A Foray into Enhanced Genetics

This year, my husband and I decided to bid on one of the consigned Texels at the National Show and Sale in Sedalia, MO. We are very excited to bring Fisher’s Texels’ Champion ewe to our farm and even more excited to see what the offspring results will be from this ewe and our new ram! We have been breeding Texels for five years, but this is the first time we are introducing genetics from across the country to our Eastern-based flock. Enhancing and varying genetics is the story for all animal breeders, but it’s especially exciting when working with a specialty breed like the Texels.

Best of luck to all the Texel breeders out there as they start the breeding process for next year’s lambs.

I am always looking for story ideas and pictures related to Texel sheep. Don’t hesitate to contact me with questions or suggestions on the Texel Times newsletter. To submit pictures or articles, please contact me at breslaufarms@gmail.com.

Sincerely -- Kristin Pike
2013 National Show and Sale Wrap-up

By Bob Adams

The 2013 Texel National Show and Sale was held, once again, at the historic Midwest Stud Ram Sale at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia, Missouri. The Midwest Stud Ram Show is the largest sheep sale held in the US and has been continuously running for over 50 years.

Larry Meade, sale manager for over 50 years, has been very gracious in extending to the Texel breeders the same hospitality and opportunity that he extends to all of the other breeds even though the Texel consignment is a small part of the sale. This year, there were 32 head in the Texel sale and the overall consignment to the Midwest Ram & Ewe Sale was approximately 3000 head. Each year he has allowed the Texels to show first and then sell first in the auction.

The judge for this year’s show was Rob Zelinsky from South Dakota. He was looking for large Texels, that showed signs of strong productivity, impressive muscle mass and would cut out well. Fisher’s Texels, from Idaho, fit what he was looking for very well and it allowed Fishers to have a very good day in the show. They won every class, except one, and showed both the Champion Ram and the Champion Ewe. They also received the Best Consignment Award. Fisher’s had a consignment of 20 head out of the total 32 head consigned.

The “on seat” buyers were down from previous years and the prices, especially on the ram sale, were a little soft. Many of the breeders on hand, at the sale, took advantage of the prices and picked up some good rams at some very reasonable prices.

The sale started with the yearling rams and Fisher’s champion ram sold to Taylor’s Texels, Iowa, for $1100. He was a massive ram that would be a “changer” for a lot of flocks. He was followed by the Res. Champion, shown by Portland Prairie Texels, Minn., that sold to Fishers for $550. Up next was a Fisher Yearling that sold to Silvara Valley Farm, PA. for $300. He was a tall ram and could have been one of the better buys in the sale.

Portland Prairie sold another ram to Fisher’s Texels for $800. Fisher’s sold the next ram to Lillian Leveque, Montana for $300. Following was an Erdman, Ill., entry that sold to Silvara Valley Farm, for $300. The last yearling ram to sell was an entry from Portland Prairie that sold to Lillian Leveque for $300.

There was one fall ram lamb, he was consigned by Fisher’s and sold to Adams Texels, IN. at $750.

The spring ram lamb sale opened with the class winner, consigned by Wilcox Club Lambs, Michigan, and he sold to US Sheep Company, IN. for $200. He was followed by the second place ram lamb that sold to Silverdale Farms, Tom & Karin Watson, OR. He topped the ram sale at $1500. The next two ram lambs brought $425 each, one going to Erdman.
large as some of the other yearling ewes but she was very well balanced and showed tremendous muscle expression.

Fisher’s consigned 3 fall lambs and all three sold for $750 each. Two going to Stubbs Texels, Ill., and one to Wilcox Club Lambs, MI.

There were 7 spring ewe lambs. The first two consigned by Fishers brought $600 each, one going to Watts and the other going to Herman. Fisher’s then sold one to Wherry’s Farm for $575. James Yoder, Paris, Tenn. bid out the next two, one from Taylor at $350 and one from Fisher’s at $250. Taylors Texels sold the last two at $200 each, one going to Stubbs and one to Watts.

The 8 lots of yearling rams averaged $500. One fall ram average $750. Five lots of spring rams average $630.

The two brood ewes average $750. Six lots of yearling ewes averaged $1200. Three fall ewe lambs averaged $750.

Seven lots of spring ewe lambs averaged $396.

The 32 head sold for a total of $21,625 and averaged $675 per head.

The ram sale was a little soft with all but 2 selling to buyers in attendance, and the other 2 sold to Montana on internet bids.

The ewe sale was strong with both brood ewes and the 6 yearling ewes all selling on absentee bids. The 3 fall ewe lambs were purchased by breeders in attendance. Of the 7 spring ewe lambs 3 were purchased by “on seat” buyers and the other 4 by absentee buyers.

Out of the total 32 head selling, 13 were purchased by buyers at the sale and 19 head purchased by absentee buyers.

The Texel ram sale was a little soft but that was the trend for most of the other breeds. The Texel ewe sale was strong and more ewes could have been sold at reasonable prices if they had been available.
At the annual meeting, held on June 24, following the show, Tom Watson was the speaker. He and his wife Karin are Texel breeders from Oregon. They also market a large number of yearling Texel/Suffolk crossbred rams under the name of Silverdale Rams. Tom was a buyer for many years for Superior and has a vast knowledge of the complete sheep industry. He is very involved in the ASI and the National Lamb Feeders Assn. He and Karin are co-secretaries of the National Lamb Feeders Association.

He discussed several issues that involve the packing industry and how they affect the pricing of live lambs. He put a strong emphasis on the fact that each breeder needs to define their own market and determine how to participate in it. He has a very optimistic outlook for the Texel breed. As some of the Texel breeding stock is becoming structurally larger and can finish at a heavier weight, it is increasing their popularity in the West. In the West, most of the lambs come in off grass and go into feed lots to be finished at heavier weights than the Eastern markets. The West looks more for a live lamb in the 140lb. to 155lb. range whereas the Eastern market looks for a live lamb in the 60lb. to 80lb. range. To meet the Eastern ethnic market some weights may be as low as 40lbs. The traditional smaller Texel fits the Eastern market very well.

Watson talked considerably about how hair sheep continue to increase in the East, the South, and the Eastern part of the Midwest, and how it is creating an excellent fit for the Texel ram market. The Katahdin hair sheep are becoming very popular with the commercial farmers in the Eastern market but they are lacking in muscling. Crossing a Texel on the Katahdin is meeting a lot of that need in the terminal market. Tom discussed how that market is really opening up to the Texel breed.

He and Karin are very active in the Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School and he encouraged the Texel Breeders to apply.

Only 26 of the total applicants are selected. Those selected represent a cross section of sheep producers throughout the United States. The school is moved around each year to various locations in the US. Next year it will be in California and those participating will get to go through the Superior plant located in Dixon, California.

Tom is an excellent speaker and the knowledge that he shared with us was immense. To have a breeder with the wealth of knowledge of the total sheep industry that he and Karin have is an asset to the Texel breed. Sharing his knowledge, based on his years of experience, in various segments of the industry, made the evening banquet very enjoyable and very worthwhile. All of us thank Tom for an enjoyable evening.
The winners of the 2nd annual photo contest were announced at the National Show and Sale in Sedalia, MO June 24. Members of the Texel Sheep Breeders Society submitted photographs in two categories. The Breeder’s Choice category looks for images of Texels that are fun, comical, beautiful or just plain sweet. The Critic’s Choice category features photographs that best show the Texels’ attributes. The winning photographer from each category received $50 compliments of the Texel Sheep Breeders Society. Congratulations to our winners!

**Breeder’s Choice Winner:** This photograph (above), was taken by Leslie Roden from New Tazewell, TN.

**Critic’s Choice Winner:** The photo at left was taken by Niki Fisher of Fishers’ Texels in Indian Valley, ID.
Grandfather honors Granddaughter with Grand Champion award

Sam Hampton, pictured at left, had the honor of presenting the award for Grand Champion Overall Breeding Ewe to his granddaughter, Allison Hampton, at this year’s Washakie County Fair in Worland, WY. Allison’s purebred Texel ewe “Minnie” won the grand prize. Allison also showed a Texel cross lamb that won Overall Speckled Face.