are as a breed or as members? Nobody is trying to make us to be just alike or even own sheep for the same reasons.

For example, in our membership we have folks who like to show their sheep and those that do not care to show. Ask individuals who own St. Croix sheep and the reasons are endless: therapy animals, pets, lawn mowers, pleasure, milk production or meat production purposes. Then throw in the extra variation among members who linebreed, seek new

bloodlines, sort for particular traits or just let their sheep “do their own thing” and we see a whole different slant on plans and hopes. Yet, in all of the diversity of people, interest and emphasis, there is harmony because we work off of the same base and have the same goal of protecting and promoting the breed. There is great satisfaction to me that I cannot fully describe: members can to be free to make choices with their flocks and their goals while being a part of something bigger.

The diversity within the St. Croix breed still amazes me. Where else can you find sheep that can fit into an environment as wide as the bounds of a tropical island, Mexico, USA and Canada? Select for muscling and you can increase it. Select for more lambs per birth and the sheep respond. Select for slick hair, milk production, or whatever your trait of interest may be, and it seems to be there. We can honestly go on and on about the things that our breed can do.

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# News and Views

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Our breed remains a small genepool because the source is fixed and the total number of sheep that has been imported is limited. In what we see as the expression of diversity within the breed, there is a greater hope that enough gene combinations exist to keep us away from problems of severe inbreeding now and in generations to come. The long term protection and preservation of the breed will always depend on the individual flocks of members who seek the best for their sheep and the breed.

In our total diversity we still have the basics that glue us together: the purity of the breed, breed standards, a common goal of the good of the breed and an active interest and concern for fellow members. Come to North Carolina in June for the annual meeting and share your stories and your diversity with fellow breeders. The speakers and presentations should challenge and motivate us and the preparations are being made with our comfort and enjoyment in mind. It will be a good time to share our common goals and our diversity. I hope to see you there. **NW**

## The Catchy Phrase That Caught

The Board of Directors and I would like to thank and recognize the people that sent in suggestions for our Catchy Phrase contest. Three members sent in many wonderful ideas, and EACH of them will be receiving the \$10 Grand Prize in appreciation for their participation. They are: Ann Young of Cardinal Point Farm in Morgantown, IN; Susan Kubak of Springport, IN and Jeff Robinson of Kingston, OH. You all rock!! Secretary Kathy Bennett will be contacting the Registry regarding your credit (if she has not already done so).

After much deliberation, one of the Catchy Phrases was chosen in February. We feel it embodies the true spirit of our wonderful breed of sheep. And the official Catchy Phrase is....

### **St. Croix=\$mart Choice**

The BOD hopes that you can use this to help advertise your sheep and sheep products.

*Yates Colby  
Northwest Director*

## St. Croix Membership

### **St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc.**

P.O. Box 51, 222 Main Street  
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### **641-942-6402**

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](http://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 Karey.

# 2014 Annual Meeting

June 6-7

Bethania, North Carolina



This year's annual meeting promises to be the best yet, with a destination location, gourmet food, and fascinating programs. A bit about what you'll experience...

- Historic Bethania is the only example of a European style "open field" agricultural village remaining in North Carolina. Its 500-acre Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has also received the highly-respected designation of National Historic Landmark.
- Alpha Chapel, location of Saturday's business meeting, was built in 1895 and remains in use to this time as the town's meeting hall.
- Stauber Farm (home of hosts, Charles and Lamar Taft) sits near the historic landmark village of Bethania. Here in the Yadkin Valley Wine Region, guests find many ways to create memorable experiences—both on the farm and in the many attractions for visitors to this area. Friday evening a "farm to table" gourmet dinner will be catered by chef John Bobby at Stauber Farm.

## Meeting Information

### Friday, June 6

Meetings will be held at a conference room at the Hampton Inn and Suites University. Speakers will include Dr. Susan Duckett from Clemson University and John Wilkes, a livestock marketing specialist. Morning presentations and demonstrations will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch.

### Friday afternoon

Farm tours will be held in the afternoon, ending with a sheep herding demonstration at Stauber Farm in Bethania.

### Friday evening

A "farm to table" dinner catered by chef John Bobby will be held at Stauber Farm.

### Saturday, June 7

The Saturday business meeting will be in the Alpha Chapel, adjacent to the visitors' center. The business meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. until noon, followed by lunch and conclusion of meeting.

### After the business meeting

Browse in Bethania or visit Old Salem, which is 20 minutes away, or Reynolda House, 10 minutes away.

## Travel Details

**Arriving by air?**—Closest airport is Greensboro, NC (GSO) 30 minutes from Hampton Inn and Suites. Second airport would be Charlotte (CLT) 1hr 20min from Hampton Inn.

**Lodging**—Rooms have been reserved at Hampton Inn & Suites University. The cost is \$109+ with breakfast included. Their phone is 336-377-3000.

**Cost**—A registration fee of \$35/person includes two lunches and the catered dinner at Stauber Farm. Please send your registration information and check to Matt Morgan, 2130 Highway 1066, Bloomfield, KY 40008.



# Our Newest Little Shepherds

*As told to Lynne Vanderlinden, North Central Director*

When SCHSB board member Billy Hearnberger picked up the phone that morning and a pleasant female voice inquired about purchasing two young St. Croix ewes, his first response was, "I'm sorry, but I just don't have any for sale right now." The caller then told him she had three children, one with special needs, and she felt that after all her research into various sheep breeds, St. Croix would be a perfect fit for them. Billy suddenly had two ewe lambs available and Alison Tarver, husband Andy, and kids Nicholas (7), Allie (5) and William (3) were headed for Joaquin, Texas.

*Alison:* My oldest children showed nubian/pygmy cross goats in our local parish fair (can you tell they're from Louisiana?) We can no longer show the goats so decided to look into sheep. I definitely did not want to have to shear anything, so narrowed my search to hair sheep. I decided on St. Croix because they are known to be docile and calm. As my oldest son Nicholas has Cerebral Palsy, we were looking for sheep that would not be rambunctious! My search led me to the St. Croix website, where I not only learned a lot about them, but also found Billy on the breeder's list.

We live on Dividing Ridge Farm in Many, Louisiana. My mother-in-law owns several horses and she got the goats for the grandkids. Our "petting zoo" consists of 30 chickens, 3 box turtles, goldfish, horses, goats, dogs, a cat and now, sheep. The kids love living on the farm, horseback riding, swimming and showing their animals at the parish fair. The kids will be joining Clover Buds, the 4-H program for those under 9.

Billy said he had some trepidation when the Tarver's drove up that day in an SUV. But after the two ewes were loaded into the well-bedded



cargo space and the three kids clambered right in after them, he had to smile to himself. He later admitted that as they rolled away, he had "song in his heart, tear in his eye" syndrome.

*Alison:* We wanted to start the bonding process ASAP, and by the time we made the 1-1/2 hr. trip home, the kids were in love and the lambs had taken it all in stride. We immediately put collars on Angel and Anna Bell



so we could work with them daily. Within three weeks, they were walking calmly beside the kids on their leashes. We believe that some animals have a "sixth sense" when it comes to taking care of their owners. Nicholas in particular has had this experience with his

horse Muffet, his goat Quincy, and now with his sheep Anna Bell. Having Cerebral Palsy brings many challenges to Nicholas and the animals sense this and "know" to take care of him. It is truly amazing to watch!

Anna Bell and Angel will have babies in the future so the kids can continue to show in 4-H, and that will be the extent to which our sheep population will grow. (Note to Self: We'll check back with you on that one, Alison...) **NV**

# When the Joint Ain't No Longer Jumpin'

By Lynne Vanderlinden, North Central Director

Unfortunately, our large breed livestock guardian dogs are prone to several joint ailments. It's heartbreaking to see my two older dogs (11 & 12) stiffly navigate stairs they used to bound up and down or run with that inflexible gait while in hot pursuit of predators real or imagined.

A couple of years ago I started researching canine NSAID's (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) used to treat arthritis and other joint pain, including hip dysplasia. One of the most common drugs of choice appeared to be Rimadyl but, wow, was it pricey - at least \$50/month per dog! When my vet made a farm call here a few months ago, I asked him to check out my dogs and observe how they moved. Yep - old age taking its toll. I asked if Rimadyl would be appropriate and if so, was there a doggie generic.

He surprised me by writing a prescription intended for the same problems in humans: Meloxicam, 7.5 mg. Meloxicam is a generic and is on most of those "90-day supply for \$10" lists at a host of pharmacies (most of which also accept pet prescriptions). He wrote a 120-day scrip that my pharmacy charged \$12 to fill. If you're currently using Rimadyl, you might want to ask your vet about switching to Meloxicam.


In the Summer 2013 issue of "News and Views", I referred to a heartworm alternative that, while still obtained from your vet, costs

considerably less than chewables. While I was focused on LGDs, veterinarian member Janet Kepley correctly chided me for not taking it to the next step by inserting a cautionary note of possible toxic effects in collie breeds.

Neither the Ivermectin solution I wrote about or Heartguard chewables may be suitable for your herding dogs. There are several collie breeds (even Old English Shepherds), and unless they've been tested for the mutant MDR1 gene, there's a surprisingly long list of drugs that can prove toxic or detrimental to dogs with this gene.

Chances are that your collie breed critter does not carry the MDR1 gene and you can safely use heartworm medication, but do you really want to take that chance? There is a simple test kit you can order from Washington



State University and all it takes is a cheek swab and \$70 (last time I used it). Cheap enough for a one-time test and a lifetime of knowing for sure what drugs can be safely administered. Go to the website [www.vetmed.wsu.edu/dept-vcpl](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/dept-vcpl) to learn about susceptible breeds, the list of drugs and the downloadable test kit form. 



# Fetal Progaming in Sheep due to Nutrition

By Eddie Martin, President

**A**dages seem to linger in my head. One proverb which we have all heard is “you are what you eat.” But what is being discovered through continuing research is that a lamb is affected by what its mother and grandmother ate during the gestational period when the lamb or its mother was being carried as a developing fetus. On a topic like this one of “fetal progaming” or gestational influences, I think that the first two questions you should ask when you read an article like this one are:

*Does this affect my sheep?*

*Should I really be concerned?*

From our personal experiences of raising St. Croix sheep in years of good rainfall and adequate feed as compared to enduring the droughts of about 3 or more continual years ending in 2012, I can personally answer the two questions ASAP as “yes” and “yes”. We have seen a change in our sheep during the drought years that are not pleasing to us. The average size dropped, lambing rates were lessened, weaning weights were off, and the general thriftiness of the flock diminished. Some of this was compounded by a once dependable hay supplier who suddenly supplied us some of the worst hay we have ever bought. I can assure you that he is no longer in our phone directory! But 2013 was a turn-around year both in terms of weather, pasture quality and lamb performance, but I know that some of you are still struggling with the effects of droughts, floods, fires, the harsh winter and other disasters. You have my sympathy.

So how or what does poor nutrition do to lambs during gestation? We all probably have read that lambs from well fed ewes have an average higher birth weight and a better chance of survival after being born. A study at the University of Nebraska by Summers and Funston had documented references that the actual number of potential eggs that the ovaries of an **unborn ewe will ever produce is**




**decreased by poor early gestational nutrition of her mother.** The list of traits that are negatively affected include the amount of muscling the lambs will ever develop, their future rate of gain and their final mature weights.





A study from New Zealand showed that the development of the udder of a ewe lamb can be impaired by the underfeeding of her dam and her maternal granddam. So, her lambs might not ever get adequate milk and wean at their full genetic potential because of what happened one or more generations before.


Research from Australia documents some of the above deficiencies and also lists a reduction in the mature skeleton of sheep that are born to ewes that are undernourished during their pregnancy. Have you ever wondered why small lambs seem unable to move and function as well as the normal birth weight lambs? This paper asserts that they do not have a fully developed nervous system due to being undernourished as fetuses.


## So, what can you and I do?

 The good news for us as livestock producers is that the price of corn and feed has dropped. Consider supplementing your ewes if you know that the hay, grazing or feed that you have is below the quality that they need. Feeding ewes prior to breeding and for a period of time after breeding, as you know, is called flushing. It is almost a no-brainer to flush ewes if the number of lambs are increased to help recoup the feed costs.

 You will need to know the level of protein and energy needed by your sheep before you can target a mix. Ration calculators can be found at several extension sites. Here is a link to one that lets you plug in the costs of feed and byproducts available to you. <http://beefextension.com/new%20site%202/sccalc.html> Click on OSU Ration Calculator “instructions” to learn how to use it and then “program” to run it. Your area livestock agent or the local farm supply store may be able to help you with these decisions, too. Not all of us have access to the same feeds or byproducts.


 In some areas of the US, it is still a good time to plant spring or even late winter annuals. Before you spend too much money on seed purchases, take soil samples to be sure that your pastures will actually grow the plants from the seeds you sow. Without proper fertility or having the pH in the right range, some plants will not ever return the costs of your seed money. Check with your local extension agents to be sure of what will work for you.

 Be sure that the hay that you feed is “sheep quality.” Just because a bale rolled out of the back of a baler does not mean that any animal will benefit from trying to eat it.

 Be sure that the minerals that you buy are what your sheep need, can absorb, and are safe for both them and you. The reason I mention your safety is detailed below.

A recent *Shepherd* magazine had an article concerning research of levels of selenium supplementation to ewes and how it affects their lambs. Some of you probably read the article, thought it out and plan buy selenium rich premixes to add to salt or minerals or you may already use premixes. Please let me deviate and add a word of caution that a veterinarian shared with me: the selenium in minerals and premixes is easily absorbed both through your skin and by you inhaling the dust. Use caution how and where you mix these minerals and use gloves and dust masks to protect yourself. Please take note because there are serious and toxic effects of too much selenium for both humans and animals.

I'll close with one last matter that will impact each of us after our lambs are born. Pam and I came into raising sheep from a cattle background and still raise cattle here on the farm. One term that cattle folks use is “compensatory gain.” It generally means that if a calf's growth was held back a period of time due to too little feed or low quality feed, then the lost gains can be made up later in life if their feed sources improve or increase. ***Sheep do not have the ability to make compensatory gains. If their feed sources do not support their needs, they will not gain weight and they can never make it back up.***

What is the bottom line to let your sheep do their best? Feed them what they need and feed it when they need it. If your feed is limited, consider selling some sheep or delaying the breeding cycle until the feed and pastures can catch up with the nutritional needs of your sheep. 

### References:

Proceedings, Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle – Northwest 2011; Boise, ID

FETAL PROGRAMMING: IMPLICATIONS FOR BEEF CATTLE PRODUCTION

A.F. Summers and R.N. Funston, University of Nebraska  
Effects of ewe size and nutrition on fetal mammary gland development and lactational performance of offspring at their first lactation<sup>1</sup>

D. S. van der Linden<sup>\*\*</sup>, P. R. Kenyon<sup>\*\*</sup>, H. T. Blair<sup>\*\*</sup>, N. Lopez-Villalobos<sup>\*</sup>, C. M. C. Jenkinson<sup>\*\*</sup>, S. W. Peterson<sup>\*\*</sup> and D. D. S. Mackenzie <http://www.animal-science.org/content/87/12/3944.short>

Care for mum - fetal programming, lamb survival and lifetime performance  
R W Kelly, CSIRO Livestock Industries, Floreat WA 6014



# The Making of a Sheep Show Junkie...

By Malia Miller, Southwest Director

So, we're going to the National Western Stock Show in Denver. Have to be there by Friday, show is on Sunday. We- me, my two daughters Bethany and Stacy and my 10 year old granddaughter, Kimmie- decide to go down Thursday evening so we can get good pens close to the show ring. This is important because I have worked two jobs since October- working 7 days a week, when I would have begun halter training the 4 lambs we took along with the 2 yearling ewes, and I didn't Git 'er Done. We've done it before, and my youngest, Stacy, won showmanship with one of them, so I wasn't too stressed about it. 'Course, those weren't St. Croix...

The weather report says snow Wednesday night into Thursday morning, so I move my horse trailer up top by the house and big barn, from where it was parked down by the sheep barn, about 100' up a hill that you can't get up in 4 low pulling a trailer when there's snow and ice on it, I don't care who you are! Snow falls as foretold, stops by noon, roads are clear, yay. So, we get out there about dark, hitch up and go halter some sheep. It's 11 degrees, 3 inches of snow on the ground and the hill, and just a little past sheep supper time. It's dark, it's cold, there's snow everywhere. They prefer not to leave the barn.

Yearling ewes require 3 people to carry them up a hill, because when one of you goes down (me) the other two can still keep the sheep from getting hurt when it lands on top of you. Seven month old lambs can be carried by one or two people, depending. Daughter Bethany notes that ram lambs are very heavy on their hind ends, so have the strongest person there...! Kimmie ran around with the flashlight mostly shining it in our

eyes and occasionally the eartags so we didn't waste the hike up the hill with the wrong sheep.

Trip down is uneventful, pens are almost ringside, sheep settle in very well, and we have a great two days, Friday and Saturday, to go see the sights at the stock show. Mini vacay for me. Saturday afternoon, while everyone with wool sheep is shearing, blocking, washing, etc., we're in there with our little buckets of water and a couple of wash cloths and our brushes, giving everybody a nice touch up and yes, a haltering lesson.

Show day dawns, and it's finally time for our classes. We shuffle over to the holding pens and into the show ring we go with the ram lambs first. Judge says, "Are those Katahdins?" No sir, they are St. Croix. "Oh, sorry." That was the last nice thing he said to/about us. We showed in the All Other Purebred Meat Breeds,



against Dorsets. When judging oranges and apples, I always understood you are supposed to assess the attributes of each, and then whichever most

fits the profile, those are the winners. You aren't supposed to COMPARE the oranges and apples. Apparently I was misinformed.

I want to believe he didn't know the St. Croix breed standard, and that flummoxed him, and that's why he sent us to Loser Land in virtually every class. He did send one poor Dorset ewe down past us to You Really Suck Ville in two classes, with the comment that "even those two St. Croix have more muscle tone than that ewe has."

So, after a couple of classes of THAT, we just started concentrating on working our sheep and making sure Kimmie was learning all my Been There, Done That, Have The Trophies To Prove It previous sheep show junkie daughter Stacy could teach her, just glancing up every now





and then to make our little trip to Loser Land as directed.

All the sheep except one came around and were doing very well. My little wackadoodle ewe lamb Georgia refused to drink the juice. Every time into the ring she would fly around on the end of her lead rope like a pin-stuck balloon until she found a flock mate and then try to crawl underneath them. The spectators loved her, and I stopped trying to make her hide her crazy. It's not like it would have made a difference.....!

So, show is over, sheep are recovering in their pens before the trip home, we go to eat some lunch. Kimmie says to me, "Grammy, I really hope we get to come back again next year." And that, my friends, is how it's done! **NW**

## Dues Policy Clarification

Dues for the St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. cover the calendar year, from January 1 to December 31 of any given year. Payment is scheduled for January 1 and is delinquent on March 1. Prompt payment of dues allows the association to provide advertising in 15 publications, to print and distribute quarterly newsletters, provide individual farm listings through the website Breeders List, and provide individual sales postings through the website Buy St. Croix feature. Your prompt attention to this schedule is appreciated. A membership form is included in this mailing for you to bring your dues current and continue to benefit from the opportunities provided by this association.

## Tax Tips for farmers & ranchers

1) Some farmers and ranchers who were forced to sell livestock due to drought have an extended deadline in which to replace livestock and defer tax on any gains from forced sales. Details on this and a list of counties that qualify can be found at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) after a search for Notice 2013-62.

2) Farm income averaging on Schedule J still exists and can be a tax saver for farmers who are in a higher tax bracket now versus in the last three years.

3) There was a change to the home office deduction rules for 2013. There is now a simplified method to choose where you can deduct up to \$1,500 for the year based on \$5 per square foot up to 300 square feet for an office in use, rather than adding up your actual deductions.

4) Be aware of the 9% domestic production deduction available for federal purposes (Form 8903 carries to Form 1040, line 35). The DPD is available to domestic producers (farmers and ranchers qualify) who have paid wages and have reported a profit for the year.

5) Medical expenses as an itemized deduction now have to exceed 10% of your adjusted gross income, up from 7.5% in prior years.



# St. Croix Sheep Meet the Polar Vortex

By Lynne Vanderlinden, North Central Director

When Karen Zell of Weldwood Farm bred her St. Croix ewes last fall, little did she know she'd be birthing and rearing lambs, including her first set of triplets, smack in the middle of one of Wisconsin's coldest winters. Karen, her Mom, sheep, Lowline Angus and the retired show horses she boards all live on the same farm where she was raised in Janesville. So much history - ewes lamb in what used to be the grainery, a peg and beam building from the 1800's. This Wisconsin native's story:

**T**he coldest night we've had so far was -26.

The heavily blanketed horses are turned out every day, the cattle do well outside without shelter, but the sheep stay in most of the winter. During normal winters I turn them out all day in the cow yard; however, this winter is extra cold and the yard is 90% covered with 5' snowdrifts. The only trails have been

shoveled to get to the manure pile and such. I have a heated water container for the ewes and everyone gets warm water about 4 times daily. I always tell them to drink while it is still soft, because it will be hard in no time. Having the old milkhouse and maintaining a hot water heater is really key to better health and warm lambs. Nutrition consists of good quality tested hay and crimped oats (mine won't eat corn) topped with other grains.

Clean housing and keeping them dry is another key. I clean every two weeks, lime the floor, then shavings and straw. It basically acts like a diaper; urine through the straw into the shavings and absorbed, straw stays dry for them to nest in. And these sheep literally nest, straw banked up around them as high as they are,


lambs sleeping on top of or tucked around their mothers like hens and chicks.

I heat with propane and have not run into any shortages so far. I have my outside automatic drinkers banked with piled manure which heats up like compost, making it an inexpensive way to create some no-cost heat to keep it all from freezing.

Everyone is healthy and I haven't had any weather-related vet bills, the killer for anyone's budget. When my vet did do a routine checkup, he told me to continue with my worming program as it was working well. He was

shocked when I told him I didn't worm! Also, the milking ability of the St. Croix never ceases to amaze me. Don't let anyone tell you St. Croix sheep can't thrive in the cold!

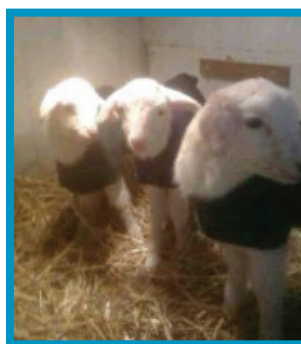
This isn't my first really cold winter, but I have to say my road has snow banked at least 10 ft. high on each side and it has been a good

long while since I have driven in those kinds of tunnels. I was raised here on this farm and this is just winter in Wisconsin. A little colder than usual, but I've had lots of experience in getting the chores done – it just takes a little longer! 

*Karen has had great success crossing some of her St. Croix ewes with a 1/2 Dorper ram and has a ready market for her lambs and their meat. If you'd be interested in discussing this cross or purchasing lambs, she can be contacted at [kare4horses@yahoo.com](mailto:kare4horses@yahoo.com)*



**Subzero weather vs. cell phone camera**



**Three snuggly lambs in their converted 1800's grain bin lambing jug, which has low ceiling and safe overhead lamp**



**St. Croix = \$mart Choice**





# News and Views

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*St. Croix Hair Sheep Breeders, Inc. Newsletter*

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

- Easy Care
- No Shearing



## First in Internal Parasite Resistance

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***Sheep That Work Better For You!***