



THE LINCOLN LETTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL LINCOLN SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOC.

SUMMER

2009

“BELT TIGHTENING” PRESIDENT’S REPORT

by Brian Larson, President NLSBA

NAILE Premiums: The NLSBA got a rude financial shock this past year when NAILE could not live up to its commitment to paying the majority of premiums of the three-year-old show format with white and natural colored divisions of the Lincoln show. This was due to a \$400,000 cut to their budget by the Governor of Kentucky due to the bad economic conditions. Unfortunately the NLSBA got no warning before the premium book was printed. The bottom line for the NLSBA was a massive \$\$\$ hit to our cash reserve. The NLSBA board of directors and officers met via conference call and authorized the president to negotiate with NAILE to put our financial commitment on par with other breed associations – from 72% down to 45%, along with a reduction in total premiums to better fit into a NLSBA budget. At the president's request, the registry (Milo, IA) compared the NLSBA fee structure to many other breed organizations and found that NLSBA was consistently in the lowest range of fees. The NLSBA board of directors deferred to the biennial membership meeting in June the consideration of fee increases to offset the loss of our cash reserve and our goal to achieve a balanced budget for the years to come.

NLSBA Fee Adjustments Effective January 1, 2010: The biennial meeting of the NLSBA membership held in Springfield IL June 19, 2009 considered several budget options, however only one would approach a balanced budget. Therefore the membership overwhelmingly approved the following fee changes: **New Membership**, Senior \$25 and Junior FREE; **Annual Dues**, Senior \$25 and Junior \$10; **Registrations & Transfers**, Member \$5 under 12 months & \$6 over 12 months, Non-Member \$10 under 12 months & \$12 over 12 months; **Duplicate Certificates**, \$5 for Members and \$10 for Non-Members; **Rush Fee**, Double the regular fees for Registration/Transfer.

In Other Business: The membership was informed of the status of the Roger Watkins Memorial Youth Fund. A committee will be appointed by the Board of Directors to manage the fund. It was decided to formalize holding an annual show & sale and the location every odd numbered year will continue to be Springfield, IL along with the biennial membership meeting. The location of the show & sale every even numbered year will be determined by the board and officers. When no other location is viable, the default will be Springfield, IL. Board of Directors and Officers elected to four and two-year terms, respectively were Diane Klingelhofer (MD, East Region), Mona Lisa Pettersson (WA, At-Large), Debbie Vanderwende (DE, Secretary/Treasurer), Donna Lein (IA, Vice President), and Brian Larson (MI, President).

NLSBA Show Results: Champion and reserve champion white

Continued on page 2

REMEMBERING ROGER WATKINS

by Donna Lein, Vice President NLSBA

Generous, helpful, jovial, witty, and gregarious is but a short list of words to describe the Roger Watkins many in the NLSBA knew well. Since the summer of 1995, Roger generously gave of his business training and talent to the association as its secretary/treasurer. Before taking the office and during those 13 years Roger looked for ways to promote the Lincoln breed, talk up its great qualities and gain more recognition for the association and its activities. When he retired in 2004 as a manager of support services with the American Society of Agronomy, he freely gave more of his time and energy to the association and in 2008 he traveled to Lincolnshire, England to experience the Lincoln in its native land.

Roger found the state and national shows a great venue for promotion and recognition of the breed of sheep. He was tireless in visiting about the Lincoln



breed of sheep with anyone who would listen. Helping young people become interested in Lincolns and get their flock started was his passion. It was his helpful nature that found him explaining the most elementary or the most complex questions. Lincoln breeders and others at the fairs would benefit from his thoughtfulness as he regularly brought his coffee maker, brewed a pot the first thing in the morning and then walked the aisles inviting friends to go to his pen and get a cup.

The names of some of the first sheep owned by this city-raised boy seem to mark his jovial ways of looking at his world. Having married a girl of Norwegian heritage may have influenced calling the first purchases “Lutefisk” and “Lefse” and they also had “Skin and Bones”. A Jersey cow was named “2%” and the license plates they choose for their vehicles were promotional and more good humor: “Bo Peep” and “Ewe Bet”. Tied to that jovial nature was an ability to lend his quick wit to a gathering.

Roger, friend to Lincolns and Lincoln Association members, may be best described as gregarious, “habitually associating with others as in groups, flocks or herds; sociable”. Roger’s association with animals was one of kindness and respect with very interactive “social relationships”. The brochure from the visitation said that “above all his favorite activity was spending time with family and friends.” That activity was certainly evident in the Lincoln circles.

Next Newsletter: Donna’s transcription of a recorded talk by Robert Watts about the history of Lincoln Longwool sheep

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www.lincolnsheep.org

PRESIDENT'S REPORT... *Continued from page 1*

rams - Kruse (IL) and Boersma (IL). Champion and reserve champion natural colored rams - Pettersson (WA) and Reister (WA). Champion and reserve champion white ewes - Boersma (IL) and Pettersson (WA). Champion and reserve champion natural colored ewes - Pettersson (WA) and Kruse (IL). Best white fleece - Clifford (CA), Best natural colored fleece - Pettersson (WA).

NLSBA Sale Results: Averages - white rams (2 hd) \$325, natural colored rams (3) \$816, white yearling ewes (5) \$441, natural colored yearling ewes (2) \$562, white fall ewe lambs (4) \$337, white spring ewe lambs (2) \$437, natural colored spring ewe lambs (2) \$575. Top selling rams - Pettersson NC (\$1,200), Reister NC (\$900). Top selling ewes - Pettersson W (\$725, \$675), Pettersson NC (\$675).

2010 NLSBA Argentina Tour & Palermo Expo: Eleven day tour departs the US July 24th, 2010. Includes lodging, ground transportation, many meals, sheep site visits (Pampas and Pategonia) and workshops, tourist activities, Palermo Expo (largest livestock show in SA), city regions (Buenos Aires, Esquel, Neuquen, Bariloche, and Ayacucho). Contact Brian Larson (longwools@mei.net or 269-623-2549) for brochure and more information.



'08 NAILE CHAMPION COLORED EWE

'08 NAILE CHAMPION WHITE EWE



ROGER WATKINS, 1940-2009

Roger was born on March 13, 1940 in Truman MN to Howard and Viola Watkins. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Cedar Falls Iowa where Roger attended all 12 grades at the Teachers College Laboratory School. He was active in sports and was proud to be a member of the 1957 11-man (no substitutes) football team that won the State Championship. That same year, Roger lost the State heavyweight wrestling championship in a double overtime referees decision, a decision that he accepted with the grace of a true sportsman. The friendships that Roger made in high school endure to this day and his classmates often refer to the kindness with which he treated everyone.

Roger came to the University of Wisconsin on a wrestling scholarship. During the Christmas break he worked in the shipping room at Manchester's department store where he met Carol Norby, the love of his life. They were married in 1963 and lived in Chicago where Roger worked as an employment counselor. In 1972 the couple returned to Wisconsin and purchased their beautiful farm in Perry Township. Being a city boy, Roger's early farming attempts provided much entertainment for the neighbors. All of the farm animals that passed through Roger's life including beef cows, his beloved Jersey cow "2%", pigs, chickens, geese and numerous dogs and cats were treated with unflinching kindness and compassion. Roger was active in the community, including the Big Brother program, 4-H enrollment coordinator for the Blue Mounds Busy Mites, Cashier for the Shepherd's Harvest in Verona, women's softball coach, 2nd grade reading tutor, and Meals on Wheels delivery. After retiring from the American Society of Agronomy in 2004, where he served as Manager of Support Services, Roger turned his attention to his flock of rare Lincoln Longwool sheep. He exhibited his sheep at the Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota State Fairs and also the North American Livestock Exhibition in Louisville Ky. In 2002 he raised and showed the National Champion White Lincoln ram. In addition to many blue ribbons, Roger garnered friends from across the country and was regarded as a fair and honest breeder of quality animals. He served as secretary of the National Lincoln Sheep Breeders Association for the past ten years. In 2008 he and several members of the Lincoln Longwool Association traveled to Lincolnshire England to learn more about this rare and elegant breed. In addition to his farm and animals, Rogers's interests included fishing, card playing and sports. Above all his favorite activity was spending time with family and friends. His quick wit and sense of humor were legendary but he was known mostly for his genuine, kind, loving, helpful, gentle and gregarious spirit.

Roger was preceded in death by his parents, and an older brother, Leroy.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Carol, sister Donna (Norman) Pitts, Fayette Iowa, sister Karen (Gary) Darland, Cedar Rapids Iowa, foster daughter Lucy (Ted) Stuckey, Juda WI, half sister Betty (Frank) Scheff, Fairmont MN, nephews David (Deb) Boike, Fayette Iowa and their children Dianna (Kris) McGrane, and Dustin, great great nephew Kegan McGrane, Dierk (Cara) Hofreiter and their son Connor, Minneapolis, Don Hofreiter, California and grandsons Cody and Skyler Stuckey, brother-in-law David (Susan) Norby, sister-in-law Louise (Raymond) Kubista, nieces Annalisa (Russell Meyer) and Christina (Kent) Kelsey.

There was a visitation with Roger's family Tuesday, March 10, 2009 in Mt. Horeb, WI. To quote a dear friend, "You know how much we all loved Roger and we will miss him terribly. There should be many, many more Rogers in the world. His generosity, helpful spirit and unending jolliness were such a joy and a great help to many."

The "Roger Watkins Memorial Junior Lincoln Fund" has been created that will be used to encourage current or prospective junior members of the NLSBA to purchase Lincolns and become involved in junior events.

REMEMBERING ROBERT WATTS, LLSBA PAST PRESIDENT

by Frank Martin, Family Friend

The passing of our Lincoln Longwool Sheep Breeders Association (LLSBA) president Robert Watts will leave a gap in the Lincolnshire farming scene from many different angles. Before I make a reflection on his life, I must record a few facts on the 'Thorpe Latimer' involvement with Lincoln Longwool sheep. During the Second World War and for about ten years afterwards all livestock was in demand to feed a hungry world. Thus to fulfill demand from various countries, Russia in particular, quality animals from the UK went on to improve other countries' flocks and herds. They were very interested in Lincolns for their size, wool producing capacity, strong constitution, sound feet and general good health. There were, during this period, about 10 breeders who regularly exhibited sheep at shows and to them this was a time of relative prosperity. From the middle 1950's every-



thing was to change; the export trade virtually dried up and traditional butcher's shops no longer had carcasses hung-up over sawdust-strewn floors to be cut up on wooden blocks to meet customer's requirements. Supermarkets and pre-packs were the order of the day and large sheep breeds were out of fashion. Over just a few years the remaining flocks, each of 100-300 ewes, disappeared either through breeder's deaths or for economic reasons.

Against this background, Philip Watts, Robert's father, decided to do something about the situation. In 1954, he bought the flock of Stewart Dean from 'Sudbrook' and two rams from Max Howard's 'Nocton' flock - the 'Thorpe Latimer' flock thus came into being. I have always maintained that by this bold purchase the future of the Lincoln Longwool was assured. Had Philip Watts not done what he did, the Lincoln Longwool sheep would probably have followed the Lincoln curly coat pig into extinction. The 'Thorpe Latimer' flock was very soon the only flock of any size and it was the only place where prospective breed-

ers could obtain foundation sheep. The show scene at this time had very few exhibitors. Thus, in 1977 Philip sent 30 sheep to his somewhat reluctant son Robert's farm at Bourne and the 'Billingborough' flock was born. Robert's speciality was growing celery, at which he excelled, but to his great credit he recognized the gravity of the situation and set about doing the sheep job properly.

On the death of his father, Robert took control of both the 'Thorpe Latimer' and 'Billingborough' flocks. He continued to show them separately and made great efforts to preserve the individual flock blood lines. The size of the flocks meant it was the only source of stock for any new breeder. The LLSBA owes Philip and Robert Watts an immeasurable debt. Had it not been for their efforts the Lincoln Longwool sheep would not be in the good position it is today.

I first met Robert when he came to the shows with his father over 50 years ago. His great endearing quality has always been his sense of humor and his ready smile. Robert was a member of many committees and councils over the years. When he arrived at a meeting a little later than most members (I think it was his preferred way), the little chuckle and smile followed as he came through the door which fully reflected his character. Where differences of opinion prevailed, rather than get 'het-up', Robert bided his time until everyone had had their say, then his carefully thought-out opinion on the matter always brought calm to the most difficult situation. Robert did not seem to know the word panic and his laid back approach to difficulties is something many of us would envy. I never heard him say a bad word about anyone. He would say "some people can't seem to get on with so and so, but I find him all right."

Robert had a great love of all things traditional and of historical interest in this country, of which he had an immense knowledge. As a conversationalist Robert had few equals, the sort of chap who could talk on any subject. He and I had, on occasion, to meet on church matters in our diocese. I found Robert to have a very deep faith and took very seriously his work with his local church. How joyful he would have been to see his beloved St Andrews, in Helpringham, filled with those who respected and loved him during his life on earth.

Robert's father, Philip, helped me often in my younger days. It was said of him at his funeral, "Philip Watts was a giver, not a taker." These same words can be said of Robert, he was so generous in his attitude to his fellows, he gave much more to others than he expected to take. I consider it a great privilege to have known him and his legacy to those of us who are left is something of which his family, especially William, Victoria and Edward can be very proud.



'08 NAILE PREMIER EXHIBITOR



08 NAILE JUNIOR EXHIBITORS



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