



newsletter newsletter

APRIL, 2003
SECOND QUARTER

Greetings from the President

Dear Members,

I am thrilled that you've placed your trust in me and hope I fulfill your expectations.

I've kicked off the year with a Board Meeting. Each officer, director, and advisor is assigned to various projects which will make our Alliance even greater.

Please try to attend our spring meeting as we will be voting on some important issues and distributing Breeder Directories and By-Laws.

We hope you are enjoying the newsletters. This one focuses on Marketing. We suggest you keep a few Alliance applications on hand as well as a few extra newsletter copies. This is a great way to introduce new owners and breeders to our organization. Give them a copy of each, and not only do they go home with a great new lamb, but a wealth of contacts and information.

Hope to see you May 10th.

Happy Spring Lambing!

Michelle Holmes

President, Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida



President

Michelle Holmes, Citra

Vice President

Carol Postley, Ocala

Secretary/Treasurer

Janice Cox, Lake City

Board Members

Ron Taber, PhD

Williston

Mimi Williams, PhD

Brooksville

Nola Wilson

Extension Service

Advisor

Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida
Janice Cox, Secretary/Treasurer
Oak Lane Sheep Farm
Rt 3, Box 78-3
Lake City, FL 32025

SATURDAY, MAY 10 IS NEXT MEAT SHEEP ALLIANCE MEETING

Mark your calendars for the May 10th Meat Sheep Alliance meeting at Jim and Michelle's lovely farm in Citra. See directions to their farm on page 2. We want to encourage you to attend the Spring meeting. Part of successful marketing is networking and knowing fellow sheep owners. Florida has a market for lamb but matching the sellers and the buyers can be difficult.

Get involved in the Meat Sheep Alliance and take

advantage of opportunities to market your sheep, keep them healthy, and stay abreast of Federal and State regulations.

Two of our board members are on the State Scrapie Board. This means as a member of the Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida, you will receive the latest information regarding Scrapie regulations.

This will be a lunch meeting. The host farm will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, and condiments (ketchup, mustard, mayo). If you can bring a lunch contribution, needed items are: Drinks, Side Dishes, Deserts, Toppers for Burgers such as lettuce, tomatoes, onion, pickle, cheese. If you would be so kind as to RSVP Michelle at 352-595-5820 or Ruth Taber at 352-528-4843 and let us know what you'll bring, we'd appreciate it. If you can't bring something – come anyway! There's always enough.

EXTRA ADDED BONUS:
Michelle says if My Mystic Oaks herd cooperates we'll have a variety of soft goat cheese for sampling.

Spring Meat Sheep Alliance Meeting

Saturday, May 10, 2003
11 AM (Rain or Shine)
My Mystic Oaks Farm
18852 North US Hwy 301
Citra, FL
Phone: 352-595-5820
Citra is 8.5 miles east of I-75
Located midway between
Gainesville and Ocala.

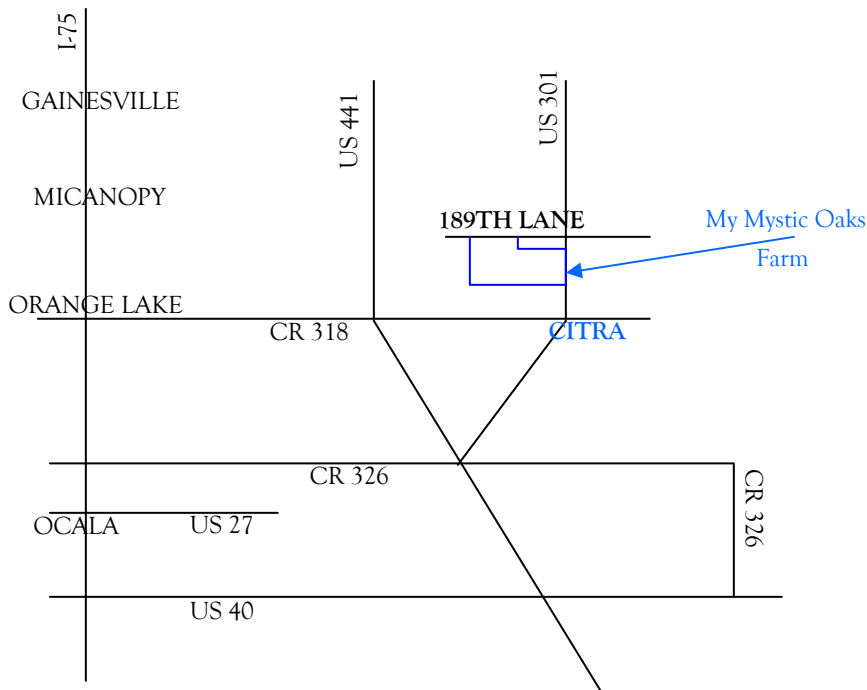
Schedule:

- 11-12 Arrive, set up, visit with critters, enlist grill help.
- 12-1 Lunch and Socialize
- 1-2or 3 Business Meeting
 - Speaker
 - Report from Board Meeting
 - By-Laws Discussion & Approval
 - Distribute Breeders Directory
 - Fall Meeting—Discuss & Plan
 - Discuss Plans to Grow the Alliance

Directions from US 301: We are approx. 18 miles north of Ocala and 12 miles south of Hawthorne. Follow signs for “The Orange Shop.” Farm is 3/10 mile north of the Orange Shop on west side of 301. See stone entry way and sign “Little Bear Lane.” Turn in and follow to parking.

Directions From I-75: Exit 368 (Orange Lake, CR318, Jai-li). Go east on CR 318 8.4 miles to US Hwy 301 (2nd stop light). Go north (left) on US 301. Go 7/10 mile and make U-turn. Farm is on west side of 301 and the first gate you come to. See stone entry way and sign “Little Bear Lane.” Turn in and follow to parking.

Directions from east or west:
Call Michelle for best directions.



Scrapie Watch From Scrapie Certification Board Member Ron Taber

The big news in sheep circles is scrapie, a disease of the nervous system that is fatal. Kind of a sheep equivalent to Mad Cow Disease. Not a lot of cases in America, but enough to get our sheep removed from international trade. No hair sheep are known to have the disease. One case was reported from a Suffolk brought down from Georgia. All black face wool sheep are suspects. The Government is trying to help the sheep industry get rid of scrapie

by instituting a tagging system that allows veterinarians to trace a scrapie infected sheep back to where it was born.

If you choose to enroll in the program you will be issued a farm number which will be printed on official ear tags provided through the Federal program.

Annually, for five years, a state veterinarian will visit your farm to inspect your flock. Each individual 18 months or older must be

tagged and recorded. The vet will expect a list of all sheep on the premises entered in the program. You must also keep a record of deaths and sales of entered sheep. Each one must be accounted for. After the five years, if your flock does not exhibit scrapie, you will be Certified Scrapie Free. This will enable you to transport out of State.

Those who want to sell breeding sheep really need to be in the program.

If you only sell sheep for slaughter, don't bother with the certification. Just start identifying your animals with an official tag for slaughter animals. These are also provided and can be ordered by calling Mark Berlin, Secretary, at 352-333-3120, USDA Veterinary Services, 7022 NW 10 PL, Gainesville FL 32605. They have a great website for scrapie information. I encourage you to visit: www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/scrapie

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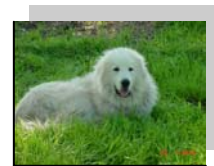
Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida Supporting County Fairs

The County Fairs in Florida are a wonderful opportunity for Florida sheep breeders to market to 4-H kids. We're speaking to the Marion County Fair Board about having a Florida bred breeding ewe and ram class as well as a

market lamb class at the Marion County Fair. Local breeders are excited about preparing lambs for the shows. Breeders will provide good quality, well fed sheep for 4-H and FFA projects. Prices will be affordable.

The Florida Bred classes will enable our smaller sheep to compete against each other instead of against the larger northern bred sheep. Suffolk, Hampshire, Dorset, and many of the wool breeds have a hard time surviving

in our climate. Gulf Native, St. Croix, Katahdin, Romanov, Dorper, and many other smaller breeds do well here and provide a good source of lamb for our buyers. We'll keep you posted.



Florida Dairy Goat Association Invites Sheep Owners

To Parasite Seminar At Annual Conference In June

The 25th Annual Goat Production Conference will be held June 14-15 at the University of Florida Vet School and Livestock Pavilion. The speaker is Dr. Caplin who will discuss the FAMACHA method of parasite detection. The cost for Saturday is \$20 in advance, or \$25 at

the door. Lunch will be provided on Saturday for a fee. The parasite discussion will take place on Saturday and will last about 45 minutes. The all day parasite work shop will take place Sunday. If sheep owners want to attend Sunday, there will be a \$25 fee. For pre-

registration, call Michelle Holmes at 352-595-5820 or Ruth Taber at 352-528-4843. Parasites are the ugly part of animal husbandry. Learning how to better control parasites is never wasted time. The Famacha test reveals an anemic

condition which may mean a parasite load. Some of our popular wormers are losing effectiveness. We are being asked to worm only those sheep showing a worm burden. This test may be a useful tool to use for worming specific individuals.

Marketing Your Sheep and Lambs

By Michelle Holmes

How are you selling your lambs, ewes, rams, and culls? Are you getting a fair price? Are you spending more to promote your sheep than they bring? We are all anxious to learn new markets. The following list will hopefully be a good start.

EXTENSION/SMALL FARM AGENT – Get to know the folks at your local extension office. They field a great number of calls and can be an easy referral source. They also have a wealth of information which may help you promote your product, or assist you with obtaining grant monies for various projects. Our Small Farm Extension Agent representative is Nola Wilson. She can be reached at 352-620-3440.

FLORIDA FARM BUREAU – This is your voice in Tallahassee and Washington. The Farm Bureau is very involved in legislation regarding farms and agriculture and they support the farmers by providing affordable insurance, banking services, availability of purchasing from other farm bureaus, car seat discounts, and rebates on Dodge vehicles, to name a few. Get to know the gals in the Farm Bureau office. Make sure they have your business card on file. They have a free annual dinner. As a member of the Florida Farm Bureau, you are eligible to register and list on their website for farmers at www.sunshinefarmersmarket.com. Non-members may access this site.

FRESH FROM FLORIDA – This is a Florida Agriculture promotional campaign. For information or to join call 1-850-488-4411. Membership is \$50 per year.

MUSLIM HOLIDAY DATES FOR 2003

The 2003 Muslim celebration dates to shoot for are:

October 27, 2003 – Ramadan

November 26, 2003 – Eid Al-Fitr

February 2, 2004 – Eid Al Adha

CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY DATES FOR 2003

April 20, 2003 – Western Easter

April 27, 2003 – Greek Easter

If you can breed your ewes to hit these markets you

With initial enrollment the state provides a beautiful farm sign which displays the Fresh From Florida logo. You will be listed in their directory for two years. (I am presently approaching this department to do a sheep brochure for our Alliance. (They are here to support us, so let's do it!)

LOCAL FEED STORE AND AG SUPPLIERS –

Post your ad on the bulletin board. A picture makes your ad stand out. It will attract attention on a board with nothing but cards.

FREE WEB SITES –

Ocala4Sale.com/. I'm sure there are more out there and if you know of a good site let us know. We'll pass it on.

4H and FFA –

Each county varies with their use of Florida sheep. Presently there are classes for Florida bred sheep at the county fairs in Lake County and the Orlando area. We are pursuing sheep classes for the Marion County fair. We hope to have Florida bred classes within 2 years. We're speaking to the fair board.

FLORIDA FARM BUREAU – To subscribe call 1-888-816-6854 or go to www.florida-agriculture.com. Ads for livestock must be placed by the 10th of each month for inclusion in the next issue, free of charge.

can get top dollar for your good lambs. The Ocala Livestock Market (352-732-4454) sells sheep the first Friday of the month. The North Florida Livestock Market in Ellisville (386-755-3576) sells the fourth Saturday of the month. If you take lambs to the sale, you may have to have them ready a month early in order to hit the sale date. Call sale yard for confirmation of sale days.

Feed your lambs well and keep them healthy. If we provide an excellent product, we'll reap excellent prices.

PREPARING LAMBS FOR MARKET

How we do it at Calovine

By Ruth Taber, Williston

There's nothing like sitting in the sale ring, watching the buyer's hands go up when a pen of healthy, fat lambs come through. You'll get more bidders on these types of lambs than on poor, rough coated stock.

There are three different feeding regimens that we use for: 1) flushing ewes, 2) pregnant ewes and lambs, and 3) market lambs. A good market lamb program begins even before the lambs are conceived! We flush our ewes with a little corn two weeks prior to turning in the ram, and worm them with Levasole drench. This results in twinning (in most breeds) and more lambs conceived on the first heat cycle. We want our lambs born in a tight group so that most of them hit the high market.



We put the ram in for three heat cycles – about 50 days. After the ewes are bred they are fed ordinary quality hay or pasture. The last trimester is the time when the lambs are growing rapidly, so three weeks prior to lambing the ewes receive their Pregnant Ewe feed. Two weeks prior to lambing, the ewes are vaccinated with CD/T and drenched with Cydectin (not cleared for sheep) at 10 ml per 100 lbs. Just before they lamb, as indicated by a full udder, they are placed in a clean pasture next to the barn. As each ewe lambs she is brought into the barn and placed in a jug (pen). The lambs are given “Survive!” from Hunter Nutrition and their navels are dipped in iodine. They are introduced to the teat and we make sure they nurse. If there is any question, we milk the ewe and feed the lambs – a warm mouth is a good indication that the lamb has nursed. We also strip the teat to make sure milk is flowing well. They are left in the jug for one to two days and then turned out to enjoy the great outdoors. We prepare a creep feeder for the lambs and provide the Pregnant Ewes and Lamb Ration right away. The lambs enjoy having their own place

and will begin to eat their ration within a week. At around 25 days we give all lambs CD/T. Three weeks later we give the CD/T booster and worm market lambs with Levasole drench, if needed. At 60 days we wean the market lambs and place them in a comfortable pasture with protection from the weather. They are then gradually switched to the Market Lamb Ration with free choice good quality hay. Our top end lambs will weigh 90 pounds in 100 days. Our average lambs will weigh 80 pounds in 100 days.

There is a problem with coccidiosis when sheep are held in confinement. Coccidiosis will cause diarrhea and unthriftiness. If you've wormed your sheep but aren't getting a good response, try drenching with a coccidiostat such as Corid. You can also mix this in the drinking water. We've used it in the past and found it to be very effective. Currently we mix Rumensin (not cleared for sheep but cleared for goats) in our feed rations and this prevents any problems in the flock. Happy Shepherding!

CORNELL U. PROVIDING MARKET ASSISTANCE

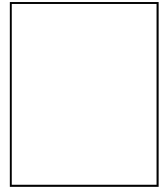
It's too late for participating this year, but Cornell University has started a marketing program to improve the Easter lamb market for Conn., Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Mass., New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Penn., Rhode Is., Vermont, and West Virg. Each Easter a “holiday listing” is sent to 200 buyers telling them what producers have for sale. Many of the buyers go to the livestock markets to get their orders filled, but if we miss the sales this could be an opportunity to sell our lambs. This would require hauling to a collection point and holding the lambs for the buyer. We'll be ready for this next year.

If lambs for slaughter only are less than 18 mo. old and have never been pregnant, they do not have to be in the Scrapie program and can be transported across state lines. However, they must be tagged with a sale tag ordered from USDA Veterinary Services, 7022 NW 10 PL, Gainesville FL 32605—Phone 352-333-3120. www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/scrapie



newsletter

Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida
Janice Cox, Secretary/Treasurer
Oak Lane Sheep Farm
Rt 3, Box 78-3
Lake City, FL 32025



MEAT SHEEP ALLIANCE OF FLORIDA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Farm Name: _____

Sheep Breeds: _____

Mail Dues To:

Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida
Janice Cox, Secretary/Treasurer
Oak Lane Sheep Farm
Rt 3, Box 78-3
Lake City, FL 32025



Membership Dues:

\$10 Single Membership—One Vote

\$15 Family—Two Votes

\$ 7 Junior—No voting privileges

\$ 7 Newsletter Only