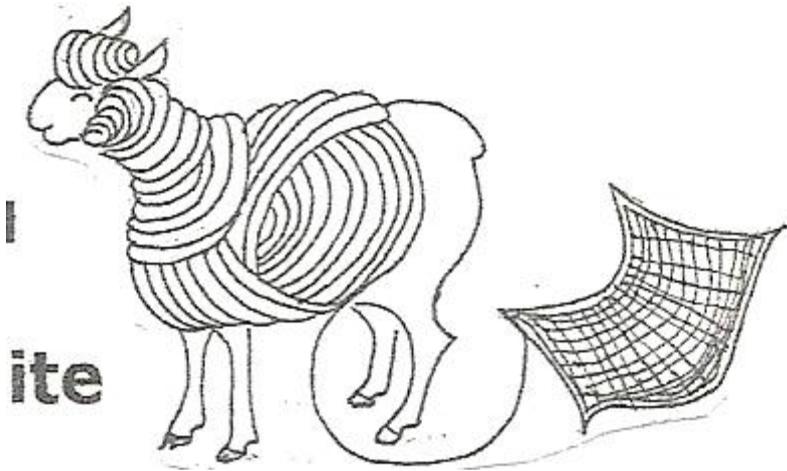


# THE RHODE ISLAND SHEEP COOPERATIVE



Website: [www.risheep.org](http://www.risheep.org)

Telephone: (401) 578-2012

# THE RHODE ISLAND SHEEP COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER

*VOL. XX ISSUE 1*

*February 2009*

## ***What's been happening with the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative in 2008?***

Some of you may not know what the Cooperative has been doing this year. Our annual meeting was held on March 29, 2008, following a delicious potluck supper and a wonderful slide show presented by Katherine Moore of New Hampshire, telling of her family's four-month trip to various sheep farms in New Zealand and Australia complete with refreshments from Australia! The meeting included reports on 2007 blanket project, new happenings in the sheep show at the 2008 Big E, and election of officers of the Cooperative. Following the meeting a raffle was held conducted by Artie and Colin Siegmund, which brought in \$81.00 to the treasury. During the winter months, the Rhody Warm Blanket Committee held two workshops on skirting fleeces, one at the Exeter Grange and one at the Harmony Grange. Wool from growers was collected and bagged at those events. Although the turnout was not what they had expected, those who came had a great hands-on learning experience to take home to skirt their own fleeces. The Blanket Committee set up a booth at the Second Annual Rhode Island Wool & Fiber Festival at the Coggeshall Farm in Bristol in May with skirting demonstrations throughout day. The ladies also collected and bagged wool for the Project from the local sheep farmers in the Bristol area. The wool collection day was held in June at the Urban Edge Farm in Cranston, Rhode Island. We accepted lots of good wool that day from local farmers, however, there was approximately 500 pounds of unacceptable wool which was left behind for the Urban Edge Farm to use as mulch. The good bagged wool was delivered to the University of Connecticut where the trailer truck was waiting to deliver it to the Faribault Mill. A few Northern RI sheep farmers got together a display of roving, yarn, fleeces and handmade wool items in the Sheep Co-op's 'red shed' at the Foster Old Home Days in July, where also displayed were samples of the last two year's Rhody Warm Blankets and orders were taken for the 2008 blanket. The RI Sheep Cooperative also sponsors awards for the 4-H sheep show at the Foster Old Home Days, and sponsors the Supreme Ram and Ewe awards in the open sheep show at the Washington County Fair. A few of our members also participated in demonstrations in the Fiber Nook at the Eastern States Exposition (the "Big E") promoting sheep and wool. Also available to the public in the Nook were copies of the RI Sheep Co-op 2008 Member Directory. Speaking of the Big

E, for the first time in a few years, Rhode Island had a delegation of 4-H members attending the 4-H sheep show. Rhode Island was well represented by four individuals who received many awards. A few of the awards included: Nathaniel Brown won 2<sup>nd</sup> Cheviot Yearling Ewe; Colin Siegmund: 1<sup>st</sup> & Champion Border Leicester Sr. Ewe Lamb; Brittany Sederback: 1<sup>st</sup> & Reserve Champion Border Leicester Jr. Ewe Lamb; Devan Newton: 1<sup>st</sup> Sr. Lead Line & Overall Winner, 1<sup>st</sup> Jr. Tunis Ewe Lamb, Champion Bred & Owned Tunis Ewe. In the fitting and showmanship classes the delegates did exceptionally well, winning the following: Nathaniel won 4<sup>th</sup> in the Junior Meat Breed Class, Devan won 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Senior Meat Breed Class, Brittany won 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Senior Wool Class, and Colin won 4<sup>th</sup> in the Intermediate Wool Breed Class. These four 4-Hers are members of the Aries 4-H Club. The fall meeting of the Cooperative was held with a delicious pot luck supper, as always. The guest speaker for the evening was Dr. Dennis Thibeault from Green Valley Veterinary Clinic, who lead a lengthy discussion on health issues in sheep and provided the group with educational hand-outs. Other exciting news, if you didn't already know, the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative has a website: [www.risheep.org](http://www.risheep.org). It was just established this past summer and is up and running. If any one has something they would like to add or have suggestions, feel free to contact our President, Robin Meek at telephone # (401) 949-2167 or email [ballydufffarm@yahoo.com](mailto:ballydufffarm@yahoo.com). And last but not least, the Rhody Warm Blanket Project was a success again this year. Reports can be found further in this newsletter.

Keeping all these activities in mind, we ask that you pay your dues now. The Board will be planning the budget for next year's activities, and having dues in the treasury certainly enables them to plan for lots of "sheepy" events. Please fill out the membership form at the end of this newsletter and forward to the Treasurer with your \$10.00 check.

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**HEALTHY LANDSCAPES –  
SMALL ACREAGE LIVESTOCK PROJECT  
“Managing Livestock On Small Acreages”**

**Protecting our drinking water, families and animals:** Whether you have a wealth of family experience to draw from or are new to raising animals, there are always new things to learn and new practices to adopt and share with fellow animal owners. Especially, when it comes to managing the lands we raise our animals on. New development continues all around us – rural areas within Rhode Island are some of the most rapidly growing areas in New England. Many of these developing lands rely on private wells for drinking water

supplies. Time, money and land are often our most limiting resources. In addition to meeting the basic needs of our animals – shelter, food, and water – adopting environmentally sound management practices for things such as handling manure also take time and money. And most importantly, the amount of land available for raising our animals and managing associated issues is limited. All of these factors can be very challenging.

**Education is key:** Raising healthy, productive animals goes hand-in-hand with protecting our families and the environment - it is all interconnected

**Do you know how to...** -store and handle manure?

- protect your drinking water well?
- recycle manure on the land, and what to do if land is limited?
- manage livestock yards and reduce mud?
- manage pastures to reduce feed costs, and how a pasture differs from a livestock yard?
- control animal access to streams and ponds?

Want to learn more? -- View the web pages and fact sheets about these topics and learn how to identify risks and plan solutions on your own farm.

[www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/livestock/livestock\\_publications.htm](http://www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/livestock/livestock_publications.htm)

### **Livestock on Small Acreages: Protecting Water Resources & Health A Train-the-trainer Extension Education Program**

**USDA CSREES Extension Education Grant (Sept. 2006 - Sept. 2009)**

Throughout Rhode Island and New England, small acreage livestock and horse owners often “slip through the cracks” for receiving education and assistance that encourages the adoption of livestock Best Management Practices (BMPs). Often, the information you do find applies to large scale livestock operations that may be difficult to understand and simply doesn't fit in with the goals, conditions and resources that small acreage owners have. Properties usually consist of small lots in residential areas that are close to water resources including private drinking water wells and storm drains. All these factors pose challenges with managing manure, livestock yards and pastures.

**Developing an Outreach and Education Program:** The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CE) Home\*A\*Syst and 4-H Programs, and URI Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Science along with assistance from the URI Department of Communication Studies, are developing an education program for small acreage livestock and horse owners. A needs assessment of the target audience will identify barriers and incentives for encouraging the adoption of livestock BMPs. A train-the-trainer education program, primarily working with 4-H volunteers, will be developed to increase knowledge about livestock pollution risks, adapt and transfer livestock BMPs at a scale that is appropriate, and ultimately, increase the adoption of livestock



weekly public television show which highlights agriculture. They were here to highlight “Rhody Fresh” and asked if we might consider an interview as well. We agreed to an interview, the show aired this past December, and fifteen orders were received. The airing of this show is what made this an unusual year however, each year we have blankets travel to such places as England, Germany, and Hong Kong.

We hope to have firm numbers to report at our next Co-op meeting, and a date for our next wool pool. Quality fleeces result in quality blankets so, please keep up the good work. Anyone who may be interested in joining the blanket committee can contact us at 578-2012 for further information.

### **We are celebrating .....**

This year the Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative will be celebrating our 60th year! Look for upcoming activities from the Board.

### **Deferred Dues**

Last October a vote was taken to increase dues from ten dollars to twenty dollars. The reason for the increase was to provide funds for the Co-op to join the ASI. After further investigation, it was determined that membership was cost prohibitive at this time. In light of this and the economy, dues will remain at \$10.00 for the year 2009. Discussions on on-going with the Board with regard to this matter.

### **BABLINGS FROM BARBARA.....**

Well, here we go again, as I write this we getting ready to hunker down for the next cold weather spell for the second or is it third time?? This has been a real *ole fashion winter*. Of course with the cold weather, the ewes in the barn felt it is necessary to start lambing. (Ask Tony and Sheila Donatelli about their frozen lambs!) The morning it was 0 degrees we had a set of twins (Border Leicester) first thing in the morning. They only weighed 3.8 and 6.5 lbs. Way too small and way too cold. We lost the 3 pounder but saved the 6.5 lb.lamb....a ram naturally. We put a plastic coat on him to help him to retain his body heat. He had no sucking instinct so we stomach tubed him 4 times starting with 2 oz and working up to 6 oz of a mixture of colostrx and Lamb Milk Replacer. By the next morning he was nursing from his mom with out help. (Hooray !) I had visions of raising a bottle lamb (Boo).

The Rhody Warm Committee got off to a rough start with the delivery delay due to a government contract that got priority over our order at the yarn mill. And then at the finishing mill, the smaller size blankets were cut first and then the fabric ran out when it came time to cut the Queens and King Size blankets. This was very hard on all of us who had been counting on these larger blankets for Christmas gifts. Top on our list for next year’s instructions is “to cut the larger size blankets first”. We assumed that is how it is done every year, but

learned that it is not so. This year we are learning a lot.

The *America's Heartland* came last spring and made videos on Rhody Fresh Milk, and Rhody Warm Blankets. Apparently around the end of December this video was shown in the midwest and west. As a result, we began to get blanket orders from Idaho, California, Georgia, and Ohio for blankets. This was a new venture for us. The few days before Christmas we were very busy getting out orders. Robin and I went daily to the Mill in Artie to pick up the finished blankets, and then Sheila Donatelli, Robin and I stuffed them with the thank you cards and the flyer describing the blanket process. Christmas was a blur...I do remember parts of the day. I sincerely hope that most people received the blankets they wanted for gifts.

This is a *celebration year*....It is the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rhode Island Sheep Co-operative! It started in 1949 when most of the "sheep people" were situated in Southern R.I. and the meetings were held in Perryville Grange (I think). At that time, the Washburns, the Streeters, the Swansons, John Rego, and John Atwood were the mainstays of the newly formed organization. I attended several of these meetings, while Marcus was in the Service. The big sheep show was held at the State Fair at Rocky Hill Grange just off Route 2. That is where we were bitten by the *sheep showing bug*. Marcus and I first started showing in 1952 and are still at it today. Some just do not know when to quit!! The sheep have changed greatly over the years going from a short, thick, blocky type of conformation to a tall, long and lean profile. I personally think some where in the middle of these two is desirable.

Here is wishing you a Happy and Health New Year and if you have ewes to lamb....the best of luck for hardy and healthy ewes and lambs.

### **MISTWOOD MUSINGS (from Irene).....**

For six weeks or more the denizens of my little hollow here in Primrose lived in shades of winter white, ranging from dull gray to dazzling bright, who cannot be awed at the magic of a full moon lighting the undulating shadows of a flock in a showy pasture. The eleven ewes down back often came to the fence sporting thick shawls of the newest snow, leaving behind the oval hollows where they'd slept. Even the yearlings preferred the chill under the January moon to the warmer straw beds in their shelter. And they pranced and jumped as if they were spring lambs when the grain bucket approached. The early darkness allowed special moments when woolly bodies and cold noses demanded hugs, while nearby two wary little rabbits hopped over the snow and about the grain barrels and feeding troughs. Yes, I always left a bit of grain on the snow near the shed where their nest was under the floor.

Late mornings found the ewes sunning themselves and poking their noses deep into the clean snow for a drink – sometimes they found their buried water

containers iced solid.

Now the snow is gone, leaving patches of ice to be navigated around during feeding chores. A few days of thaw allowed gates to be moved and relocated to the shelter for lambing. The “ladies” are moving more slowly as they await their lambs – and small patches of mud hint at things to come.

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## **Ask the Shepherd**

**Question:** I have started feeding large round bales to my flock. Because we just place the bale in the field, there seems to be quite a bit of waste. Any suggestions for someone on a tight budget?

**Answer:** One suggestion might be to build a bale feeder out of 2x4’s. You will need to build four panels and they should surround the bale snugly. If you go on line and look up ‘building hay feeders’ LSU AgCenter should come up and they have a set of plans that you may find helpful. Address where plans can be found:

[http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/our\\_offices/departments/Biological\\_Ag\\_Engineering/Features/Extension/Building\\_Plans/cattle/feeder/Lg+Round+Bale+Hay+Feeder.htm](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/our_offices/departments/Biological_Ag_Engineering/Features/Extension/Building_Plans/cattle/feeder/Lg+Round+Bale+Hay+Feeder.htm)

**Question:** Why do you have a creep and exactly what is it?

**Answer:** A creep is an area where nursing lambs have access to but their mothers do not. Accessibility for the lambs is usually through a creep gate. Inside the creep, grain and hay are provided to the lambs on a 24 hour basis. A creep area should be available by the time lambs are 7-10 days of age. Creeps should be set up in dry, protected areas and be kept well bedded. A light over the creep helps to attract young lambs to the creep. Creeps are essential in early weaning programs (45-60 days) as it increases gains, especially lambs from multiple births and lambs can be marketed at a younger age, like for Easter lambs. Hay in the creep should be tender second cutting grass hay or alfalfa hay where they can nibble on the leaves. The grain can be pelleted feed but it might be advantageous to make it more palatable in the beginning by mixing it with molasses, cracked corn and/or soybean meal.

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## **News from the ASI...**

### **KentWool Announces New Wool Product**

Mark Kent, president and chief executive officer of KentWool, announced in January that his company has developed a new wool product called WINDspun. He said the company's new premier product is a revolutionary development. Sam Konduros, strategic partner for KentWool, said it is the most luxurious, sleekest wool product ever developed in KentWool's 165-year history.

*“WINDspun is a process that we have developed at Kent which uses air technology to create a wool fiber that will take it, in laymen's terms, from a maybe one-and-a-half seasonal product to a four-seasons-of-the-year product,”* Kent said. *“It allows us to make yarns that are softer, more subtle, more durable and more functional than any yarn previously created in that market,”* he said. *“People now that are traditionally wearing wool, they're thinking fall and winter. After winter it goes in the closet.”* WINDspun, he said, *“will be able to lay right next to the skin and feel as comfortable as anything you can put on your body. That being the case, all of a sudden it becomes a four-season-a-year product.”*

Along with the new wool product, KentWool has been developing a formal research and education partnership with Clemson University and its School of Materials Science and Engineering. The company's \$500,000 endowment gift over five years represents a new level of commitment to that partnership with Clemson, specifically supporting the Advanced Fiber-Based Materials Center of Economic Excellence.

*Reprinted in part from*

*GreenvilleOnline.com*

### **DHS to Buy American**

Agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will now be buying garments "Made in America." Legislation offered by Rep. Larry Kissell (N.C.) mandating that any textile and apparel products contracted by the DHS be manufactured in the United States with 100 percent U.S. inputs was included in the stimulus package. This mandate, commonly known as the Berry Amendment, first was applied to the U.S. Department of Defense beginning in 1941. Because of existing U.S. international obligations, the new Kissell legislation will cover prospective U.S. government procurement of uniforms and other textile products for the Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard within DHS. *“This amendment is exactly what the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is all about--using American ingenuity to fuel our economic recovery. There is nothing more American than the brave men and women who protect us every day serving at DHS wearing uniforms made by hardworking Americans,”* Kissell commented. *“The passage of the Kissell Amendment will be a boost to the U.S. wool industry and the textile industry as a whole,”* said Rita Kourlis Samuelson, wool marketing director for the American Sheep Industry Association. *“As many as 100,000 uniformed employees will be wearing garments grown and sewn in the United States.”* The U.S. textile and apparel sector has been hit particularly hard by the economic downturn with 60,000 jobs lost during the past 12 months. In the past year, 44 textile plants have closed, including 14 in North Carolina, 10 in South Carolina, four in Georgia, seven in Alabama and seven in Virginia.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE RI SHEEP CO-OP  
APRIL 18, 2009 – SATURDAY  
SOUTH FOSTER FIRE STATION  
ROUTE 94, FOSTER, RI

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**The Business of Farming – 2009**

*It's been said - and no one knows it better than you - farming is about  
business...*

RI Farmways starts off its 2009 training series with a special program on business. In the past year many new farm business ideas, resources and services have come into play in the region.

- \* Learn about free business counseling and a growing range of available business services.
- \* Improve your marketing communications outreach and feedback.
- \* Explore new insurance issues and solutions.
- \* Plan best strategies to expand or stabilize your farm business.
- \* Ratchet up existing enterprises or start new ones.
- \* Rethink your short term and long-term goals.
- \* Learn how to start measuring your success this year and every year forward.

*All RI, CT, and MA farmers are invited and welcome!*

**WHEN:**                    **Thursday, March 5th, 8:30-3PM**  
**WHERE:**                **Location TBA**  
**PROGRAM FEE:** **\$10.00** (RI FarmWays Members: Free)  
**To register, go to:**

<http://www.rifarmways.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/home.contact/index.htm>  
or contact Rhode Island FarmWays @ 401-592-0209

.....  
**RHODE ISLAND RAISED LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION**

ANNUAL MEETING

March 18, 2009 - 6:30 pm

West Greenwich Elks Lodge, 42 Nooseneck Hill Road, Route 3  
West Greenwich, Rhode Island

The Annual meeting of the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association will be held on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 at the Elks Lodge in West Greenwich. All members of the Association are encouraged to attend as well as anyone interested in RI Livestock and Rhode Island Agriculture. **Consider joining the RI Raised Livestock Association on March 18 for the 2009 Annual Meeting.** RIRLA

has planned an informative evening of information for RI farmers. This meeting is an opportunity to learn more about the Association and what we offer our members. Farmers will get valuable information on how to obtain permits to sell your meat; learn more about different cuts of meat for marketing. Upcoming educational workshops and pasture walks will be announced. RIRLA is a member driven organization and there will be an open forum to brainstorm and plan projects and direct activities for 2009 and beyond.

For more info contact:

Kim Ziegelmayr, Director  
RI Raised Livestock Association  
P.O. Box 640, North Scituate, RI 02857  
401-575-3348 [director-rirla@cox.net](mailto:director-rirla@cox.net)

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## **Advertising**

### **Attention: RI Sheep Co-op Members**

We are offering members the opportunity to place an ad in the upcoming newsletters free of charge. If you want to buy something or have something to sell – either sheep or sheep related – send your ad to Polly. Unfortunately, our newsletters have been sporadic so please consider this when placing an advertisement. We have produced two newsletters a year in the past, and we are looking into an increase to quarterly newsletters in the future. Members are welcome to run a general farm ad or specific items for sale. For more information contact Polly at [khop4811@aol.com](mailto:khop4811@aol.com).

### **FOR SALE:**

36" LeClerc Floor Loom      Call Jennifer @ 934-1543

Looking for a  
**Gift or Remembrance?**

How about a RHODY WARM BLANKET?

Lap Throws 45"X60" & Long Throws 45"X72"

Now Available  
100% Wool  
Made from local wool  
Call 578-2012  
Or visit our web site



[RISheep.org](http://RISheep.org)

Sponsored by the R I Sheep Co-op

***Need roving or fleeces to spin or maybe wool socks (made of RI wool)? --call Barbara @***

949-0264 or

email Polly @ [khop4811@aol.com](mailto:khop4811@aol.com) for an appointment to visit "the shed"

**WANTED: MEMBERS TO SERVE ON VARIOUS COMMITTEES OF THE RHODE ISLAND SHEEP COOPERATIVE. INTERESTED IN THE BLANKET PROJECT, EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS, SKIRTING DEMONSTRATIONS, YOUTH ACTIVITIES? CALL OUR PRESIDENT ROBIN TODAY TO GET INVOLVED: (401) 578-2012.**

**CHECK OUT THE COOPERATIVE'S WEBSITE: [www.risheep.org](http://www.risheep.org)**

