



THE LINCOLN LETTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL LINCOLN SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOC.

WINTER

2011

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Brian Larson, President NLSBA

The **Roger Watkins Memorial Youth Fund** has been established by donations from NLSBA members and friends. Roger Watkins served as Secretary/Treasurer for 10 years. He was an avid promoter of the Lincoln, especially with youth. The fund is available for junior members to apply for shearing school scholarships and memorial T-shirts for junior shows.

The Memorial Youth Fund will provide **three \$100 shearing school scholarships** for junior members and young senior members (up to 23 years of age) of the NLSBA each year. The award will be sent directly to the school to which the applicant enters. If the amount of the award exceeds the tuition, the balance will be applied to equipment used in shearing. Send your request to any officer or director of the NLSBA for scholarship consideration.

T-shirts for Junior members showing Lincolns will be provided with funds from the Memorial Youth Fund. These shirts will have the Lincoln logo designed by Carol Watkins on the front and "Roger Watkins Memorial" printed on the back. Regional NLSBA directors can request these shirts for youth in their area showing Lincolns. The shirts will be provided for the North East Junior Show and the NAILE Junior Lincoln Show. The Juniors are to wear the shirts while showing their sheep.

Youth Conservation Project – Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival: If you would consider donating a Lincoln Longwool yearling ewe to a youth applicant, please contact Brian Larson. Lincoln Longwool ewes have been donated to youth for many years through this program. If you know youth who would wish to apply for a ewe in this program, contact: Elaine Ashcraft, 46118 CR 58, Coshocton, OH 43812 or 740-622-1573 or tankewe@tusco.net. Applications are due April 1, 2011.

More information at: http://www.sheepandwool.org/events_detail.php?eid=81

The **2011 NLSBA National Show & Sale and biennial membership meeting** will be held June 17 & 18 in Springfield, IL. Be an active part of the association! Banner Sales is in charge of the show and sale.

The **All America Junior Lincoln Show** will be in Delaware this year and will have a Lincoln show. Anyone interested in being a class award donor, please contact Debbie Vanderwende or an officer or director. There also will be donated entries to the National Show and Sale to raise funds for this show

New England Youth Lincoln Show will be held July 7-10, 2011 in West Springfield, MA.

A **National Regional Lincoln Show** will be held at the 2011 Eastern States Exposition (Big E) next September in West Springfield, MA. Anyone interested in being an award donor, please contact Debbie Vanderwende, Robin Meek or Brian Larson. Plan now to attend!

Tom Booth, Lincoln Longwool breeder from the United Kingdom, will judge the 2011 NAILE open Lincoln shows. Make plans to be there, bring your best Lincolns, meet one of our colleagues from the UK!

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KEY TRENDS AND ISSUES FACED AS RARE BREED STEWARDS

from the Science Desk, by Phil Sponenberg

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The Breed Type

"Breed type" is an indispensable concept in breed conservation, and one which is all too often ignored or falls into the background as an assumption. Breed type is the sum total of the phenotype of breeds, and includes the obvious physical, conformational details that set one breed apart from others. It also, and maybe even more importantly, includes behavioral and functional differences. Breed type is what distinguishes one breed from another, and this is at the core of what makes breeds useful to begin with. Breed type is essential to breed differences, and breed differences are what make breeds indispensable agricultural resources.

For me, the importance of breed type and its subtlety came to the forefront during my card grading activities for the Leicester Longwools up in Rhinebeck last fall. Breed type is important and can change over time. Some changes may be important and warranted, but in general a change from breed type is a change in underlying genetic structure as well. With all the modern DNA technology available, it is tempting to forget that the easily-visible external phenotype (or breed type) is also a product of the underlying genetic information in the animal. Breed type is readily accessible to anyone with eyes and a brain, and its importance is frequently overlooked.

Difficulty sets in when the market can, and does, put pressures on breed type so that breeders select towards an ideal or goal that may well not be in the breed standard. While card grading the Leicesters, I watched someone blocking sheep for a later show. I thought they were pretty decent Wensleydales, maybe a bit pale in the face, and I was somewhat shocked when I found out that they were in fact Lincolns. The wool was very off-type. It would have been a delight to spin, but that isn't the point! The wool on a Lincoln should be Lincoln wool, and that on a Wensleydale should be Wensleydale wool. Each is exquisite in its own way. No single wool is "best," but rather each is suited ideally for one of the several purposes to which we put wool.

The Leicesters as a longwool breed are fighting the same battle because most longwool sheep breeders get a premium for finer fleeces. The stronger end of the range of fleece grades, which was historically found among most of these breeds, is now rare or missing in some of them. This is unfortunate since this long, strong wool is part of what drove the development of these breeds and contributed to their long commercial success over centuries.

The sheep examples are only glimpses of a trend important for all species. Breed type is indeed important in any and all breeds, and educating breeders on the importance of type is important. A look at other species reveals similar damaging drift of breed type. Warmblooded horses have nearly lost the original cart-horse type in pursuit of a sport-horse type. The irony here is that some observations suggest that the highly desired sport-horse

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Visit the Lincoln Association Website for Updates and Information

www.lincolnsheep.org

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

Semen from UK Lincoln Longwool rams will arrive in the spring of 2011. Semen will be available from three rams (two white, one colored) for use by US Lincoln breeders. Contact Brian Larson or Nancy Irlbeck.

Vaginal artificial insemination (VAI) success in Icelandic sheep had encouraged me to check this out as a possibility in Lincolns, thinking it may be an alternative to using laparoscopic artificial insemination (LAI). However, the leaders in this technology, Southram - South Iceland Sheep Breeding Center (<http://southram.bsll.is/>), has said that it appears to not be a viable option for British breeds. Sorry folks, it appears that LAI is the best option right now.

MN Junior NLSBA member wins NFIB scholarship for Lincoln Sheep Business

A Minnesota teenager who, with her brother, started a sheep business, have won a National Federation of Independent Business young entrepreneur \$1,000 scholarship award. Three years ago Kelly Froehlich, 18, started her sheep business as an FFA supervised agriculture experience project for high school. She researched, selected and purchased a starter flock of eight registered Lincoln Longwool ewes for \$800.

"From there I have been expanding and learning all that I can about the sheep industry to further my business, EK Sheep," Kelly tells her local East Central Minnesota Post Review newspaper. "Since I was a little kid I adored sheep. I really had fallen in love with sheep when I was a few years old."

She says the project quickly grew into a business based at the family farm in Grasston, Minnesota, when it was realized clean, quality wool was hard to come by locally. Kelly and her brother Eric, 19, aim to develop a local wool market with fiber artists and hand spinners attracted to the natural, unique and unpredictable colors, such as variations of silver, that occur through a particular breeding process.

"EK Sheep focuses on natural wool coloration in the sheep to sell to fiber artists," she tells the newspaper. "This is unique for a couple of reasons: one, the wool market is primarily dominated by white wool because it can be dyed. Natural coloration provides unique colors that can't be reproduced by dyes; and two, fiber artists love it!"

The siblings have 48 sheep and are planning to build a flock of up to 150 Lincoln Longwool ewes.

AUTUMN McCAMM AND THE NE YOUTH SHOW LINCOLN JUDGE.



LINCOLNS READY FOR THE SHOW RING AT THE NE YOUTH SHOW.

AUSTIN SHEA'S CHAMPION RAM AT THE NE YOUTH SHOW.



EMILY MOMBOURQUETTE'S CHAMPION EWE AT THE NE YOUTH SHOW.

IN MEMORY OF LINCOLN BREEDER JOHN CROSBY LEE



John Crosby Lee,

Highgate, Ontario, died Wednesday November 3, 2010 at the Village Nursing Home, Ridgeway, at the age of 90.

John Crosby Lee was born at home on the family farm one mile west of Highgate. The first son of agriculturalist, Herb M. Lee, and his wife, Stella (nee Crosby) Lee, he was the fourth generation "John" born on the land first farmed by his great-grandfather and namesake, John Lee, who emigrated from Skibberrean, County Cork, Ireland in 1841. Known far and wide as a shepherd, the get of John Lee's prize-winning Lincoln flock can look upon both oceans. The first purebred ram was brought to the farm by John's grandfather in 1889. John's father Herb began showing at local and international fairs in the early days of the 20th century. Both John and Herb showed at the Chicago International Livestock Exposition, and the Lee family showed sheep at the Royal Winter Fair every year since its inception until the sheep were sold after the last showing in November of 2000. That year John capped his career by winning Grand Champion Ram over all breeds.

Genetics from this historic farm were desired by leading stockmen for both the Shorthorn cattle and Lincoln sheep. John was proud that Leeland Farms' genetics were used in founding the Columbia breed of sheep, and the upgrading by the U.S. government of native Navajo sheep to increase wool production. John was a long-term Chairman of the Sheep Committee, and eventually became President of the Howard Agricultural Society. He received the Agricultural Service Award for his contributions to the Fair's success. He was a member and Chairman of the Sheep Committee of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair for years, and was President and Director of the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association. John declined many invitations to judge sheep because he preferred showing. In this, his physical strength, combined with an excellent understanding of animal behavior, made a difficult task seem effortless. The decision to sell the Lincoln sheep flock was difficult, yet gratifying, because a top U.S. Lincoln breeder (William Bankhead of Rock Hall, Maryland) acquired the entire flock.

John's dedicated work for the betterment of sheep and wool, his skillful shepherding, and his expert knowledge of animal husbandry were rewarded with the presentation of the first, Peter C. Levine Award at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. This was the Levine family's recognition of the difficult and dedicated life work of the shepherd. Another high point in John Lee's career as sheep breeder came in 1988 with the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Royal Winter Fair when he was honored for his uninterrupted participation in the Royal. A photograph appeared in several papers showing John in a ten minute conversation with Princess Anne of the Royal House of Windsor. An article about John and Princess Anne in the Windsor Star can be accessed at: http://www.windsorstar.com/columnists/Marty_Gervais.html

John served in the Royal Canadian Navy in WWII as a signalman and semaphore specialist on HMS Mansfield and on HMCS Wasaga, a Bangor Class minesweeper. On D-Day, June 6th, 1944, at 2 AM, HMCS Wasaga was in service off the coast of Normandy, France, sweeping the cold dark Atlantic waters for mines before the invasion. After the war, John C. Lee returned to farm the family farm with his father, Herb and brother, George. Herb passed away in 1966 and brother George died in March of 2004. John remained on the farm which he and George's widow Irene continued to share crop with a neighboring farmer.

A lifelong bachelor and in addition to shepherding, Lee's leisure activities included genealogy, stamp collecting, coin collecting and much more. An avid reader with a broad range of interests, Lee was a fascinating man. He could hold forth at length on a wide range of topics. He was a favorite amongst his nieces and nephews who would spend entertaining hours with

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KEY TRENDS AND ISSUES FACED AS RARE BREED STEWARDS... *Continued from page 1*

type is a hybrid and therefore not necessarily true-breeding. For the most reliable sport horse production, breeders need that cart-horse type because from it they can reliably and easily get the sport horses so desired by modern markets.

Cattle have not been immune from type drift, either. Several years ago at a large cattle show, all of the more popular breeds had the same basic structure and look (except the color, which still varied) and this included very posty rear legs. These cattle were not going to make it into their teens, because they lacked the structure that would allow them to do so. The rarer breeds fortunately still looked distinct from one another, and still had legs under them. Hopefully we can keep that trend going.

Breed type is what keeps breeds distinctive and useful, and breeders need to be diligent to safeguard it, whatever breed they treasure!

Breed Population Structure

Breed conservation is not just about the numbers. The numbers happen to be the easiest single measure of “endangeredness” or relative risk of loss, but they are really just the tip of the iceberg. It is important to realize this point if breed conservation is to succeed in the long run. In addition to numbers, several other aspects of population dynamics within breeds are important, and are notoriously difficult to reduce down to a number. One of these is how the population is constituted (strains, bloodlines), and how these subunits interact with one another under the care of their owners.

Population structure is an important aspect of breed conservation and maintenance. The closer this issue is inspected and pondered, the more nebulous and subtle it becomes. Concepts such as bloodlines, strains, and families within a breed are extremely important. They assure that the population is subdivided usefully into little pockets that are somewhat distantly related, and this can assure that all members of the breed have potential breeding partners that will not lead to inbred offspring. This can very much contribute to long-term survival of a breed.

Defining concepts like “bloodline” or “strain” can itself be a strain! The key idea is that within breeds, there are subfamilies that share few or no ancestors. These are almost “sub-breeds” in a sense, but breed type and identity are shared among them. A strain is essentially a subgroup of a breed, in which the animals all share some level of relationship that is closer and more obvious than it is to the breed as a whole.

Most strains also have the stamp of an individual breeder. Every breeder is going to shape the general look and finer points of type within the larger umbrella of the overall breed type. The selection decisions that a breeder makes do this shaping, and each breeder is going to emphasize slightly different characteristics, with the result that the final product is ever so slightly different.

Years ago my college roommate and I had a herd of Texas Longhorn cattle. We were working with one strain (Yates cattle), and even within that overall family descended from a single breeder, were other substrains that had been tended by yet other breeders who had bought foundation animals from the original Yates herd. One of these was the Schaleben line, and these

were incredibly distinctive, to the point that a Schaleben cow could easily be identified out of a herd of Texas Longhorns, even if they were all Yates Longhorns. The strain uniqueness in this case, and in most cases, came from a combination of foundation effect as well as the selection pressures put on the animals.

It makes a huge difference, especially in rare breeds, if all of the replacement males are coming from a single herd/flock, as opposed to a situation in which all herds and flocks are providing males for the next generation. In the first situation, the single popular herd will eventually overwhelm the breed and make it into that one image. In the second, the breed’s genetic diversity is much more likely to be adequately maintained.

If animals are selected strictly on the basis of genetic merit for production without any regard for how they fit into the overall population, they very well may be out of a single or a few strains. Picking out the high performers for several generations in a row, and then using these extensively throughout the entire breed, leaves the breed with everything related to everything else, because all animals are then related to these few high performers. At that point the breeders have truly boxed the breed in on itself, because no unrelated matings are then possible.

A most powerful example of this is the Holstein dairy cattle breed, which is exquisitely selected for production. This breed has an international population of millions, but curiously has an effective population size (think of this as the number of genetic individuals in the population) of only 30 or so animals because everything is so closely related. Every time animals are related, that effective population size goes down. So, when everything is related to everything else, the effective population size can plummet rapidly, and with that goes at least some option for future selection of the breed, as well as its long-term viability.

The “fix” for this situation is somewhat different for rare breeds versus common ones. In both types of breeds, the issue of population structure demands that attention be paid to how animals are related. Selection for performance must be done, but with consideration for family structure. For example, in my own goat herd it is important for me to select the best son from each buck I use (six per year) rather than the best six bucklings. If I were to use the latter strategy, I would likely end up with one or two sets of three half-brothers, and four or five of the bucks will not have provided replacements for the next generation. That can go on for a short while, but eventually it will take the herd down the path of obligatory inbreeding, and the performance and reproductive deterioration that goes with it. In this example, the different buck lines become similar to ‘strains’ (and in my herd they actually are), and assuring replacement animals from each of them also assures that the herd remains genetically diverse. The end result is that the offspring of one buck can generally be used to pair up with the offspring of one of the others with little resultant inbreeding. That’s good for the goats, and good for the breed.

D. Phillip Sponenberg, D.V.M., Ph.D. is a Professor of Pathology and Genetics at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Virginia. He is a long-time member of ALBC, and serves as the Technical Advisor to the ALBC staff. He can be reached via e-mail at dssponen@vt.edu.

IN MEMORY OF LINCOLN BREEDER JOHN CROSBY LEE... *Continued from page 2*

their uncle in the den on the farm. He concealed invisible chipmunks in his cupped hands; made paper birds appear, disappear, and reappear at will; and teased their young minds with a wealth of word and number puzzles.

There is a photograph taken on the farm of John as a boy. He is seated in a chair on the lawn reading a copy of “Boy’s Own Book of Knowledge”. This little boy grew into a man, admired for his knowledge of the world, and for his articulate and persuasive way of presenting what he knew for the sake of consideration by others. No single noun - - veteran, shepherd, farmer, uncle, friend - - will suffice in describing John, who took his place in the proud tradition of “John’s” born on the farm on the hill, just west of Highgate.

In 1988, speaking of his experiences as a shepherd at the Royal, John said, “this is why my grandfather, my father and his brothers travelled many miles by horses and wagons to exhibit sheep in the four-county area within 20 miles of home in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. My brother and myself have continued to show at the Royal since the death of my father... How much better is the country for the dedication and special kind of love that inspires hundreds of men and women who produce and show?... I don’t think it can be measured”. On November 16, 2010, John and his brother George were inducted into the Kent Agricultural Hall of Fame.

CONGRATULATIONS 2010 LINCOLN LONGWOOL SHOW CHAMPIONS

National, Regional, and State Shows Included in Listing Below

Show.....	Color.....	Champion Ram	Res. Champion Ram	Champion Ewe.....	Res. Champion Ewe.....	Best Fleece
MD Sheep & Wool Festival	White	Mohr.....	Mohr	Mohr	Mohr	Mohr
MD Sheep & Wool Festival	Natural Colored	Vanderwende.....	Long.....	Mohr	Vanderwende	Vanderwende
<i>(also Supreme Champion Fleece)</i>						
NLSBA Show & Sale	White	Larson	Boersma	Lein	Boersma	
NLSBA Show & Sale	Natural Colored	Gibson.....	Reister	Pettersson	Hordyk	Pettersson
Ohio State Fair					Sando	
Wisconsin State Fair	Long Wool	Burgener	Burgener	Burgener	Burgener	
Wisconsin State Fair	Natural Colored	Burgener	Burgener	Burgener	Burgener	
Illinois State Fair		Boersma.....	Crome	Mohr	Boersma	
NE Youth Show		Shea	Belleavoine.....	Mombourquette.....	Mombourquette.....	Mombourquette.....
Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival.....	Senior	Lein	Mohr	Mohr	Lein	Lein
Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival.....	Junior	Yunker		Yunker		
Iowa State Fair		Burgener	Lein	Lein	Burgener	
California State Fair	Wool & Fiber				Pettersson.....	
California State Fair	Natural Colored	Pettersson			Pettersson.....	
Missouri State Fair	Natural Colored	Gibson		Swartz	Gibson.....	
Eastern States	White	Haddock	Vanderwende	Vanderwende	Haddock	Vanderwende
Eastern States	Natural Colored	Mombourquette	Mombourquette.....	Mombourquette.....	Meek	Vanderwende
Delaware State Fair	White.....		Vanderwende			
Delaware State Fair	Natural Colored	Vanderwende.....	Vanderwende	Vanderwende	Vanderwende	
NAILE Junior	White	Mohr.....	Mohr	Mohr	Mohr	Mohr
NAILE Junior	Natural Colored			Mohr	A.Richert.....	A.Richert.....
NAILE	White	Clifford	Larson.....	Pettersson	Pettersson	Lein/Vanderwende
NAILE	Natural Colored	Gibson.....	Clifford	Pettersson	Mohr	Clifford/Vanderwende



NATURAL COLORED YEARLING EWES AT THE NAILE JR SHOW.

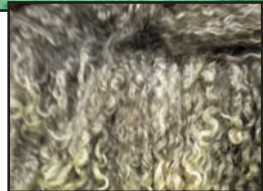


CHAMPION EWE LINE-UP AT THE NAILE JR SHOW.

CLIFFORD'S BEST FLEECE NATURAL COLORED RAM AT THE 2010 NAILE.



WHITE YEARLING EWES AT THE NAILE JR SHOW.



VANDERWENDE'S BEST FLEECE NATURAL COLORED EWE AT THE 2010 NAILE.

GIBSON'S CHAMPION NATURAL COLORED RAM AT THE 2010 NAILE.



PETTERSSON'S CHAMPION WHITE LINCOLN EWE AT THE 2010 NAILE.



PETTERSSON'S CHAMPION NATURAL COLORED LINCOLN EWE AT THE 2010 NAILE.



VANDERWENDE'S BEST FLEECE EWE AT THE 2010 NAILE.



LEIN'S BEST FLEECE WHITE LINCOLN RAM AT THE 2010 NAILE.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS AT THE NAILE!

2011 LINCOLN BREEDERS DIRECTORY

This membership directory includes members who paid dues in 2010. It is updated once a year.

also available on the web at www.lincolnsheep.org

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MAKE NOTES HERE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LINCOLN BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

A society of Lincoln breeders was started in England in 1796 and the present Lincoln Longwool Sheep Breeders' Association was founded in 1892.

In the United States, the National Lincoln Sheep Breeders' Association (NLSBA) was started in Michigan in 1891. By 1900 the membership consisted of approximately 150 members of which one-third were Canadian. Registration of colored Lincolns in the U.S. began in 1984.

The registry maintained by the American association is open for offspring of animals recorded in Lincoln breeders' registries from other countries. For example, animals that have qualified for registration and are recorded in the Canadian Livestock Records can be transferred and recorded in the American registry.

Lincoln Longwool judging guidelines, reflecting desirable characteristics of the breed, were updated in 1993. The registry and generation of registration papers were computerized in 1997 to offer a standard

three-generation pedigree (with a five generation option) and to identify the fleece color phenotype as "white" or "colored".

During odd numbered years, at a central location, the NLSBA holds a biennial meeting, white and colored sheep and wool shows, breeding sheep sale, and election of officers and directors. Officers

include president, vice president, secretary-treasurer and director regions including eastern, mid-eastern, mid-western, western and one at-large. In alternating locations through out the U.S. on even-numbered years, the association holds a membership meeting, shows and sale. Youth activities are conducted nationwide.



Visit the Lincoln Association
Website for Updates and
Information

www.lincolnsheep.org

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