

American Lamb Meatball and Orzo Soup

Recipe by "Homemade"  
Total Time: 55 min  
Servings: 4



Ingredients

For the Meatballs:

- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs (or almond flour for gluten-free)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon each ground cumin and dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon each smoked paprika and salt
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

For the Soup:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 6 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup dry orzo pasta
- 4 cups fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon

For the Creamy Tahini-Miso Base:

- 3 tablespoons tahini

- 1 tablespoon white miso paste
  - 1/4 cup water
- To Serve: Lemon wedges and Fresh dill chopped

Directions

1. Make the meatballs: In a large bowl, mix together all meatball ingredients until just combined. Roll into small, bite-sized meatballs (about 1 inch). Heat a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat with a drizzle of olive oil. Sear the meatballs in batches until browned on all sides (they don't need to be fully cooked). Remove and set aside.
2. Sauté the aromatics: In the same pot, add the onion, garlic, carrot, and celery. Sauté for 3-4 minutes until softened and fragrant.
3. Simmer the soup: Add the broth and bring to a gentle boil. Stir in the orzo and return the meatballs to the pot. Simmer for 10-12 minutes, until the orzo is tender and the meatballs are cooked through.
4. Prepare the creamy base: In a small bowl, whisk together tahini, miso paste, and water until smooth.
5. Finish the soup: Reduce the heat to low. Stir the tahini-miso mixture into the soup, followed by the chopped spinach and lemon juice. Simmer for 2-3 minutes until the spinach is wilted and the broth is creamy.
6. Serve: Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with fresh dill or parsley.

Christy Green  
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January 2025

2024 Missouri Sheep Producers Annual Conference

On November 23, 2024 Missouri Sheep Producers members and non-members gathered at Lincoln University George Washington Carver Farm in Jefferson City for the annual conference. There was approximately 90 attendees for the day. The day was full of speakers along with a youth program taking place simultaneously.



The day started with presentations Lynn Fahrmeier, ASI board representative, giving a update from American Sheep Industry, Chris Boeckmann gave an update on LU Agricultural Program. The vendors gave a quick description of the services that they had to offer and were available that day.

The annual meeting and elections of board members was held.



All attendees were served a lamb gyros lunch with baked beans and chips prepared by Dana Jenkins, Christy Green and Brenda Lane. Lois Wissman donated homemade apple pie for everyone as well. During the lunch time the 2023 starter flock recipients Henry Brescheien and Anna McLaughlin presented their year reports. Each recipient did a great job and had lots of information to share with the attendees.

After lunch Jennifer Lutes- Field Specialist in Agricultural Business presented a “Market Outlook and Preferences.”Reuben Hendricks, a MSP member and owner of Cabriejo Ranch presented ”Building up our operation” about what they have been doing on the ranch to gain profit.

During the time of the youth program Klarissa DeOrnellis lead the youth through activities about taking care of sheep, different parts of sheep and wool products. Youth also got to participate in several craft

projects. In addition to the meeting there were multiple vendors setup that attendees could go and visit to talk about different breeds of sheep, fencing, feeding products or working facilities. Lois Wissmann displayed different wool products and fleeces as well.

All attendees went home with a nice cooler bag with window decals and a pen inside. The board would like to thank everyone for attending and look forward to seeing you at future MSP events.

Annual Meeting held during Annual Conference

The board of Missouri Sheep Producers held the annual meeting during the annual conference. The treasurer’s and secretary’s reports were accepted as read. Board members were elected. The board members for 2025 are:  
President: Cord Jenkins  
Vice-President: Mac Finley  
Treasurer: Deb Minish  
District 1: Travis Ellis  
District 2: Matt Anderson  
District 3: Taylor Kemp  
District 4: Dan Rhoades  
District 5: Becca Roberts  
District 6: Elizabeth Keifer  
At-Large: Becca Ancell, Britton Francis, Ray Jones, Larry Henneke

The board will be working to put together different events throughout the year including a field day so if you have any suggestions or resources available please let us know by contacting Christy Green at [mosheepproducers@gmail.com](mailto:mosheepproducers@gmail.com).

## Message from MSP President

Greetings MSP Members! I hope you and your family had an enjoyable holiday season and that you are ready for the new year! It looks like good old winter has shown up for the entire state. I hope you and your family are able to navigate the winter weather with little to no issues on the farm; the snow, ice, and cold can make farm chores difficult and time consuming. Remember, spring will be here before you know it and in a



short 2 - 6 weeks we should be frost seeding legumes on our pastures. Check out this MU Guide sheet for more information on frost seeding in our state: <https://extension.missouri.edu/news/frost-seeding-improves-yield-quality>

Also, this time of year kicks off lambing season! My girls and I purchased some bred ewes to add to our flock over the Christmas holiday. They should start lambing in the next two weeks; my three girls are very excited! This can be a very exciting and stressful time of year; I would encourage you to have your lambing supplies purchased, sorted, and ready to go. I hope your lambing seasons are successful and that you

are able to wean a large lamb crop this spring!

As we move through the winter season and into spring, please remember to support 4-H and FFA members with their sheep endeavors. The spring season is very exciting for students who are considering lamb projects for 4-H and FFA. Be available and willing to help students who are interested in the sheep industry. My three girls' 4-H club is very eager to see baby lambs. So, as our ewes start lambing, we will provide an opportunity for those students to be in the barn and see the lambing process first-hand. Additionally, I have FFA members who are just as excited. I would encourage you to provide opportunities for your local 4-H clubs and FFA chapters to be involved with the sheep industry in your area.

Cord Jenkins, MSP President

## 2024 Missouri Sheep Producers FFA State Public Speaking Contest



The 2024 Missouri Sheep Producers State FFA Speaking contest was held at Margaritaville Resort on Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup>. Christy Green, executive director of Missouri Sheep Producers and chairman of the event said, "The contest is designed to develop individual public speaking skills and to promote interest in and awareness of the many different aspects of the sheep industry." Participants earned the right to compete at the state contest by winning their respective district competitions. District winners are, Central – Bailey Wheeler – Osceola FFA, South Central – Chloe Barton– Dora FFA and Southeast – Sandy Miranda – East Prairie FFA. Results of the competition were as follows; First Place – Kale Pollard – North Shelby FFA, Second Place – Emily Fox – Mt. Vernon FFA, Third Place – Ben Brubaker – Chillicothe FFA. Christy Green, MSP Executive Director, presented each of the participants with a plaque and a check from MSP. Pictured from left to right are Christy Green, Kale Pollard, Emily Fox, Ben Brubaker, Chloe Barton, Bailey Wheeler and Sandy Miranda. Thank you to the judges, Britton Francis, Fonda Underwood and Ali Cannefax.

## LU 2025 Shearing School

Lincoln University shearing school will be March 5-6, 2025 at Carver Farm in Jefferson City, MO. Registration is online for \$125 and must be done by February 14, 2025. Use the QR below to register.



## 2025 Midwest Stud Ram Sale

The Midwest Stud Ram Sale will be here before we know it. Check the website, <https://www.midwestsale.com/>, for registration deadlines and sale dates. There will be consignors and purchasers from the east to the west coast. Missouri Sheep Producers receives part of the proceeds to help fund yearly educational activities around the state. Please consider consigning or purchasing from this sale.



# June 9-14, 2025

**Sedalia, Missouri**  
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## MOKATS

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And only very small incremental advancements can be made over a few years. So why keep resetting? The goal is to focus on real improvements.

Solar grazing has been an interesting learning experience for Fagerman Farms. Releasing sheep into a several thousand-acre paddock and a sea of solar panels was intimidating. They were not sure what to expect on these solar grazing contract lots in Alabama. Because they were unable to do rotational grazing, parasites were a concern. Occasionally, some sheep did not perform well and eventually died. However, they are extremely pleased that most of their Australian and American White Sheep survived and thrived! With the increasing need for sheep to graze solar panel areas, it was good to see these breeds hold up in this low maintenance situation.

When interested sheep producers ask Daniel what the biggest single differentiating factor for the Australian and American White Sheep is, he says it is the meat, and more specifically, the fat quality. Both meat taste and fat quality have an impact on consumers' lamb eating experience.

From a lamb meat marketing perspective, he feels Australian and American White lambs are not competing with other breeds of lamb. The biggest competition is the consumer's preference to select for other meat types such as chicken, beef, pork, fish, and other proteins over lamb. Lamb is not even 1% of America's meat consumption. Breeders should be working together to give the end consumer what they will en-

joy on their dinner plate. The consumer never asks, "How worm resistant was that lamb?", "How well did they shed?", "What color were their hooves?", and a host of other non-food preparation questions! These traits are important to sheep producers, just not consumers. There are a massive 340 million Americans potentially waiting to consume lamb.

From a sheep producers' perspective and one of the most attractive aspects of the Australian White Sheep is the extensive scientific work done on the breed to capitalize on preferable eating characteristics. Specific focus on improving animal traits that create an exceptional lamb meat eating experience promotes consumer preference for these breeds' meat products. And producers also want an animal that performs on the farm!

Based on Daniel's observations, he states the Australian White, in general, is what the well-established Katahdin Hair Sheep breed strives to be in terms of growth and confirmation. However, reviewing a side-by-side comparison, the maternal traits of the Katahdin shouldn't be discounted. On average, Katahdin's rear more lambs to weaning than the Australian White Sheep. The cross between the two (Australian White Sheep and the Katahdin Hair Sheep or any hair breed) has been a big success among most, if not all, breeders. The F1/F2 cross lambs (AWUSA recognizes and registers these as American White Sheep) will likely outperform their counterparts in many aspects. All indications point to the fact that the purebred American White Sheep (a fifth cross of an Australian White with another breed) will be slightly superior to the full blood Australian White and, if bred correctly, will include improved lamb count while not compromising what makes an Australian White so great.

## In closing

As we move forward on this sheep breed journey, our AWUSA goal is to educate and encourage our breeder members to set the standard for the lamb meat product intended for the consumer, instead of just selling a novelty breed stock. It will be exciting to see what the future holds as the number of Australian and American White Sheep grows, making more animals available for farmers to incorporate their genetics into their current flocks.

**Author Information:**  
Kim Harrison co- owns Harrison Valley Farms with her husband, John. Their farm is in mid-Missouri, about 40 miles north of Jefferson City, Missouri State capital. They currently raise and market Australian and American White Sheep, and South Poll Grass Cattle seed stock. Kim has spoken at small farm focused conferences as well as written articles on a variety of small farm topics. Her email is [KHarrison@Harrisonvalleyfarms.com](mailto:KHarrison@Harrisonvalleyfarms.com)

*A special note about The Shepherd magazine from Kim: Rebecca Miller is now the Publisher/Editor of The Shepherd magazine, taking over this responsibility from long time publisher Cat Urbigkit. This magazine has been a valuable resource to me on my journey as a shepherd, providing timely, helpful health and flock management information. I sincerely hope that you are a current subscriber to this magazine. If not, please consider subscribing to support the publisher's effort to make useful and interesting information available to sheep producers.*



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Mohan Acharya and Tanner Tipton  
Lincoln University of Missouri

There are several methods available to determine pregnancy in small ruminants. The following are some of the commonly used methods.

1. **Urine test:** P-test is a simple and quick method to monitor pregnancy using urine samples. It is packed in strip form. The test is run by dipping the P-test strip directly into a urine sample. This can be performed in the second and third trimesters (45 days post breeding in sheep). Accuracy is about 97.4%. For details please visit: [emlababgenetics.com](http://emlababgenetics.com) by scanning the code below or visit this link:



[https://www.emlabgenetics.com/  
product-page/p-test-strip-sheep-goat](https://www.emlabgenetics.com/product-page/p-test-strip-sheep-goat)  
-1

- 2. Pregnancy-associated glycoproteins (PAGs):** Detection of PAGs in blood serum has become more common in recent years. Available in the market as Alertys, BioPRYN®, and UDEXX assay. For this, the producer needs to send a sample to the lab for analysis. Samples can be sent in as early as 30 days after breeding. Please contact your local vet/veterinarian to see if any of these tests are available. **Pregnostx** is available for on-site (at home) pregnancy testing and is approved for cattle, goats, and sheep – delivering accurate results in less than 30 minutes. It testing for pregnancy-

specific protein B. Please scan the following QR code or visit this link for the detailed process: [://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cbe5a884d8711d123317dab/t/654240bc40f02b36a8b34898/1698840765694/Pregnostx+Instructions+2023.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cbe5a884d8711d123317dab/t/654240bc40f02b36a8b34898/1698840765694/Pregnostx+Instructions+2023.pdf)



- 3. Progesterone test:** Blood or milk samples can be used for the detection of progesterone concentration. Blood samples can be collected 21 days post- breeding, and milk progesterone tests can be done 22-26 days after mating with an accuracy of 88 – 99 % accuracy. This can be done in local vet clinics and other veterinary labs.

**4. Ultrasound:** Requires probe (transrectal or transabdominal) and ultrasound machine. Generally performed by technical experts. Most accurate method that will provide information on expected pregnancy date. Transrectal probe can detect pregnancy as early as 17-19 days but transabdominal can detect in 25-28 days.

[Ms. Tanner Tipton is currently working at Lincoln University as an Extension Associate. Dr. Mohan Acharya is a small ruminant specialist for Missouri and will be available as a guest speaker for sheep and goat events at no costs. His email is [AcharyaM@lincolnu.edu](mailto:AcharyaM@lincolnu.edu) . This article is made possible through NCR SARE partnership grant].

## OZARK HIGHLAND FIBER FESTIVAL

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- Supported Long Draw
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- Fiber Processing and Blending Tools

## ASK ABOUT BEING A *volunteer or vendor*

Finding the American White Sheep—The Journey Continues

Written by Kim Harrison, Harrison Valley Farms

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Meet the Boys! March 2024 Australian White Rams born on Fagerman Farms.

Two years ago, the article I wrote introducing the American White Sheep to "The Shepherd" readers was published in the December 2022 issue. Then, in April 2023 a reprint of this article appeared in the Missouri Sheep Producer's quarterly newsletter. That article, titled "Finding the American White Sheep—A Journey for Many," featured several people's journey to find this new to the USA sheep breed—mine; Missouri Sheep Producers (MSP) members Claire Sandbothe, sheep producer, and Mark Fechtel, one of the American White Sheep USA (AWUSA) Board Directors; and Daniel Fagerman, American White Sheep breed founder and the sheep breeder to first import Australian White Sheep genetics to the USA. That 2022 article triggered many inquiries to the AWUSA for more information on the breed and requests to connect to breeders of both the Australian and American White Sheep. This current article highlights the story of Claire helping a sheep breeder in northern Idaho start her journey with these breeds. And it will share an update on these "White" breeds from Daniel Fagerman and Mark Fechtel.

Focused on the Journey

1,785 miles--the distance between Claire's Saddle Rock Ridge Farm located in central Missouri and Sheila Hasselstrom's Winchester Ridge Farm in northern Idaho. Claire's brood ewes bred to her Australian White Sheep ram are carrying in utero Sheila's first F1 American White Sheep lambs. These brood ewes will be transported to Winchester Ridge Farm this December. Sheila first read about the American and Australian White Sheep breeds and Claire's farm in that 2022 December issue. The timing of the article coincided well with Sheila's need to consider making changes to her current sheep operation due to challenges beyond her control.



Saddle Rock Ridge Farm's brood ewes headed to Idaho in December

Sheila and her family have a long history in sheep production, raising fine wool sheep, garnering and maintaining a great relationship with Pendleton Woolen Mill. Until recently, Sheila's flock of 900 Rambouillet ewes and their lambs rotationally grazed grasses and forbs on their home-based timber pastures and cover crops from May to September. Then in October, the flock was transported 180 miles west to Washington state to graze grass seed producers' private property. Her ewes lambed in Washington in the spring, then all came home in May allowing the lambs to finish on their home-based nutrient dense grazing areas.

For Sheila, this closely managed



sheep movement, along with their regenerative crop and cattle farming, had a romantic rhythm to it. A rhythm you could fall in love with. However, everything changes. Nothing remains the same. Challenges set in that required Sheila to make some hard decisions. In 2023, the grass industry experienced a small crash that impacted Sheila's ability to find winter grazing. Certification fees and labor costs for H2A temporary agriculture workers increased dramatically. Wool prices fluctuated. Sheila sold 800 ewes in the fall of 2023, leaving 100 ewes and 4 rams to allow her to continue her established direct to consumer lamb meat sales as she contemplated her next steps.

Winter 2023, Sheila kept her downsized Rambouillet flock on the home-based farm. The wet winter weather in northern Idaho caused wool rot and foot issues in her flock, and Sheila resolved to look for a different breed of sheep. The American and Australian White Sheep breeds she had first learned about in 2022 intrigued her. Sheila said, "Finding and researching these sheep breeds was invigorating! I am passionate about raising sheep and am excited to learn more about the benefits of raising American and Australian White Sheep."

While Sheila was researching these new breeds, Claire was growing her flock of American and Australian White Sheep. Claire's brood ewes are a mix of Katahdin, St. Croix and Dorper breeds. With the help of Mark Fechtel, Claire purchased her first Australian White Sheep ram in 2022 to breed to these brood ewes. Sheila noticed Claire's American White F1 yearling ewes were uniform in look and exhibited sturdy body structure. Uniform self-replacement is a

highly desired attribute of the Australian and American White Sheep breeds. This is also one of the characteristics Sheila looks for in her sheep. The ewes Sheila is buying, are carrying Claire's third set of F1 lambs. (Note: American White Sheep are a cross between a registered Australian White Sheep ram and an ewe breed of choice).



Winchester Ridge Farm's Rambouillet flock grazing timber pastures. Her newly purchased Katahdin cross hair sheep to join them soon.

Claire said, "I'm really thrilled to be able to send these girls to Idaho. I spent 13 years working up to a nice commercial flock of Katahdin, St. Croix, and Dorper cross ewes. I'm so happy they have a new place to go and a new purpose now that I'm focusing on my Australian and American White Sheep journey. They are carrying their F1 American White lambs to Idaho where I hope they can help Sheila in her new endeavor." As Claire says goodbye to these ewes, she is replacing them with



Claire and her sheep herding helpers

For the love of sheep

Australian White Sheep ewe lambs, which makes her one of the largest breeders of registered Australian White Sheep in the USA.

Helping Claire and other interested sheep breeders find and purchase both Australian and American White Sheep is a passion for Mark. On average, he responds to four or more requests for more information on these breeds and help in locating breeding stock per week. He has delivered Australian and American White Sheep to at least 18 states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In addition to having a full-time off the farm job, managing a large herd of South Poll Grass Cattle, and most recently setting up a joint venture to graze sheep in contracted solar panel areas in Alabama near Daniel's Fagerman Farm, Mark travels to grazing and livestock conferences working at the AWUSA booth promoting these sheep breeds. He has traveled over 3,400 miles this year doing this!



Mark Fechtel with his Australian and American White Sheep Ewes

Always looking to improve—we don't want to "stand still"

On Fagerman Farm to boost efficiency and maximize results, methods are constantly evolving and changing depending on flock size, weather, feed costs, and more. Recently, the biggest change Daniel mentioned his farm is experiencing is the opportunity to "solar graze" his sheep on several thousand acres. Daniel states, "Understandably, we were nervous at first to release our Australian

Whites into the "wild" where there would be virtually no human intervention. However, we decided to move forward on this because we were serious about finding the best animals and bloodlines that could withstand this minimum maintenance." Instead of buying "new" Australian White Sheep genetics on an annual basis from Australia, Daniel saw the advantage of "asking" his sheep to adapt, allowing nature to help sort through and find the animals that excel here in the USA.

In addition to natural selection and natural cover, Fagerman Farm will continue to do artificial insemination; however, they have currently reduced the number of embryos transplants they do. Daniel reminds himself that the Australian White was developed originally for the Australian environment. He knows and appreciates that some folks may wish to buy embryos on an annual basis and take advantage of any progress within the breed. However, he believes this is just hitting the "reset button" in terms of selection for the North American environment.



American White Sheep Breed Founder, Daniel Fagerman's Australian and American White Sheep flock

Daniel helps the AWUSA Board and members understand a balanced approach should strive to respect the established breed characteristics for the Australian White Sheep set in Australia and introduce carefully selected fresh genetics via semen from Australia, if needed. From Daniel's point of view, the Australian White is about 95% of what the original breeders intended.

Continued