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# LAMB & WOOL

A Newsletter For The Iowa Sheep Industry / September - 2005

## Iowa Department of Agriculture to offer Scrapie Resistance Testing for Rams

### Free Ram Testing

The Iowa Department of Agriculture (IDALS) is pleased to announce that funding has been allocated through USDA for a Ram Testing Program in Iowa. This testing will be offered at no cost to Iowa sheep owners so that they can identify rams in their flocks which will pass on scrapie resistance to their offspring. A ram which tests "RR" at codon gene number 171 cannot produce offspring which are "QQ" at codon 171, and these QQ sheep are the ones that can become infected with scrapie. By using only "RR" rams and saving back female offspring a flock will eventually become "scrapie-proof", as older "QQ" ewes are gradually culled.

Funding will be available to

IDALS very soon, and testing will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis, while funds last, and funding is limited.

- ▶ Blood will be collected from your rams by state or federal district veterinarians;
- ▶ Up to 10 rams may be tested per flock. Seedstock producers may test up to 100 ram lambs, and will be listed on our IDALS website as having RR rams for sale (seedstock producers must agree to have QQ rams either castrated or identified with "meat" ear tags, and sell only to slaughter);
- ▶ All rams to be tested must have official scrapie flock ID tags in place at the time of sample collection;

- ▶ The flock owner may add-on additional scrapie codon testing (ie: codon 136) or spider gene testing at his/her own expense, by contacting the lab directly;
- ▶ Flock owners must register their premises with IDALS as part of Iowa's participation in the National Animal Identification System. This involves completing a one-page form, so that your farm can be issued a premises number;
- ▶ Results will become available two to three weeks after the sample is collected.

To sign up for ram testing please call the IDALS office at (515) 242-5950. Your local state or federal district veterinarian will contact you to schedule your farm visit as soon as funding becomes available.

## Experimental Results to take to the Bank

Kreg Leymaster, Brad Freking, and Eduardo Casas • USDA, ARS, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center  
Clay Center, NE 68933-0166

### Introduction

Broad diversity among breeds of sheep is a precious industry resource. This breed diversity can be managed to increase performance and profit through use of crossbred ewes mated to rams of a terminal sire breed. Differences among breeds in performance for survival, growth, carcass, wool, and reproductive traits are due to the unique genetic history associated with each breed. Beneficial genetic effects of each breed can best be realized in terminal crossbreeding systems that use sire breeds to complement characteristics of maternal line crossbred ewes, thus greatly improving efficiency of commercial lamb production. Evaluation of breeds for important traits is necessary to determine their appropriate use in terminal crossbreeding systems designed for specific production and marketing situations.

The relative performance of breeds can best be determined from large-scale experiments that are designed to give unbiased results.

The above fundamental genetic concepts provided justification for an experiment to comprehensively evaluate several breeds of sheep. Comparative information on Romanov and Texel was limited in North America, whereas the relative performance of Montadale was unknown. The Romanov breed originated in Russia and was one of two prolific breeds (Finnsheep being the other) that was widely evaluated in numerous European, Middle Eastern, and North African countries beginning in the 1960's. Romanov sheep were imported into Canada from France in 1981 and a flock was established at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) in 1986. The Texel breed has been widely

used as a terminal sire breed in Europe and, more recently, in many other countries. A Texel flock was established at MARC in 1985 based on importations from Denmark and Finland. A terminal sire evaluation of Texel was done at MARC, but comparative information on reproductive traits was missing. The Montadale breed was developed in the United States from crosses of Cheviot rams and Columbia ewes, but it had not been experimentally evaluated.

Experiments to gauge the merit of insufficiently characterized breeds should include one or more standard breeds to serve as a control. Dorset sheep are widely used in the U.S. sheep industry and have been included in many breed evaluations. Finnsheep contribute significantly to commercial sheep production due to

See **TAKE TO THE BANK** on page 4

# ShortCLIPS by Dan Morrival

## New Graduate Shepherd



Scott Smalley is the new shepherd at the Iowa State University Sheep Teaching Farm. He hails from Ubyly, Michigan which is in the thumb area. Scott will be working on his Master's degree in Agriculture Education.

He has extensive leadership and teaching experience from a very active participation in FFA in high school and while attending Michigan State University. Scott has a small flock of purebred Suffolk ewes which are club lamb oriented. He showed at county, state and national shows as a youth exhibitor. Yes I know from his picture he still looks like a kid. He also assisted a large (200 ewes) purebred operation in Michigan.

Scott can be reached at the sheep farm number, 515-292-2860. His email address is [smalle16@iastate.edu](mailto:smalle16@iastate.edu).

## 4-H Lamb Performance Results



The 2005 Lamb Performance Division had a total of 291 exhibitors. This year's lambs grew a little slower at .56 pounds per day. Some of that may be attributed to our hotter weather in 2005. Carcass data on this set of lambs was outstanding, with .16 inches of back fat, 3.1 inch ribeye area and .94 inch bodywall thickness. The calculated Percent Closely Trimmed Retail Cuts was 46.6%. Average carcass weight on these lambs was 77.9 pounds with a dressing percentage of 59%.

Champion in the live show was exhibited by Tyler Lette from Shelby County and Reserve Champion in the live show was shown by Danielle

Holmes. Over all Grand Champion was exhibited by Jordan Rasmus of Cherokee County (shown in picture). Jordan's lamb had a rate of gain at .85, 19.1 on live score and 49.0 % BCTRC. The lambs carcass measurements were .2 on back fat, 1.0 on bodywall and 4.6 on ribeye area. The Reserve Grand Champion Performance lamb was exhibited by Kelsy Westman of Lucas County (shown in picture). Her lamb gained .64, with a live score of 16.74 and a %BCTRC of 50.3%. The carcass measures on this lamb were .1 back fat, .6 bodywall, 3.5 ribeye area. Also shown in picture is Chuck Morris, program leader for 4-H and Youth Programming Extension.

This division would not be possible without the support of the following sponsors: Iowa Lamb and Wool Promotion Board, Des Moines, Kimm Suffolks, Dysart, Iowa Lamb Corporation, Hawarden, Land O Lakes Purina Feed LLC, Ft. Dodge, Premier Sheep Supply, Washington and Iowa Club Lamb Association, Keota.



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**Remember to turn in receipts for unshorn lambs to your local FSA office for the wool LDP on the pelts.**

**COMMERCIAL BREEDING STOCK FOR SALE**  
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**Great selection of Polypay rams with EPDs.** West Cyclone Farm and Woodhill Polypay have over 20 years of combined NSIP records. Ram can be selected with the ISU Ram Selection Emphasis. Index according to your flocks needs. Select from Maternal, Growth, or Balanced traits. To view the rams on both farms call Jerry at (712)579-1511 ([wclones@fmctc.com](mailto:wclones@fmctc.com)) or Mike at (712)647-2492 ([mdkpark@iowatelcom.net](mailto:mdkpark@iowatelcom.net))  
**Ram Lambs:** One black and nine purebred Dorset. They are brothers to two rams on the WIU Ram Test. All are tested. Three are RR, two are QQ and the rest are QR. They are Huntrods breeding and meat type rams. One of the rams at the WIU Ram Test had a 3.7 loin and the other had a 3.48 loin. Calvin Enfield, PO Box 121, Collins, IA 50055, 641-385-2557, Email: [cenfield@iowatelecom.net](mailto:cenfield@iowatelecom.net)  
**Polypay commercial ewe lambs:** May born; will be delivered to Iowa in September of 2005 from Delta, Colorado. These sheep are out of Tisdale Superior Polypay's. Contact Dan Morrival, 337 Kildee Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3150, 515-294-0847, [morrival@iastate.edu](mailto:morrival@iastate.edu).

\*Note: This is a free listing for ISIA members. ISIA members are encouraged to submit breeding stock for sale along with name and contact information (address, phone, email) to the ISIA office at 5771 230th St., Sibley, IA 51249, (712) 736-2109 or [iasheep@iowatelecom.net](mailto:iasheep@iowatelecom.net).

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## Flock Talk by Marsha Spykerman

Arriving home after two weeks at the Iowa State Fair, I discovered that my husband was ready to bale our third cutting of alfalfa. We have experienced cool days and crisp evenings and I was actually hunting for a sweat-shirt one afternoon! My job is driving the tractor and I rather enjoyed the change of pace from the busy time at the fair plus it gave me time to reflect on all of the people involved in making the Foodstand a success. Because of the volunteers, ISIA experienced another exceptional year at the Foodstand. A detailed article will be in the October issue of the newsletter.

An email was sent out from the ISIA office in August concerning the change in rendering plants accepting sheep offal. If ISIA does not have your email address you probably did not receive the information so here are the basics. At a board meeting of the

National Renderers Association (NRA), they voted to rescind the policy which recommended the exclusion of the collection of sheep materials for rendering. The NRA policy, which has been in place for many years, recommended voluntary guidelines for renderers not to collect or render sheep material for animal protein (meat and bone meal) use. According to the letter from NRA to the American Sheep Industry Association, "A renderers decision to collect or not collect sheep material will now be based on marketing needs rather than on regulations." I contacted Dr John Schiltz, State of Iowa Veterinarian, and asked if Iowa had additional rules governing this or if it actually meant that rendering plants could accept sheep offal. His answer was, "There are no Iowa prohibitions against sheep offal going to rendering that I am aware of. It would

be subject to the ruminant feed ban."

We will turn rams in October 1st and will get breeding soundness exams done on all of our rams this week. Many of you will recall that last year, because of a number of circumstances, we did not do this. It was costly! The 54 ewes we bred for replacements yielded three lambs from our maternal sire (two of them were bucks) and the rest of the lambs were from our terminal sires and were born in April rather than February. By the time the ewes were exposed to sound rams, the benefits of being flushed had long past and these ewes, which normally produce triplets and quads, yielded singles and twins. They say the ram is half of next year's income. If he's sterile, he is the income!

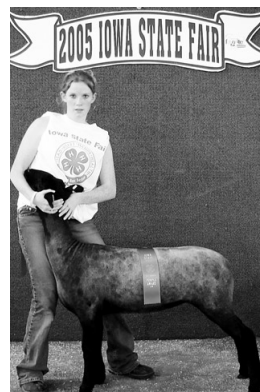
Have an enjoyable fall and a safe harvest.

## Young Shepherdess Promotes Lamb

Krista Vlazny, 15 year old daughter of ISIA members Joe and Lori Vlazny, is a member of the St. Olaf Jr. Farmers 4-H club in St. Olaf, Iowa. She enjoys promoting lamb either by preparing lamb dishes for others or by inviting friends to help her show sheep. This year she prepared a leg of lamb (see recipe) for the Food and Nutrition Extravaganza at the Clayton County Fair. In addition, Krista was judged on planning a well balanced meal and a table setting to compliment the meal. Krista received a purple ribbon at the County Fair and was the only one chosen from a field of 26 to display at the State Fair, where she received a blue ribbon.

Krista was a little anxious when the judge commented, "Oh lamb ... my last experience with this was not good; they put some sort of mint sauce on it!" Krista felt better when she noticed the judge continuing to nibble on the lamb as she gave her presentation.

Krista is shown in the picture with her blue ribbon ewe lamb at the Iowa State Fair. Thank you to this young shepherdess for promoting lamb!



### Krista's Leg of Lamb

- 5-6 lb. leg of lamb
- salt and pepper
- 4 cups bread crumbs
- 1 tsp. thyme
- 1 cup fresh parsley finely chopped
- fresh parsley sprigs for garnish
- 3/4 cup melted butter
- 2 cloves of crushed garlic
- 3 tbsp. lemon juice

Rub the lamb with garlic and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Combine bread crumbs, parsley, and thyme with melted butter and set aside until 30 minutes before roast is done.

Roast the lamb leg uncovered at 325 degrees, allowing 30 minutes per pound for medium and 34 minutes per pound for well done. Remove from the oven about 30 minutes before it is done and press the parsley crumb mixture firmly on the top and sides, covering it completely.

Return the roast to the oven to complete roasting for 30 minutes or longer (until coating turns golden). Garnish with parsley sprigs. Serves 6-8

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- September 10-18** Clay County Fair, Spencer, Iowa. [www.claycountyfair.com](http://www.claycountyfair.com)
- September 15** Deadline for submitting funding requests to the Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board to be reviewed at their October 13, 2005 meeting. For more information contact: Jean Van Houweling, Executive Secretary, PO Box 35633, Des Moines, IA 50315. Email [j.vanhouweling@mchsi.com](mailto:j.vanhouweling@mchsi.com)
- September 14-21** The United States Border Collie Handlers Association National Finals, Sturgis, South Dakota. [www.sturgis-sd.org/main.asp?SectionID=39](http://www.sturgis-sd.org/main.asp?SectionID=39)
- October 6-7** The North American Hair Sheep Symposium will be held in San Angelo, Texas.
- October 6-8** The North American Hair Sheep Symposium will be held in San Angelo, Texas. For more information contact Dr. Frank Craddock at [b-craddock@tamu.edu](mailto:b-craddock@tamu.edu) or (325) 653-4576.
- October 15** Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board meeting will be held at the Iowa Farm Bureau Conference Center in Des Moines.
- October 29** Make It Yourself With Wool State and District contest, Merle Hay Mall, Des Moines, Iowa. Deadline for Registration: Entries must be postmarked by October 8, 2005. For information and registrations forms contact: Sandi Bolton, Iowa State MIYWW director at: [bolton@hickorytech.net](mailto:bolton@hickorytech.net) or call (712) 568-1062.

Do you have an event that you would like to place in the Lamb & Wool newsletter? Please send information by the 15th of the month preceding publication date of newsletter. Submit via email at [iasheep@iowatelecom.net](mailto:iasheep@iowatelecom.net) or phone 712-736-2109.

## ISIA Board holds meeting via Conference Call

The Iowa Sheep Industry Association board meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Jim Timmins on July 10, 2005. Board members participating in the conference call meeting were: Jim Timmins, Dennis Wolf, Erlene Leonard, Leland Shipley, Bob Kimm, Dan Morrical, and Executive Director Marsha Spykerman.

Gary made a motion to approve the minutes as sent out. Seconded by Bob; all ayes. Erlene gave the treasurer's report with \$16311.86 in the accounts. Bob made a motion to approve. Dennis seconded; all ayes.

Marsha gave the director's report. She participated in the 4-H Round-Up in June where she attended the sheep sessions with the youth and presented at one. Lamb served was a big hit with those attending. Follow-up reports have been sent to ISWPB. Several requests for sample newsletters have been received from the website; we gained six new regular members, one affiliate member and 100% renewal in the month of June. ISIA

has 262 regular members, 5 county group memberships and 47 affiliate members.

ISU Report was given by Dan. Several ideas were brought up for Extension Assessment. Dan said the College of Agriculture will be looking for a new Dean and a new State Extension Director will be hired. He also commented that the Extension budget looks good.

Erlene made a motion to give \$100 toward the 2006 ISU Livestock Judging Camp. Bob seconded the motion; all were in favor.

We have received many thank you notes from the Iowa Lamb Judging Camp for our contribution toward the lamb meal served at the camp.

A discussion about the festival followed. Comments were good from everyone and ideas were discussed for the 2006 festival. It will be held June 10-11, 2006 at the Dallas County Fairgrounds in Adel, Iowa.

Bob made a motion to advertise the State Fair Foodstand in the Farm Bureau Spokesman pull-out section

for the fair with a limit of \$500 to be spent. Dan seconded; all ayes.

Gary motioned to supply 40 pounds of leg of lamb to the Iowa Foundation for Agricultural Advancement for the Sale of Champignons meal at the Iowa State Fair. Dan seconded; all ayes.

Dan motioned to pay \$100 toward liability insurance for the Iowa Make It Yourself with Wool contest. Bob seconded; all ayes.

Discussion was held concerning ISIA's delegate to the ASI Convention and Bob made a motion for Dan to be ISIA's delegate and Marsha to attend as well and be able to participate in the activities for the state directors. Gary seconded; all ayes.

Dan thanked the board for dedicating the Festival to him this year.

Bob motioned to adjourn. Dan seconded; all ayes. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Erickson, Secretary*

## Iowa Sheep & Wool Promotion Board

The Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board met Thursday, July 14, 2005 at the Eslinger Room, ISU, Ames, Iowa. Those present: Dave Hofland; Gary Erickson; Bill Dohrmann; Jerry Sorensen; Tom Cory; James Koss; Jon McFadden; Duane Sprouse; Dan Morrical, ISU Extension; Marsha Spykerman, ISIA Executive Director and Jean Van Houweling, ISWPB Executive Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Vice Chairman Jon McFadden. New board members Dave Hofland and Jerry Sorensen were welcomed. Election of officers for fiscal year 2005-06 followed and the results were: Jon McFadden, Chairman; Gary Erickson, Vice Chairman; Dave Hofland, Secretary; Tom Cory, Treasurer.

MMSA to wave reading of April 14, 2005 minutes and approve the minutes as written.

The treasurer's report was given. The Board discussed how low the balance of funds should go. Balances taken into consideration when approving proposals. MMSA to approve treasurer's report as presented.

The 2005 candidate election results: District #1 Dave Hofland received 9

votes; District #4 Jerry Sorensen received 4 votes. MMSA to approve appointing District #8 Les Vander Linden for a 3-year term.

The Board conducted the annual review of the guidelines. The auditor recommended that the following statement be added to the guidelines. "When a new treasurer is elected a new bank signature card must be signed at the current banking institution in use." MMSA to add the new statement as item #6 under assessment remittances.

MMSA to add the following budget statement under item #4 under guidelines for funding of cooperative agreements, page 5. "In follow-up report include a budget. All unused funds must be returned to the Board."

It was suggested that a new column be added to the financial report cover sheet entitled long term commitments. MMSA to approve guidelines as revised.

Marsha reported ISIA activities for last quarter. Copies of activities were distributed.

Dan introduced guests, Dr. Maynard Hogberg Head of Animal Science, Mark Honeyman, Professor Animal Science and Dr. Curt Youngs, Professor

Animal Science. The ISU Dean of Agriculture has resigned.

After a lunch break the following funding requests were approved: Boone County Sheep Committee Fair promotion; Iowa - Black Hawk county promotion; IFBF Iowa State Fair Cook-out contest; 2005 ISU Livestock Judging Camp and ISIA operating funding proposal. Discussion by Board on this proposal. Salary and mileage will be paid monthly, the complimentary issues of the newsletter will be paid in one lump sum and Marsha will notify when other proposals on the list need to be funded.

Dan introduced Dean Thompson, Dean at the Vet School.

MMS suggested that the Board give Mark Loutsch a plaque for years of service on the Board. Discussion followed. Jean will investigate costs, etc. and report at the October meeting. Motion was tabled until the October meeting.

Next meeting will be October 13, 2005 at Farm Bureau in West Des Moines.

Motion that the meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

*Jean Van Houweling - Executive Secretary*

**TAKE TO THE BANK** *Continued from page 1* high reproductive performance and have also been well characterized in genetic experiments. Therefore, Dorset and Finnsheep breeds were used as standards of comparison for general purpose and prolific breeds, respectively.

The experimental objective was to determine differences among Romanov, Finnsheep, Dorset, Texel, and Montadale for survival, growth, and carcass traits of crossbred lambs and for reproductive traits of crossbred ewes in both fall and spring breeding seasons. The practical goal was to provide unbiased information so that producers can select and use breeds that maximize profits in terminal crossbreeding systems.

#### Experimental Procedures

**Overall Design.** Romanov, Finnsheep, Dorset, Texel, and Montadale rams were mated to western whiteface and Composite ewes. The MARC Composite flock, created in 1980, has a breed composition of half Columbia, quarter Hampshire, and quarter Suffolk. The crossbred offspring of these five breeds were compared in three distinct phases of the experiment.

In the first phase, differences among crossbred lambs for survival, growth, and carcass traits were evaluated in 1991 through 1993. In the second phase, crossbred ewes were appraised for reproductive traits after mating in August, October, and December of 1991 through 1995 to lamb at one, two, and three years of age. In the third phase, four-, five-, and six-year-old crossbred ewes were mated during March and May of 1995 through 1999 to investigate differences for percentage of ewes lambing after mating in the spring. Information collected during these three phases of the experiment was summarized to provide reliable estimates of the comparative performance of these breeds for a wide-ranging set of traits.

The experiment was designed to use a large number of sheep so that results were conclusive and useful to producers. We used 102 purebred rams, 1,438 western whiteface or Composite ewes, and 1,799 crossbred ewes to produce 8,354 litters and 14,017 lambs.

**Sampling of Breeds.** The Finnsheep, Dorset, and Montadale breed associations were informed of

the planned research and then asked to provide information relevant to the experiment and to advise on sources of purebred rams. This approach was taken to encourage participation of breed associations in the research. For each breed, four producers were designated in 1990 to each sell two rams from different sires. This process was repeated in 1991 and again in 1992, buying rams from three producers per breed each year. In total, 21 Finnsheep, 20 Dorset, and 19 Montadale rams produced lambs, each breed represented by rams purchased from 10 producers. Four Finnsheep rams and one Dorset ram were from purebred flocks at MARC. The purchased rams, particularly Dorset and Montadale, were generally of modern show-ring type.

Romanov and Texel rams were sampled entirely from within flocks at MARC. The Romanov breed was established at MARC in 1986 with sheep provided by Agriculture Canada. This sample represented the genetic diversity of Romanov available in North America. Geneticists at MARC imported Texel from Denmark and Finland in 1985 and this research flock was the only source of Texel in the United States during the experiment. A total of 19 Romanov and 23 Texel rams was used to produce crossbred offspring.

**General Management.** Lambs were born in an enclosed building. Ewes giving birth to triplets or quadruplets were generally limited to rearing only two lambs, with excess lambs artificially reared in a nursery. Male lambs were castrated at about 14 days of age, at which time all lambs were offered a total-mixed creep diet. Dam-reared lambs were weaned at about 56 days of age and nursery-reared lambs at about 32 days of age. All lambs were switched to a total-mixed growing diet at about ten weeks of age. Lambs were reared in a drylot facility with access to an open-front building. Lambs were weighed at birth, weaning, 10 and 20 weeks of age. Productivity of ewes (litter weight) is often measured to weaning, but dam- and nursery-reared lambs were weaned at different ages in this experiment. Therefore, it was not reasonable to summarize weights of dam- and nursery-reared lambs at weaning. We chose to measure ewe productivity at 20 weeks of age, when

lambs of both rearing types were weighed. Also, litter weight at 20 weeks of age is a better indicator of income per ewe than litter weight at weaning. Throughout the experiment, crossbred ewes were culled only for reasons that limited their ability to produce or raise lambs. The primary culling reasons were poor health, pneumonia, udder problems, and vaginal prolapses.

**Crossbred Lambs.** Western whiteface and Composite ewes were exposed in 1990, 1991, and 1992 to Romanov, Finnsheep, Dorset, Texel, and Montadale rams beginning about August 5, October 15, and December 15 each year. Each distinct breeding season was 35 days in length. The resulting crossbred lambs were evaluated for survival to weaning and weight at 20 weeks of age. Samples of wether lambs from October matings were harvested at the MARC abattoir to investigate carcass traits. Wethers were harvested at 25, 29, and 33 weeks of age each year at an average carcass weight of 63 pounds. Carcass data were collected on about 110 wethers produced by each ram breed.

**Crossbred Ewes in Fall Breeding.** Crossbred ewes were mated in the fall to measure reproductive traits at one, two, and three years of age. Performance of 1,799 crossbred ewes produced in the first phase of the experiment was summarized. Crossbred ewes were exposed to groups of Suffolk rams for 35 days beginning about August 5, October 15, and December 15. Ewes exposed in August were with teaser rams for 16 days before being turned in with fertile Suffolk rams. Fleeces from 540 crossbred ewes were collected before lambing at two years of age and sent to the Texas Wool and Mohair Laboratory for objective measurement of fleece traits.

**Crossbred Ewes in Spring Breeding.** After lambing in the spring at three years of age, crossbred ewes were held open the following fall and switched to a spring-breeding production system. A total of 1,099 crossbred ewes was used to determine the relative performance of breeds for percentage of ewes lambing after spring breeding at four, five, and six years of age. Crossbred ewes were exposed to groups of Suffolk rams for 42 days beginning about March 12

See **TAKE TO THE BANK** on page 5

**TAKE TO THE BANK** *Continued from page 4* and May 14. In both breeding seasons, crossbred ewes were with teaser rams for 16 days before being turned in with Suffolk rams. Suffolk rams were photoperiod treated and semen tested to ensure ample ram fertility during spring breeding.

#### Results

**Crossbred Lambs (Table 1).** Romanov and Finnsheep crossbred lambs had higher survival to weaning than crossbred lambs by Dorset, Texel, and Montadale, whereas differences among all crossbred types in weight at 20 weeks of age were slight. When

compared at a common carcass weight of 63 pounds, Romanov and Finnsheep crossbred lambs had lower dressing percentages than other crossbreds. Crossbred lambs by Dorset and Montadale had the least fat depth at the 12th rib and the longest carcasses. Carcasses of Texel crossbred lambs were most compact, being shortest in length and having the largest rib-eye area. Finnsheep crossbred lambs had the smallest rib-eye area, followed by Romanov crossbred lambs.

**Crossbred Ewes in Fall Breeding (Table 2).** Crossbred ewes by Dorset and Montadale were the heaviest at three years of age and ewes of the

other crossbred types were similar in weight. The percentage of ewes lambing fell into four groups: Romanov crossbred ewes had the highest percentage lambing, followed by Finnsheep, then Texel and Dorset, and crossbred ewes by Montadale were lowest. As expected, crossbred ewes by Romanov and Finnsheep produced the greatest number born per ewe lambing. Romanov crossbred ewes had the heaviest litters at 20 weeks of age per ewe lambing for both dam- and nursery-reared lambs, followed by Finnsheep, then Dorset and Montadale, and finally Texel. Fleeces of crossbred ewes by Montadale and Texel were heaviest. Stayability was measured as the percentage of sound ewes remaining in the breeding flock at three-and-a-half years of age. Romanov and Montadale crossbred ewes stayed in the flock at a higher rate than crossbred ewes by Finnsheep, Dorset, and Texel.

**Crossbred Ewes in Spring Breeding (Figure 1 and Table 3).** Differences among crossbred types in percentage of ewes lambing depended on breeding season (Figure 1). In March breeding, percentage lambing was 92% for crossbred ewes by Romanov, 91% for Finnsheep, 90% for Texel, 88% for Montadale, and 83% for Dorset. In May breeding, a more challenging month, percentage lambing was 89% for Romanov, 72% for Finnsheep, 62% for Dorset, and 52% for both Texel and Montadale.

Results averaged over both March and May breeding seasons are presented in Table 3. Percentage lambing was highest for crossbred ewes by Romanov, intermediate for Finnsheep, and lowest for Dorset, Texel, and Montadale. The same ranking of breeds was detected for number born. The 20-week litter weight of dam-reared lambs per ewe lambing was heaviest for crossbred ewes by Romanov, intermediate for Finnsheep, Dorset, and Montadale, and lowest for Texel. Romanov and Finnsheep crossbred ewes produced the heaviest litters of nursery-reared lambs.

*Editors Note: Discussion and Conclusions will be featured in the October, 2005 issue of the Lamb & Wool Newsletter.*

**Table 1. Performance of crossbred lambs**

Trait	Crossbred type				
	Romanov	Finnsheep	Dorset	Texel	Montadale
Survival to weaning, %	94	93	90	91	89
Weight at 20 weeks, lb	95.8	95.6	97.9	94.6	96
Dressing percentage	53.8	54.4	55.5	55.8	55.6
12 <sup>th</sup> rib fat depth, in	0.29	0.31	0.25	0.29	0.24
Carcass length, in	23.6	23.8	24.0	23.2	24.1
Rib-eye area, in <sup>2</sup>	2.24	2.21	2.35	2.54	2.41

**Table 2. Performance of 1-, 2-, and 3-year-old crossbred ewes in August, October, and December breeding seasons.**

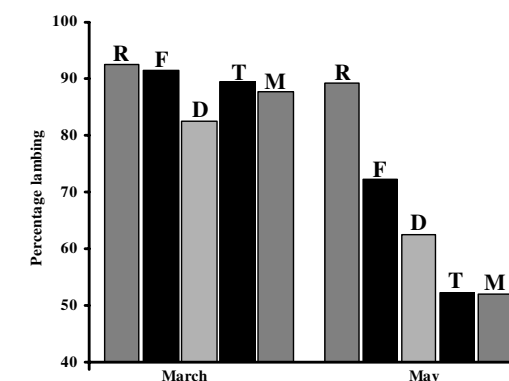
Trait	Crossbred type				
	Romanov	Finnsheep	Dorset	Texel	Montadale
Weight at three years, lb	164	166	176	166	178
Percentage lambing	89	83	78	80	75
Number born <sup>a</sup>	2.20	2.05	1.45	1.41	1.44
20-week litter weight, lb					
Dam-reared lambs <sup>a</sup>	140.1	124.3	110.9	100.5	110.4
Nursery-reared lambs <sup>a</sup>	22.2	20.5	7.0	5.7	8.4
Clean fleece weight, lb	4.55	4.58	4.71	5.10	5.17
Stayability, %	77	70	66	69	76

<sup>a</sup>Per ewe lambing.

**Table 3. Performance of 4-, 5-, and 6-year-old crossbred ewes in March and May breeding seasons.**

Trait	Crossbred type				
	Romanov	Finnsheep	Dorset	Texel	Montadale
Percentage lambing	91	82	72	71	70
Number born <sup>a</sup>	2.09	1.98	1.46	1.40	1.44
20-week litter weight, lb					
Dam-reared lambs <sup>a</sup>	116.6	100.1	98.3	79.2	94.4
Nursery-reared lambs <sup>a</sup>	32.1	30.8	10.1	12.8	8.8

<sup>a</sup>Per ewe lambing.



**Figure 1.** Percentage of crossbred ewes lambing after March and May breeding seasons (R, Romanov; F, Finnsheep; D, Dorset; T, Texel; M, Montadale).