



# FINNSHEEP *SHORT TALES*

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## Chief Shepherd's Message by Tracy Sengupta

Happy New Year Everyone! We had a very nice and productive meeting in Louisville, KY in November. The minutes from that meeting are contained in this newsletter.

Your FBA Board Members and Officers are as follows:

President: Tracy Sengupta  
Vice-President: Denny Hough  
Secretary: Cindy Smith  
Treasurer: Grant Blackburn  
Board: Dr. Paul Hunter  
Board: Joe Smith

I will continue to do the website at [www.finnsheep.org](http://www.finnsheep.org). Cindy Smith will continue to organize our advertising efforts in *The Shepherd*, *Sheep!* and other publications. If you have any ideas for advertising campaigns to promote Finnsheep and the FBA, please contact Cindy. She is always looking for good ideas.

The new *Short Tales* Editor is Terrie Godfrey of Ohio. Terrie is a new FBA member who comes to us with many years of experience showing and breeding purebred dogs. We welcome her to the FBA and are glad to have her enthusiastic help.

2006 was a good year for Finnsheep in the US. We have added several new members to our organization and registrations are up compared to the past few years.

As we begin this New Year, I think it is important for us to remember that Finnsheep are and have always been a multi-purpose breed. This leaves a lot of room for individual farms to specialize in marketing Finnsheep in different ways.

Many of our members continue to have the same goals that originally brought the breed to the US –selling to commercial farms for crossbreeding in order to increase prolificacy and maternal traits. Others are interested in Finnsheep as a heritage breed and wish to promote and preserve the rare colors and beautiful wool as they exist in Finland. Others are experiencing success marketing lean and delicious Finn meat to the emerging “ethnic” market.

Whatever our goals are for marketing our Finnsheep, I think it is important for us to remember this multipurpose nature of our breed. It is not a choice between “the way things have always been” and introducing new ideas. There is room in Finnsheep and their various uses for all of us. The variety in the interests of our membership should not divide us, but make us stronger. May our organization strive to be as versatile and practical as the sheep we raise.

## A Note from the Outgoing Newsletter Editor By Sandy De Master

Greetings! I hope you are all enjoying the fall and getting ready for a successful breeding season. It is hard to believe that the summer has slipped away!

As fall approaches and the summer ends, I too, will be taking my leave. As some of you know, I have been very involved with the Finnsheep Breeders Association since I joined in 1994 and I have decided it is time to move on and spend what little free time I do have in some other activities. I still plan on maintaining a small flock of sheep and doing some breeding, but I have decided to step down and allow some new individuals to take over some of the responsibilities of our organization.

I have enjoyed working with the FBA and wish all of you much success with your sheep and your flock goals. I would also like to encourage you to consider taking an active role in the association. As a sort of farewell address, I have decided to recap my own involvement with Finnsheep over the past 12 years in the breeder's profile.

Best wishes to all of you for many more successful years with Finnsheep!



*Photo: Triple L Finnsheep*

## **Breeder Profile: Wee Croft Finnsheep by Sandy De Master**



My introduction to Finnsheep began in 1991. I was a participant in a class with nationally renowned spinner and knitter Priscilla Gibson Roberts. Someone in the class asked Priscilla what her favorite fleece was for spinning, and when she responded “Finn”, we all said “What is that??”

After more dialogue with Priscilla and some research, I decided I wanted to get some Finnsheep. I was particularly interested in their wool and my goal was to produce Finns with great maternal characteristics and consistent wool. In the research that I had done on the breed, I learned that in Finland, the Finnsheep was traditionally a dual-purpose breed. Being a landrace breed, the Finn provided people with meat and wool. In fact, the state flock of Finnsheep housed at the Pelso Research station in Finland maintains 3 lines of Finnsheep: 1) a meat line 2) a wool line and 3) a pelt line.

The desire to select Finnsheep for their wool was a novel idea in the United States and this intent did meet with some criticism along the way. The bylaws of the American Finnsheep Breeders Association indicate that the Finnsheep was imported to increase the lambing percentage in commercial flocks. Very little attention, if any, was paid to the wool of the Finnsheep. Thus, the wool aspect of the Finn got lost in the shuffle and wool quality played a very minor role in the US Finnsheep.

Nevertheless, I persevered with my idea and purchased my first Finn sheep from several

Finnsheep breeders. My first sheep were white and black. There were no other colored Finnsheep available in the US at that time. I found the wool to be quite variable. Some was quite soft and fairly consistent and some was dual-coated and very hairy. Thus began my odyssey to improve Finn wool.

In my research I had learned that Finnsheep were a Nordic Short-Tailed breed and like the Shetland and Icelandic, their wool was available in all the natural colors from white to gray and black and fawn to brown. I dreamt about being able to achieve these colors in the US and set about doing more research and locating some individuals in Finland who would help realize these goals.

As luck would have it, I had the good fortune of meeting Carol Rhoades, a spinner and knitter from Austin, Texas. She had attended the Colored Sheep and Wool Congress in England and met a woman, Jill von Weymarn, who presented a paper on preserving the brown Finnsheep in Finland. I was able to contact Jill and in February of 1996 I made my first trip to Finland.



Jill was very gracious and an enormous help to me. She introduced me to Mr. Eino Hautakangas, head of the Finnish Finnsheep Breeders Association at that time, and Elena Puntila, a key researcher at the Agricultural Institute in Jokioinen. All of these individuals were instrumental in helping me achieve my goals of importing semen from colored Finnsheep in Finland.

After many trials and tribulation, the imported genetics did arrive in the US and my first offspring out of the semen was on the ground in

2001. My first breedings were done to semen from several brown rams and these offspring were white or black, but all carried a brown gene which they inherited from their sire. The following year I bred offspring of one of these rams to offspring of the other and I did achieve my first brown ewe lamb! In subsequent years I used the gray semen on brown and black ewes and was able to produce fawn and gray colored Finnsheep. Along with the colors and improved wool quality, I was also getting Finnsheep with larger bone. The number of lambs born and the maternal traits were equal to what I had been producing in my flock prior to the use of the semen. In order to achieve the colors, I had to ease up temporarily on my selection of wool quality. My first objective was to achieve the color. Once that was available, I could resume my selection of wool quality.

Last year I attended a knitting conference in Estonia and made my second trip to Finland. I met with Helena Korhonen, a breeder of gray Finnsheep in eastern Finland. She took me to numerous sheep farms and I saw my first badger Finnsheep (gray Finnsheep with black bellies and black markings on their faces). One of the most striking observations I had on this trip was her comment that Finnsheep breeders in Finland are selecting away from high numbers of lambs. They prefer ewes that can produce triplets and raise them unassisted as opposed to ewes producing 5 or 6 lambs at a time.



Upon my return from Finland last year, I decided to downsize my flock a bit to make room for 2 horses. In doing so, I had to make some very difficult decisions about which ewes to keep and which to sell. My flock now consists of 12 ewes, and I can honestly say that

I feel I have accomplished my original goals of producing quality Finnsheep with consistent wool. For the first time since I began raising Finnsheep I can honestly look over my flock and feel satisfied that every sheep has wool that is consistent and of superior quality. My goals for the future are to continue working at improving the wool, which now will occur much more slowly, and producing Finnsheep of superior maternal traits with soft, lustrous, consistent wool.

You can contact Sandy De Master at 920-699-7420 or [veecroft@execpc.com](mailto:veecroft@execpc.com).



*A note from the webmaster:*

PLEASE look at your listing in the Breeders' Directory and check its accuracy.

There is a copy in this newsletter and also one on the website at [www.finnsheep.org/direcory.htm](http://www.finnsheep.org/direcory.htm)

In the past, I have tried to use some of the email addresses or phone numbers only to find out they were wrong or outdated.

If you find an error please inform the Milo office: 641-942-6402

**and / or**  
contact me: [tracy@fireflyfields.com](mailto:tracy@fireflyfields.com) or Tracy Sengupta, 4110 W. Plymouth Church Road, Beloit, WI 53511

If I can't find you, then your prospective buyers can't either!!

**Finnsheep Breeders' Association  
General Meeting – November 11, 2006  
Louisville, Kentucky**

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by President Tracy Sengupta.

**Present:**

- Members: Grant Blackburn, Naomi and Joe Smith, Terrie Godfrey, Tim ??, and Tracy Sengupta

**Secretary's report:** The minutes from the 2005 meeting were read by Tracy (substituting for Cindy). Grant moved to approve. Naomi seconded. Minutes were approved as read.

**Treasurer's report:** The treasurer's report for the past year was read by Grant. The income for the past 12 month (since Nov. 2005) has been 3000.. About 400 purebred Finnsheep have been registered in the past 12 months, including MARC. We have 12 new members. Our expenses have been primarily advertising and contracted labor from Milo. \$2000 was budgeted for advertising for the past year. We have spent \$1800 so far and another \$200 is due to The Shepherd for the December issue.

**Membership report:** Naomi has not done any work on the new member packet yet. (See below.) We have 12 new members in 2006. This is an increase in membership even compared to 5 years ago.

**Old Business**

Advertising: Finnsheep are featured in The Banner in August. Naomi moved to place an ad in the Banner in August to accompany the feature on Finnsheep. Joe seconded. Carried.

FBA Printed Promotional Materials and Flyers: Naomi would like a promotional flyer made up with the advertising campaign: "12 Reasons to Own a Finnsheep". The Shepherd has the photos used in this campaign.

*Background: In 2005, the board voted to create a breed standard "booklet" as a lower cost replacement to the old "grey booklet" for new members. Naomi would assemble a new member packet and including this booklet and send it out to new members. The task of getting the "booklet" printed with a regular paper interior and a cardstock cover was assigned to Sandy and Tracy by the board for 2006. We would use the 2005 tri-fold "pamphlet" that Sandy produced to give out at festivals and for people calling the secretary for information on Finnsheep.*

Naomi is not satisfied with the breed standard booklet which Tracy had printed up. She would like some things added to it.. Naomi would like the year added to the booklet. Naomi also wants to know when the statement that a single ram should not be registered was removed from the breed standard. Tracy said that it was not a part of the breed standard in recent

years. No one at the meeting could remember anything. Tracy will look back in the box of presidential materials and ask Cindy to look back through the secretary records.

Naomi would like to have a flyer with the 12 Reasons made up. She showed a full color flyer done by the Southdown Breeders' Association as an example. It is made on shiny magazine style paper (11" x 17" folded in half) with many photos and their breed standard printed on the back. We will ask Cindy to talk to The Shepherd's graphic arts department or the Southdown Assn. or The Banner about getting something similar printed up. Grant voted to allocate approximately \$500 for this project. Naomi seconded. Carried.

Naomi will wait to create the new member packet until the 12 Reasons brochure is done.

#### Frankin Fund:

*Last year the board voted to remove the money languishing in the Franklin Fund and put it into a Certificate of Deposit or Money Market Account.*

Grant has been in contact with the Franklin Fund Broker. He is waiting to hear back from that individual. Signatures are now no problem (as they were in the past) as Grant and Naomi can sign to transfer the funds.

#### New Registration Forms:

After consulting with the Associated Sheep Registries in Milo, Tracy revised the registration forms in 2006. The new forms are easier to read and understand and have features that the Milo office needed. They have also been added to the FBA website in both Microsoft Word and PDF formats. It is suggested to add a completed sample to the website with hyperlinks to explanations and to also put a sample in the newsletter.

#### New Business:

##### "Short Tales" – Newsletter:

It was decided that Terrie Godfrey will take over Short Tales. (*Sandy is no longer interested in doing Short Tales and Tracy is already serving on the board and doing the website.*)

##### Election of Board Members:

Naomi moved that Joe Smith come onto the empty board seat vacated by Naomi. Grant seconded. Carried. Naomi moved that Cindy Smith serve a second term on the board. Grant seconded. Carried.

Grant moved that the meeting be adjourned at 11:30. Joe Smith seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted: Tracy Sengupta (substituting for Cindy Smith)

*The following article was written by the FBA to advise would-be shepherds of important things to consider when buying sheep. It is also located in its entirety on the FBA website at: [www.finnsheep.org/buysheep.htm](http://www.finnsheep.org/buysheep.htm).*

## **SO YOU WANT TO BE A SHEPHERD... OR QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN PURCHASING SHEEP**

by The Finnsheep Breeders' Association

Recently, it has come to our attention that there is some confusion regarding how a new shepherd can most safely purchase healthy, registered sheep. In an effort to help, we have compiled some ideas and questions pertaining to purchasing sheep.

The first piece of advice is BUYER BEWARE! Do your homework before attempting to purchase sheep. Learn everything you can about the breed of sheep you are interested in buying. Talk to several breeders.

### **Research**

Familiarize yourself with the breed standard of the breed/breeds you are interested in purchasing. These can be obtained from the breed organization. Learn what the breed should look like and what qualities it should have.

### **Decide on goals for your flock**

Before going out to look at sheep, or even calling breeders, you need to decide what your goals are for your flock. Breeders have different goals and it is important to ask each breeder what he is selecting for. Finnsheep are a highly versatile breed and you want to find a breeder who is selecting for the things you want to buy. If wool is important to you, maybe it is best to work with a breeder who is selecting for wool. If white production ewes are what you want, find a breeder who selects for this.

### **Interview the breeder**

How long has the breeder been raising sheep?

Is he a member of his breed organization (for example, the Finnsheep Breeders Association)? Buy from members who are active members of their breed association. This is an indication that they have a strong interest in the breed and the qualities listed in the breed standard. It is best to support those who pay to advertise in the Breeders Directory Listing, in the newsletter and on the breed organization's web site.

Does he maintain records on the flock (which you may request to see)?

Are his sheep registered?

What are the main goals the breeder has for his/her flock: prolificacy, wool quality, commercial (lamb for consumption), raising crossbred replacement ewes, etc.?

What are the selection criteria he uses in deciding which sheep he is going to sell and which he is going to cull? Or does he put all his lambs up for sale as breeding stock (i.e. meaning they are worthy of being registered). If the breeder does not select, beware...

Would the breeder be willing to mentor you as a new shepherd?

What is the purchase price of the sheep? Does this include the registrations for the sheep you are purchasing or is this a "pet quality" price? Beware of individuals who are selling sheep cheaply. (Remember the old adage, "You get what you pay for.")

Does the breeder have references? Don't hesitate to ask him for names of past customers that you can contact for a reference.

Ask the breeder if he will stand behind his sheep if there is a problem. For example, what if the ewe or ram you purchased is not fertile? Will the breeder replace it or what arrangements will he make?

Assess the breeder's personality as you converse with him. Does he seem reliable and

easy to work with? Don't be afraid to call several breeders until you find someone you can work with who has the type of sheep you need.

Try to purchase your starter flock from one or two farms. Each additional farm you go to increases the odds that you may bring home some type of disease or unwanted problem.

### **Visit and observe**

Look at the lambs or sheep you are buying and the environment they are living in. Are the living quarters for the animals clean (by farm standards)? Do they have good hay (not moldy) or adequate pasture? Is there clean drinking water available? During the rainy months, is there accessible high ground so the sheep are not standing in water? Are the hooves of the adult sheep in good condition? (Not misshapen or overgrown "elf shoes".)

Look at the lambs / sheep you are buying. Do their eyes look bright and alert? Beware of anything that looks unusual such as nasal discharge or raspy breathing. If in doubt, have a vet or experienced shepherd look at the sheep with you.

Make sure the lamb/sheep is "up on his pasterns" and has a good bite.

Do the sheep / lambs look "strong" to you? Even lambs should have good strong, straight legs etc.

Do not buy a sickly lamb / sheep just because it is cute, you drove a long way, the price is right, or you feel sorry for it. You could be buying many months of expense and heartache. You could also possibly contaminate your farm and home and infect any other animals living there.

Check that rams / ram-lambs have two fully descended testicles.

### **Health**

This is a major concern when purchasing any type of livestock.

Ask the breeder about the health status of his flock. Ask him what diseases he tests for, how often he tests, and what percentage of his flock is tested. Ask him to give you the name of his vet if you feel a need to further verify this information.

Is he enrolled in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program? Has he ever had Scrapie in his flock? Does he raise other breeds with his Finnsheep? (Black-faced breeds have a greater susceptibility to Scrapie).

Other diseases to ask questions about are: OPP (Ovine Progressive Pneumonia), Johnes Disease, Foot rot, Caseous Lymphadenitis, Brucellosis.

Is his flock closed? If not, what does he do when he brings in replacements?

Does he vaccinate and deworm? You want to purchase animals that are well cared for. Generally, most flocks are vaccinated for Clostridium Perfringens and Tetanus (C D & T) and are dewormed on a regular basis. Some breeders have good reasons for not vaccinating or deworming (such as organic farming). If the breeder is not vaccinating and deworming, find out why.

Biosecurity: What does he do to insure his farm is safe? (In other words, how does he prevent diseases from coming into his flock / farm).

### **Registration**

This is an important issue. If you are paying for registered breeding stock, then you have the right to obtain registration papers. If the sheep you are purchasing do not have papers, then their lambs are not registerable, even if they are purebred.

Ask the breeder if his flock is registered – if all his purebred ewes and rams are registered. Ask to see their official registration papers.

Ask if the lambs born in the current year are already registered. Many breeders register their lambs and transfer them at the same time. This is not unusual. But if the parents of the lambs you are interested in are not registered, this tells you something about this individual. He will have to “back register” the parents in order to register the lambs. This will cost the breeder double the usual registration fee and can take a lot of time. It is best to buy registered animals or at least buy sheep whose parents are already registered.

Discuss with the seller how long he thinks it will take him to get his registrations/transfers completed. Here you are taking a leap of faith, but if you have done your homework, you should have a pretty good idea if the seller is reliable.

## Wool

If you are interested in wool, it will be helpful to ask the following questions:

Is wool important to the breeder? Does he select his replacements with wool in mind? Some Finn breeders are interested in wool quality and others do not consider it a top priority.

What does he do with his fleeces? Sell to the wool co-op? Sell to handspinners? Personally use the wool for spinning, knitting, weaving or felting?

Ask the breeder if he micron tests his fleeces. These tests give the shepherd a quantitative analysis of each fleece. Ask to see the records.

Also ask the shepherd if he jackets his fleeces. If not, what does he do to keep them clean?

Ask them how often he shears. Most Finnsheep are sheared once a year in the US and twice a year in Finland.

Be sure that the wool is not too hairy. The wool in Finns varies quite a bit. Finn wool should be 23 to 31 microns. If the breeder has tested the parents' fleeces, he should have paperwork that shows the micron count and the coefficient of variation (the uniformity of the fleece). Wool is 40% heritable. If you want to produce lambs with good wool, then the parents must have good wool.

The wool in colored sheep is often toward the coarser end of the spectrum. This is normal. However, it should still have crimp and look like wool, rather than hair or fur. (The lamb that is “fuzzy” as a baby is adorable, but will have coarser wool later on.)

## Last but not least...

If you do have a problem with a breeder, contact a board member of the breed organization and ask for assistance. It is not the role or responsibility of the board of directors to police the relationship between a buyer and a seller. It is not even their legal right to do so. However, if there is a problem and the seller is an active member of the association, a board member may be able to help resolve the problem.



Photo: House Mountain Finnsheep

*Note: At the 2005 FBA Annual Meeting, a few individuals expressed an interest in learning more about Sponenberg's Conservation Breeding Program. This article by Carol Elkins, describes her experiences using the Sponenberg program. It has been previously published in Sheep! Magazine as well as on Carol's website. It is reprinted in Short Tales with her permission.*

## **Rescue and Conservation Breeding (or How to Grow Your Flock with Only One Ram)**

**By Carol J. Elkins, Critterhaven**

### **Starting Out Small**

When I acquired my first two Barbados Blackbelly ewes, they had already been bred at their previous owner's location. I kept their lambs, one ram and one ewe, and thus began my flock of four. It didn't take me long to realize that my breeding options were limited--my ram could be bred to his mother and to his sister, but never to his half-sisters. (The consensus among sheep breeders is that you can get away with inbreeding only one generation--never more.) I purchased an additional two unrelated ewes, but I was still stuck with the limitations of one ram.

I thought about getting another ram, but I was full of dire warnings I'd received about the problems that come with having a single ram and was unwilling to consider a second ram at this stage. Also, as a newbie to raising sheep, I didn't have space or pasture to accommodate a separate ram pen, which I would need if I wanted to be certain about which ram had bred my ewes. What to do?

Luckily, about that time I read an email posted to the Sheep-L listserv that mentioned the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy's (ALBC's) breeding plan for rare and endangered animals. I want to summarize their information in this article so that it might help other Barbados Blackbelly breeders who are stuck in a "One Ram Rut." All information in this article is liberally and thankfully borrowed from the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy's book *A Conservation Breeding Handbook* authored by D. Phillip Sponenberg and Carolyn

J. Christman (ISBN 1-887316-00-0, 136 pp, \$12.95 +P&H). You can purchase this book directly from the ALBC's Web store at <http://www.albc-usa.org/> with my heartiest recommendation. You can contact the ALBC directly at P.O. Box 477, Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312, telephone 919-542-5704.

### **Small is a Lot Like Rare**

There are almost 100 breeds of cattle, goats, horses, asses, sheep, pigs, and poultry that are in danger of becoming extinct. The Barbados Blackbelly sheep, although not threatened by imminent extinction, is considered a "watched breed" because there are fewer than 10,000 of them in the world and fewer than 2,500 of them registered annually in North America. Many of the truly endangered breeds of livestock live in isolated clusters where a single male lives with a few females (the foundation male and females). Intense inbreeding occurs as the male, and eventually his sons, breeds with the only available females, which are all related to him. The ALBC has developed a breeding program to rescue these endangered breeds from extinction. The rescue breeding program is designed to increase the animal count in a breed while also maintaining the breed's genetic diversity and decreasing its incidence of inbreeding.

For the small farmer choosing to raise Barbados Blackbelly sheep, a flock of one ram and two or three ewes often resembles one of the "endangered" breeds. There may be no place close to obtain replacement livestock or funds to purchase good breeding stock. Without new blood, the flock will become seriously inbred, reducing the value and vitality of the flock. Therefore, for the purpose of this article, we will treat the small Barbados Blackbelly flock as if it were rare and describe a rescue breeding program useful for the small farmer.

### **Step One – Rescue Breeding**

If anything happens to your only ram, your "rare" flock is essentially extinct. The goal of a rescue program is to develop at least three

distinct male bloodlines from the original ram and ewes, thus preserving your male line while also reducing inbreeding. Because you have only one ram, it will be the ewes who contribute most heavily to the genetic diversity in your breeding program.

In order to develop three or four distinct male bloodlines, you will need to breed your ewes to as many different rams as possible. Since you have only one ram, you will need to make more. The following paragraphs explain how to do this using a sample flock of one ram and four ewes.<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article, alphabetic letters are used to represent each of the bloodlines in your flock. We start off in this example with Ram A and four ewes, B, C, D, and E. Their offspring are identified by the combination of letters from the ram and ewe. For example, Ram A + Ewe C=lamb AC. Table 1 illustrates the steps using alphabetic letters. As the number of generations increases, so does the number of letters used to identify the lambs. I found this to be very complex and learned that I could better understand what was going on by referring back and forth between the text and the table. Hopefully, you will, too.

Only the rams, the original ewes, and the ram lambs are listed in the table because they are the most important members of the rescue breeding program. When the daughters enter the breeding program, mate them to whatever ram lamb is scheduled to breed with their mother. Because Barbados Blackbelly sheep will breed at any time throughout the year, you can breed the ewes back shortly after you have weaned their lambs.

**First breeding cycle:** Breed the foundation ram to all four ewes. Keep the foundation ram until the next generation of rams is ready to breed, then cull him (sell, butcher, or transfer to a different breeding program). Keep all of the lambs for the third breeding cycle.

**Second breeding cycle:** Do the same thing you did with the first breeding cycle because your foundation ram is still the only ram old enough to be reliably fertile. Keep all of the lambs for the fourth breeding cycle.

**Third breeding cycle:** Divide the flock into two small breeding groups (this can be a problem when space is really limited, but it is necessary to at least temporarily cordon off a small area for each breeding group (using electric netting or some other temporary fencing that is sturdy enough, however, to prevent ram breakthroughs). In each group place one of the best young rams born from the first breeding cycle, two unrelated foundation ewes, and those ewes' daughters from the first breeding cycle. (The daughters are half-sisters of the rams, but as we progress through the rescue breeding program, this inbreeding will be reduced.) Cull the ram lambs used in this breeding after their offspring are born. Also cull any ram lambs born to the daughters of the foundation ewes in this group.

**Fourth breeding cycle:** As you did with the third breeding cycle, divide the flock into two breeding groups, except use the ram lambs from the second breeding cycle, all of the foundation ewes, and all of their daughters from the second breeding cycle. Cull the ram lambs used in this breeding after their offspring are born. Also cull any ram lambs born to the daughters of the foundation ewes in this group.

**Fifth breeding cycle:** This breeding cycle continues to use ram lambs born from foundation ewes rather than from the daughters of those foundation ewes (which you should have culled). This further reduces inbreeding and increases genetic diversity. Again, create a small breeding group for each of the rams born in the third and fourth breeding cycles. Each ram will be assigned one of the foundation ewes and her daughters from the #1, #2, and #3 breeding cycles. (If there are more than four rams available that were born from foundation ewes, create a separate breeding group for each ram if you have space.)

The rams that result from this fifth breeding are quarter-brother rams and only one-fourth the genetic influence of the foundation ram. Genetically, they can be considered to be four distinct male bloodlines.

**Table 1. Rescue breeding program**

Generation <sup>2</sup>	Breeding Cycle	Ram used	Ewes bred	Young rams produced <sup>3</sup>
First	1	A	B, C, D, E	AB, AD
	2	A	B, C, D, E	AC, AE
Second	3	AB	C, D (plus their daughters from the #1 breeding cycle)	AB/C
		AD	B, E (plus their daughters from the #1 breeding cycle)/P>	AD/E
	4	AC	D, E (plus their daughters from the #2 breeding cycle)	AC/D
		AE	B, C (plus their daughters from the #2 breeding cycle)	AE/B
Third	5	AB/C	E (plus her daughters from #1, #2, and #3 breeding cycles)	[AB/C]E
		AD/E	C (plus her daughters from #1, #2, and #3 breeding cycles)	[AD/E]C
		AC/D	B (plus her daughters from #1, #2, and #3 breeding cycles)	[AC/D]B
		AE/B	D (plus her daughters from #1, #2, and #3 breeding cycles)	[AE/B]D

In as little as three years, you have four rams instead of one, and at least 30 ewes! Each foundation ewe now has daughters sired by different rams, and each ewe's bloodline is distinct from the other ewes' bloodlines. From a rescue perspective, the flock is no longer genetically endangered and can now progress to a conservation breeding program.

**Step Two – Conservation Breeding**

Once you have established several distinct bloodlines, you can change from a rescue breeding program to a conservation breeding program. The goal of a conservation breeding program is to maintain those bloodlines over several breeding cycles. The good news is that you can manage the flock as a single unit. This

is much easier from a management perspective because you no longer have to separate breeding groups. Instead, you need only house your rams in one area and your ewes in another.

In the conservation breeding program, you will breed each of the rams (from your three or more distinct bloodlines) sequentially to the entire flock of ewes. The following paragraphs describe how to do this using three of the four bloodlines you established in the rescue breeding program. (You can use the fourth bloodline too--or sell it-- but it makes this article too complex, so I'm leaving it out!) For simplicity, each bloodline is assigned a new letter, A, B, or C, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Dividing the flock into bloodlines**

Rescue Ram ID	Ewes	New Conservation Bloodline
[AB/C]E	D (plus her daughters from the rescue breeding program)	A
[AD/E]C	B (plus her daughters from the rescue breeding program)	B
[AC/D]B	E (plus her daughters from the rescue breeding program)	C
[AE/B]D	C (plus her daughters from the rescue breeding program)	D (sell)

Rather than describing each of the breeding cycles in detail, have a look at Table 3 and study each breeding cycle carefully. You will see that for each of the breeding cycles, you breed one of the rams to all of the ewes in the flock. Assign an identity to each lamb born based on its parents' bloodlines. For example, because Ram A sired all of the lambs in the first breeding cycle, the lambs are labeled A/A (or simply A), A/B, or A/C.

**Table 3. Conservation breeding program**

Breeding Cycle	Ram used	Ewes bred	Lambs produced	
			Linebred (save ewe and ram lambs)	Linecross (save only ewe lambs)
1	A	A,B,C	A	A/B, A/C
2	B	A,B,C	B	B/A, B/C
3	C	A,B,C A/B, A/C	C (C/AC)	C/A, C/B, C/AB
4	A	A,B,C A/B, A/C B/A, B/C	A (A/AB, A/AC, A/BA)	A/B, A/C, A/BC
5	B	A,B,C A/B, A/C B/A, B/C C/A, C/B, C/AB	B (B/AB, B/BA, B/BC, B/CB, B/CAB)	B/A, B/C, B/AC, B/CA
6	C	A,B,C A/B, A/C B/A, B/C C/A, C/B, C/AB, A/BC	C (C/AC, C/BC, C/CA, C/CB, C/CAB, C/ABC)	C/A, C/B, C/AB, C/BA

Keep all of the female lambs from the breeding cycle. Let the rams grow to butchering weight and select the best A/A, BB, or CC ram lamb to use to replace his father. Sell or butcher the

remaining ram lambs as well as the mature ram (A, B, or C) because he has made his genetic contribution and you can replace him with his son.

The ewe lambs from the immediately preceding breeding cycle are too young to mate, so keep them separate, probably where you had them during weaning.

Labeling the lambs after the second breeding cycle can get complex because of all of the letters involved. You can simplify things by using this rule of thumb: if a lamb is more than 50% of a line, you can combine the letters used. For example, the lambs born from the third breeding cycle are C/A, C/B, C/C, C/AB, and C/AC. The C/C lambs are 100% of line C and the C/AC lambs are 75% of line C, so you can simply call both groups C.

At the fourth breeding cycle, you return to the line A ram, who replaced his father after the first breeding cycle. Now, however, he is breeding his sisters as well as his mother, which calls for a discussion of inbreeding, linebreeding, and linecrossing.

### **Inbreeding, Linebreeding and Linecrossing**

Inbreeding and outcrossing (outbreeding) are about breeding animals who are or are not related to each other.

- To *inbreed* is to mate brother to sister, half-brother to half-sister, father to daughter, or mother to son.
- To *outbreed* (also *outcross*) is to breed animals who are not related in any manner.

Clearly, when you mate one ram to all the ewes in a flock, some inbreeding will naturally occur. Father/daughter crosses will not happen because you will retire a ram after breeding so that he never has a chance to breed his daughters. Likewise, there will never be more than one instance per breeding cycle of a mother/son breeding. However, brother/sister and half-brother/half-sister matings will be somewhat common because the ram you choose to replace the line's sire will return to mate his own line three breeding cycles later. Instances of inbreeding are separated by time

(at least three breeding cycles), and managed in such a way as to minimize inbreeding in any one bloodline.

In contrast, linebreeding and linecrossing are about bloodlines, not relatives.

- To *linebreed* is to mate two sheep who have a common ancestor but who are little, if at all, related to each other. A lamb is considered linebred if it is more than 50% of a line's genetic makeup.
- To *linecross* is to mate sheep of different bloodlines. For example, a lamb is considered linecrossed if it is a mixture of A, B, and C but no one line contributes more than 50% of the total genetic makeup.

You need to include both linebreeding and linecrossing in your conservation breeding program.

- Linebred ewes provide replacements only for their line.
- Linecross ewes provide replacements for other lines.

Table 4 describes how this replacement scheme works in your flock:

The conservation breeding program requires only 30 ewes to adequately represent and maintain three separate bloodlines. This is a reasonable flock size for a small farmer. However, the most powerful aspect of the conservation breeding program is its rotation of rams and their replacement by their sons so that members of the flock are alternating between an inbred and outbred condition. This maximizes genetic diversity, strengthens the "good" genetic traits, and breeds out the "bad" genetic traits.

The necessity of replacing rams with their sons, however, is the hardest part of this program for most Barbados Blackbelly breeders. A really good ram, once obtained, is hard to part with, and a breeder is naturally inclined to maximize

exposure of that ram to as many ewes through as many breeding cycles as is possible, thus "making his good genes go a long way." This approach will work for a short time, but ultimately will leave the breeder in a "One Ram Rut" and will entail returning to a rescue breeding program to once again establish three distinct bloodlines.

Although the rescue and conservation breeding programs may seem complicated after reading them through the first time, I encourage you to read them again. Put pen to paper and create your own breeding tables with the sheep in your flock. If you have space for a larger flock, read more in ALBC's *A Conservation Breeding Handbook* about managing two parallel flocks. Contact the ALBC with your questions about the rescue and conservation breeding programs. But most importantly, think about your responsibility to breed sound, vital, Barbados Blackbelly sheep and to strengthen this breed's numbers and genetic diversity. In this way you can help ensure that our sheep never become endangered and, ultimately, can cease being a "watched" breed.

1. If you don't have four ewes, you can easily modify [Table 1](#) to illustrate a situation with two or three foundation ewes and one ram.
2. All offspring of an animal are considered to be in the same

generation, regardless of the breeding cycle they were born in.

3. This model assumes that each ewe produces one lamb and that half of the lambs born will be rams. Barbados Blackbelly regularly produce twins; this will increase the number of lambs to work with but will not speed up the time it takes to complete five breeding cycles.

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Carol Elkins owns A Written Word, a technical communications company that writes documentation that normal people can understand. During breaks away from her computer, she steps outside her back door to watch her flock of registered Barbados Blackbelly sheep frolicking in the pasture. For more information, call 719-948-3773 or email [celkins@criterhaven.biz](mailto:celkins@criterhaven.biz).

**Wanted: Photos of your flock!  
(for use on the FBA Website)**

email to [tracy@fireflyfields.com](mailto:tracy@fireflyfields.com)  
or US Mail to  
Tracy Sengupta,  
4110 W. Plymouth Church Rd.,  
Beloit, WI 53511

**Table 4. Replacing sheep by linebreeding and linecrossing**

Ewes per Line		Source of Replacements for Each Line		
Line or Linecross	# of Ewes	A	B	C
A	5	X		
A/B	5	X	X	
A/C	5	X		X
B	5		X	
B/C	5		X	X
C	5			X
Total	30			

### Finnsheep in Print:

Finnsheep and their wool were featured in the Summer 2005 issue of *Spin-Off* magazine!

A pre-edited version of the article "*Fiber Basics: Finnsheep*" by Grace Hatton is reprinted with permission of the magazine on the FBA website at

<http://www.finnsheep.org/spinoff.htm>

Back issues of the magazine are still available for purchase from Spin-Off. [www.interweave.com/spin](http://www.interweave.com/spin) or 800-272-2193.

*Thank you Grace for helping to spread the word about our wonderful sheep!*



Photo: Stillmeadow Finnsheep

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**Counting Words:** Phone numbers count as one word. Each number and two letter initial count as one word. For example "I. M. Wright" is two words, and "P. O. Box 999" is three words. Hyphenated words, (e.g.: Jones-Smythe) count as separate words.

### A little light reading?

A new doctoral thesis by Miika Tapio entitled:

Origin and Maintenance of Genetic Diversity in Northern European Sheep

Is available on line, in English, at:  
<http://herkules.oulu.fi/isbn9514282353/isbn9514282353.pdf>

## FINNSHEEP BREEDERS DIRECTORY

### CALIFORNIA

---

Connie Santos,  
34843 Wiemiller Rd.,  
Tollhouse, CA 93667  
flynsbar@psnw.com  
Purebred Finnsheep  
Black, white, grey

### COLORADO

---

Janet Herman  
7054 S. Hwy. 83  
Franktown, CO 80116  
(303) 668-6812  
Purebred Finnsheep/Crossbred Finnsheep  
(Finn/Dorset)  
Commercially processed batts. Specializing in out of  
season lambing

### IOWA

---

Dale L. Amendt  
6815 Waterman Blvd.  
Sutherland, IA 51058  
(712) 446-3489  
Purebred Finnsheep/Crossbred Finnsheep (Finn X  
Suffolk, Finn X Corriedales)

Marvin Blair  
3402 Fletcher Ave.  
Lake City, IA 51449  
(712) 464-8153  
Purebred Finnsheep Crossbred Finnsheep (Finn X  
Hamp & Finn Dorset)

### MASSACHUSETTS

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The Sokol Family  
Stoney Meadow Farm  
52 Bates St.  
Mendon, MA 01745  
508-473-0446  
lkendoit\_99@yahoo.com  
www.stonemeadowfarm.com  
SFCP: Enrolled status; Flock# MA19  
Purebred Finnsheep: white, black, piebald. Enrolled  
in Voluntary Scrapie Program. Also raise Nubian  
dairy goats and llamas.

### MONTANA

---

JT and Julie Korkow  
HC 40 Box 28A  
Volborg, MT 59351  
(406) 554-3123  
jtkinmt@midrivers.co  
http://www.finnsheep.us  
Flock prefix JK, Purebred Finns and Finn/Texel  
cross. Flock enrolled in VFSCP (MT30), OPP  
tested, no history of footrot or Johnes. Production of  
color and white Finns with selection for prolificacy and  
size.

### NEW YORK

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Jeff and Sherry Barber  
Willowcreek Finnsheep  
2315 Oran-Delphi Road  
Manlius, NY 13104  
(315) 662-7141  
jsbarber@hotmail.com  
Purebred Finnsheep

Elizabeth Hale Kinne  
Stillmeadow Finnsheep  
5883 Randall Hill Rd.  
DeRuyter, NY 13052  
(315) 852-3344  
stillmeadowfinns@hotmail.com  
Purebred Finnsheep since 1994. Genetically  
diverse white, natural colored solids and piebalds.  
OPP test Negative, CL and footrot free. Selected for  
maternalism, udder quality, structural soundness,  
& fleece.

### NORTH CAROLINA

---

Guenther and Evelyn Baerje  
Santa Maria Farm  
Aberdeen, NC 28315  
(910) 281-4036  
EBAERJE@ALLTEL.NET  
Finnsheep and Cormo/Finn Crosses  
SFCP: Enrolled Status (since 2002);  
Flock# NC125037.  
Purebred Finns as well as crossbred Cormo/Finns.  
Alpacas and Llamas.

## OHIO

---

Paul J. Hunter, DVM  
11425 Bruns Rd.  
Fort Loramie, OH 45845  
1-800-628-LAMB (5262)  
drhunter@bright.net  
Breeder of Finnsheep since 1989, Cesarean derived-disease free flock, OPP test negative entire adult flock since 1996, Scrapie Certification Program OH 20, White Finnsheep selected for commercial important traits, 3 separate lines available for genetic diversity Finn/Dorset and Finn teaser rams also available.

Terrie P. Godfrey  
Eldorado Farms  
Farm address:  
10915 Main Rd.  
Berlin Heights, OH 44814

Mailing address:  
450 Salem Drive  
Vermilion, OH 44089  
440-967-1578  
terrie@eldoradofinns.com  
www.eldoradofinns.com  
Purebred Finnsheep  
Flock Prefix: Eldorado  
SFCP Certified Status  
Small flock. Pasture raised. Easy Keepers. Nice colors. Very friendly.

## OKLAHOMA

---

Cynthia Smith  
HC 65 Box 517  
Hominy, OK 74035  
(918) 885-1284  
cindyusmith@yahoo.com  
<http://www.boulderridgefarm.com>  
Purebred Finnsheep, OPP, Johnes and Footrot free, Voluntary Scrapie Program (OK001926). Breeding for maternal instincts, prolificacy, size & wool quality. Also raise Great Pyrenees Livestock Guardian Dogs.

## OREGON

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Linda Stimson  
Riyescott Ranch  
20465 Huckleberry Ridge Road  
Brookings, OR 97415  
541-469-3065  
linda@riyescott.com  
www.riyescott.com  
Purebred Finnsheep, Finn/Shetland Crosses; Possibly Finn/Icelandic Crosses.  
Floci Prefix: RIYS  
Fiber Farm producing llama, mohair, and sheep wool. We have Shetlands, Icelandic and Finn. Also raise Maremma Livestock Guardian Dogs.

## PENNSYLVANIA

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Grace Hatton  
HC 8 Box 8151  
Hawley, PA 18428  
(570) 775-9136  
hatton@microserve.net  
<http://home.ptd.net/~hatton7/>  
<http://antique-spinning-wheels.blogspot.com>  
Purebred Finnsheep  
SFCP Certified Status; Flock# PA43  
Since 1986. OPP negative tested; b.ovis negative tested. Fully functioning antique spinning wheels and accessories.

Dale and Martha Livermore  
RR - 5, Box 134A  
Brookville, PA 15825  
(814)328-2720  
Purebred Finnsheep  
Flock Prefix: ARK  
Natural purebred Finnsheep. OPP, Johnes test negative. Footrot, abccss, b.ovis test free. Breeding stock for sale.

Megan Loyd-Thompson  
Blue Twig Finns  
1140 Creek Rd  
Carlisle, PA 17013  
717-249-4321  
cowdance@epix.net  
Purebred Finnsheep, Shetland/Finn Crosses. Closed flock; scrapie free; OPP free; Concentrating on fine fiber production and natural colors. Lambs available on occasion.

## VIRGINIA

---

Grant W. Blackburn  
"Anzar Sheep"  
142 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. White pedigree ram and ewe lambs for sale.

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.

Linda and Leanna Witt  
154 Quail Call Lane  
Amissville, VA 20106  
(540) 937-4707

[linda@MistyMountainFarm.com](mailto:linda@MistyMountainFarm.com)  
[www.MistyMountainFarm.com](http://www.MistyMountainFarm.com)

OPP free, Scrapies free VA flock 26. Very prolific white and colored Finnsheep. Handspinning, weaving, and felting equipment and supplies. Fiberart classes. New! Guardian llamas!

## WASHINGTON

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TRIPLE L FINNSHEEP  
Dan and Leanne Hughes  
89202 N. Harrington Road  
West Richland, WA. 99353  
(509) 967-3975

[danlea23@msn.com](mailto:danlea23@msn.com)

purebred white, black and gray finnsheep, all ages. OPP and disease free flock. Breeding records since 1982. Breeding for size, milking and lambing ability.

## WISCONSIN

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### Sandy De Master

Wee Croft Finnsheep  
N 7087 Hillside Dr.  
Watertown, WI 53094  
(920) 699-7420

[weecroft@execpc.com](mailto:weecroft@execpc.com)

[www.weecroftfinnsheep.com](http://www.weecroftfinnsheep.com)

Purebred Finnsheep

Flock Prefix: WeeCroft

Flock of gray, fawn, brown, black and white Finnsheep with a high percentage of imported Finnish bloodlines. Primary focus is wool color and quality. Jacketed handspinning fleeces, roving, and yarn.

Tracy Sengupta  
Firefly Fields Finnsheep  
4110 W. Plymouth Church Rd.  
Beloit, WI 53511 608-361-1446  
[tracy@fireflyfields.com](mailto:tracy@fireflyfields.com)

Certified Status - Voluntary Scrapie Program - WI Flock 1990. White and colored purebred Finnsheep. Bred for health, prolificacy, and lovely wool. Covered handspinning fleeces.  
[www.fireflyfields.com/finns](http://www.fireflyfields.com/finns)

*Don't forget to sign the agreement, if you are new member.*

Mail (along with a check or money order) to:  
**Finnsheep Breeders' Assn., 15603 173rd Street, Milo, IA 50166**

### **Membership Services**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Please check all that apply:**

- ( ) New member - \$35
- ( ) Continuing member - \$25 (Annual Activity Fee)
- ( ) Listing in Breeders Directory - \$30
- ( ) Flock Prefix - **One time fee** of \$10 **per letter** -  
Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note:** Annual Dues are **payable by Jan 7<sup>th</sup>** of each year. For this fee, **members receive** the Short Tales Newsletter, Meeting Minutes and Annual Report and all other pertinent mailings from the FBA. Additionally, FBA members pay **half price for registration fees.** (Often times this discount on registrations will pay for your membership dues!)

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### **Lifetime Membership Application for New Members**

Check:

- ( ) Purebred Breeder
- ( ) Commercial Producer
- ( ) Other

I / We agree to be governed by the rules, regulations, constitution, and bylaws of the association as amended from time to time, and to keep a written memorandum of breeding, exact birth dates, and litter size of Finnsheep, and further that I / we will furnish promptly any information concerning same at any time when requested to do so by the association.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Don't forget to fill out the Breeders Directory Form on the reverse side!!*

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The Breeders Directory is included with each issue of Short Tales in a given year from January 1st to December 31st. Your listing will also be included on the FBA Website. The directory is sent to people inquiring about the breed exhibited at fairs etc. with the Finnsheep Breed Display.

Please check:

- Purebred Finns  
 Crossbred FinnX - What crosses? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Website URL: \_\_\_\_\_

*As an organization, we encourage our members to participate in the USDA (Voluntary) Scrapie Flock Certification Program. This is value-add for our customers and will help us eradicate Scrapie in the Finnsheep breed.*

Do you participate in the SFCP?

Flock number: \_\_\_\_\_

- Certified  
 Enrolled -- Enrolled since (year): \_\_\_\_\_

Products and Other Information: 20 words (Over 20 words - \$1 extra per line to be included with Breeders Directory fees):

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### **Flock Prefix**

**One Time Fee** of \$10.00 **per letter**

A flock prefix enables exclusive use of your name or that of your farm or flock on registrations. You could use your last name, the full name of your farm, or some initials.

Please enter your chosen prefix here: \_\_\_\_\_

**Finnsheep Breeders' Association  
HC 65 Box 517  
Hominy, OK 74035**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**