



Herd the News

January/February 2019

The California Wool Growers Association will deliver lasting value to support and grow all segments of the California sheep industry.

Endangered Gray Wolf in California Must Be Protected, Court Rules

On Jan. 28th a San Diego Superior Court judge ruled against California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) in their lawsuit challenging the June 2014 listing of the gray wolf as an endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act, finding that the California Fish and Game Commission did not act "in excess of its jurisdiction by listing the gray wolf."

The lawsuit, filed in January of 2017, challenged the listing of the gray wolf on three grounds: (1) that the subspecies of gray wolves now present in California (Northwestern gray wolf) is a non-native subspecies and is thus ineligible for CESA protections (which are extended only to native species and subspecies); (2) that the Commission arbitrarily limited the species "range" to California's borders, ignoring the species' robust population throughout its biological range; and (3) that the Commission wrongly listed the species based on the occasional presence of OR-7 in California between 2011 and 2014.

The court rejected each of these arguments. The court reasoned that the Commission reasonably listed the gray wolf at the species level due in part to significant scientific disagreement over appropriate subspecies classifications among gray wolves. The judge also concluded, based on his interpretation of prior caselaw, that the Commission's interpretation of "range" to mean "California range" was justified. Finally, the court dismissed CCA's claims that OR-7's occasional presence in California was insufficient to warrant listing the species as endangered, ruling that the Commission could rely on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's assertion that "it is likely that other dispersing wolves...from Oregon will travel to California" in determining that "protection was needed...to prevent extinction in California."

CCA and co-plaintiffs CFBF have 60 days from the date the final ruling is entered to appeal the court's decision (the court's January 28 ruling is a "minute order"; a final judgement will likely be entered at a later date). In the coming weeks, CCA and CFBF will consult with the Pacific Legal Foundation to determine the appropriate next steps.

The court's order can be read at <https://pacificlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Gray-Wolf-Minute-Order-Jan-28-2019.pdf>

Note: California Wool Growers Association and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation filed an animus curiae brief in support of the plaintiffs.

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Presidents Message ~ Turning Virtual Friends into Real Ones: The Value of Conventions – Dan Macon



Dear CWGA membership,

As I write this, I'm sitting in the Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans awaiting my flight home from the American Sheep Industry (ASI) conference. As usual, my suitcase is stuffed with new information – as is my brain! I always come away from these meetings with more knowledge of our industry than I had when I arrived. But for me, perhaps the greatest benefit of participating in our state and national conferences is the opportunity to renew old friendships –

and establish new ones!

As some of you know, I do a fair bit of outreach about our industry on social media. Through Facebook, Twitter, and especially Instagram, I try to share information about our sheep operation specifically, and about our industry generally. These platforms have also allowed me to connect with sheep producers, fiber artists, and other industry partners all over the world. And this week in New Orleans, I got to meet a number of these contacts in person for the first time!

On Friday morning, after I attended the State President's Breakfast, I sat down next to a young woman from Missouri in the Resource Management Committee meeting. We introduced ourselves, and she said, "I think I follow you in Instagram." Turns out I was sitting next to Ashleigh Redman from Missouri, who I follow on Instagram as well. Meeting in person gave us a chance to talk directly about predators, grazing management, and other resource-related topics. And speaking of young people, I was incredibly encouraged to see so many young producers in attendance in New Orleans.

Later on Friday, as I was exploring the tradeshow, I met John Wilkes, a transplanted ex-shepherd from Shropshire, England. John and I have communicated via Twitter and Instagram for several years about Shropshire sheep, sheep dogs (both border collies and livestock guardian dogs), and other ovine topics. John writes for the Farmer's Guardian and other publications – he calls himself a "sheepist" (a term I like immensely). Over the course of the next day, we made plans to collaborate on several projects (including the 2019 Livestock Breeds Conservancy conference in Santa Rosa in October).

On Saturday, as our ASI Board of Director's meeting resumed after another outstanding lunch featuring lamb from Mountain States Lamb, Madeline Rosenberg, Kentucky's ASI director, introduced herself. Madeline is a sheep producer and "fiber ambassador" from Bagdad, Kentucky. We follow each other on Instagram, and she invited me to be on her wool-focused podcast in the coming months. I'm looking forward to it!

Much of our day-to-day work as sheep producers can seem very focused on our own particular operations and issues – for me, it can be somewhat isolating.

Social media, despite its many flaws, can give us a chance to connect with producers from all over the world – to share frustrations, ask questions, and celebrate successes. Last year, I connected with a shepherd from Dorset, England, who was using a pasture lambing technique that seemed like it would work in our operation. With her help, I found a very cost-effective way to protect our newborn lambs from inclement weather (we don't have a lambing barn, so this technique was especially helpful).

For me, however, the utility of virtual friendships and online conversations pales in comparison with the value I get from face-to-face conversations. These connections, for me, are the most valuable part of our industry meetings. As usual, we had a great turnout from California – thank you to everyone who made the trip to New Orleans! The interests of ALL California sheep producers – large and small – are well represented at ASI. If you've never been to an ASI convention, plan to go to Scottsdale, AZ, in January 2020! And make plans now to attend our CWGA Annual Meeting in Gardnerville, NV, on August 23-24, 2019. We have a great Friday workshop planned on wool quality and marketing, and Saturday's membership meeting promises to be outstanding as well. I look forward to seeing you there!

Welcome New Members

CWGA is very pleased to welcome the following new members to CWGA:

Eileen Hanson, HH Ranch, Clayton, CA

Sonya Miller, DS Miller Farms, Galt, CA

Terri & Zephyr Oyarzun, Goats R Us, Orinda, CA

Angie & Phil Shephard, BBB Ranch, Friday Harbor, WA

Ray White, White Ranch, Corning, CA

Do you know a producer or industry stakeholder that is not a member of CWGA? If so, please share this issue of *Herd the News* and urge them to support their industry and join CWGA today!

Member News

CWGA Guard Dog Funds Received

The CWGA Guard Dog Fund helps to support CWGA in its efforts to support and engage in legal activities related to sheep, livestock, and agriculture in California.

Cubiburu Livestock, Inc., Stockton, CA

Florence Cubiburu., Stockton, CA

Now Available - Renew Your Membership Online

For those members who prefer to pay for their membership online, electronic payments by credit card and PayPal are now being accepted on the CWGA website.

To renew electronically go to - californiawoolgrowers.org/about/join.

Don't Forget CWGA Offers Liability Insurance for Member Industry Events

CWGA offers liability insurance coverage at a reduced rate for member hosted sheep, lamb, and wool related events including local association picnics, county fair booths, on-ranch promotional events, etc.

Please submit all liability insurance requests to the CWGA office at least 10 days prior to your event to ensure adequate processing time.

ASI's 2019 Spring Legislative Action Trip, March 11 – 13, 2019

Now is the time to increase your political activity!

Political advocacy is an ongoing and active part of CWGA's mission and role to deliver lasting value to all segments of the California sheep industry.

The American Sheep Industry (ASI) Spring Legislative Trip on March 11 – 13, 2019, offers members the opportunity to meet with their elected Congressional Representatives and Senators (and staff) to discuss the issues facing your industry.

Every meeting you engage in with your elected official, strengthens your relationship with those offices. Building relationships with elected officials represents an important part of influencing the political process. A personal visit is the most effective way of communicating with elected officials. Personal stories about our industry are the most effective and provide decision makers with valuable insight into our industry.

Issues and legislation can change quickly, which further highlights the importance of maintaining an ongoing relationship with your elected official. Why not start that relationship by joining fellow CWGA members on Capitol Hill?

California has 53 representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives, the most of any state, along with two senators in the U.S. Senate. In order to meet with as many representatives possible and voice our concerns, we need you to attend.

Tentative Schedule

Monday, March 11th – Travel to Washington DC

Tuesday, March 12th – Meetings with USDA Agencies & Capitol Hill Visits

Wednesday, March 13th – Capitol Hill Visits & Industry Legislative Reception

Thursday, March 14th – Return to California or Extend Your Trip for Sightseeing

Deadline to register – February 14th.

To register or for questions, contact the CWGA office at (916)444-8122 or info@woolgrowers.org.

2019 Sheep Shearing School, May 6th – 8th

Shearing school participants will learn to shear sheep using the methods taught by certified instructors of the National Shearing Program. This five-day hands-on course, jointly sponsored by the National Sheep Shearing Program and the University of California Cooperative Extension in Mendocino County, is intended for both the beginner as well as the advanced shearer.

The course fee is \$450 per student which covers the instructor fee, ASI Workbook/DVD is provided by American Sheep Industry Association. All shearing equipment is provided for the training. Registration information: cemendocino.ucanr.edu/Sheep_Shearing_School/.

2019 Wool Classing School, May 8th – 10th

The focus of the school is to provide the U.S. sheep industry with trained wool classers who can assist in improving the quality of the domestic wool clip, which is imperative to American wool becoming more competitive and available in the international as well as domestic markets.

The course fee is \$140 per student. Registration information: cemendocino.ucanr.edu/Wool_Classing_School/

From the Flock

A firsthand report from California sheep and wool producers.



Don Watson

Napa, Sonoma & Yolo Counties

Our farmer friends told us a decade ago that the sandy loam soils of their ranches would be planted to walnuts. They have replaced alfalfa with 2500 acres of walnuts during this time. There was still sufficient alfalfa this year. This fall, we learned that sheep will still have a future on alfalfa when it is grown organic. Sheep are very effective eating weeds when spray is no longer an option. We saved their newest 80 acres from an infestation of mustard and radish. The challenge is teaching traditional farmers how to use sheep as woolyweeders. Sheep prefer brassicas to alfalfa when

given the choice. In general, I believe that sheep can be used to complement the farming of nearly all crops. We are able to weed, mow, and fertilize using very little fuel or equipment.

I am very optimistic about spring and summer feed this year. We have proven that sheep saved homes when fire storms flashed through Napa county a couple of years ago. For the past 75 years, public policy eliminated livestock from open space near our cities and towns. During this time, the growth of fire fuels has been relentless. Due to the recent fires, I believe that there is public sentiment has swung in favor of grazing livestock in urban and suburban areas. We are developing relationships with land managers who see a need for diminishing fire fuels. We are very confident about sheep, but it is not quite true that only ewes can prevent forest fire. We should make room for cattle and goats too.



Ryan Indart

Fresno County

Grazing this spring looks to be very good. We have had ample winter and spring rains which will make and has made for very nice pasture in the hills and the flats of the valley. This year is a 180-degree difference from last year. If the rainfall this year continues the way it is, we are going to have a good feed year.

Furthermore, for those of us who don't travel to allotments and stay in the Central Valley the rainfall year so far and the snowpack in the mountains could set up nicely for higher water allocations from the state and federal water projects. This will be helpful because many sheep producers graze crop residue and the more crops that are planted the more residue available and thus more feed available.

There has been a gradual and significant decrease in grazing lands due to the planting of permanent crops in the Central Valley. The main crop that we see less of is alfalfa. Most Central Valley sheep farmers rely on alfalfa for lambing over the fall and winter months.



Frankie Iturriria

Kern County

In the Southern part of the state, we were blessed with good moisture in early January and hardly any cold weather to speak of. The hills around the Bakersfield area are looking very promising and with the forecast calling for more warm storms to hit our area in the coming weeks, the feed should be abundant. Many of the producers in our area are also closely watching the Mojave Desert for later in the spring which is looking promising as well.

The planting of permanent crops in our area has exploded in recent years. Pistachio and Almond acreage have significantly increased. It is a trend that will continue and with the new groundwater pumping regulations coming, I would expect farmers to plant higher value crops rather than forage crops

99th Annual California Ram Sale – April 13th in Porterville

Mark your calendars, the 2019 California Ram Sale will be held on April 13th at the Porterville Fairgrounds.

Contributions and the proceeds from the California Ram Sale support CWGA in its continued efforts to deliver lasting value to support and represent the interests of the California Sheep Industry through advocacy, education, and investment in markets and infrastructure.

Schedule of Events

9:00 am – Buyer Check-In & Ram Preview

9:30 am – Trade Show Featuring Sheep Health & Equipment Companies

11:00 am – Buyer BBQ Lamb Lunch

1:00 pm – California Ram Sale

Selling over 500 range rams from California, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, and Utah. Breeds offered include: Crossbred, Hampshire, Suffolk, Composite, Dorper, Merino, Oxford, and White-Faced. Ultrasound carcass measurements (i.e. loin eye area) and a Range Ram Index will be provided on all sale rams to help identify the carcass traits and the genetic potential of those rams.

Directions:

Porterville Fairgrounds, 2700 West Teapot Dome Ave. Porterville, CA 93257

North from Fresno – Take Hwy 99 south to Hwy 190. Go east on Hwy 190 into Porterville, then Hwy 65 south to Teapot Dome (Ave. 128). Turn west on Teapot Dome and travel approx. 2 miles until you reach the fairgrounds.

South from Bakersfield – Take Hwy 65 north into Porterville. Turn west on Teapot Dome and travel approx. 2 miles until you reach the fairgrounds.

Range Ram Index: A Tool for Selecting Range Rams

Each lot of rams sold in the 2019 Ram Sale will be assigned an Average Range Ram Index Value (Ram Index). The Ram Index will help to identify those rams that will sire progeny with more desirable carcass traits such as heavier carcass weights or larger loin eye size.

- The Ram Index is calculated using the following carcass characteristics: loin eye area (LEA), loin depth, fat thickness (BF), and ram weight.
- These characteristics are given numerical values to measure the ram's genetic merit value relative to other rams at the California Ram Sale.
- Rams with a Ram Index over 100 (e.g. 110) will exhibit more desirable carcass characteristics (i.e. larger LEA, less BF) relative to all of the rams at the Ram Sale. Rams with a Ram Index under 100 (e.g. 85) will exhibit less desirable carcass characteristic relative to the other rams at the Ram Sale.
- There is potential economic incentive in selecting rams with higher Ram Index values.
- According to the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station (USSE), genetic selection for larger loin-muscle area should be expected to improve carcass merit and carcass value of market lambs.
- Utilizes live animal ultrasound which can provide reliable estimates of carcass quality characteristics.
- Carcass traits are highly heritable.
- Producers can implement changes in progeny carcass traits change so much faster and improvement in the accuracy of breeding decisions is so much better.
- Will benefit the industry as whole in producing a more desirable product for the consumer.

Plan to Attend CWGA's Annual Meeting in Minden, NV

The 2019 CWGA Annual Meeting & Convention will be held on August 22 – 24 in Minden, NV.

CWGA is committed to delivering lasting value to support and grow all segments of the California sheep industry. Our annual meeting and convention delivers on this commitment by providing an opportunity for attendees to participate in educational forums, learn about current happenings in our industry, be engaged in association policy making, and provide input in future planning. While at the same time meeting with fellow sheep producers and enjoying the recreational activities in the area.

Lodging Information:



For online reservations go to www.carsonvalleyinn.com (Select Reservations/Group Sign-In) and enter the following group code: 1528.

Or call 800-321-6983 and mention the California Wool Growers Association.

Room Rates: Hotel: Sun/Thurs \$92.00, Fri/Sat \$115.00

Registration: Opens May 2019

Things to do in Carson Valley

Carson Valley is a place where you can choose to do as much or as little as you prefer. You can soar in a glider, hit the links, tour museums, tackle bike trails and ski slopes, find a bald eagle in your viewfinder, bounce your way into a desert sunrise in search of wild horses or wrap the day in the raucously communal setting of a Basque restaurant. Then again, you can set aside moments to pause, reflect and rediscover the power of simply “being.”

Just 45 minutes south of Reno and only 12 miles east of South Lake Tahoe, Carson Valley offers an abundance of authentic adventure.

To learn more about what the valley has to offer go to - <https://visitcarsonvalley.org/>.

Tentative Schedule of Events

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22

Local Area Industry Tour

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

Ram Sale Committee Meeting

Wool & Fiber Quality Workshop

Board of Directors Meeting

Dinner at J.T.'s Basque Bar & Dining Room

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

Annual Membership Meeting

Past Presidents Lunch

Antimicrobial Use & Stewardship Update

Delving into Sheep Industry Labor Issues

Cocktail Reception

Shepherds Ball & Banquet

Calling All Photographers

Start taking your pictures as CWGA will be hosting a sheep photography contest again at this year's Annual Meeting.

Contest pictures are utilized in CWGA publications, social media outlets and other Association materials.

Look for details in the next issue of *Herd the News*.

Legislative Update

Jan. 1 Sheep & Goat Inventory Report Release Rescheduled

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) Agricultural Statistics Board has begun rescheduling reports that were affected by the lapse in federal funding. During the lapse, NASS was not able to collect data nor issue reports.

The January 1 Sheep and Goat Inventory Report will be released on February 28th.

USDA Extends Farm Program Deadlines Due to Government Shutdown

Because of the federal government shutdown and the emergency nature of many of the programs, USDA's California Farm Service Agency (FSA) has extended the deadlines on some of its programs.

For more information on FSA extension and programs, go to www.farmers.gov/service-locator to contact your local USDA office.

AB 273 Proposes to Ban All Commercial Fur Trapping in California

Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher (D-San Diego) has introduced the Wildlife Protection Act of 2019 in response largely to the concerns of wildlife advocates, who say fur trapping is cruel and anachronistic. Trapped animals are strangled, shot or beaten to death, with care taken not to damage pelts before skinning them.

Gonzalez-Fletcher, however, said there were also financial reasons for shutting down the industry.

The proposal argues that the roughly six dozen trappers still working in the state — down from more than 5,000 in the 1920s — cannot afford to pay the full cost of implementing and regulating their industry as required by law.

A total of 68 trappers reported killing 1,568 animals statewide in 2017, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Among the 10 species reported taken were coyote, gray fox, beaver, badger and mink. Reported capture rates that year were highest for coyotes, followed by gray foxes, officials said.

Of the animals lawfully trapped and killed, 1,241 were reported sold, generating an estimated \$4,531 for trappers, or an average of \$67 per trapper.

The price a trapper can get for a coyote pelt on the current world market is about \$73, officials said; a gray fox pelt fetches roughly \$11.86.

The total revenue received by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the sale of those trapping licenses was \$15,544, and \$709 for the sale of fur dealer licenses, officials said. Some of those licenses were held by pest-control companies, officials said.

The proposed legislation is backed by the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity — which led a successful earlier campaign to prohibit bobcat trapping statewide — and the nonprofit group Social Compassion in Legislation, which a year ago spearheaded a bill banning the sale of mill-bred dogs, cats and rabbits. That bill went into effect on January 1.

The State Department of Fish and Wildlife declined to comment on the pending legislation. Fur trappers were not immediately available for comment.

Source: *Los Angeles Times*, www.latimes.com

Strong First Year for California Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Program



The California Department of Food and Agriculture has completed its first year of full implementation of SB-27, a law that created the Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Program (AUS), bringing all medically important antimicrobials used in livestock under veterinary oversight; prohibiting their use for growth-promotion and limiting their use for disease prevention; providing resources to veterinarians and livestock producers to implement antimicrobial stewardship plans; and initiating the collection of antimicrobial use information and monitoring of trends of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria.

[A mandated 2019 report](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/AUS/docs/CDFA_AUS_Report_2019.pdf) recently delivered to the California Legislature describes how CDFA has developed strong relationships with federal, state, and academic partners to gather meaningful data that will help improve antimicrobial use decision-making and inform the development of antimicrobial stewardship guidelines for California's diverse livestock industries and producers. The report can be found at: www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/AUS/docs/CDFA_AUS_Report_2019.pdf

"California is paving the way to comprehensively understand current antimicrobial use and animal health in livestock," said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. "Using the information we're developing, California's veterinarians and livestock owners can identify the best ways to use antibiotics while preserving their effectiveness for human and veterinary medicine."

CDFA has utilized voluntary participation in data gathering efforts to engage livestock producers; create program buy-in; and ensure that stewardship materials are evidence-based, meaningful, and practical for California's many different livestock industries. Using scientifically established methods as employed by other research groups including in a publication by the Pew Research Center, CDFA is confident that data gathered through AUS surveys accurately reflect the target population and provide sufficient information to evaluate trends and inform future program efforts.

Moving forward in 2019, the AUS program will focus on analyzing and reporting the results of initial data collection activities and developing scientifically valid resources for veterinarians and livestock owners as they promote antimicrobial stewardship while protecting animal health and well-being.

NEW! CDFA Antimicrobial Stewardship Materials

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Antimicrobial Use & Stewardship (AUS) program has developed new materials that highlight the principles of antimicrobial stewardship as well as guidelines for the judicious use of antimicrobials.

The emergence of bacteria that are resistant to antimicrobials is a serious threat to animal health, human health, and the planet. Physicians, veterinarians, livestock owners, companion animal owners, and the general public all contribute in the One Health effort to fight against the development of antibiotic resistance by incorporating antimicrobial stewardship into their day-to-day activities.

Antimicrobial Stewardship Plans aim to optimize patient health and improve antimicrobial drug use in order to preserve the efficacy and ensure the availability of antimicrobials for years to come.

This information (and more) can be found on the new [Antimicrobial Stewardship page](#).

Relevant laws and regulations can now be found on the new [Federal & State Policy page](#).

To access the CDFA AUS website go to www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/AUS.

Wool - The Original Performance Fiber



There was a lot of excitement about American wool during this year's American Sheep Industry Association's annual convention in New Orleans.

It's an exciting time for U.S. woolgrowers as American wool is in high demand both here at home and around the world.

The [American Sheep Industry Association's](#) (ASI) Rita Kourlis-Samualson explained some of the efforts that the group is doing to build demand for that high-quality U.S. wool clip.

"We do export quite a bit, so ASI works with the Foreign Ag Development Service, with the USDA in developing those markets," Samualson said. "And we've developed markets all over the world. We do export a lot.

"But here in the U.S., we're also developing our brand. We have the American wool brand to bring it into the current age and modernize it and let young people and millennials know about wool and its capabilities," she added.

"And because our breeders are breeding for finer wool, they're making finer yarns and lightweight fabrics, it can be worn year-round. Wool is very versatile and that's an important message we would like to share with consumers," Samualson told MTN News.

David Fischer, a member of the ASI's Wool Council from Sonora, Texas, says keeping the U.S. textile industry alive is a big priority to help ensure demand for American wool continues.

"Some of the talk that went on was really looking at how we can help infrastructure. What can we do to help with wool testing?" Fisher said.

"A conversation came up regarding helping the scouring facilities to modernize to the 21st Century like they need to be. Without that, we can't continue to move forward and have the growth and productive industry we want," he continued.

Textile companies also see opportunities as demand continues to grow for American wool — including Jacob Long who leads [American Woolen Company](#) based in Stafford Springs, Connecticut.

"Obviously, as one of the last remaining weavers in America, the big thing for us is to try to take wool fabric and go across other consumer segments," Long explained.

"Most people think of wool for only the apparel industry for outerwear, and for us, there's a huge opportunity for interiors as well as for accessories."

"So, for us, I think it's just looking at which consumer markets are growing and taking our wool fabric and trying to attack those markets," Long concluded.

Woolgrowers like ASI Wool Council member Randy Tunby from Baker, Montana say the growing demand for American wool is also helping their bottom line back at the ranch.

"We did have record prices this past year and wool is on a pretty strong market trend this year. Maybe not quite as much as it was last year but it helped fill the gap for people," Tunby said.

"It also made some people realize that boy we should pay attention to maybe the wool side of things a little bit more and when you can get those dollars back in your pocket from the wool that you that you were able to get this year it makes a large difference."

There's good reason why there's so much excitement in the U.S. wool industry because after all, American wool is the original performance fiber.

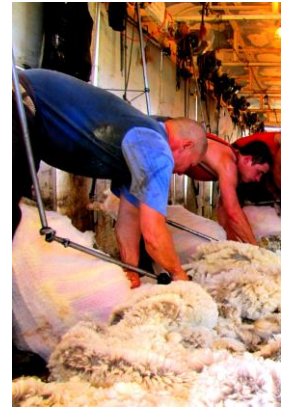
Visit www.americanwool.org to learn more about ASI's efforts to grow demand here in the U.S. and around the world.

Source: Montana Ag Network

Be Prepared – Tips for Shearing Season & Wool Quality

Are you willing to put forth the effort needed to make your wool clip the best that it can be? Even the best shearers in the world can't make the most of shearing day without a little help. That means making sure you're on the same page with your shearer and his crew long before they arrive on site.

Here are some tips to consider as you prepare for one of the most labor-intensive days of the entire season.



- Have facilities ready and prepared for the shearing crew. This includes adequate pen space, working facilities, extra labor to move and sort sheep prior to shearing, as well as processing sheep after shearing. You might need to provide help and assistance moving wool bales or bags away from the shearing site to a storage facility. Sort different wool types prior to shearing to reduce cross contamination. The preferred shearing order remains white face, crossbreds, black face and, lastly, hair sheep or hair sheep crosses.
- Sheep should be held off feed and water overnight prior to shearing. This eliminates fecal and urine contamination on the shearing floor and helps keep wool as clean as possible. It's also easier for shearers to handle the sheep during shearing when this rule is followed.
- Visit with your shearer or shearing crew manager prior to shearing to determine what is to be accomplished at the shearing site: bellies out only, will wool be classed, perhaps skirted? Who is providing the packaging for the wool? What type of packaging is needed? Burlap, film and nylon packs are all approved packaging materials in the U.S. Who will label the bales and keep the wool press record?
- Provide a trash bin on site for disposal of hair type fleeces, bloody wool, skin pieces, heavy tags or contamination items.
- If using a shearing crew, the producer should try to provide electrical outlets for campers, water, restrooms and showers for the crew.
- A hot meal at noon – provided by the grower – is sincerely appreciated by the shearing crew and makes a significant difference in the afternoon work performance of the crew. Mid-shift snacks at break time are also much appreciated by the crew and strengthens the relationship between the producer and his crew.
- Respect for the producer and mutual respect for the shearing crew has to be gained by performance. It continues to be a team effort to make shearing day a positive experience for all involved.
- With fewer shearing crews available, as well as fewer shearers, both domestic and foreign, producers will find it beneficial to do everything possible to complete shearing day with minimal stress on the sheep, working help and shearing crew.
- Shearers also recommend that producers use plastic ear tags and place them in the sheep's left ear, toward the outside edge approximately half way between the base and the tip. Metal ear tags are especially dangerous during shearing.

Tips for Wool Quality

Another way to enhance wool quality is proper harvesting techniques on shearing day. The goal is to provide your processor with the most uniform product possible. When preparing for shearing day, at a minimum, consider the following first three steps below to optimize effectiveness and financial return. With a fine, white-face wool operation, the last two steps should additionally be considered.

- Minimize wool contamination.
- Sort sheep before shearing and package different types of wool separately.
- Remove belly wool and tags during shearing and package separately.
- Some wools benefit from table skirting to remove inferior wool.
- Class wool in like groups for commercial marketing purposes.

‘Sheeping Off’ Alfalfa is a Win-Win for All!

By Rachael Freeman Long, Morgan Doran, Dan Putnam

‘Sheeping off’ or grazing alfalfa fields in the fall and winter, when alfalfa fields are dormant and not growing very fast is frequently of benefit to both alfalfa growers and sheep producers. The bulk of California’s lambs are born in the fall and early winter when winter grasses are just beginning to grow from seasonal rains. Grazing alfalfa at this time of year accommodates the lambing operation by providing high quality feed at a time when forage is usually scarce.

However, there are some risks to consider!

Sheep producers commonly establish enclosed paddocks on alfalfa fields with temporary fencing. Sheep are moved to new areas of the field, often daily, to prevent overgrazing, soil compaction (especially if it’s wet), and stand loss. Sometimes bedding down also causes damage to hay fields if the sheep are in an area for too long. Water is always provided for the animals (and the dogs are well taken care of and fed too!).

Alfalfa growers also benefit from sheep grazing in their fields during wintertime when the alfalfa is dormant. Sheep feed on winter weeds, helping to control them in both seedling as well as established alfalfa stands that may negate the need for an herbicide treatment. Sheep grazing also reduces the alfalfa vegetation that will commonly die back during the winter, producing cleaner hay the following spring. In addition, sheep help control weevil insect pests by feeding on older alfalfa stems, where the weevils lay eggs. This practice may help reduce weevil pressure and feeding damage to the first alfalfa cutting when weevils are actively feeding, a positive benefit, especially for organic growers.

Watch Out for Bloat!

The correct timing of alfalfa grazing is especially important for sheep producers since incorrect timing can result in a potentially lethal condition in sheep called bloat. Bloat occurs when a ruminant, such as sheep, consumes too much fresh, lush alfalfa (or clovers or lush small grains) with a high concentration of leaf proteins called saponins. When saponins are digested in the rumen, they create a stable foam that prevents the sheep from burping up rumen gases that are produced from digestion in their rumen. Grazing too early in the fall or too late in the spring when the alfalfa is lush and actively growing increases the risk of bloat, which is another reason why alfalfa grazing is done during the winter months. Sheep that develop frothy bloat have a distended abdomen, discomfort and bellowing and are at risk for sudden death. Make sure the animals don’t enter fields very hungry, and utilize ‘bloat-guard’ types of products, and watch the animals carefully to prevent death. [Discussion of management of alfalfa grazing](#) by Cangiano et al., 2008 is quite helpful.

Economic Benefits & Trade-Offs

Studies in California have documented economic benefits for both sheep producers and alfalfa growers. Sheep producers benefit from high quality feed during wintertime. Alfalfa growers benefit from weed and weevil control, as well as cleaner hay that can result in higher quality forage compared to non-grazed alfalfa stands.

There is some risk to hay growers in that excessive grazing pressure, excessive hoof compaction of soils, or bad timing reduces regrowth, but many times, grazing does not detract from the hay yield potential the following year, and in fact can reduce weed growth and insect presence.

When you come upon an alfalfa field full of sheep, know that they’re there for a purpose, providing feed for sheep and weevil and weed control for the alfalfa, in an environmentally sound manner. And, see if you can get in that game of ‘I Spy’ and find those Great Pyrenees dogs guarding the flock from coyotes and other predators. But, don’t try to make friends with them, as they have a job to do and need to focus on protecting their sheep.

Source: UC Cooperative Extension, Alfalfa & Forage News.

Climate Resilience and A New Generation of Ranchers

Leslie Roche¹ and Kate Munden-Dixon²

An aging demographic and declining numbers of ranchers pose serious challenges to the future of ranching and rangeland management in the American West. The average age of ranchers is 62, and fewer children are taking over the family ranch. Retaining the next generation and recruiting new generations is difficult due to a complex mix of start-up costs, knowledge and skill requirements, and regulatory barriers.



Surprisingly, there has been limited research and outreach programs focused on first-generation ranchers; at best, they are generalized as beginning farmers. To help bridge this gap, we have been working with ranchers and rangeland managers in California with support from the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE) program.

California's estimated 38 million acres of grazed rangelands are biologically rich working lands supporting livestock production (~\$3 billion annually including cattle and calves and sheep and goats) and the supply of other ecosystems services such as water resource protection, biodiversity conservation, and wildlife habitat. California's rangeland communities are already challenged by the characteristically hot, dry summers of the largely Mediterranean climate; escalating drought frequency and severity further compound this challenge, posing substantial and recurrent economic and ecological stresses to the system.

Based on results from the [California Rangeland Decision-Making Survey](#), we've found many first-generation ranchers aren't plugged into information networks such as Cooperative Extension and ranching organizations. Additionally, compared to their multigenerational counterparts, first-generation ranchers have access to fewer resources, fewer general management practices, and fewer drought adaptation strategies—making them more susceptible to drought and climate variability. This vulnerability is particularly concerning given many first-generation ranchers have limited experience with drought.

Building on this work, UC Davis graduate student Kate Munden-Dixon is interviewing 40 new, “early-career” ranchers from across California to better understand the perspectives of a broad diversity of ranchers. This new generation of early career ranchers are typically young, women, less likely to own land, and more likely to graze small ruminants (sheep and goats). Munden-Dixon's dissertation research will shed light on how demographics (gender, ethnicity, age) influence decision-making and adaptation to climate change and how outreach organizations can better support climate resiliency across a diversity of ranchers and operation types.

Organizations looking to enhance climate resilience of rangeland systems can more effectively target outreach and policy initiatives by taking into account the broad diversity of land managers and ranching operations and subsequent differences in information needs, experience, and individual challenges.

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²Ph.D. Student, Geography Graduate Group, University of California-Davis

UC Rangelands – California Grazing & Drought Resources

The mission of UC Rangelands is to develop and advance science-based knowledge to diverse management and policy stakeholders to promote agricultural and environmental sustainability on California's grazing lands.

The UC Rangeland Research and Extension “Hubs” provide information and tools on science-based solutions for sustainable rangeland management. Hubs include: livestock predator interactions, rangeland water quality, irrigated pastures, rangeland drought, public lands, rangeland decision making, knocking out weeds on rangeland, and pasture nitrogen management.

You can access all the Hubs at rangelands.ucdavis.edu/research.

New Year, Same Activist Tactics



It may be new year, but the Animal Agriculture Alliance is expecting business as usual from animal rights activists. They are likely to protest at any venue where they can garner attention and anywhere animals are present – farms, ranches, processing plants, fairs, expos and even truck stops. Here are a few pieces of advice to help those working in animal agriculture prepare.

Do not engage. Whether you encounter a protester at an event or on a farm or if an activist approaches a truck transporting animals at a truck stop, it is always best to ignore them and immediately contact law enforcement. Keep your cool and always assume you are being recorded or livestreamed online in your interaction, regardless of what you are told or whether a camera is visible. In one incident, the activists falsely claimed they were not recording the conversation at a poultry plant as they were livestreaming on Facebook.

Do take photos. Take photos of operator, license plates and vehicles involved – including the drones if applicable. Any identifying information helps law enforcement and producer trade organizations (i.e. CWGA, Farm Bureau).

Train Employees. Make sure employees at every level know how to handle unexpected and unauthorized visitors. Activists often approach farm or plant employees first when arriving at a facility. In one instance, activists entered a dairy processing plant office and demanded the receptionist tell them where the dairy farms producing for that plant are located. In another situation, a woman brought a young child to the gate of a plant and pleaded to be let in for the child to use the restroom. Once they were inside, she began running around taking photos and trying to access secure areas.

Do not Negotiate. One group has started demanding for animals to be released to them from farms, emboldened by a police officer who let them take one chicken in an October protest, and a farm who gave them 100 animals in November. While it might be tempting to try to get the group to leave by allowing them to take an animal, it is vitally important you do not give in to their demands. Giving the group an animal significantly weakens attempts to convey why their actions are unacceptable. Negotiating with an organization who wants to see animal liberation and the end of animal agriculture will not be productive.

Build Relationships with Law Enforcement. Proactively build relationships with law enforcement and first responders in your community. Let your local police department know about the protests targeting animal agriculture across the country and get advice from them on preparing.

Like most things, it's best to be prepared. If you haven't done so already, use the new year as an opportunity to update or create a crisis plan. The Animal Agriculture Alliance has more in-depth resources and information available to anyone about animal rights activism at AnimalAgAlliance.org/Protect.

CWGA Comment - Stanislaus County was a hot spot for animal activist activity in 2018. Similar activity is expected to continue in 2019. While the focus of the activity is on the dairy industry, please be aware of your surroundings and review the information above in the event you experience any activity at your operation.

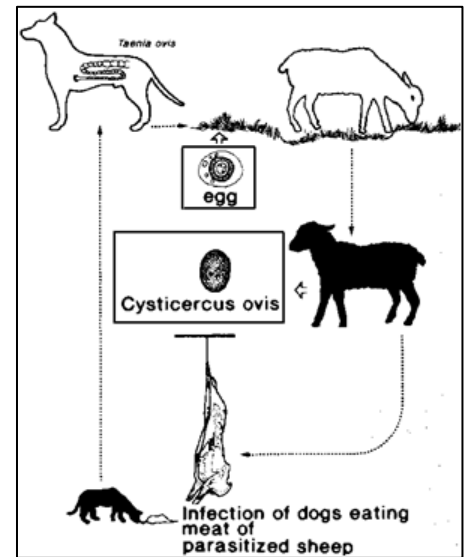
Animal welfare is more than just an ethical decision; it is imperative to successful business. Sheep ranchers are dedicated to the job of looking after their animals and keeping them healthy. Ranchers are always looking towards the best available animal practices to ensure good economic management of their business and optimum results in their produce. The routine care of sheep includes far more than providing fresh air, water, and food. It includes providing protection from predators, and a full regimen of preventative care including shearing, vaccinations, nutrition (pasture management and supplements), and birthing assistance. This humane and proactive approach provides uncompromising welfare standards for sheep that provide American Lamb and Wool.

Sheep Measles – A Profit Drain

By Melissa Garrod-VanLaningham, DVM & CWGA Production, Research & Education Committee Member

Sheep measles, otherwise known as cysticercosis, are small cysts found in the meat of sheep and goats. The consequence of these 'measles' is partial or whole carcass condemnation at the processing house. The cysts are found throughout the meat and only a small portion are on or near the surface. Cysts are most easily seen in the diaphragm, heart, jaw muscles and tongue.

So where do these cysts come from... man's best friends, the stock dogs. Sheep measles are caused by the tapeworm *Taenia Ovis*. The definitive host for this tapeworm is the dog, meaning the adult form of the worm lives in the dog's digestive tract. There it grows and reproduces to the point that 1 dog can shed up to 250,000 eggs per day! These eggs can live in the environment for 6 to 12 months. Like most internal parasites, this worm then goes through a larval form in an intermediate host – your sheep. The sheep graze contaminated pastures or feed, ingest the eggs, which hatch into larva and migrate through the lamb's body, eventually becoming encysted in the skeletal and heart muscle. The next step in the life cycle of this worm is for the intermediate host (your sheep) to be eaten by the definitive host (your dog) thereby releasing the encysted larva into the intestinal system of the dog where it can grow into an adult and start re-infecting your pastures all over again.



So now you're asking – why does this affect my pocket book? Well, it takes just 5 encysted larva to cause an entire carcass to be condemned at the processing house. While this particular species' larval form does not pose a risk to humans if consumed, imagine biting into a nice rib chop only to find something crunchy in the center – that can put customers off buying lamb forever!

So what can you do? Tapeworms generally do not cause clinical illness in your dogs, so a healthy appearing dog does not mean it doesn't have tapeworms. Guard dogs and herding dogs should all be on a regular deworming schedule. Tapeworms are the hardy sort and the over the counter dewormers that work on other worms (roundworms, hookworms and whipworms which can all cause mild to serious illness in dogs) are NOT effective against them. The only readily available and effective treatment for tapeworms is Praziquantel.

If you choose to go the over the counter route, you will need to use 2 different products to protect your dogs and your flock – 1 to eliminate the disease causing worms (usually a pyrantel pamoate or fenbendazole active ingredient) and 1 to eliminate the tape worms. Your veterinarian has products that combine both treatments into one. This is best done as part of a routine annual health checkup and vaccinations. At that time, your veterinarian can get you a prescription for the combination dewormer (Drontal or Drontal Plus) to use throughout the year. Dogs working or living in close proximity to sheep should be dewormed at least every 3 months. This may need to be more frequent if the opportunity for re-infection is high in your operation. Speak with your veterinarian to determine what schedule is the best for you.

Which brings us to the next steps that you can take to reduce the incidence of cysticercosis in your operation. If dogs do not ingest raw sheep meat or offal, then the lifecycle of the worm is stopped. Re-infection of the dog cannot occur, so adults do not mature and produce more eggs to put back on the pasture. Implementing good practices for keeping your dogs away from any dead stock or any home slaughter is extremely important. Controlling scavenging of sheep carcasses by your domestic dogs, as well as, the wild canids in the area is necessary. Bury dead stock at least 2 feet deep or compost it appropriately. If you feed sheep meat to your dogs, then either cook it to 140 degrees F or freeze it for 7 days prior to feeding. Avoid feeding sheep offal all together. *Continued on page 16.*

Sheep Measles, *cont'd*

Another item to consider is what other dogs come onto your property regularly? Restrict access of other dogs to your property – and yes, that means Aunt Lucy's poodle too. Or at least make sure their veterinarian has dewormed them within the last 6 months. Are your grazing lands part of a hunting club? Ask the club to require proof of deworming before they can let their dogs loose on your land.

And yes – unfortunately the wild canids (fox, coyotes) in your area can also be the definitive hosts for this worm. Obviously, you are not going to be able to catch them all to make them swallow a deworming pill every 3 months, but controlling access to dead stock and remnants of home slaughter can go a long way toward breaking the life cycle. Once *Taenia Ovis* is established in your wild canid (definitive host) and deer (intermediate host) population, it can be extremely difficult to control.

Prevention of the tapeworm in the dog is key. There is no treatment for the larval form in sheep, and it takes just 4 weeks for the larva to travel from the small intestine to encyst in the muscle of a lamb where they sit, just waiting to cut into your profits.

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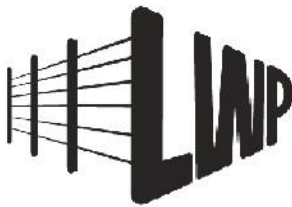
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Looking forward to speaking with you, Bill & Susan Shaul



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March 11 – 13, 2019

ASI Spring Legislative Action Trip
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March 22, 2019

CWGA Board of Directors Meeting
Los Banos, CA

April 9, 2019

CA Sheep Commission Meeting
Sacramento, CA

April 13, 2019

**California Ram Sale
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