

Texel Times

FEBRUARY 2017

V.13, NO.2

2017: A
good year
to get
ahead



Brutus - a Texel ram lamb - at his first weigh-in. Turn to page 7 for the story.

Hello fellow Texel Sheep Breeders!

Please enjoy the next edition of the Texel Times.

Turn to Page 3 to read more about the new workshops offered by the National Sheep Improvement Program. This is truly a great, FREE, opportunity to learn more about improving the quality and genetics of your flock to help meet *your* goals. Keep reading to see if this is something that might work for your flock.

We have started a new feature in this edition of the Times - a letter from the president of our organization.

This feature is another way that the board is trying to better communication with members.

I send a sincere thank you to all of the people who have continued to contribute articles, pictures and ideas to our publication. Keep 'em coming!

To submit your ideas, articles, pictures or feedback, please contact me at breslaufarms@gmail.com.
Sincerely -- Kristin Pike

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A letter from the President of the Texel Sheep Breeders Society....

Dear TSBS friends and family,

February is a busy month from everyone. I hope that lambing is going well. Those of us in the lazy, grass-fed markets haven't yet had lambs hit the ground. Have no fear, we will be losing sleep soon enough.

2017 is shaping up to be a very good year for our Society and Texels in general. In addition to increasing communication within our organization, the TSBS is reaching out with more shows and sales and new opportunities to talk to the sheep industry in general about your products and our terrific breed. Please consider ways that might speak to you in this regard.

March is the deadline for membership renewal. You should have received a form to renew for 2017 in the mail. Please renew ASAP and update your information. We are looking to make the TSBS more organized – we need your help.

In May, we have the Ohio show and in June, Sedalia. We will have information and important links about these shows in the upcoming new version of the TSBS web page.

We are looking to help individual members get the word out about their purebred stock for sale. To this end, please consider buying in to the breed co-op advertising for the spring.

Lastly, we want to help you tell your stories. This addition of the Texel Times talks about member stories. These (and yours) can be shared along with high quality photos in The Shepherd Magazine under our breed notes as well as the Texel Times. PLEASE, send us your farm and fair photos, your stories and even your ideas. We want to

help you to be known, admired, and successful.

Please keep in mind that the TSBS board is here for our members. We are working on solidifying and clarifying the American Texel breed standards. This will impact you. If you've got thoughts on this standards or this process, please let me know. I want the voices of the members to be heard.

For those of you in snow, be grateful that Texels don't mind the cold so much. For those of you with no snow, be grateful. Have a great month.

With my very best regards,

Judy St. Leger
President, TSBS

NSIP Workshops are Coming!

The National Sheep Improvement Program has now developed workshops specifically targeted towards sheep and meat goat farmers who raise breeding stock for sale to commercial farms. Workshops are geared for those seriously considering enrolling in NSIP to obtain genetic evaluations for specific performance traits in their breeding stock. The workshop is also ideal for folks already participating in NSIP who want to learn more about how NSIP works, traits being evaluated, etc. Commercial farms raising their own replacement animals and those interested in enrolling in on-farm genetic evaluation programs either now or in the future are also welcome to attend.

NSIP now includes evaluations for genetic resistance to parasites in their evaluated traits. Other meat, wool, reproductive, growth traits included can be found at: <http://nsip.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/NSIP-EBV-Descriptions-FINAL-1.16.15.pdf>

Please note that these workshops in VA, WV, PA and NY are not parasite workshops or FAMACHA certification programs or anything of the sort. Information will be focused on the genetic programs available through NSIP to help evaluate seed stock. Space is limited so register soon if these workshops would be constructive for you to attend.

Workshops in VA, WV, PA and NY will take place March 1-11, 2017. The topic is: Getting Your Genetics Right: Converting Performance Records into Relevant Decision-Making Tools

Here are the dates, times and locations:

• March 1 – 9:00-3:30 - Blacksburg, VA. Virginia Tech Alpin-Stuart Arena

500 Plantation Rd. Contact: Dr. Scott Greiner, sgreiner@vt.edu , [540-231-9159](tel:540-231-9159)

• March 3 – 10:00-4:30, Wardensville, WV. West Virginia Univ. Reymann Memorial Farm.

1695 State Rd, 259N. Contact: Dr. Marlon Knights, marlon.knights@mail.wvu.edu, [304-293-1946](tel:304-293-1946)

• March 4 – 9:00-3:30, Kearneysville, WV. West Virginia Univ. Jefferson County Ext Office.

1948 Wiltshire Rd. Contact: Emily Wells, emily.wells@mail.wvu.edu, [304-728-7413](tel:304-728-7413)

• March 6 - 9:30-4:00, State College, PA. Penn State University.

Meats Lab, Porter Rd. Contact: Melanie Barkley, meh7@psu.edu, [814-623-4800](tel:814-623-4800).

• March 9 - 9:30-4:00, Ithaca, NY. Cornell University.

Morrison Hall. Contact: Barbara Jeanne Jones, bjj6@cornell.edu, [607-255-7712](tel:607-255-7712).

• March 11 - 10-4:30, Canton, NY. Cornell Cooperative Extension, St Lawrence County.

2043B State Highway 68. Contact: Betsy Hodge, bmf9@cornell.edu, [315-379-9192](tel:315-379-9192).

FREE REGISTRATION (LUNCH PROVIDED), PLEASE CONTACT INDIVIDUAL LISTED ABOVE FOR EACH LOCATION

Speakers will include:

Russell “Rusty” Burge, NSIP Program Director - intro to NSIP, use of Estimated Breeding Values, Ultrasound demo on live animals comparing visual/hands-on evaluation of live animals vs ultrasound results and discussion of heritability of the production traits being measured

Dr. Anne Zajac, Parasitologist, Virginia Tech - parasite resistance in sheep, genetic component and tools available for management, Fecal egg count demonstration

Dr. Katherine Petersson, Univ. of Rhode Island – services available to Northeast sheep and goat farmers to help them evaluate their animals for genetic resistance to internal parasites

Melanie Barkley, Penn State Ext & NSIP member - personal experience with participation in NSIP and what it has accomplished in her flock

Please note that Mr. Burge will also guide farmers through the free Pedigree Master software. If you wish to practice with the software during the workshops, please let us know ahead of time and we may be able to arrange to preload the software onto your laptop or tablet. We will have a couple of extra laptops available at the Cornell University site for farmers to practice with.

This work is supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

Program Project LNE15-342 and USDA NIFA Hatch Project 1007290. The University of Rhode Island provides equal program opportunity.

*These workshops are being conducted as part of a Northeast SARE project (LNE15-342) entitled, **New Approaches for***

Improving Integrated Parasite Control Strategies for Small Ruminants in the Northeast.

Brody

By Lisa Hendrick

&

*A story about a boy
and his Texel lamb*

Brutus

This is a story about a Texel lamb named Brutus and a young boy named Brody. Brody told his mother, Sarah, that he wanted to join 4-H. Not knowing quite how to accomplish this, but knowing that Brody was interested in sheep, she talked to a local farmer who told her that the Texel breed was great for market lamb production. She located Hilltop Acres Farm in Fonda, New York to see if they would have a lamb for Brody. They sent Sarah and Brody pictures of a young lamb named Brutus.

Brutus grew up fast and before Brody knew it, Brutus was ready to be weaned and move to Brody's house. After arriving, Brutus quickly made friends and settled in.

Brody is an excellent sheep herder and tasked Brutus to learn how to lead with a halter. Brutus easily went along with the idea and before he knew it, it was time for Brutus to go to his first weigh-in where he topped the scales at a whopping 83 pounds! Brody figured Brutus was gaining almost 1 pound a day and by fair time should weigh in at 120 lbs. The perfect weight for a fat Texel lamb.

The Texel breed is known to be parasitic resistant which enables the lambs to grow quickly on grass with very little grain. They generally hang at 110-115 pounds with a hanging weight of 65-70 pounds.

Fair time arrived and Brody went quickly to work preparing Brutus for show. Texels are shown "slick sheared" so there isn't very much primping. Just a simple shear and wash and they are ready for the ring. Brutus wasn't so sure about getting a bath, but his docile temperament made it easy for Brody to wash him. More importantly, if a Texel gets dirty before show, they are easily spot washed and quickly dry due to the lack of wool.

The first class for Brody and Brutus was "showmanship." This class not only tests the ability of the showman to "show off" his lamb, but also show the judge their knowledge of the breed and other various questions not limited to anatomy, healthcare and much more. The pair was top of their class bringing home a 2nd place ribbon.



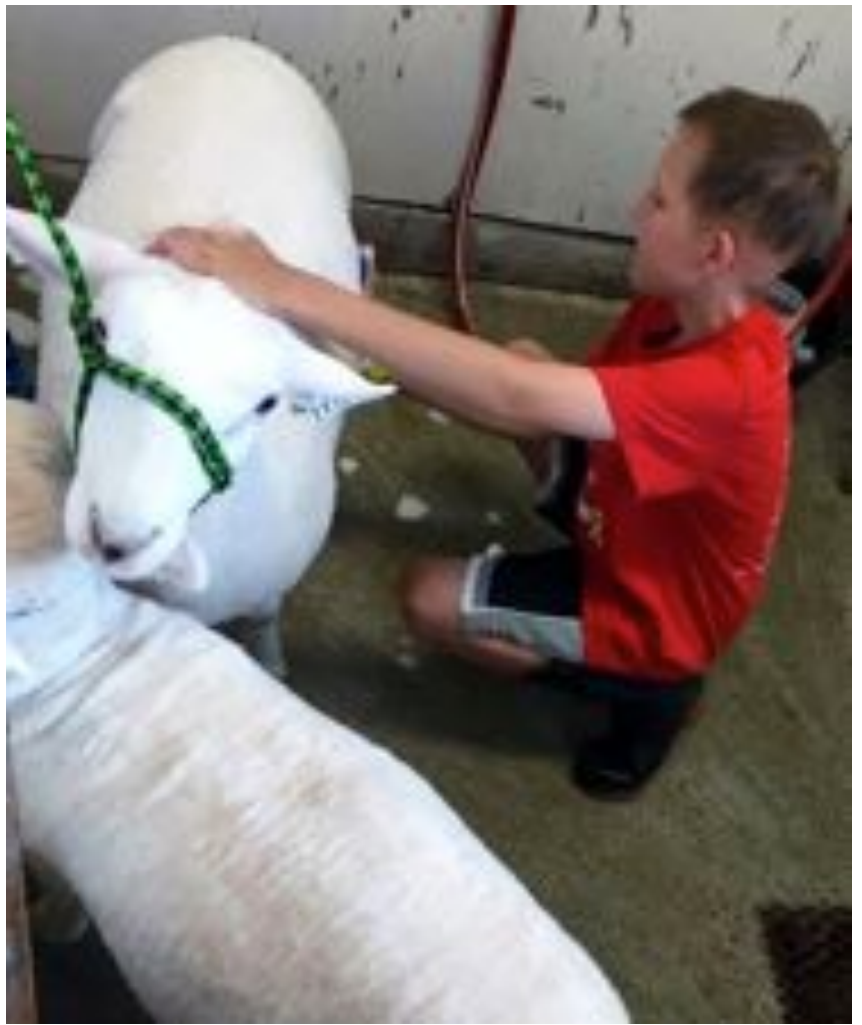
Brody and Brutus place 2nd in showmanship.

The next class was the market lamb class. Brutus weighed in at the top of his class. Even though Brutus was not the tallest in the class, he was showing off the well-known Texel characteristic of large leg muscling and thick loin. Because Brutus was slick shorn, there was no hiding his perfect composition.

The judge took his time feeling all of the muscles and checking for any extra fat. Brutus was solid, from the top, down his loin and throughout his leg muscling. Brutus was chosen as Reserve Grand Champion Market lamb. Brody was so proud of his lamb!

The last big event was the auction for all market livestock. This included beef, hogs, goats, and lambs. Brody proudly took Brutus into the ring knowing that he had raised the perfect market lamb. When it was Brody's turn, the auction lit up and Brutus started at \$1.00 pound and quickly ended up at \$8.50 per pound! That would give Brody \$1,020!

Brody's success has encouraged him to purchase another Texel project lamb for the fair in 2017. He will be waiting for his next success story.



At right: Brutus gets his first bath.



Above: Brutus as a baby.

All pictures courtesy of Lisa Hendrick and Gretchen Subik

More About Texels:

Originating from the Netherlands early in the nineteenth century, the Texel breed is known for their superior meat quality and naturally lean fat content. Texel lambs have been at the top if not the winner in many carcass contests. In comparison to the black face lambs, they require #15 less feed to produce #60 of gain, and are known for large muscling and loin-eyes. Texel's are also known for their docile disposition and gentle temperaments. Because of these traits, Texel rams have become the number one choice for terminal sires and in large commercial herds. Texel ewes are also known for being easy keepers. They are winter hardy and easily raise lambs with only

A Visit With Scottish Sheep

By Patrea Pabst
Beaver Creek Texels

When I went to Scotland this past June, I saw a lot of two things: sheep and rain. In fact, I learned that in Scotland, saying it was going to be a sunny day did not mean it wasn't going to rain - just that you could see the sun through the rain. And it was cold. I had to wear my ski jacket! Lots of grass. No predators. A border collie on every farm. Perfect sheep country. Scotland is a gorgeous country, with really nice people and superb Scotch whiskey. I wasn't a fan until I tried some of the smoky whiskeys from the islands, like Talisker. But I came back to the States knowing there was nothing better!

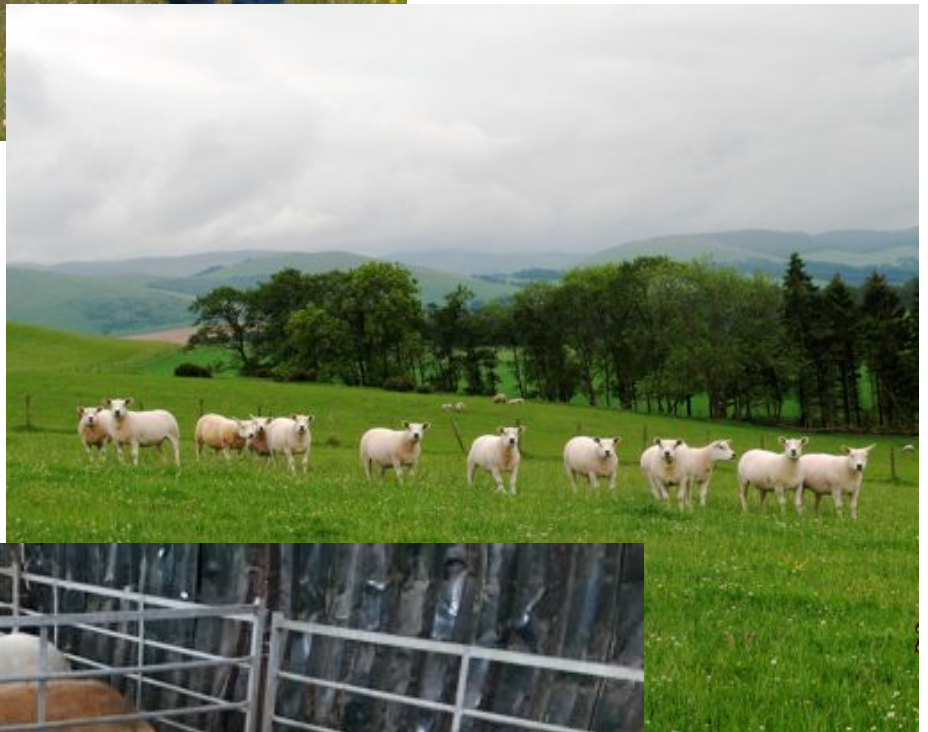
I was on a trip to ride horseback through the highlands, so I had a different view than most people. We covered about 120 miles in five days, riding on sturdy Highland Ponies and one Arabian. We watched for Nessie in Loch Ness but we were disappointed -- no sighting. I was also treated to a visit to two Texel sheep farms, Cambwell Farm owned by Robert Laird and his family, and Glenway Farm, owned by Ian Murray, whose dad did a great job showing me the sheep.

There is an incredible variety of sheep in Scotland, ranging from the Bronze Age haired Soay Sheep to the modern Texel. The Scottish blackface is ubiquitous. The Bluefaced Leicester is a tall very old breed of sheep used for crossing with the blackface to get more size and higher quality wool. The Texel is the major terminal sire for meat production. The moors are full of many different sheep, most crossbred, that are left out on the moors most of the time, only being rounded up to harvest the lambs.

The Texels in Scotland are AMAZING. They have length, muscle, size, and exude power. The following are just a few of my photographs - many more can be found in the albums on my Facebook page for Beaver Creek Texels. We are very excited to be importing semen to the US from Scotland in 2017.



Scottish Texels



Above: Robert Laird of Cambwell Farm in Scotland, stands in one of his fields with his Texel ram lambs.
At right: Texels in the Scottish countryside
Below: More Scottish Texels

All photographs courtesy of Patrea Pabst

