

Loaded Gameday Lamb Nachos

Recipe by "Convino Board"

Prep Time: 5 min
Cook Time: 20 min
Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

tortilla chips of choice
1.5 lb of **ground American lamb**
one packet of taco seasoning
4oz of shredded mozzarella cheese
3oz of shredded cheddar cheese (if you want it extra cheesy)
chopped tomato
chopped onion
chopped avocado
cilantro
sour cream

DIRECTIONS

Add your chips to a sheet pan.

In a pan cook your ground **American lamb** on medium heat, add on the taco seasoning for flavor.

Once cooked, add on the shredded cheese until it melts.

Pour your cheesy lamb onto your chips and then add on your toppings of choice!



Christy Green
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October 2024

Deadline Dates have Changed

At the August board meeting, the board voted to change the deadline and award dates for the Starter Flock Grants and Scholarships. The deadline for the 2025 Starter Flock Grant will be November 1, 2024 with the decision being made at the November Executive Board meeting. All recipients will be notified by December 1, 2024. This will allow recipients to purchase animals sooner and at early sales. The deadline for the 2025 Scholarships will be February 1, 2025 with the decision being made at the February Executive Board budget meeting. This will allow the Missouri Sheep Producers to be listed in awards students have received. If you know of someone that is wanting to apply please have them get the forms submitted soon for the 2025 Starter Flock.

Save the Date for the 2024 MSP Annual Conference

The Missouri Sheep Producers will host their annual conference and meeting on November 23, 2024 at Lincoln University's Carver Farm in Jefferson City. The day's events will include a number of educational speakers, reports from 2023 starter flock recipients, Henry Bescheienn, Madison Rapp and Anna McLaughlin, a free lunch and a short business meeting. The day will start with free donuts and coffee along with updates from various supporting organizations like American Sheep Industry and Lincoln University. Rachel Ancell with give an update about competing in the Miss Missouri State Fair Contest.

Highlighting the list of speakers will be the Jennifer Lutes, Field Specialist in Agricultural Business talking about "Market Outlook and Preferences" and Rueben Hendricks, Cabriejo Ranch talking about how they have built their operation and marketing their lambs. There will be a youth program available during the day for youth to learn more about the sheep industry separate from the adult meeting. New this year will be a cooking with lamb culinary school contest. There will be some local culinary schools that will be asked to prepare a couple of dishes using specified cuts of lamb. Attendees will be asked to help judge and sample the products. The doors will open around 8:30 for registration and paying of membership dues if necessary. The meeting will start promptly at 9 am with a welcome speech from president, Cord Jenkins. The meeting will conclude around 3 pm. Everyone interested in the sheep industry is invited to attend regardless of MSP membership status. In the same manner, the meal will be available to both members and guests. The short business meeting will include a short summary of 2024 activities, report on MSP finances, vote on election of 2024 executive board members. Those positions due for election and the nominees are:
District 2- Matthew Anderson
Clay Wierzbicki
District 4- Matt Schmidt
Dan Rhoades
District 6- Elizabeth Keifer
Anthony Bockhold
At-Large (positions) - Britton Francis
Jonah Lasater
Larry Henneke

Jesse Rainey
MSP board hopes to see everyone there.

Deadlines for Missouri Sheep Producer Funded Activities and Events

Every year, MSP applies for numerous grants and funding to help cover the cost of events put on by MSP members or organizations. When writing these grants there needs to be some idea of what is going to take place during the year to satisfy the qualifications and make sure that enough money is requested. In order to make this process a bit easier we are asking that if you are thinking of doing an event or activity that might fall under the topics of education or demonstration of wool, mentorship, cooking demonstrations or youth activities involving the education about sheep to please let us know what that is by January 1, 2024 You can make your request in several different ways. One way is to contact Christy Green at mosheeproducers@gmail.com, (573)578 - 0497 or go to <https://bit.ly/2025MSPFundingRequest> and fill out a MSP funding request form. MSP board will meet the first weekend in February to discuss these requests and then an email will be sent to ALL applicants with the board's decision and how to further proceed. Please understand that if you have an activity or event after that date funding can still be requested but it won't be guaranteed. The whole goal of MSP is to promote the sheep industry and we want to do that as diversely as we can but funds are limited.

Message from MSP President

Greetings MSP members! I hope you and your family have had a fantastic start to the autumn season! As we experience the welcomed change in weather, take the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors with your family. I was able to attend the Ozark Farm Fest in Springfield last week with my family. If you have never attended the show, I would highly recommend adding it to your calendar for next year. The show has grown substantially over the years and it now is a challenge to see everything in one day! MSP was well represented in the livestock area and our booth was busy with prospective members and folks seeking more information on the sheep industry.

Additionally, as we progress through the autumn season, local FFA members are working on fall speeches.

MSP sponsors an FFA fall speaking contest for current FFA members to research the Missouri Sheep Industry and prepare a speech. The Fall FFA District Speaking Contests are right around the corner and as a MSP member, you may be asked to judge at your local district contest. Missouri FFA has six districts across the state: Northwest, Northeast, Central, South Central, Southwest, and Southeast. Please consider helping with this opportunity to promote and educate youth about the Missouri Sheep Industry.

I hope you have November 23 marked on your calendar for our Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting will be held in Jefferson City at the Carver Farm on Lincoln University's campus from 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM. The event will include

vendors, educational sessions/resources, MSP

Sincerely,
Cord Jenkins
MSP President
jeninslivestock@gmail.com



Missouri State Fair Queen Representative places as First Runner Up

Rachel would like to thank the Missouri Sheep Producers for sponsoring her participation in this year's Missouri State Fair Pageant. As a board member, and someone with a passion for marketing, Rachel loves to find new and creative ways to promote our industry. Rachel believes having the opportunity to speak about the Missouri Sheep Producers to such a broad audience has been an amazing and impactful experience! Rachel received the award for Best Speech as well as First Runner Up. Rachel will present her speech at the Annual Conference in November.

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.



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Parasite Prevention with Grazing
Tanner Tipton and Mohan Acharya
Lincoln University, Missouri

Parasitism is one of the most serious constraints affecting small ruminant production. Economic losses are caused by decreased production, cost of preventions, cost of treatments, and the death loss of animals. Learning to manage parasites in a grazing system is key for the operation's success.

Rotational grazing: This system of grazing involves a subdivision of a total pasture into several paddocks. Each of these paddocks are grazed for a short time before animals are moved out and the pasture is allowed to rest. It is suggested that a paddock is grazed for 3-4 days and

then rested for 35 days during summer in the tropics. This is to prevent the animals from consuming infective larvae once they have been shed and allows the pasture to be clear of larvae before reintroducing the animals. It is also recommended not graze within 4 inches of the ground as 80% of the larvae reside within the bottom 3 inches of the plant.

Multispecies grazing: Each species generally has its own parasites. Grazing cows with sheep allows cattle to consume parasites that affect sheep and vice versa. This reduces the number of infective larvae for each species. If co-grazing is not practical, grazing sheep and cattle alternately on the same pasture can have the same effect. For this method it is suggested that the cattle used are above the age of 2 years to get the best results.

Condensed tannin forages: Studies have shown that forages that contain condensed tannins decreases internal parasites in small ruminants (up to as much as 70 percent). Condensed tannins rich forage such as sericea lespedeza can be grazed,

dried as hay, fed as leaf meal, or pelleted. Other condensed tannin rich forages includes birds-foot trefoil, sainfoin, and chicory. It is important to check the state regulations before planting as sericea lespedeza is considered invasive in Missouri (as of December 2023) and cannot be

sold and planted.

Nematode-trapping fungi (BioWorma®): These fungi feed on a variety of free-living soil worms. They are fed as a feedstuff supplement and have to be fed daily. After passing through the gastrointestinal tract of ruminants, spores of the fungus germinate and trap the developing larval stages of the parasitic worms in the host feces. This method requires a management system that can accommodate daily feeding to ensure that all animals consume the necessary amount and can become expensive to implement.

Genetics and selection: Genetic control plays a part of the variation in host resistance to worm infection. 20 to 30% of the animals in the herd carry 70-80% of the entire worm population. Selecting animals that are resistant to parasites will lower the number of parasites in the herd. Selection can be done by using fecal egg count and FAMACHA techniques. Some sheep or goat breeds are more resistant to gastrointestinal parasites than others. Selection of resistant breeds for breeding can be implemented to control parasites in the herd.

Integration of practices: Two or more methods (listed above) can be used to increase the effectiveness of parasite control. In doing so, will result in the decrease in the need of dewormers that will minimize anthelmintic resistance in the flock. The integration of these practices will look different for each operation, so it is important to select the procedures that best fit the goals and everyday operations of your own herd. [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 inside Missouri. His email is AcharyaM@lincolnu.edu. This article is made possible through NCR SARE partnership grant].

Guidelines for Implementing On-Farm Biosecurity Measures for Sheep

Biosecurity in sheep farming encompasses various management practices designed to protect the flock from infectious diseases, pests, and other health risks. The aim is to prevent the introduction and transmission of disease-causing agents to animals by direct or indirect means. Diseases can spread quickly within a flock, leading to illness, reduced productivity, significant financial losses, and even death in extreme cases. Biosecurity should not be confined to large operations; it is vital for all flock sizes. It takes just one sheep to introduce a new disease, and a single farm can trigger a disease outbreak. Hence, biosecurity practices should be a critical component of every operation's health management plan. Biosecurity is not just about protecting farm animals; it also involves safeguarding the shepherd and farm workers. Some diseases can be transmitted from sheep to humans (zoonotic diseases), making the implementation of biosecurity measures essential for ensuring the safety of animals, farm workers, visitors, and the wider community. Healthy animals are fundamental to a successful sheep operation, which is why it is crucial for sheep managers to prioritize biosecurity measures. Here are some general guidelines for implementing on-farm biosecurity:

Isolation and Quarantine

All new animals arriving on your farm should be isolated for at least 30 days before being mixed with other animals or allowed to share pasture with your existing flock. Isolation allows you to monitor the health of the new sheep for signs of illness or disease. Many diseases may not show symptoms immediately, so a period of observation helps identify any potential health issues. The isolation period is an ideal time to implement

health protocols, such as vaccinations or hoof care, ensuring that new animals are in good condition before joining the flock. Newly purchased sheep may have different parasite burdens compared to your existing flock. Isolation provides an opportunity to deworm the animals and monitor for any signs of parasites before introducing them to the main flock. Producers should gather the deworming history from the farm they purchased the new sheep, including which dewormers they have used and the frequency of their deworming practices. A fecal egg count should be conducted 10 to 14 days after treatment to determine whether the deworming was effective. Keep your entire flock up to date on vaccinations as recommended by a veterinarian. Animals purchased at sale barns often come with unknown health histories, including vaccination status, previous exposure to diseases, and overall health conditions. This uncertainty may lead to the introduction of health issues into your flock. If you plan to incorporate animals from a sale barn, it is essential to quarantine them before adding them to your existing flock. Keep the new sheep isolated for at least 60 days to monitor their health and check for signs of illness. This reduces the risk of disease transmission on your farm. An animal that appears healthy may still be harboring a disease or other issues that could hinder its productivity.

Implement Access Restrictions

I recently participated in a bus tour to a sheep farm with about 20 other producers. We remained on the bus and were not permitted to step onto the pasture. This served as an excellent example of limiting farm access to essential visitors only. Limiting access helps reduce the risk of introducing infectious diseases and pathogens that can be brought in by visitors, vehicles, or equipment. On another occasion, I was provided with footwear before entering the sheep

farm to minimize the risk of introducing contaminants or pathogens into the environment. This practice helps maintain biosecurity by ensuring that no dirt, manure, or other potential sources of infection from outside the farm are brought in, protecting the health of the sheep and the overall farm operation. It is also a good practice to maintain a record of visitors, as well as any trailers or trucks that come to your farm. Disinfect footwear by using a footbath filled with a potent sanitizing solution. Alternatively, you can treat shoes with a disinfecting solution from a spray bottle. Make sure to adhere to the usage instructions provided on the product label.

Maintain Good Hygiene Practices

Good hygiene practices are essential for sheep biosecurity, as they help prevent the introduction and spread of diseases on the farm while contributing to overall flock health. Regular cleaning and sanitization of equipment, barns, and feeding areas minimize contamination and control parasites, ultimately ensuring that sheep have access to clean food and water. Furthermore, these practices protect both animals and farm workers from zoonotic diseases, enhance biosecurity measures, and help farmers comply with health and safety regulations, leading to healthier animals and improved productivity. Producers should establish and maintain a veterinary client patient relationship (VCPR). As the saying goes, "prevention is better and cheaper than cure." These management practices emphasize that it's easier to prevent diseases than to treat or respond to issues that arise from them. For more information on this subject, please visit the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners Biosecurity Tool Kit Resources.

David Brown, Ph.D.
Small Ruminant Specialist,
University of Missouri Extension.

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BEYOND DOG MASSAGE



Book Review by Kim Harrison “Introducing The Masterson Method—Beyond Dog Massage” Written by Jim Masterson with Robin Robinett, DVM

A book review on dog massage, really? Yes, and wait! Before you give this review a pass and skip over it, please take a few minutes to read it. Your working livestock guard dogs and herding dogs will thank you! Honestly, I think it is harder to raise sheep without working dogs. My sheep flock has predator pressure from aerial and on-the-ground predators all year round. The livestock guard dogs keep an eye to the sky and work hard ensuring the coyotes, feral dogs, fox, and bobcats understand the perimeter fence must be respected. The border collies make moving sheep to where I need them to be, much easier. And they do this in all kinds of weather and on a variety of terrain. My lead guard dog will be 9 years old in December, and my lead border collie will be 10 in January. I count on these older lead dogs to “steady the course,” and get the job done while showing the younger dogs what to do. As dogs age, just like us, they more often have sore muscles, reduced range of motion, and less endurance. A little soft touch massage is hassle free to do and can go a long way in relieving some of the muscle tension and physical discom-

fort dogs experience as they age, allowing them to more easily continue doing their job on the sheep farm for a longer time. Jim Masterson started his animal bodywork with horses. As his Masterson Method for horses grew over the years, expanding globally, people would tell Jim how they were also using his techniques on their dogs, helping them recover from injuries and physical issues, as well as helping dogs with emotional and behavioral issues as the dogs learned to relax and trust a person touching them. In 2023, Jim published his Beyond Dog Massage book. The book is divided into two sections. Part One is an introduction to The Masterson Method and explains how this method uses your dog’s responses to soft touch to help you find tension in your dog’s body, then help you dog release it. The touch techniques in this method improve movement, comfort, and longevity while encouraging better communication with your dog, which strengthens the relationship and builds trust. Part Two details how to apply the techniques to different areas of the dog’s body. Excellent photos show precisely where to apply the soft touch and show the tension releases dogs can do to let you know they are responding to your touch. There are also QR Codes in the book that when scanned take the reader to a video that shows the technique being performed. One soft touch point that is easy to find (on both dogs and humans) is the TMJ Point. First find it on yourself. Place your finger just in front of the bottom of your ear. Find the small space that you don’t feel movement in when you open and close your mouth. This is the TMJ Point. Your dog’s TMJ Point is in the same area on their head. Lightly touching this spot on your head can relieve tension, and in some instances help lessen the pain of a head-

ache. Soft touch at this point on your dog can do the same thing. It relieves tension in muscles and ligaments associated with the TMJ Point. When I greet my livestock guard dogs in the morning after they have had a hard night of being on alert due to coyote pressure, they often rest against my legs as I lightly touch the TMJ joint. Sometimes they will yawn (indicates a release of tension), lay down, close their eyes, and take a much-needed mini-break. My border collies like this touch point too, especially after moving a group of ewes with lambs on a hot day. Lambs that haven’t quite figured out they need to move with the flock cause tension in my border collies. Touching the TMJ point is one of the areas I typically touch to help my border collies relax and recover after a demanding flock move from one grazing lot to another. You can find more information about The Masterson Method on Facebook. Look for The Masterson Method, Integrated Equine Performance Bodywork. The focus of this page is equine bodywork; however, it is also a good way to watch for special Masterson Method events that pertain to dogs. And you can sign up for the Canine Newsletter and order this book on their website: www.mastersonmethod.com.

Author Information:
Kim Harrison is a current Missouri Sheep Producer member. She co-owns Harrison Valley Farms with her husband, John. Their farm is in mid-Missouri, about 30 miles north of the state Capital in Jefferson City. They currently raise and market Australian and American White Sheep, and registered South Poll Grass Cattle seed stock. They use Great Pyrenees/Maremma/Anatolian cross livestock guard dogs. 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 or call 573-590-0643.

Nominees for 2025 MSP Board Elections Continued Part 2

Jonah would like to be elected to help the board and program continue the great things they have to offer and support in any way possible.

Larry Henneke

Larry Henneke lives in Millersburg, Missouri. He raises club lambs and has 50 ewes. Larry has been involved in the sheep industry for 25 years. It began when they moved and could only afford a small farm near Columbia. His kids were at 4-H age and he wanted them to have experience in agriculture. They purchased 2 market lambs and that was our start in the sheep business. Being an Agriculture Instructor in Columbia he was challenged to come up with SAE projects for his urban students. Larry wrote a grant and purchased a portable building for students to raise club lambs in and show at the county fair. The market lamb numbers jumped from 35 to over 100 head during his tenure in Columbia. This provided a much needed demand for affordable lambs that students could purchase. His son and him purchased a small flock of ewes and began raising lambs. Even though he is no longer teaching, the demand for lambs in his area has grown. He currently sells 55-65 show lambs per year. Larry said “In Missouri, as well as in the US, we are seeing a decline in sheep numbers due to high input costs and decreased consumption of lamb and mutton. In the show world, we are seeing fewer young people exhibiting market lambs and breeding stock at our local shows and the State Fair. Why should this matter? These young people will be the backbone of our sheep industry in the State of Missouri! We as producers must do a better job of not only mentoring current exhibitors, but we need to create more awareness

of the industry through our 4-H and FFA programs. “ He believes that starts with offering more usable curriculum/lesson plans for 4-H leaders and Agriculture Instructors. Much of what is readily available is outdated. At county wide levels we could also help sponsor “Lamb Clubs” as a part of 4-H and FFA. He recently started one in Callaway County and their sheep show is now the largest show at our fair. Larry believes as producers we can be mentors for such programs and offer our expertise in the industry. This includes allowing them to tour our farms and gain that “hands on experience”. Larry said, “another element missing in many of our counties is the lack of skilled veterinarians that will treat sheep. We also can help be that resource. Perhaps a Missouri Sheep Producers blog or facebook page could be developed to help answer questions relating to health and daily management of a flock. I know that some of these things might sound a bit ambitious, but getting involved with youth and beginning sheep producers can help bolster our State’s sheep industry as well as being a very rewarding experience!” Larry feels that his past teaching experience and current involvement with 4-H and FFA sheep exhibitors would be beneficial in developing educational experiences for both the youth and current sheep producers. He has a passion for introducing agriculture experiences through sheep production to our young people of Missouri. Larry believes that we offer some great resources and programs for producers. However, to be more effective he believes we should conduct more localized programs for producers at maybe a district or county level. He also believe that we could use technology to produce farm tours or special topic presentations and distribute via the web. togetherness between the different phases of the industry and would make Missouri Sheep Production

stronger. In addition, I’m concerned the industry isn’t getting represented appropriately at the Land Grant Universities. I’d like to engage leadership from these institutions to become more involved with the Missouri Sheep Producers and for students to see small ruminants as a viable farm commodity that they can enter with less financial indebtedness and still maintain profitability. “

Jesse Rainey

Jesse Rainey and her family live in Seymour Missouri and have been members of the MSP for a couple years. They have raised sheep for 3 years now. They currently have a flock of about 60 hair sheep with 20 of them being registered St. Croix the others are a commercial Katahdin based flock. This fall they plan on covering them with an Australian White Ram to increase our meat yield on the lambs. If elected to the seat on the board she will take the time to learn all she can to share with fellow shepherd’s. At Jesse’s current job at Powerflex Fence she finds herself talking and sharing a lot of information with other Shepherd’s about our sheep industry.



Nominees for 2025 MSP Board Elections
Continued Part 1

collectively work to provide these services and benefits to our members and that is what she thinks she can help do as a member and as part of the board. Elizabeth would like to be reelected as a board member to the Missouri Sheep Producers, because she believes that she is extremely active within our industry. She travels to many places throughout the year showing and selling sheep. Elizabeth gets to talk to so many other producers and get to learn what is going on in other places and find out what others are doing. She has been involved and has experience with multiple breeds of sheep and feel as though she is fluent in the promotion of all breeds, not just my own. Within the bootheel area of Missouri, Elizabeth would approximate that she has one of the larger sheep operations in my area and has connections that enable her to be a resource to smaller producers in her area and district, both commercially and with registered purebred sheep. Most importantly, she likes helping and teaching others about the sheep industry. Elizabeth thinks we can all agree that anything within the sphere of agriculture can be trying at times for producers. With that being said, sheep producers can be at a further disadvantage with resources and such in some areas. Networking is key for everyone to succeed and learn within this industry. She believes that being involved in the Missouri Sheep Producers is a great networking organization where people within our state can meet and discuss successes and challenges. Events like the annual meeting and field days are great places where we can meet new people and learn about trends within our state and industry.

Britton Francis
Britton is from Paris, MO and his family and him currently run 500 registered Katahdin ewes. Their primary focus is raising and selling registered seedstock to other purebred breeders along with offering stud rams to commercial producers. Their farm has had sheep on it since the day he was born and it's all he's ever known. Britton grew up primarily raising commercial sheep starting with wool sheep and then making the switch to hair sheep in 2009. They did this along with getting into some purebred breeds once they were enrolled in 4-H and FFA. He currently serves on the KHSI (Katahdin Hair Sheep International) Katahdin Hairald Committee for our quarterly



magazine along with being a committee member for the new digital KHSI registry. Britton thinks it's pretty easy to see that we still deal with same issues recurring issues in that there has been a drastic decline in demand for wool as well as trying to get consumers to consume more lamb meat. MSP does several cooking demos at different fairs and expos to give fairgoers a chance to taste lamb. Most have probably never tried it. He wants to be elected to really engage members in guiding our industry from all aspects of the sheep industry. Increasing our membership is and has been a goal within the asso-

ciation. There is a need for education for those producers that are just now getting into sheep, whether or not they have extensive sheep or livestock background to provide continued growth for them.

Jonah Lasater
Jonah Lasater and his wife currently live in Elsberry/Silex area on the eastern side of the state. They own and operate Lasater Livestock. They raise high quality Katahdin sheep for show purposes and for seed stock. They have owned several different types of breeds over both of their lives. Jonah's experience in the sheep industry started out like many, when I was 8 years old showing market lambs. Through many years and connections he has made, it led to him raising several purebred sheep, market wether dams and market lambs, to eventually their current breed, Katahdins. One issue he would like the Missouri Sheep Producers to tackle is the low consumption rate of lamb meat. The board and MSP has done a great job the last few years, but would like to continue to somehow increase the consumption of lamb in the public.

Continued



Barber Pole Worm Part 1
Ed Crowley

Haemonchus contortus, also called barber pole worm, I just call it plain evil. Almost anyone who has raised sheep in the South, has at some time probably dealt with Barber Pole worm. We first began dealing with barber pole worm when we were living in Kentucky and had bought our starter flock of Rambouillet sheep from a ranch in South Dakota. When I bought the sheep, I asked how they dewormed, and they said, we don't de-worm – we only have 17 inches of rain a year! Clearly, moving to Kentucky with an annual rainfall of over 45 inches a year meant we would have a parasite challenge with these sheep. From day one our protocol involved frequent fecal checks, only treating when required. Over time our protocol changed to include drenching with three separate drenches, one after another. While we did lose some of our first generation sheep from South Dakota to barber pole worm, we only lost two ewes to this over a four year period, so we felt this protocol worked well. Then we moved our sheep to Southeast Missouri in 2021. We began having problems with losing lambs after weaning to worms despite our protocols. In the fall of the prior 2023 we had purchased a number of ewes from a ranch in Montana, including a ram we used in our 2023 fall breeding. Then the spring of 2024 hit with high rains, a lot of humidity, and heat. Beginning with weaning time in May, we had catastrophic losses of our lamb crop and, for the first time, significant losses in our ewes. This was an incredibly traumatic, difficult time. I don't think any sheep farmer ever feels okay about losing sheep, but to be losing sheep everyday was devastating. We conducted fecal checks, necropsy, tried different dewormers, and still we had significant mortality rates. We even started asking ourselves if it was possible to

raise fine wool, merino heritage sheep in this environment. But we don't quit easily. As a result of the losses we had in 2024 we are completely revising our protocols and management system. We have worked with our vet to develop what we believe will be a workable protocol. However, we realize we are pushing the envelope by trying to raise a Merino breed of sheep in a humid, wet environment. Merino sheep thrive in dry climates (cold or hot), but not in wet humid environments. The goal of this series of articles is going to be to share the protocols, and as we progress through the year, to share how effective these protocols are. The major changes we are making include:

- 1) Breeding beginning July and ending in late September in order to lamb in November through January with the goal of moving our weaning dates into early spring prior to the heavy worm load season. While this has the risk of lowering our lambing rate due ewes breeding out of season and lowered ram fertility during summer months, avoiding peak worm season is worth the risk.
- 2) This year we used a ram for breeding which is ¼ Rambouillet, ¼ Scottish Blackface, and ½ Cormo. Our goal in our experimental cross breeding program was to find out if we could breed in some of the 'toughness' of the Scottish Blackface while retaining the fine wool characteristics of our Rambouillet and Cormo sheep. While this will mean that we will not be able to sell registered breeding stock anymore, the goal is to breed in parasite resistance into a fine wool breed.
- 3) We have begun feeding Sericea Lespedeza hay and plan on developing a Sericea Lespedeza pasture specifically for feeding lambs when they are weaned. Sericea Lespedeza is a high tannin forage (it has been called the 'poor mans alfalfa'

which has been shown to reduce worm load. Developing this pasture will take several years, and it must be managed carefully to avoid spreading (it is considered invasive). We ran a group of rams on a rented lespedeza pasture several years ago, and we noticed a significant difference in worm load. By introducing lambs into this when they are weaned we hope to significantly reduce worm load during this high stress period. We are also planning on buying and feeding Lespedeza pellets in our supplement mix.

4) While we always feed our wool sheep some amount of grain for wool quality and production reasons, we have ramped up our supplement volume in order to over-feed the sheep. While this doesn't help with reducing the worm load, it will help sheep to survive the worm load.

5) We will continue our aggressive deworming protocol, rotating dewormer drenches, and using 3 different dewormers during each treatment. I am concerned about the potential for dewormer resistance, and I want to avoid moving to copper drenching. We will always keep this as an alternative, but we consider it the very last option. We also give Iron shots to any ewes that need drenching. Iron helps with the blood loss sheep suffer from worm load.

Throughout the year, I will publish about one article a quarter to share how this process is working. Again, I'm not an expert on worms, and it's not entirely comfortable sharing the struggle we are having with parasites, or, to be share whether our protocols are working. However, my hope is by sharing this with the community we might help out some other producers who are struggling with the "devilish" worm! Feel free to reach out to me with your thoughts, comments, and questions at ed@mestameadows.com

Nominees for 2025 MSP Board Elections

The ten nominees for board positions this year were asked the following questions to help you know a little more about them.

1. Where are you from and what do you produce?
2. What is your experience in the sheep industry?
3. What do you see as some issues that need to be dealt with in the sheep industry that Missouri Sheep Producers can help with and what would you like to do if elected?
4. Why do you want to be elected?
5. How do you feel that Missouri Sheep Producers can better help the producers?

Clayton Wierzbicki



Clayton Wierzbicki is from Orrick, MO. Ray County. They have a Registered Southdown flock. They have been in the business for 17 years with the Southdowns and had a commercial flock for a short time before deciding to just focus directly on the Southdowns. They have been consigning to the National Southdown show and sale since 2012, Midwest Stud Ram Sale and The Stars sale at the NAILE in November. They also have a show flock that they travel around the

country on the National and State level shows. The industry needs more Vets in the sheep industry. As he travels he hears people all the time talking about not having a good sheep vet. Clayton feels that there isn't enough interest in the industry for some of the vets to take time helping this group. It is a subject that he has talked with his Vet and the State Vets about. He thinks it is something that not just MSP should try to help with, but all species in the large category should have more interest in getting more involved. Clayton likes to see more youth in ag, not just the sheep industry but in all aspects. "We need the youth to be more involved and it takes the parents or mentors to make it happen. It takes more people willing to get involved with things like these boards and other aspects of their counties." He believes Missouri Sheep Producers could be more vocal or present at things like county fairs or State Fair.

Matt Schmidt



Matt is from Centraila, MO. He raises Dorset Advantage, Katahdins and a few cross bred sheep. Matt's experience in the sheep industry is that there isn't many people in the industry anymore and he looks forward to seeing the new generation to be in the industry. Some of the issues in the sheep industry are that there isn't much of a demand for the wool or the meat anymore and with feed cost nobody

can afford it anymore. If he gets elected he would like to get new and upcoming kids started in the industry. Matt wants to be elected to continue to get people started in the industry and get the organization numbers up. He feels that Missouri Sheep Producers can better the industry because they can help out new people in the industry learn new things.

Dan Rhoades

Dan Rhoades currently lives in Centralia, MO with my wife Nicole, daughter Bethany and youngest son Adam. My oldest son, Shane, lives in Maryville, MO where he is an Ag Teacher. They currently have 40 crossbred ewes that they primarily use to raise show lambs. In addition, we have 15 registered Montadale ewes. Dan has owned sheep for nearly 45 years. Currently, he is currently on the Executive Committee and am Sale Chairman of the Midwest Stud Ram Sale. In addition, he has served as the Board President of the Montadale Sheep Breeders association. Also, he has served as project leader for our local 4-H clubs sheep/goat project and manage the sheep and goat shows at two local fairs. Up until 10 years ago he was a custom sheep shearer for 20 years. According to Dan, "industry wise we need to be promot-

ing sheep as a viable income commodity to families purchasing small farms and those with existing facilities that weren't originally built for sheep. Also, developing additional markets outside of the segment of the industry that producers are directly involved. Specifically, direct markets and farmers markets venues where lamb is more positively received than grocery stores. Also, for the lamb industry to grow there

needs to be a viable futures market for large feeders. Currently the sheep industry is severely disadvantaged to other commodity producers that can secure futures pricing. "If elected he would promote all breeders of the industry working together as Sheep Producers. Dan believes in the industry; it's been an important part of his family's life and he would like to give back. Dan would like to see MSP become

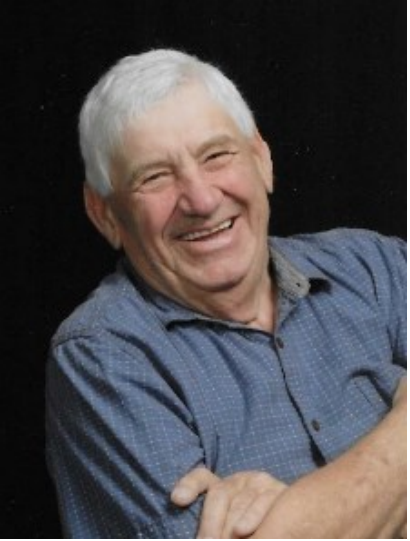


more involved in the Midwest Stud Ram sale. Dan said, "some will know that the Midwest Stud Ram Sale Executive Committee originally started MSP as an avenue to promote and educate and that is why the 1% of the sale commission is directed to MSP. I think it would promote togetherness between the different phases of the industry and would make Missouri Sheep Production stronger. In addition, I'm concerned the industry isn't getting represented appropriately at the Land Grant Universities. I'd like to engage leadership from these institutions to become more involved with the Missouri Sheep Producers and for students to see small ruminants as a viable farm commodity that they can enter with less financial indebtedness and still maintain profitability."

Anthony Bockhold

Anthony Bockhold and his wife, Catherine have two sons. Their son, Steve and his wife Kate have a daughter, Eve and son Luke. Steve

is a chemist and is employed for a paint company. Dan and his wife, Amanda, have a daughter, Gemma and son, Michael. Dan is a biological engineer and is employed in Jefferson City at NRCS. Anthony enjoys rabbit hunting, fishing and spending time with his grandchildren. Anthony was raised on a dairy farm in Dexter and took over as the owner in 1967. In 1988, his sons, Steve and Dan, began raising sheep as a 4-H and FFA project. Dan chose the Hampshire breed and Steve chose



the Dorset breed. In 1997, Anthony sold out of the dairy business and at that time the herd had increased to 100 ewes and three rams. When Dan, the youngest son, entered college, Anthony took over raising the flock. He now has 80 ewes and three rams. Recently, Anthony has added hair sheep to his flock. He sells market lambs at 50-70 pounds and keeps some replacement ewes. He helps his great niece and nephew prepare their market lambs for the fair. They help with vaccination and care for his sheep. Anthony is a board member of the Stoddard County Fair Board and is the livestock chairman. He is a member of Missouri Sheep Producers, the Stoddard County Extension and Knights of Columbus. Anthony wants to learn more about the sheep industry and ways to promote the marketing of lambs.

Elizabeth Kiefer

Elizabeth Kiefer is from Patton, MO, a super small town in Southeast, MO, in between Perryville and Cape Girardeau. Her husband Chad and her own and operate Kiefer Sheep Farm and produce registered Katahdins. As a third generation shepherd, she grew up helping her dad and grandpa with their Oxfords, Hamps, and Southdowns. As a kid she joined 4H, showing my flock of Dorsets, and continued that tradition in FFA as an SAE project. About 10 years ago, her husband and her started with a small group of commercial hair sheep and eventually made the plunge into purchasing some registered ewes and rams. They currently have 65 registered ewes and show and sell them at events across the country. Throughout this state (and probably many others) she constantly hears, "We're in cattle country, and there are not enough resources." I would wholeheartedly agree with that statement. The new trend within our industry is that so many people are getting sheep. They are not multi-generational shepherds, they are brand new! With that said, finding the help and resources needed are vastly important. Any little learning tool, word of advice, learning seminar, sheep care, etc... is what she feels as a board member that we are called to do. As a board, we

Continued

