The newsletter featuring Texel Sheep – the breed with exceptional muscle development

November 2011, v.8, no.5

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Pictured above: Eli Peterson, 7, of Silverdale Farms with the winning yearling ram from Oregon’s Umatilla County Fair.

Fair season shows Texels at their best

Reports from around the country make it clear that the 2011 Fair Season was exciting for Texel breeders. As awareness of the Texel breed continues to grow, breeders are seeing hard work and good genetics paying off.

In this edition of the Texel Times we begin an ongoing series of profiles of Texel breeders and those involved with the breed. As we are a small group of people spread throughout the country, perhaps we can come to know each other a little better in this way.

Thank you for your feedback on the Texel Times. As always, don’t hesitate to contact me at breslaufarms@gmail.com.

-Kristin Pike

Attention Texel Sheep Breeders!

Please take a moment to review your information on the TSBS Directory to make sure all contact information is current and accurate. Should you need to make any changes please contact Niki Fisher at fishertexels@gmail.com.
Showing Texels at State and County Fairs

Texel Sheep Breeders Society members report exciting recognition at regional fair competitions

Across the country this fall, many Texel breeders have had great results in the show ring at state and county fairs. Some of our members’ exciting results are listed below. Some members, however, report that it can be challenging getting a fair judging of their Texel sheep since the breed is still relatively unknown. Lilly LeVeque of LeVeque Ranch in Cascade, Montana, said the judge at the Montana State Fair said she had never seen a Texel sheep before. Hopefully with more awareness of the breed, breeders will have better judges and more competition! Congratulations to all Texel breeders who earned honors at local and state fair sheep competitions. Here are some highlights from

TSBS members:
* Crystal Retzlaff, of Lena, Wisconsin, said she sold two lambs to a Gillett FFA member last spring. The young girl showed both lambs at the Oconto County Fair in Wisconsin and won Grand Champion carcass with one of the lambs and 3rd blue carcass with the other lamb.

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Get in on the Texel Photo Contest!

The Texel Sheep Breeders Society is asking for submissions for the 2011 Texel photo contest. The winning photo will be displayed on the home page of the TSBS website and will be included in the Texel Times. The winning photographer will gain all sorts of notoriety as being the best photographer in the whole US Texel world!

Photos will be posted on the website and judged by the entire membership through an email voting process. Stay tuned for more details on the contest, but keep those cameras handy!

Sara and Amy Marquette with their Texel sheep during the FFA show at the Minnesota State Fair.
Bret Taylor, (pictured at right), president of the Texel Sheep Breeders Society, has been breeding Texels for almost 10 years. Read more about how he grew from one yearling Texel ram to a record-breaking $3500 ram lamb at the National Show and Sale!

Bret and his wife, Donna, live on their farm in Osceola, Iowa. They have two grown children and both live away from home. Bret has worked for one of the major pipeline companies for 30 years.

Prior to acquiring his first Texels, Bret was running a small flock of crossbred ewes, predominantly Dorset/Suffolk cross. His introduction to the Texel breed was by reading about them in Sheep magazine. In 2002 he went to the National Show & Sale in Springfield, Ill. and purchased a yearling ram from Kerry Richardson. In 2003 he went back to the National Show and Sale and purchased some ewes from Jerry Hess. He continued to attend the National Show & Sale picking up some ewes and stud rams. One of the rams was a Lone Star ram from Velsie Vest from Texas. The Lone Star ram was from Australian breeding and was a good addition to his flock. By that time he had a combination of various bloodlines and they were beginning to click.

In 2007 Bret attended his first National Show and Sale, in Sedalia, as a consignor. He consigned four head. His hopes were to get them sold and hopefully receive $200 to $300 a head for them. His plan was to take that money and buy another good stud ram. The first animal that Bret ever sold at the National Sale was a ram lamb for $3500. That set a record price for a ram at the National Sale at that time. He followed with another ram lamb in the $1500 range and two ewe lambs at a $1000 each. His hopes were to get $1000 to $1200 out of all of them but they brought $7000. Many of the breeders around the sale ring, when the ram sold for $3500, will always remember the look on Bret’s face.

Mallorie Jennings, a high school sophomore from Indiana, started showing Texels three years ago after looking to raise money for a school trip. In August, Jennings’ lambs placed in the top 5 in the 4H Indiana State Fair show.

Junior member, Mallorie Jennings, a sophomore at Triton High School, Bourbon, Indiana, lives on a farm with her parents, Scott and Stacy Jennings and her two sisters, Hanna and Courtney. She participates in softball, basketball, cross country as well as a number of school organizations. She is a 4H club member and also belongs to the FFA.

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Mallorie Jennings, shown with her ewe lamb that took first place and was Resident Champion at the 2011 Indiana State Fair.
Continued …

-Fairs

She competed against 20 lambs that were predominantly Suffolk with some crossbreeds.

* Marquette Farm showed at the Minnesota State Fair and their Texels showed well in the “All other meat breeds” category against Katadins, Dorpers and Shropshires. Their best placing was Reserve Champion Ewe in FFA.

* Tammy and Fred Hemmerly of Silvara Valley Farm in Silvara, Pa. showed at the Wyoming County Fair. In the open class they had the champion ewe and ram. They were also listed as the premier breeder at the fair.

Their granddaughter, Haley Hemmerly, showed in the 4H division of Pennsylvania’s Wyoming County Fair. She won the grand and reserve champions in the market lamb classes.

* Silverdale Farms of Hermiston, Oregon showed 9 head of Texels at the Umatilla County Fair and won in every division. Three generations were involved in showing and preparing the sheep for competition. The Watson’s 7-year-old grandson Eli, showed a ram that won Champion Yearling Ram.

Texels make history at the Umatilla County Jackpot Lamb Competition

By Wally Davis and Robin Delasandro of D&D Texels

The 2011 Umatilla County Jackpot Lamb competition was one to remember for Texel Sheep Breeders. Of the 26 all-breed lambs entered, the judge placed a Texel lamb first in the live judging segment of this competition for the first time in its 21-year history.

In the past, during live judging, judges might place a Texel lamb up in the top of the pack only to place them behind other entries when the final placings were given. These Texel and cross-bred Texels have consistently placed in the top 3 when hanging on the rail in the Carcass Division of the competition.

This year was different. The judge placed a lamb from Fisher Texels in Indian Valley, Idaho, in the first place position. All the Texel breeders held their breath to see if it would stay in first place and after 30 minutes of suspense, the final moves were made and he stayed in first!

After the show, the judge said after he had put his hands on Fisher’s lamb, he judged every other lamb entered against Fisher’s. He knew that the Fisher’s lamb would remain in first position.

Out of the 26 entries, 6 were Texel or Texel cross lambs. Two of these placed in the top 5 of the Carcass Division. Third place was from Heavenly Hills Texels out of Prosser, WA. He weighed 118 pounds, back fat was .10”, leg score was prime+, loin eye measured 3.3” and ADJ was -0.8.

The fourth place lamb was another entry from Fishers and came in with a weight of 108 pounds; back fat .10”, leg score prime; loin eye 2.9” and ADJ -0.5”. The Live division winner came in eighth over all in the carcass division with a weight of 131 pounds; back fat .25”; leg score prime+, loin eye of 3.7”, and ADJ -0.2. The back fat measurement was the reason he stood eighth.

This type of contest is a good tool for sheep breeders to see how your lambs’ carcass yield grade evaluations stand. Congratulations to all the winners.

2011 Indiana State Fair Texel Show

By Bob Adams

The 2011 Indiana State Fair Texel breeding class show was one that all of the Indiana Texel breeders are proud of. There were a total of 33 head, including 10 market lambs, entered in the 4H classes. All 23 of the 4H breeding animals also entered into the open show. There were a total of 84 individual entries, including the pairs, best four head, and the flocks in the open class. Indiana has a beautiful show arena with its white fence and the overhead lighting and it certainly showcased the Texels.

The quality ran deep in all of the classes but the yearling ewe class was especially impressive. There were 16 head showing and not a bad one in the class. A judge will normally cut the class to 5 or 6 fairly quickly. With this class of yearling ewes, he slowly cut it to 10. And then he took his time cutting it to the final 5 head. The final 5 head were very close, and as the judge pointed out, the final placing could have easily been reversed in several places. As the class was moved in place for the side view the ewes were lined up all along one side and across one end of the arena. They were showing in the early evening and it was a very impressive sight, all ewes clipped and
Taylor

It was as if he didn’t know whether he should smile or show no reaction. He had quite a day of selling at his first National Show and Sale. Since then he has consigned at every one of the National Shows and Sales. Although he has never been able to match that first year, his consignments are always good and his sheep always sell in the top tier. Currently he is running around 25 head of registered Texel ewes. Just a few years back he purchased a group of ewe lambs from Fishers, from Idaho, and sold off most of his crossbred ewes.

Bret has a good understanding of how he wants to develop his flock and he knows what he is looking for. He prefers to always use RR stud rams and he is strong in requiring that they have good feet and legs, heavily muscled, and especially in the rear quarters. Breed character is very important to him.

In his market area he is seeing the same thing many Texel breeders are seeing and that is increased interest in the Texel breed. His problem is the same as many other Texel Breeders. There is a strong interest in new people wanting Texel ewes or ewe lambs. Most of the present breeders are trying to increase their flock numbers and they don’t have excess ewes or ewe lambs to sell. The breed needs more breeders, in more areas, but they must be willing to pay the price to pry the ewes away from the present breeders to start new flocks. Fifty to one hundred dollars over market price is not going to buy breeding ewes of the quality needed to start new breeding flocks.

Bret is very enthusiastic about the Texel breed and does everything he can to get rams into the hands of commercial operations. He is serving his second term as President of the Texel Sheep Breeders Society and his intentions are to be in the Texel sheep business for the long term. Bret has an outgoing personality and his love for the Texel breed is very obvious. The Texel breed needs more breeders like Bret.

Indiana

snow white, all high quality and virtually glowing under the overhead lighting. It was very interesting to see some of the other breeders gravitate to the ringside to see the Texel yearling ewes show. One breeder, of another breed, sent an email complimenting the Texel show and how it had improved since they were first shown at the Indiana State Fair. It will be very hard to duplicate the quality of the 2011 show next year.

They would be willing to give her. When she marketed the lambs the money would go toward her trip. I was one of those who responded to her letter. I told her that we didn’t have anything at that time but we would see if we could help her in the future. That summer at the National Show and Sale, in Sedalia, Rachel Gately, from Connecticut, entered a ewe lamb that was not meeting the reserve price. I bought the lamb and when I got her home she immediately got homesick for Rachel. I contacted Mallorie’s parents and told them about the ewe lamb and that I would give her to Mallorie but they would have to get her the next day. The ewe lamb would not eat and was going downhill fast. They came and got the ewe lamb and the lamb adjusted immediately to her new home with Mallorie.

In 2008, Mallorie showed her at the county fair where she was the only Texel present. She drew a lot of attention by being the first Texel at their county fair. That fall we loaned Mallorie a ram lamb for breeding. Mallorie’s ewe had two ram lambs but one of them died at birth.

In 2009 we leased Mallorie two yearling ewes and they were the Champion and Reserve Champion ewes at her county fair and they stood third and ninth at the 4H show at the Indiana State Fair. For her 2010 4H project she acquired 1 market lamb, 2 ewe lambs, and 2 yearling ewes. At her county fair the market lamb was reserve AOB and the ewe lamb was the Champion Texel. Her yearling ewes stood first and second and one was the Reserve Champion. At the Indiana State Fair her market lamb was the Reserve Champion Texel but was disqualified because it had gained one pound.

-Jennings

In 2006 she was nominated and selected as the only student from Indiana to attend a World Leadership Conference in Washington, DC the following year. There were around 400 kids selected from all over the USA and around the world. In an attempt to raise money for her trip, Mallorie sent out approximately 40 letters asking sheep breeders in Indiana if they had any orphan bottle-baby lambs that

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more than the limit of 6 pounds that are allowed from the time of weigh-in until after they are showed, which was one day apart. It seemed improbable that the lamb had gained that amount but that was the decision and it stuck. In the open show her ewe lambs stood 7th and 9th and were the 5th place pair. The yearling ewes stood 7th and 10th and were the 5th place pair. She won the market lamb showmanship and was second in the breeding ewe showmanship.

2011 was to be her year. With the advice of a neighbor boy, who had attended a school sponsored by Purina, held in St Louis, which taught the use of the Purina show feeds, she developed the ability to really feed and fit her animals. They came to the Indiana State Fair fitted just about as well as you could have fitted any sheep. In the 4H show her market lambs placed 2nd and 5th. Her ewe lambs were 2nd and 4th and the 2nd place pair. Her yearling ewes were first and second and the yearling ewe was the champion ewe. She also won both the market lamb and the breeding ewe showmanship classes.

In the open class her ewe lambs were 1st and 4th and they were the 2nd place pair. Her yearling ewes were 2nd and 5th and they were the 2nd place pair. Her ewe lamb was the Reserve champion.

In 3 years of showing at the Indiana State Fair she has developed from being “sort of shy” to a very mature young girl. And her ability to fit and show has increased immensely. Mallorie plans on attending Purdue University and majoring in animal science and would like to work in some area related to livestock. When one sees a young person benefit and grow through 4H and FFA, as Mallorie has, it makes a person appreciate what 4H and FFA projects can do for young people if approached in the proper manner. Mallorie is a true example of the benefits of being a part of those two organizations. And being so well rounded in her other school activities, she is preparing herself for the future, and at the same time making good lifetime memories.