

Texel Times

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Texels Making Waves



2015 Champion Ram at the National Texel Show and Sale. Image provided by Rachel Gately

Hello fellow Texel Sheep Breeders!

Please enjoy the next edition of the Texel Times.

You will find an important article featuring the work of Dr. Scott Bowdridge at West Virginia University. Dr. Bowdridge is studying Texels to see whether they could be the most efficient terminal sire breed with parasite resistance. Awareness of his research is critical to Texel Breeders.

There is also some important information on the National Sheep Improvement Program and the Big Ohio Show and Sale which will be featuring Texels for the first time ever!

I send a sincere thank you to all of the people who have continued to contribute articles, pictures and ideas to our little publication.

I look forward to working with the members of the Texel Sheep Breeders Society to produce more newsletters soon!

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

Sincerely -- Kristin Pike

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Important Research on Texel Parasite Resistance and Carcass Merit

Can Texels be the most efficient terminal sire breed with parasite resistance?

Dr. Scott Bowdridge would like to find out.

By Judy St. Leger

I'd like to introduce a rising champion of the Texel breed, Dr. Scott Bowdridge. Scott was born on a small sheep farm in Southern California where they raised around 100 Rambouillet and Suffolk ewes. In 1998, he earned a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Education from Chico State. After graduation, life took him to Lincolnville, Maine where he ran a farm that focused on raising rare breeds of livestock. There, he began a master's program in animal science at the University of Maine studying parasite resistance in Katahdin Sheep. He earned his PhD in animal science from Virginia Tech in 2009.

Scott shifted to West Virginia University in 2011 where he is now an assistant professor. His lab focuses on parasite immunology. In 2016, Scott established a starter Texel flock to generate lambs for research and outreach efforts. He is interested in developing ways to better market, promote and use Texel sheep in the US.

His particular field of research is aimed at identifying mechanisms of parasite resistance in sheep. Largely, his work has utilized St. Croix sheep as a model of complete parasite resistance. The team at WVU has identified immune mechanisms in St. Croix sheep that contribute to their enhanced killing of larval stages of the parasite *Haemonchus contortus*. They have attempted to translate this work to methods altering immune response in susceptible breeds through dietary supplementation. In this step, he used Dorset crossbred ewes

from a producer in southwest Pennsylvania to test the effect of a dietary supplement on reducing parasites in those sheep. These ewes had some Texel influence (25 - 50%). While this project did not generate results supporting the hypothesis, what they were able to learn from this experiment was that percentage Texel sheep have a remarkable amount of parasite resistance.

Here is Dr. Bowdridge's explanation of his research:

We compared fecal egg count (FEC) data from this project to FEC data from parasite-resistant St. Croix and parasite-susceptible Suffolk sheep. What is important to note in this situation is that facilities at WVU permit the development of sheep that are naive or have never been exposed to the parasite *H. contortus*. This allows us to evaluate response to a primary infection and secondary or challenge infection. As seen in figure 1, Texel crossbred lambs had lower FEC than Suffolk lambs, albeit higher than St. Croix. However during the challenge infection (Figure 2), FEC of Texel crossbred does not get higher than 500, considerably lower than Suffolk lambs. Currently, Katahdin sheep are the most popular breed in the US with the greatest annual number of registrations. Yet commercial Katahdin producers have struggled with the lack of carcass merit and are in need of a terminal sire that will maintain parasite resistance, as many producers graze their lambs. Our thought was to consider Texel rams as "The Terminal Sire with Parasite Resistance." In collaboration with colleagues at Virginia Tech we mated Texel, Suffolk and Katahdin rams to

Katahdin ewes and half of the lambs were maintained in a dry lot, the remaining half were grazed on pasture. The dry lot lambs were shipped to WVU and evaluated for parasite resistance, gain and carcass merit. Table 1 indicates that Texel sired lambs have equivalent or greater carcass merit as Suffolk sired lambs. While we observed no difference in parasitological parameters during a controlled infection, Texel sired lambs had greater gain on pasture and required less deworming than Suffolk-sired lambs. ***Bottom line, in a grass based production scenario Texel sires not only offer superior efficiency but can improve carcass merit of crossbred lambs while not losing parasite resistance.***

Why are Texel sheep parasite resistant? When we compared Suffolk, Texel crossbreds and St. Croix we found interesting results when worm counts were evaluated upon slaughter. As expected St. Croix had extremely low numbers of adult worms in their abomasum, however an equivalent number of adult worms were found between Suffolk and Texel crossbreds (Figure 3). This indicates that Texel sheep permit establishment of adult parasites yet affect ability of adults to reproduce or directly attack eggs. While this is an interesting academic line of inquiry, what matters most to producers is that ***Texel sheep have an ability to lower FEC resulting in pastures with less parasitic contamination, thus lowering infection.***

It is my aim to establish a flock of purebred, registered Texel sheep enrolled in NSIP genetic evaluation at WVU. Over the next several years we would focus our efforts on:

- **Determining the mechanism of parasite resistance in Texel sheep**

- **Demonstrating how Texel sires can be used in both conventional and organic production systems as parasite resistant terminal sires**
- **Collecting FEC data and submitting to NSIP to calculate FEC EBV for the breed Selection emphasis on low FEC and other desirable traits**
- **Evaluating sires through our annual ram test program which includes determination of efficiency as measured by residual feed intake (RFI)**
- **Making seed stock available to producers nationwide**

Ultimately the establishment of this flock will serve to address the role of Texel sheep as the

The National Sheep Improvement Program

Helping Breeders to improve and advance their flock

To achieve something in life requires one to set some goals. As a Texel breeder, what are your goals? Are you looking for increased growth rate? Do you want carcasses with more lean meat yield? To be able to track one's progress towards goals, a system of measurement is needed. This is where the National Sheep Improvement Program fits into a breeding program.

Once enrolled, the basic data collection would be birth weights, weaning weights, post weaning weights and loin eye scan information. The weighing is done on the farm by the breeder and the loin eye scanning is done by a NSIP approved scanner. This information is entered into the NSIP data base, calculations are performed and returned to the breeder in the form of ebv's (estimated breeding values). The calculation of ebv's takes into account birth status (single, multiple), raised status (single, multiple), sex, loin scanning information, family linkages, and other variables in order to rank the animals in your flock for genetic merit. Ebv's not only allow you to rank your animals and track your flock's progress, it also helps buyers decide which animal best suits their needs. An increasing number of buyers want NSIP data before they will consider buying an animal.

If you are wanting to measure the progress of your flock and to provide that information to customers, enroll your flock today. Go to www.nsip.org to learn more and enroll. If you have questions about NSIP feel free to call Charlie Wray, the NSIP Texel coordinator at 507-495-3265.

Big Ohio Show and Sale Welcomes Texels For the First Time

By Rachael Gately

Exciting News! Texels are gaining more exposure and have been added to the lineup for the 2017 Big Ohio Sale for the first time. The sale is May 11-13 at the Preble County Fairgrounds in Eaton, Ohio. The deadline for entries is March 10, 2017.

Texels will be shown Thursday, May 11 at 9am and sold the next day, Friday, May 12 at 11am.

This sale is exciting for the Texel breed as it provides an opportunity to sell and purchase Texels closer to the East Coast. This sale also brings together more than fifteen breeds, creating a great opportunity for transportation around the country. The sale features Dorpers and Katahdins as well, which in combination with Texels will attract commercial breeders looking for terminal sires.

The Big Ohio Sale, managed by Banner Sale Management Service, works hard to promote expansion and awareness of the breeds featured. Thus they require a specific ram to ewe ratio from consignors. Keep this in mind when thinking about your consignments. Making ewes available to interested buyers allows our relatively small breed to expand and gain involvement.

Never Underestimate the Power of Texels!

By Brady and Blake Campbell

They may be tiny, but they sure are mighty!

I'm Blake Campbell, currently a junior at The Ohio State University in the College of Food Agricultural and Environmental Sciences majoring in Agriscience Education and this is my brother, Brady Campbell, who is a 2nd year Master's Graduate student in the Department of Animal Sciences within the college.

We own and operate Campbell Brothers 2 where we raise purebred Texel sheep and purebred Berkshire, Hereford, Poland China, Spotted, and Tamworthswine. Located in Southeastern Ohio, we are fourth generation farmers focusing on niche marketing of purebred livestock.

This year at the Ohio State Fair the sheep department offered a class for all the other meat breeds, AOB Meat, which was developed for breeds that did not already have an existing breed show.

This year two different sheep breeds were exhibited, Dorpers and Texels, with our family exhibiting the only flock of Texels. Coming into the show with the only "off" breed seemed to be a bit of a disadvantage and we were hopeful that we would be competitive due to our difference.

We stood competitively within the ram and yearling ewe classes. Coming into the Early Spring Ewe Lamb class, we were excited to see what may happen as our ewe lamb seemed to have some size and dimension compared to the rest of the class. The judge began placing the class of 11 ewes and then approached the top 5 in the class. 5th; wow is this right?, 4th; still doing good, 3rd; we're still in this, 2nd; heart pounding, and then the judge motioned us to the top of the class as the Texel ewe lamb placed 1st (Insert high five). Now it was time for champion ewe, with smiles as we were thankful to be walking into the show ring with the only

Texel in the final drive. After what seemed to take forever, the judge began making his final remarks on the ewe classes of the AOB Meet sheep. With no hesitation, the judge announced that Grand Champion went to the Dorper Yearling Ewe. Next was Reserve Champion. This became a harder decision for the judge as he explained that there were 3 females in the final drive that were worthy of this honor. After granting each of the 3 females he previously described, he noted at the end that he was typically not a Texel sheep man, but he would make an exception as our Texel ewe was one of the, if not the most, free moving and complete Texels he had ever seen. So with that he announced that the Texel Ewe Lamb will be the Reserve Champion Ewe in the AOB Meat Sheep show at the Ohio State Fair. My brother and I had smiles from ear to ear as cheers from the crowd and show ring burst out. The mighty little Texel ewe did it! This was a great day not only for our family, but also for the Texel sheep breed. Brady and I plan on continuing the growth and development of our Texel flock and hope to make an impact in the sheep industry with this mighty breed. Be sure to check out our Facebook page at Campbell Genetics and don't hesitate to contact us to talk about this awesome breed of sheep. We also have breeding stock for sale. Sheep industry watch out, the Texel sheep breed is up and coming!



Fair Results from 2016

Compiled by Nikki Fisher

Every year the number of Texel sheep being shown in county and state fairs nationwide continues to increase. Texels are making a name for themselves and the breed is slowly gaining recognition. Here are some of the results from fair competitions featuring Texels over the past year.

WALLOWA COUNTY FAIR, OREGON

Kevin Plew, a junior Texel Sheep Breeders Association member, received Champion honors with a Texel yearling ewe that he showed in the Breeding Division at the Wallowa County Fair in Aug. 2016.

Kevin also had the Reserve Champion Spring Ewe Lamb and the Reserve Grand Champion over all breeding ewe.

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

Showing against Katahdins and Tunis, Amy Marquette of Marquette Texels in Buffalo, Minnesota, won the All Other Meat Breed Grand Champion Ewe and Reserve Champion Ram at the Minnesota State Fair FFA Sheep Show. The ram was purchased from Heller Texels in 2015 as a lamb and the ewe was sired by a ram purchased from Fisher Texels.



Brother and Sister Team Craig and Amy Marquette of Marquette Texels in Buffalo, Minnesota. On the left is pictured their All Other Meat Breed Grand Champion Ewe and on the right is their Reserve Champion Ram at the Minnesota State Fair FFA Sheep Show.

INDIANA STATE FAIR

Mekena Morgan, 11, won Jr. Showmanship at the Indiana State Fair.

Abigale Clift, 5, won Breeding Ewe on a Show Line Lead. Her family started a Texel flock a few years ago to show in their county and state fairs.

Mike Bokelman won the Champion Ewe and Ram.



Abigale Clift



**BANNOCK COUNTY 4-H FAIR,
IDAHO**

In a tiny town named Downey, Idaho, Texel sheep made themselves known at the Bannock County 4-H Fair.

Colt Pavlis showed a Texel/Hampshire cross market lamb taking fifth in Showmanship and Reserve Champion in the Market Class.

Nate Pavlis placed third in Showmanship and had the Grand Champion Ram in the Breeding Class competition.

Robert Pavlis placed seventh in Showmanship and placed third, with a Texel ewe, in the Breeding Class competition.

Olivia Farey Oliver placed sixth in Showmanship and in the Market Class took the Grand Champion honors with a Texel wether. In the Breeding Class Olivia was awarded the Reserve Champion Ewe ribbon.

Colt, Nate and Robert are brothers and Olivia is their cousin. Their grandmother, Mary Woodworth said, “The judge actually talked to the audience a little about the Texel breed in a positive way. And now the high school AG teacher is inquiring about purchasing a Texel/Suffolk ram.”



Mekena Morgan with her Champion Ewe at the Indiana State Fair.