



# FINNSHEEP *SHORT TALES*

PUBLISHED BY THE FINNSHEEP BREEDERS ASSN.  
VOLUME 50, MAY 2002

## Index:

Chief Shepherd's Message, page 1

Finnphotos pages 2, 3 & 4

Dr. Threlfall, page 5

Breeders' Listings, page 7

---

### CHIEF SHEPHERD'S MESSAGE, By Naomi Leith Smith

My message this issue is about wool - - Finn wool. I attended the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival and walked through the booths looking for Finn wool. Linda Witt had her display in a very prominent location on the grounds and included Finn wool in her exhibit. The wool show area displayed piles of fleece from many breeds, but I didn't see any Finn fleece. The same was true of the wool show at the North American Livestock Show last November. I asked a couple of vendors if they sold Finn wool. A vendor from Alabama said he had Finn wool at home, but didn't have it at the show. Another said there was Finn wool in some of her bags of processed, dyed fleece, but she "had no use for Finnsheep" so she didn't mention it.

The ASI bulletin spotlights Nicole Telaar of Alstead, N. H. who operates Festive Fibers. She likes a blend of 50% white Finnsheep, 25% Merino and 25% Dorset. The Finnsheep wool is important to her felt making because it produces a flatter, more lustrous felt.

The ewe lamb replacement program should create a demand for Finn lambs as their traits for multiple births, twice a year lambing, and early maturity will contribute to increasing sheep numbers in the United States. The local Farm Service Agency has the necessary form. If the lambs meet the criteria, a payment of \$18 per head will be forwarded to your bank account.

Grace has included details for the annual meeting of the Finnsheep Breeders Association. I encourage you to attend, but some breeders tell me they will not be able to travel that far. If you have issues which you wish to be presented at the meeting, please either contact Grant Blackburn ([anzar@rockbridge.net](mailto:anzar@rockbridge.net)) or write to me at 1765 Jacktown Road, Lexington, VA 24450 and we will add these concerns to the agenda.

I am finishing this message at the Keystone Stud Ram & Ewe Sale. We brought a triplet ram lamb from our first lamb crop to the sale in 1986. Back then there were two barns full of sheep of all breeds. This year only one barn has sheep in it. This seems to reflect the whole state of the sheep industry in the United States today. Hope to see you in Wisconsin.

# ANZAR FINNSHEEP



**Top quality registered pure white Finnsheep.  
Ewe and Ram lambs for sale.**

**Grant W. Blackburn, 143 Gravel Lane, Lexington, VA 24450  
Phone or fax: (540) 463-4594 Email: [anzar@rockbridge.net](mailto:anzar@rockbridge.net)**

## **Board and Officers**

*President*

Naomi Smith  
1765 Jacktown Road  
Lexington, VA 24450  
(540) 463 6062

*Vice-President and  
Secretary/Treasurer*

**Grant W. Blackburn**  
142 Gravel Lane  
Lexington, VA 24450  
(540) 463-4594  
[anzar@rockbridge.net](mailto:anzar@rockbridge.net)

**Directors:**

**Elizabeth Luke,**  
HC 65 Box 495  
DeRuyter, NY 13052  
(315)852-3344  
[stillmeadowfinns@hotmail.com](mailto:stillmeadowfinns@hotmail.com)

**Sandy De Master**  
N7087 Hillside Dr.  
Watertown, WI 53094  
(920)699-7420  
[weecroft@execpc.com](mailto:weecroft@execpc.com)

**Carol Winchell**  
52 Frank Smith Road,  
Canton/Salem NJ 08079


**Denny Haugh**  
824 Delta Rd,  
Red Lion, PA 17356.

\*\*\*\*\*


**The FBA 2002 Annual Meeting** will be held in conjunction with the Wisconsin Sheep Conference Sept. 6-Sunday, Sept. 8. It will be held at the Jefferson Country Wisconsin Fairgrounds. The conference includes a production tested ram/ewe sale, stock dog demos, breed exhibits, producer education, shearing demos, fleece show and sale, Make it Yourself with wool contest, handspinner sessions, as well as commercial exhibits. The official website is [www.wisbc.com](http://www.wisbc.com) phone: 608/868-2505.



**Connie Santos sent us this photo of her Finn sextuplets!!!!**



**Elite  
Genetics**



**Elite  
Visions**

- Ram Semen Collection & Distribution
- Annual Ram Semen Catalog
- Artificial Insemination
- Embryo Transfer
- Gourley Scope™

Elite Genetics/Elite Visions  
Dr. Dennis and Deb Gourley  
605 Rossville Rd, Waukon, IA 52172  
Office: 319-568-4551 • Fax: 319-568-6370 • Lab: 319-568-4847  
E-mail: [EltGenetic@aol.com](mailto:EltGenetic@aol.com) • <http://www.elitegenetics.com> • <http://www.elitevisions.com>

## **How Clark BreDahl used Finnsheep to repopulate after OPP.**

Clark gave us permission to use parts of his column Dispatch from Mormon Trail Farm in the Feb 2002 issue of The Shepherd.

"We made a decision a few years ago to eliminate it (OPP) as one of the variables in our operation. To the best of our knowledge we have done so, and the results have met all our expectations...."

"We started over with a meager seven ewes three years ago and turned 50 in with the rams this fall. That was one of the reasons **we chose to repopulate with purebred Finn ewes:** when it comes to reproduction, they begin throwing exponential numbers in a hurry!"

"...Is it cost effective to eliminate OPP? Dozens of producers across the country who have undertaken such an effort individually would say, yes! In our own situation, going from 20 percent forced lamb orphanings with OPP to zero percent without seems very cost effective."

---

### **TWENTY FIVE YEARS WITH FINNSHEEP: DR. WALTER THRELFALL**

Dr Threlfall took time out of a heavy speaking schedule across the U.S., teaching at OSU, and entering into the busiest caseload time of year (equine breeding season) to tell us about his years with Finnsheep.

Since he was and is still a theriogenologist (a veterinarian who has specialized in reproduction and obstetrics), he began to read with great interest the capabilities of the Finnsheep in regard to their multiple births, and the hardiness of the "small" offspring in way back in the mid-seventies.

Dr. Threlfall bought three 3/8 Finns from Penn State University in 1977, and these three ewes each produced triplets with no problems, and all lambs made it to market age. " We then imported purebreds from a breeder in Canada, and a second trip was made several years later for additional bloodlines. We have since crossed them with several breeds in an attempt to find the "best."

Multiple births are the most exciting part of the Finns! The trips, quads, quints and sextuplets (nothing higher yet!) are great! We have never seen ketosis in our Finn ewes, even when they were carrying sextuplets. All our ewes raise quads with no problem, but the larger litters do need some supplementation. The lambs are hardy at birth, and mature rapidly. Another big point going for the Finns is that they have been selected for production, and have not been ruined (yet) by judges in a show ring. The ewes are very easy keepers except when heavily lactating following lambing.

Many have laughed at the "thin" Finns. While it is true that the purebreds are not market animals, when they are crossed with other breeds to produce a commercial ewe, they shine! We have crossed Finns with the following breeds: Hampshire, Shropshire, Montedale, Corriedale, Suffolk, Dorset, Texel and Dorper. The original crosses with Suffolk were okay, but the increasing size of the pure Suffolk did not make the cross as good for commercial ewes because they were still too large for all practical purposes. The lambs were excellent, but the ewes were too expensive to maintain. The other crosses were acceptable, but the Finn-Dorset and Finn-Texel crosses are our favorites. In both cases, the ewes are great mothers and easy to maintain on pasture without major expense. Six years ago we reverted to year-round pasture as the major method of foodstuffs for our sheep (my grandfather and father did it this way!).

We have used several (most) bloodlines over the years. When we originally started there were numerous inherited abnormalities (bad feet, backs, mouths, etc.), probably because the best animals were kept in Canada due to the few numbers available in the beginning. In the early years, we had many offspring that were sold at market because the quality was not present for breeding stock. It took about ten years of critical culling of our flock to get the quality of Finnsheep we could be proud to have on our farm.

We currently have approximately 40 pure Finn ewes; we have had as many as 50 ewes in the past. Last year we sold a large majority of our "excellent" Finn-Dorset ewes in order to reduce our numbers. We added pure Texels and Dorpers approximately five years ago, and decided to stay with the pure breeds and to eliminate our commercial flock. We have recently used the Dorper and Texel as a cross with some of our Finns and found it to be an excellent sheep. Our oldest daughter, Ronda, (fourth generation sheep raiser!) would adopt all of these born on our farm if we would let her. They make an excellent brood ewe - lots of muscle and a high lambing percentage.

It was really difficult to sell the Finn-Dorsets and Finn-Texels we had worked so hard to produce with the excellent lambing and raising percentages (average 2.6 lambs). We decided that 160 ewes plus our equine breeding farm (The Ohio Stallion Station) as well as full-time employment elsewhere was too much!

We primarily market our breeding stock to individuals through private advertising. The remainder are sold at auction for meat. Many are sold for purebred breeding, but more are used for crossbreeding with commercial ewes.

We have done accelerated lambing in the past, but it does not fit in well with our pasture rotation and stockpiling of winter grasses. Our ewes will breed out of season, but we do not find it profitable with our particular operation.

Walter R. Threlfall, DVM, MS, PhD, ACT, Professor and Head Theriogenology Area  
The Ohio State University, 601 Tharp Street, Columbus, OH 43210

<http://www.microserve.net/~hatton/finnsheep.htm>

Purebred Finnsheep since 1986  
OPP neg  
Enrolled VSCP - PA 43

## VIRGINIA

Grant W. Blackburn  
"Anzar Sheep"  
143 Gravel Lane  
Lexington, VA 24450  
(540) 463 4594  
[anzar@rockbridge.net](mailto:anzar@rockbridge.net)  
Purebred Finnsheep  
Breeder of Finnsheep since 1994,  
participating in  
Finnsheep semen  
importation and  
specializing in high  
quality pure white  
pedigree livestock.  
We have never had  
scrapie, foot rot or  
OPP and the flock is  
enrolled (VA18) in the  
USDA Voluntary  
Scrapie Flock  
Certification Program.

Joe and Naomi Smith  
House Mountain  
Finnsheep  
1765 Jacktown Road  
Lexington, VA 24450  
(540) 463 6062

Enrolled VA Scrapie  
Program  
Purebred Finnsheep  
Farm established in  
1985 in the Blue Ridge  
Mountains of Virginia.  
Flock of 50 breeding  
ewes, mostly quads  
and quints. Bred for  
size, multiple births,  
mothering ability and  
structural correctness.  
Glen Avon and Root  
bloodlines. Also rams  
available for  
crossbreeding.

(Continued on page 4)

## WISCONSIN

Sandy De Master  
Wee Croft Finnsheep  
N7087 Hillside Dr.  
Watertown, WI 53094  
(920)699-7420  
[weecroft@execpc.com](mailto:weecroft@execpc.com)  
[www.weecroftfinnsheep.com](http://www.weecroftfinnsheep.com)  
Health status: OPP  
Free  
(3+ flock tests) and  
Voluntary Scrapie  
Program WI Flock 28.  
White and colored  
Finnsheep selected for  
maternal traits,  
prolificacy and wool  
quality. Covered  
handspinning fleeces,  
roving, and yarn.

TRIPLE L  
FINNSHEEP  
Dan and Leanne  
Hughes  
89202 N. Harrington  
Road  
West Richland, WA.  
99353  
509-967-3975  
purebred white, black  
and gray finnsheep, all  
ages. OPP and disease  
free  
flock.  
Breeding records since  
1982. Breeding for  
size, milking and  
lambing ability.

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Please send all  
corrections,  
complaints, great  
ideas, Finnpower  
items, etc to Grace  
Hatton,  
[hatton@microserve.net](mailto:hatton@microserve.net)*

# **FINNSHEEP BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Finnsheep Breeders' Association of the USA:**

- ❖ **Provides a national pedigree breed recording system for Finnsheep**
- ❖ **Maintains the Finnsheep breed standard for the USA**
- ❖ **Promotes animal health within the breed and nationally**
- ❖ **Fosters and promotes the proliferation and marketing of Finnsheep within the national industry and abroad**
- ❖ **Is a national focal point for Finnsheep Breeders**
- ❖ **Disseminates timely information to members on all matters relating to the breed**

Finnsheep Breeders' Association  
143 Gravel Lane  
Lexington, VA 24450

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED