

American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association Newsletter

SPRING 2011



Guard Dogs and Black Welsh charges. Photos by L. Mizner of Chengwatana Farm

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Association Updates

Registration/Lamb Count - If you haven't already made a 2010 list of lambs and registered them, please do so.

Volunteers - Consider putting your name forward to participate and be a board member for a two year term or run for an executive position. Your participation and input are important. All participation can be done by internet and email so this means that your location is not an issue.

Dues - Please remember that your membership fee is due at the beginning of each year.

Current Board of ABWMA 2011

President—Jerry Jones, Rockbridge Farm,
717-235-5097 rock-bridge@cyberia.com

Vice President—Steve Sands

Secretary-Treasurer—Oogie McGuire,
Desert Weyr, 970-527-3573,
oogiem@desertweyr.com

Immediate Past President - Suzanne
Corriera, Fire Ant Ranch, 512-281-4496,
Suzanne@fireantranch.com

Board Members

Andrea Minicozzi	Melanie Grimster
Val Fiddler	Kendra Jones Mabon
Becky Bemus	Heather Morrissey
Tim Wyman	Steve Sands

Newsletter Editor Val Fiddler - Please email your articles and photos for future ABWMSA newsletters to: Val at bvranch@sasktel.net

Danger in the Garden

The long awaited green and grassy shoots of springtime are a real delicacy for any sheep, and the Black Welsh Mountain are no exception. Last spring, my expectant BW ewes were looking longingly over the fence to my garden. I decided it would be an opportunity for them to forage and browse on the remains of last years garden and it's surrounding grass border and shrubs. However, a rhubarb plant was poking up out of the ground. I found an metal washtub and covered it (out of site, out of mind).

The ewes had a marvelous time and soon had the garden cleaned up and their tiny, sharp hooves had thoroughly dug up the soil.

When the rhubarb had outgrown the tub covering it, I built an enclosure of chicken wire and enforced it with long metal stakes pounded several feet in the ground. The sight of the succulent, green leaves must have drove them wild! I discovered the rhubarbs' fence had been ploughed over and the plant eaten, right down to the dirt. I examined all the ewes and none seem to be suffering any ill effects.

A few days later lambs started being born. The first week of lambing seemed normal, except for a mothers who was continually calling for her lamb. I would go out, find the lamb and within minutes it would happen again. I spent some

time observing them and realized that the lamb would not following the mother, and he wouldn't call back to her when she called. He seemed to be off in his own world. At one week old, he had convulsions, difficulty breathing and died suddenly. Two more lambs would succumb, each lived for 2 weeks but exhibited similar behavior along with dilated pupils, periods of lethargy and lack of coordination.

This spring the ewes will do some garden maintenance. However, there are a few plants that I have removed to ensure the flocks safety. Here common plants to watch for:

American Yew	Goldenseal	May-apple
Amer. Mistletoe	Hedge Mustard	Monkhood
Autumn Crocus	Hellebore	Mountain Laurel
Azalea	Henbane	Moonseed
Black Locust	Horse Chestnut	Marsh Merrigold
Buttercup	Indian Tobacco	Pokeweed
Blue Flag	Indian Pink	Snakeroot
Broom	Jimsonweed	Virgins-bower
Castor Bean	Larkspur	Wallflower
Chinese Lantern	Lily of the Valley	Water Hemlock
Chokecherry	Monkhood	Wild Cherry
Cotton	Nightshade	Wild Licorice
Daffodil	Rhododendron	Winter Cress
Foxglove	Rhubarb	Wormwood

Approved North American Inspector for the UK Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association

I am now an Approved Inspector for Black Welsh Mountain sheep and am available to come inspect and consult with members on their flocks.

I will evaluate every sheep in the flock with you and discuss good and bad points as compared to the UK standard. A written evaluation of every sheep can be provided.

Fees are \$20/day per flock plus all expenses. I am willing to travel all over the US and Canada to inspect sheep but I will need to time my travels to be after our own lambing dates.

**Call 970-527-3573
or e-mail oogiem@desertweyr.com
to set up an appointment.**





Grandma Daisy checks on little Xeremiah. I find that the BW have strong family ties. Photo by V. Fiddler



This is Mutiny Bay Matta, 5 years old. He actually figured out immediately how to back out of the wreath and gently remove his horns. I could not figure out how he remembered other than when I put it on him, how to get out of it. Photo by C. Pettis



Showing the spread between the horns of a British Black Welsh Mountain ram (O. McGuire's trip to Wales 2010)



Nolina & Windflower at their new home. Photo by A. Fall

North East Youth Sheep Show July 7-10, 2011

The 2011 North East Youth Sheep Show will be taking place July 7-10, 2011, one week earlier than previous years and is held in the Mallary Complex at the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The youth show is open to all youth 21 years old and younger as of January 1st with all breeds of sheep being eligible. The sheep and exhibitors should arrive by Thursday, July 15th; with animals being penned by 11:00 p.m.

We will also be hosting the National Junior Southdown Youth Show this year and we are pleased to have them. Activities begin on Thursday evening and continue right through the weekend with the finale being the selection

of the Supreme Champions on Sunday afternoon. This year we are going to be offering Virtual Market Lamb class for all youth exhibiting market lambs. Pens will be available early for those youth who plan to come from the All-American.

Anyone interested in sponsoring a t-shirt please visit our website to download the form; they are due by May 1, 2011. The youth show also needs items and volunteers for the food booth and the Fiber Nook at The Big E please visit our website for more information. Donations are also appreciated and help fund the show for the youth. For more information please visit the NES&WG website (www.nesheep.org).

Farewell Old Chum - Hello Lambchops!

This is a story of one of my first experiences with rams when I got BW. I agonized over why this ram was so rammy. It's previous owner told me the circumstances of his unfortunate upbringing.

"This ram lamb and his twin were born to a 11 year old Black Welsh mother. Three weeks later she passed away and the lambs had to be bottle-fed."

There wasn't a choice, but to bottle feed any male ruminant animal is to go down a slippery path. When I first got this handsome ram, he stood out from the flock and was friendly, always coming over to get some attention. I later learned that was an early sign of aggression. He was actually the self-appointed king, coming over to see who was invading his territory.

To make a long story short, the aggressive behavior accelerated rapidly. I knew I couldn't go into the pen he was in. I couldn't even put my arm over the fence to pick up the mineral tub, or he would have rammed me into next week! My brother who sometimes takes care of the sheep, found out the hard way that you never challenge this ram.

So, it was decided that this was very serious

indeed and he would be put down at our next butchering. I wanted him prepared as the others so we could see what the meat of a 4 year old breeding ram was like. Also, to make this an educational experience, I did a necropsy on all the organs, checking especially for urinary calculi which is a common problem in our part of the country.

The examination of the kidneys, bladder and urinary tract showed no signs of calculi. The butcher hung the meat for a few days and the ram was cut and wrapped along with the yearling rams.

If I hadn't wrapped and marked those packages myself, I couldn't have believed the outcome. All cuts, from legs, chops, roast and stew meat were as lean and tender as the yearlings, and the real surprise was the mild flavor of a yearling lamb.

Having to put down this dangerous ram, turned out to be a real learning experience. I feel that I can keep rams over longer now, for several years even. If they don't sell or when characteristics show up that I would rather not use for breeding, they can go to the butcher, and be beautiful "lamb roasts or chops".

Bon Appetite! by V. Fiddler

2011 Events

**May 7 & 8, 2011 38th Annual
MARYLAND SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL**
Howard County Fairgrounds
2210 Fairground Road, MD
www.sheepandwool.org

**May 6-8, 2011 8th Annual
CRANE & SHEEP VIEWING FESTIVAL**
Don't miss one of North America's most spectacular migrations (Sandhill Cranes & Fannin's Mountain Sheep) Contact Town of Faro by phone at 867-994-2728 or by email: erica@faroyukon.ca.

**June 24 - July 1, 2011
OLDS COLLEGE FIBRE WEEK**

Olds, Alberta Canada
<http://www.oldscollege.ca/programs/ContinuingEducation/trades-career-studies/fibreweek/>

**July 7-10, 2011
NORTH EAST YOUTH SHEEP SHOW**
Mallary Complex at the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts. website (www.nesheep.org).

**July 22 -24, 2011
Grasslands CANADIAN SHEEP CLASSIC**
Drake, Saskatchewan Canada
kmacdougall@supremebasics.com
gordsheepdb@sasktel.net