



# **FINNSHEEP *SHORT TALES***

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## **Chief Shepherd's message**

### **Annual Meeting**

The FBA Annual General Meeting is being held at the Amerihost Inn East 2055 Lincoln Way East Wooster, OH 44691 (**330-262-5008**) at 7p.m. on July 7, 2000. Rooms are available at the Inn but individual members must make their own reservations and payment arrangements by June 17. When booking your room mention the FBA meeting. Cost of rooms \$62 plus tax.

On the day preceding the meeting (July 6) Dr. Paul Hunter has kindly opened his farm for members to visit at Minster OH. Paul has a number of interesting aspects to his flock including, cross breeding of Finns and most interesting the off spring from Finn ewes artificially inseminated with imported semen from Finland. Six rooms have be reserved (\$45.95 + tax) at the Inn at Versailles for Thursday, July 6, 2000. Phone 937-526-3020. All members must make their own reservations by June 17.

The meeting is being held in conjunction with the Ohio sheep day Saturday, July 8, 2000. The FBA has reserved display space at the sheep day for a Finnsheep exhibit. because of health restrictions live Finnsheep will not be on display. The Board of Directors meeting will be held after the Sheep day ends.

The agenda is included in this edition of Short Tales. It is anticipated the number of members attending the AGM will be very small. However, this does not preclude you from sending your comments or concerns with agenda items, or any other business, to the secretary for inclusion in discussion at the meeting.

The more participation by members the better the FBA will be in the long run.

An agenda item of significance is the adoption of a voluntary health protocol. Dr. Hunter has developed and published guidelines in a previous edition of Short Tales and this will be the basis for discussion at the meeting. Animal health is of prime importance in any flock and a healthy flock not only costs less but is readily salable.

I hope you all have noticed Finnsheep continue to be promoted in numerous ways and most notably on the front cover of the Shepherd Magazine. This is due to the tremendous energy of our secretary, Elizabeth Luke. She has taken time to gather photos and write articles for our benefit. If you have photos and articles that would be good publicity for the Finnsheep breed and the FBA please send them to Elizabeth. The FBA now has its own web-site **[www.finnsheep.org](http://www.finnsheep.org)** If you have good photos of your Finns then send them to me and I will gladly put them on the page.

Per the constitution I will be stepping down as President in July. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Board Members for their support and thank Elizabeth and Sandy for their work as Secretary and Treasurer over the last two years. And thanks to our editor, Grace, for the production of Short Tales.

I hope all members have had a successful lambing and I look forward to seeing you at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Hunter Farm Visit**

Dr Paul Hunter has kindly agreed to open his farm at Minster OH to visitors on July 7, 2000. He has a range of sheep including Finns, cross breeds and has an accelerated breeding program underway. See also the lambs from Finn ewes artificailly inseminated with imported semen from Finland.

**He requests that you wear clothes and footwear that are clean and have not been worn on any other farms.**

**Overnight accomodation (July 6) is available at the Inn at Versailles, Minster, OH (\$45.95 + tax) Phone: 937-526-3020. *Make your reservations by June 17.***

**Assemble at Inn at Versailles, Minster, OH at 9:30a.m July 7. Dr. Hunter will meet and escort visitors to the various locations of his farm. Visit concludes 3 p.m and members make their way to Wooster, OH for FBA Meeting.**

## FINNS AND FINN CROSSES AS ETHNIC AND HOT HOUSE LAMBS

Brian Magee, of Dryden, NY, former FBA president and board member, is the Cornell University Shepherd and has been selling 1/2 Finn, 1/2 Dorset hot house lambs as well as 1/2 Finn and purebred Finns as ethnic lambs for many years. He sells about 200 lambs per year from his own flock and 500 to 600 of the same crosses from the Cornell flock into the hot house and ethnic trade. The demand is there year round and continues heavy. He recently received a call indicating a need for 10,000 lambs. In his experience, ethnic lambs are the heaviest at 70 to 80 lbs and he usually markets surplus purebred Finn lambs not kept or sold as replacements as ethnic lambs. Hot house lambs are sold smaller and younger at 35 to 50 lbs. In the spring the Greek Easter market seems to want the smallest lambs, not over 40 lbs. Since so many more lambs are born in the spring, the market tends to be lower than at other times of the year. For that reason, Brian selects replacement ewe lambs and offers ewe and ram lambs for sale in the spring when the hot house and ethnic markets are lower. It is also cheaper to raise a spring ewe lamb to her first lambing since few fall born ewe lambs will breed their first spring. Most of the fall born lambs are sold into the hot house or ethnic markets to take full advantage of the higher prices for out of season lambs.

The lambs are destined for these unique markets aren't castrated, docked or vaccinated for CD/T. Their dams were vaccinated prior to their birth which gives them protection for at least a month. The lambs have creep feed available as soon as they can eat it. They never see pasture. Brian found that they make more rapid gains if they don't have unlimited freedom to exercise excessively. By the time they hit 40 to 50 lbs, the Finn/Dorset crosses are capable of gaining 7 to 8 tenths of a pound per day.

## BACKGROUND AND STATUS OF THE HOT HOUSE LAMB MARKET

*Another Perspective*

*By Alan Ritchie*

Milk fed shed born lambs were raised in Washington around the turn of the century to sell to the preferred hotel markets in the east. Farmers after the Civil War in the east sold milk fed lamb to hotels from Dorset ewes at Easter time. Krueser described the term Hot House as deriving from the fact that buyers thought the barns that lambs were born and raised in during the

winter looked like Hot Houses.

Joe Regenstein said that you can tell a milk fed lamb because one of the stomachs changes color when a lamb is weaned onto self feeding. The change takes several days.

Not every lamb born is destined to be hot house material. I'd say that 70% of my lambs qualify as hot house material, a number that I think is an excellent ratio. The balance aren't wasted, local ethnic trade is happy to consume the rest of my lambs.

They happen to be F1 and F2 Finn x Dorset crosses.

The folks at the Cornell sheep program who developed these sheep certainly knew their business and I am happy with the results. This isn't to say that progress can't be made, but I'm willing to bet that Finn sheep prolificacy will remain a part of the program.

Bloom can be lost in less than a day because of stress..... Lambs delivered direct to slaughter will have very little shrink and much less loss of bloom.

Tony Biancardi in the Bronx only wants heavier lambs, 40 to 50 pounds. He sells wholesale and retail, and the folk at Rosen NY will buy hot house from him when a customer asks for one. While the premium crowd speaks of \$150 lambs (the holy grail), his customers balk at paying more than \$90 for a carcass (with the head on it). He has a single large scale supplier and only buys outside when he needs more lambs.

Frank Broccoli, from Utica, generally does the veal trade, but at Easter buys several hundred lambs and goats on a direct basis. He pays very well for live chunky, bloomy, lambs between 30 and 39 pounds (\$2/pound live weight). He discounts on both sides of that weight and can't use poor lambs.

Vermont Quality Meats pays \$5/pound for hot house lamb from its co-op members. Then it takes out a sizable marketing charge, but generally the payment to the members is better than you'll get anywhere else.

Another buyer pays \$2.70/pound hot hanging weight for a 26 pound carcass, which in the dorset/finn class is about a 40-45 pound lamb. They sell direct to fine restaurants and receive a good premium for a lot of extra effort.

Yet another buys on a regular basis throughout the Ohio and NY region, but pays less.

Then there is a gaggle of buyers who descend on Lancaster and the New Holland Sales Barn in the 10 days prior to Easter. The sales were chaotic and some lambs do/did sell for \$2.70 liveweight, but it is just as easy to get \$1.25 when somebody goes to the bathroom. Everybody dumps anything like a spring lamb on the auctions and I suppose you win about half the time. The last couple of years have been losers for most people.

My favorite recipe is to take a suitably sized hot house lamb and cut it into large bite sized pieces. Saute in a pan with olive oil, white wine, salt and pepper. Reserve. Do the same to a pile of potatoes. Reserve. Do the same to a pile onions. Combine in a large oven proof dish or platter. Add more white wine and bake in a hot oven until done. Mangia. I got this recipe from a Sicilian friend in Malone, New York who makes goat milk cheese the way he remembers when he was little and now runs LaPizza with good sense and taste

Because there are more pounds to sell in an ethnic (editor's note: usually around 80 lbs) or finished lamb and I have more grass than I need, I will probably only sell a few lambs as hot house this year and sell the rest to local buyers. Certainly, my February production will be too large for the late April Easter this year, so I'll sell them as they reach 42 pounds over several weeks.



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## ***FINNPOWER***

- Dr. Paul Hunter had 11 Finn lambs born from the AI breedings using the semen recently imported from Finland. In one case a ten year old ewe had AI triplets.
- Grace Hatton's nine year old, Martha (GH 16), is still going strong with a set of triplets September of 1999 and another set the beginning of March 2000 and is apparently bred back for September 2000.
- "Lorelei", a quad Finn ewe purchased from Cornell as a \$25 bottle lamb, has disproved the idea of "you get what you pay for". With lambings of 1, 3, & 4, in 1999 both she and her triplet daughter "Snobird" had quintuplets, each raising 4 of the lambs. This March, Snobird had sextuplets. Owners Larry & Elizabeth Luke wonder what the next litter will be like.
- Grant Blackburn's purebred Finn ram (#19593) had a yearling fleece sample tested by Yocom McColl with the result being 25.2 microns for average fiber diameter. Anzar Finnsheep specializes in pure white Finns.

## **BEST PRODUCTION RECORDS FROM FINNLAND UP TO 1973 From FINNSHEEP IN FINLAND BY H. GOOT**

Largest number of lambs born per litter was 9 in a single lambing or 11 per year if lambing twice a year.

Largest number of lambs surviving per litter or year was 7.

Largest number of lambs born in a lifetime (11 lambings) was 49

Largest number of lambs surviving per lifetime (11 lambings) was 46

Highest average litter size per ewe (9 lambings) was 4.9.

Highest litter weight at five months old in kilograms was 271 kilos ( 596.2 lbs) or 312 (686.4 lbs) for twice a year lambing.

Highest ram weight in kilograms was 139 or 305 lbs.

Highest ewe weight in kilograms was 107 or 235lbs.

# **CULLING**

*By Grant Blackburn*

“To cull or not to cull? That is the question. Whether it is better to have substandard masqueraders roaming the pastures or healthy, fine marketable specimens reflecting the breed standard. This is the essence of serious culling. What is culling? By definition it is the process of separating the good from the bad. What is good and bad in sheep? Some will say all sheep are good and others will say all sheep are bad. Is it all in the eye of the beholder? Some believe so while others take a puritanical approach to the breed standard.

**AIM:**To provide a guide to achieve Finnsheep breed conformity and uniformity across the nation.

## **Breed Standard**

What is a breed standard? A breed standard for whatever breed of animal whether it be sheep, cattle, horses or pigs is the specification that defines the breed of that particular animal. Some breed standards such as thoroughbred horses are very technical with precise weight and size measurements. Some require formal confirmation of the genetic make up of the animal. A breed standard or specification has legal definitions and may be cited in court cases over contractual grievances relating to the transfer (selling /buying) of registered purebred animals.

The Finnsheep Breeders Association (FBA) has the national responsibility of maintaining the breed standard for Finnsheep and the registration of Finnsheep in the USA. There is no established process by which any registered Finnsheep in the USA are examined for compliance with the breed standard. The responsibility for conformity to the breed to standard rests with the breeder. In the past, situations have occurred where sub-standard animals, some with serious health problems, have been registered and sold or transferred to new owners. This irresponsible approach to breed conformity produces extremely negative attitudes towards the breed as whole and potential legal grievances for the individuals involved.

As a nation we can make roads, cars and hamburgers that conform to an expected standard wherever you go across the USA. Why not Finnsheep? How does the FBA, a seed stock producer’s organization, assure breed conformity nationwide? The answer is education. The following has been produced as a guide to breed conformity and is meant to be a ready reference for breeders. It is not exhaustive and considered an evolutionary reference.

## The Finnsheep Breed Standard

**Health:** The paramount consideration in breed conformity is animal health. Animals are unhealthy for two reasons: poor genetics/culling and irresponsible animal husbandry.

**Genetics:** A number of sheep diseases such as OPP are known to be passed from one generation to the next. OPP for example is passed to the lamb through the mother's milk. How do you know if your flock has diseases? Normally, blood tests will determine whether or not the animal is free of many diseases. Consult your vet for more information on blood testing.

**Animal Husbandry:** Sheep, like any other animal including humans, need tending. This includes good food, water and mineral salt. Regular vaccinations and deworming, shearing and routine hoof maintenance are necessary for maintenance of healthy fit sheep. Diseases such as foot rot and tick infestation are easily prevented through good animal husbandry practices. Providing good sanitary conditions, keeping the flock from standing in mud, trimming hooves regularly and treating for parasites are part of an essential regular health maintenance regime. It is imperative that any seed stock flock producer follow a serious health maintenance plan.

### **PROLIFACY:**

The Finnsheep Breed Standards assigns some 60-70% of the standards significance to prolific characteristics. The standard is rather specific about the registration of ewes and rams. The breed standard is not hard and fast in this regard as exceptional circumstances could exist where for example a ram single is registerable. Unusual circumstances such as the introduction of new genetics via Artificial Insemination (AI) may have a lower than normal yield yet the offspring is necessary to extend/modify a flock's gene pool.

The general guidance is that any deviation from breed standard must be noted on the registration certificate. Thus is very important when selling the animal and imperative to the furtherance of the breed. Potential buyers must know what they are buying.

### **Objectives of Culling:**

Because the Finnsheep is a versatile sheep, culling of the flock must have an objective. While health, prolificacy and structure considerations are paramount, a breeder may wish the flock to conform to breed standard with a bias, such as, in wool production or milk production. The chosen attributes the producer is culling for should be of lesser consideration than health and prolificacy.

What has developed is a model which prioritizes the elements that need to be considered when culling seed stock. The conformity model is divided into three parts:

## **Culling Model**

**Must Have** - no deviation  
Excellent health

**Should Have** - some flexibility  
Prolific characteristics per the breed standard  
Firm physical structure per the breed standard

**Could/May Have** - options  
Fine wool (wool bias)  
Good milker (milk bias)  
Good Muscling (fat lamb bias)  
Any combination of the above

From the above model, there are several options/combinations a breeder may want to pursue and further sub-set of considerations. The final selection is determined by the market that the breeder wants to target. Once a breeder establishes a target market, it is time to assess the registerable flock for suitability in terms of the breed standard.

### **Summary:**

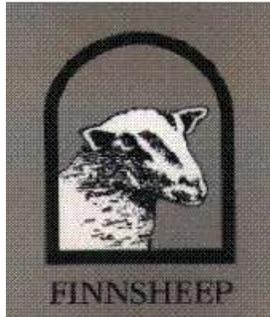
In summary, it is essential to consider culling the most important aspect of breeding seed stock. Inappropriate culling can lead to diseases that could enter the food chain. Culling is a form of preventative animal health. Poorly selected breeding stock only make the breed unmarketable. Good specimens conforming to breed standards are essential to the successful marketing and proliferation of the Finnsheep breed. **Remember, if in doubt throw it out!**

The above model is suggested as a guide. It is intended to be useful to breeders at all levels. If you have suggestions that would enhance the model, they would be appreciated. Feedback of any nature is always appreciated.

## **CONCLUSION**

If Finnsheep breeders adhere to the model, breed conformity within Finnsheep flocks will be seen across the USA. If common conformity is achieved, this can only benefit the FBA membership as a whole and ensure uniformity of the Finnsheep entering markets across the USA and elsewhere.

# Finnsheep Breeders' Association



## Annual General Meeting

July 7, 2000

Amerihost Inn East

2055 Lincoln Way East

**Wooster, OH 44691**

ph 330-262-5008

### **AGENDA**

Opening Remarks

Previous Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Breed Registration Report

Election of Directors

Previous Business

- Combined advertisement/promotions
- Semen importation
- Web page

New Business

- FBA change of corporate address
- Improved Financial Situation
- Editorship of Short Tales Newsletter
- Code of animal health ethics

AOB

Adjournment

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### *Tagine Barrogog or Lamb Tagine with Prunes*

The Andalusian Moors who left Spain after reconquest had a great impact on North Africa. Under their stimulus a renaissance of cooking came about in Fez and in Tetouan. In Morocco there are several festive meat dishes in which apples, apricots quinces, raisins and dates are used together with sugar or honey. This one with prunes is the most common. Significant amounts of black pepper and spices provide a delicate balance with the sweetness! Serves 6-8

2 lb boned lamb, cut in large pieces  
Salt to taste  
2 teaspoons ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 large onion, grated

Small bunch of parsley, finely chopped  
4 tablespoons sunflower oil  
1 lb prunes  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
1-3 tablespoons orange blossom water  
1-4 tablespoons honey or sugar

Garnish (optional):

1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
6 oz blanched almonds, coarsely chopped or left whole

Put the lamb in a pan with salt, pepper, powder, ginger, garlic, onion, parsley and spoons of the oil. Add enough water to cover and simmer, covered, until the meat tender. Add the prunes and cinnamon and cook for another 15 minutes, then add the honey or sugar and the orange blossom water and cook for a few minutes more until sauce is quite thick and reduced. Just before serving, toast the sesame seeds under the grill and fry the almonds in the remaining oil. Sprinkle the sesame seeds and almond over the meat. Serve hot and enjoy.



Elizabeth Luke sent us this wonderful photo of one of her Finn ewes "baby sitting." Her photos have appeared in many publications as well as on the cover of *The Shepherd* magazine.