

Herd the News

January/February 2020

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

In this issue:

- 2 President's Message
- 4 New Members
- 5 From the Flock
- 6 ASI Legislative Conference
- 7 CA Guard Dog Fund Donors
- 8 Legislative Update
- 10 100^{th} Annual CA Ram Sale
- 11 Lamb Market Update
- 12 ALB Annual Report
- 13 Young Leader Opportunity
- 14 CA Shearing School Update
- 15 Tips for Shearing Season
- 16 Wolf Management Update
- 17 Monthly Scrapie Report
- 18 Prepare for Animal Activist Tactics
- 19 Advertisements
- 24 Calendar

ASI Calls for Direct Payments to Sheep Producers

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) formally requested this month that Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and U.S. Trade Representative Robert E. Lighthizer consider direct payments to sheep producers as part of any future Market Facilitation Program.

"Our producers overwhelmingly support efforts aimed at strengthening the United States' position on free and fair trade and are appreciative of the administration's efforts to rectify long standing disparities in the trading actions of China. To that end, we are optimistic given the recent positive steps taken to sign the first phase of an agreement," wrote ASI President Benny Cox. "Yet, our understanding is that through this process China will maintain retaliatory tariffs, specifically tariffs on raw wool and sheepskins (pelts). That means that we are preparing to head into a second shearing and marketing season with the effective loss of our largest export market.

"In the first round of the MFP, the USDA identified \$17 million in American lamb purchases. That option has not impacted markets or provided any revenue to sheep producers for sheepskins and certainly not for wool. We ask that the program specific to our industry be reconsidered to focus on wool and sheepskins as the primary targeted products.

"Our wool market is effectively closed, with producers not receiving checks for unsold wool and warehouses sitting on product that cannot be absorbed into the domestic market. Textile capacity in the United States, similar to hide tanning, is a shadow of its former self."

"Initially, we had hoped that we could help bridge this gap through the use of the existing Wool Marketing Loan Program administered by USDA/FSA. While we have been successful in working with USDA on updated price reporting, unsold wools do not generate a price report and it seems we may be at a standstill to see the repayment rates reflect this wreck in the wool and unshorn sheepskin market."

"We are hearing clearly from producers across the nation on the impact this is having to their bottom line and profitability. Without the ability to sell their wool, they are completely reliant on the slaughter market, where the loss incurred to sheepskins alone is eliminating their profitability. As we come up on our annual convention at the end of this month, I fully expect this to be a major topic and already our state affiliates have circulated policy directives urging ASI to continue to pursue a pathway to diminish the effect of this trade disruption on our wool and sheepskin market."

To read the full letter visit the ASI website <u>https://sheepusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ASI-MFP-Letter.pdf</u>.

Presidents Message – Dan Macon

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> Erica Sanko Executive Director



Dear CWGA Membership,

As I write this issue of my President's Message, I'm still trying to work through the piles on my desk that seemed to grow over the three days I spent in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the American Sheep Industry Association annual meeting! Catching up here at home, however, is a small price to pay – as always, I came home enthused about the energy, dedication, and eloquence of our fellow sheep producers from throughout the U.S.! If

you've never been to an ASI convention, I hope you'll plan on joining us in Denver in January 2021!

As usual, California was well represented at ASI – our members participated in council meetings, panel discussions, the state president's breakfast, and the ASI board meeting – not to mention after-hours festivities and conversations. While I'm always struck by how unique (and varied) California sheep production is compared to the rest of the country, I'm also encouraged by how much we have in common with producers in other states. As CWGA Vice President Ed Anchordoguy and I listened to our counterparts from other states, we realized that many of us are facing the same challenges – and the same opportunities. I find it helpful to know that we're not alone!

In addition to representing California on the ASI board of directors, I had the opportunity to participate in the Production, Education and Research Committee, where we heard great presentations on parasite management, the Secure Sheep and Wool Supply Plan, and current USDA Ag Research Service research activities. During the Resource Management Council, we heard from USDA Wildlife Services, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. When it comes to managing things like fuel loads and invasive weeds, the federal agencies are starting to realize the importance of sheep grazing – I like to think this is largely due to the leadership of producers here in California!

The ASI board of directors adopted a policy brought forward by CWGA opposing the creation of a mandatory certification program for targeted grazers. Both the California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management, and the parent society itself, are proposing such a certification system. I will be carrying the ASI/CWGA position to the Society of Range Management meeting in Denver next month. ASI will also be re-establishing a working group to update the Targeted Grazing Handbook – CWGA will have a strong voice in this effort, as well!

Turning to state issues, as you may know, our Executive Director, Erica Sanko, has accepted a position with ASI in early March. While we're sorry to see Erica go, we're excited about this new opportunity for her – and for the opportunity raise CWGA's profile within ASI.

We have posted a job announcement on our website <u>californiawoolgrowers.org</u> – if you know of someone who might be interested in the position, please point them to the application. We are accepting applications through February 10. I want to thank our Search Committee (Ed Anchordoguy, Andree Soares, Ryan Indart, Florence Cubiburu, Joe Pozzi, and Phil Esnoz) for guiding this process.

Be sure to put April 18 on your calendar! We'll be celebrating our 100th California Ram Sale – and it promises to be quite a celebration! New for this year, the CWGA board of directors will meet on Friday, April 17, in Porterville – and hopefully most of us will stay over for the Sale. I look forward to seeing you all there!

Finally, I hope you'll join me in thanking Erica for her service to our organization and our industry. Erica, we'll miss you, but we're happy to know you'll still be working on behalf of sheep producers in California and all over the country. Thank you for all that you've done on behalf of the California Wool Growers Association.

Labor Update

The CWGA Ad Hoc Labor Committee continues to work with members of the California Legislature and representatives of Governor Newsom's administration to resolve the overtime wage issue. Updates are available on the CWGA website – if you have questions, please contact co-chairs Andree Soares or Ryan Indart.

In January, the San Jose Mercury printed the following guest opinion from CWGA President Dan Macon:

California Wage Rules Threaten Availability of Four-Legged Fire Fighters

When it comes to preventing wildfires, local communities throughout California are rediscovering the value of grazing. Large flocks of sheep and goats are an increasingly common sight in urban communities like San Rafael, Simi Valley, Pebble Beach and Roseville – all in the name of reducing fire danger. As USA Today reports, goats hired by the Ventura County Fire Department helped save the Reagan Library in Simi Valley from the Easy Fire last October by grazing off flammable vegetation well before fire season began. Even the Sierra Club has endorsed sheep and goat grazing as an effective tool in California's fight against catastrophic wildfire.

But recent changes in California's agricultural overtime rules brought about by Assembly Bill 1066 have had the unintended consequence of disproportionately increasing herder wages more than 50 percent. This legislation, signed into law in 2016 by Governor Brown and which took effect in 2019, puts California labor rules at odds with federal guidelines adopted by the Obama administration and embraced in federal court rulings regarding herder compensation. Without a doubt, this will jeopardize the availability of herders and make targeted grazing uneconomical for many California communities looking for options to chemical treatments.

As the President of the California Wool Growers Association (the state's oldest livestock organization), representing sheep and goat producers throughout the Golden State, I'm thrilled to see our communities once again embracing the importance of grazing! However, these flocks don't simply show up on their own – and they can't be stored away like a piece of equipment once the job is completed. Managing livestock takes extensive knowledge and experience which are even more critical in urban communities. The ranchers who provide these livestock – and the herders who care for their well-being – must protect them from predators and vandalism, ensure they have an ample food supply and clean water to drink, and manage their movement to communities throughout the state.

Caring for these four-legged firefighters takes a practiced eye by highly skilled herders who are paid a state established monthly salary. In fact, many municipalities and agencies which utilize sheep and goats require onsite care. Employers also provide herders with housing and meals, the value of which the State of California does not acknowledge. These jobs have a significant multiplier effect in our rural communities; according to the American Sheep Industry Association, each herding job supports eight additional non-herder jobs. And these businesses provide a vital connection between the rural communities where they are based and, the urban communities they serve.

Well-managed targeted grazing has numerous environmental benefits beyond reducing fire danger. Grazing helps maintain the carbon sequestration capacity of healthy soils. In many cases, grazing replaces costly herbicide applications, providing an ecologically sensitive alternative to chemicals. An added benefit is that grazing animals can work on steep slopes and rugged terrain inaccessible to motorized equipment.

The members of my Association are asking the Governor to correct this untenable situation by aligning state regulations with the federal guidelines for herders. In this way, herders will have the certainty of an equitable wage and the public will have the comfort of knowing that this army of firefighters will be on the job munching us toward a safer environment.

We thank the Governor for recognizing in past comments the value of sheep and goat grazing to reduce fire danger. We also agree with Todd Lando of FireSafe Marin who says, "The sheep and goats are a fantastic way to reduce fire danger. They are a very cost-effective way to treat large landscapes and protect our communities."

As a state we cannot afford to sacrifice this essential fire protection tool through unintended consequences. We hope common sense will prevail.

Welcome New Members

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

Sally Fox, Vreseis Ltd., Brooks, CA Lexie Hargett, Walking H Farms, Etna, CA Terry Scott, Shingletown, CA U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Nebraska, NE

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 Accepting Applications for 2020 Scholarship

CWGA awards one \$1,000 scholarship to an enrolled college student pursuing an academic program with an interest and/or emphasis in the California sheep industry. Applicants must be a graduating high school senior and/or student enrolled in a California Community College, 4-year University within California, California State University, or University of California, and have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA.

Applications are due March 1, 2020. Visit the CWGA website at <u>www.californiawoolgrowers.org</u> to apply.

Western Video Market - 1st Ever Spring Lamb Sales

BE A TRENDSETTER! Western Video Market's first ever Spring Lamb Sales.

- March 6th Deadline February 27th, Cottonwood
- April 15th Deadline March 30th, Visalia

Selling truckload lots only.

If interested in becoming a consignor and exposing your lambs to a nationwide buyer base, come to our informational lunch meeting on Thursday, February 13th at 11:00 am followed by lunch at the Woolgrowers in Los Banos.

RSVP by February 10th by calling or texting Brad Peek at 916-802-7335 or email <u>brad@shastalivestock.com</u>.

Renew Your Membership Online

For those members who prefer to pay for their membership online, electronic payments by credit card and PayPal are accepted on the CWGA website at <u>californiawoolgrowers.org/about/join</u>.

From the Flock

California producers share why they attend the American Sheep Industry Association Annual Convention.

Roselle Busch, DVM

Sheep and Goat Specialist in Cooperative Extension



Dan Macon *Placer County*



There are so many reasons to attend the American Sheep Industry Association Annual Convention. First, it is a great way to learn about the research that is being conducted across the states and consider how their findings might apply to our flocks. Also, the conference agenda included speakers from federal agencies including USDA, FDA, and Wildlife Services to name a few. It is important to voice our concerns about issues such as the lack of vaccines and pharmaceuticals, access to grazing on public lands, and predation. And last, but not definitely not least, it is a great opportunity to meet people who are just as passionate about the industry and think about how we might work together to find solutions to our common problems.

I have attended several ASI conventions, the last two as California's representative on the ASI Board of Directors. Even if I was not going in an official capacity, I would still try to be there - for several reasons. I think the policy discussions are extremely important for our industry and for me as an individual producer - and the convention offers ample opportunity to shape ASI policy. I'm of the mind, if you don't participate, don't complain! I also find the educational presentations during the general sessions and the committee/council meetings to be extremely informative. Most of all, though, I enjoy meeting producers from all over the country - and all over the world, really. As Martin Etchamendy said at our own convention last summer, we might speak different

languages, but we all understand one another!

A Message from CWGA Executive Director, Erica Sanko



It seems only yesterday when I began working for the California Wool Growers Association. As the saying goes, time flies when you are having fun and despite the challenging times, there have been many successes that have made my time with the association truly rewarding. I am very thankful and blessed to have had the opportunity to work for such a great organization and to serve the California sheep industry, an industry I am passionate about.

As you are aware, I have accepted a position with the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) as their Director of Analytics and Production Programs. I am looking

forward to this new opportunity and grateful that I will be able to continue my service to you and the American sheep industry in my new role assisting sheep producers to support a more profitable sheep industry.

I will officially transition to my new role on March 2nd and I am excited to being working on the issues and challenges facing our industry. While my role in our industry is changing, my phone number is not, so please stay in touch!

~ Erica

Cell number: 303-909-6245

Plan to Attend Industry Meetings



ASI's 2020 Spring Legislative Action Trip, March 10 – 11

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 10 - 11 offers members the opportunity to meet with their elected congressional representatives 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 9th: Travel to Washington DC

Tuesday, March 10th: Meetings with USDA Agencies, Capitol Hill Visits & Industry Legislative Reception

Wednesday, March 11th: Capitol Hill Visits

Thursday, March 12th: Return to California or Extend Your Trip for Sightseeing

Deadline to register – February 13th.

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

Save the Date: 160th Annual CWGA Meeting & Convention ~ August 14 - 15



The 160th Annual CWGA Meeting & Convention will be held on August 14 – 15, in Morro Bay, CA.

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

Location: Inn at Morro Bay, Morro Bay, CA

Hotel Information: For reservations call 1-800-321-9566 and mention the California Wool Growers Association. Room Rates: Sun/Thurs \$166-\$206, Fri/Sat \$186-\$226

Registration: Opens May 2020

California Guard Dog Fund Donors

Martin Albini, Valley Ford American Sheep Industry Assn. Ed Anchordoguy, Anchordoguy Lamb, Sebastopol Bob Beechinor, E & B Sheep Co., Bakersfield Robert Carreiro, Riverdale Central California Wool Growers Cubiburu Livestock Inc., Stockton Florence Cubiburu, Stockton Ken Deaver, Deaver Ranch, Plymouth Suki Dewey-White, Covelo Morgan Doran, Woodland Nancy East, Sheep Rock Ranch, Alturas Ben Elgorriaga, Elgorriaga Livestock Inc., Madera Stephen Elgorriaga, Bonita Land & Livestock Co., Madera R. Emigh Livestock, Rio Vista Phil Esnoz, Shafter Etchamendy Sheep Co., Bakersfield Brad Fowler, The Goat Works, Penn Valley Melchor Gragirena, El Tejon Sheep Co., Bakersfield Fred Groverman, Groverman Shropshires, Petaluma Richard Hamilton, Rio Vista Sharon & Ron Harston, Sebastopol Ryan Indart, Indart Ranch, Clovis Francisco & Miguel Iturriria, I & M Sheep Co., Bakersfield Frankie & Renee Iturriria, F & I Sheep Co., Bakersfield

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PJ Phillips, Nissen Ranch, Esparto

Dennis Pluth, Pluth's Homestead Ranch, Clearlake Oaks

Joe Pozzi, Pozzi Ranch, Valley Ford

Kathleen Robidart, Round Timbers Ranch, Lodi

John Ross, Alexandria, VA

Roswell Wool, Roswell, NM

George Saunders, Southern CA Sheep & Wool, Grand Terrace

Joe Schlitt, Wylecote Farm, Knightsen

Christy Scollin, Redwood Valley

Peggy Seever, Jackson

Andrée Soares, Star Creek Land Stewards, Inc., Los Banos

Stackhouse Family, Montgomery Creek

Karen Suenram, Nevada City

Superior Farms Inc., Sacramento

Pete & Beth Swanson, Tracy

Ray & Terry Talbott, Talbott Sheep Co., Los Banos

Spencer Tregilgas, Free Hand Farm, Placerville

Utah Wool Marketing Assn., Tooele, UT

Don Watson, Napa Valley Lamb Co., Loveland, CO

Western Range Assn., Twin Falls, ID

Kenneth Whitney, Whitney Sheep Ranch, Bakersfield

Jim Yeager, Putah Creek Dorsets, Davis

Yolo County Cattlemens & Wool Growers Assn.

Legislative Update

President Trump Signs United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement

Jan. 29 - Today's signing of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement by President Trump increases hopes that 2020 will begin a stronger decade for America's farmers and ranchers. Trump's signature was the final step in enacting the agreement in the U.S. Mexico approved the USMCA last year. Canada must still ratify the pact, which is expected to occur in the next few months. The agreement will take effect 90 days after all countries have approved it.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement is expected to increase agricultural exports from the U.S. by \$2 billion and result in an overall increase of \$65 billion in gross domestic product. Canada will increase quotas on U.S. dairy products, benefiting American dairy farmers by \$242 million. Canada will also treat wheat imports the same as domestic wheat for grading purposes. Mexico has also agreed that all grading standards for ag products will be non-discriminatory. The agreement also enhances science-based trading standards among the three nations.

National Pork Producers Council President David Herring said, "USMCA provides U.S. pork producers with certainty in two of our largest export markets and we thank President Trump and his administration for making USMCA a top priority. We look forward to implementation of a trade deal that preserves zero-tariff pork trade in North America."

National Corn Growers Assn. President Kevin Ross declared President Trump's signing of the new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement a big win for American agriculture. Mexico and Canada are the U.S. corn industry's largest, most reliable market; 21.4 million metric tons of corn and corn co-products, valued at \$4.56 billion, were exported to Mexico and Canada in 2018.

National Cattlemen's Beef Assn. President Jennifer Houston said, "This is a great day for America's cattle producers and we were once again honored to participate in another great victory for our industry. Of course, the ratification of USMCA comes on the heels of a game-changing new trade deal with China, a new bilateral agreement with our largest export partners in Japan, and much-improved access to the European Union.

Bureau of Land Management Plans To 'Modernize' Grazing on Public Lands

The Trump administration has spent the past month announcing sweeping changes that could benefit ranchers on public lands, including a proposal to overhaul grazing regulations for the first time in 25 years.

The proposed revisions would, in part, make it easier for ranchers to graze cattle in the name of reducing fuel loads and combating wildfires on federal lands. It could also reduce red tape and increase efficiencies, according to the Bureau of Land Management.

This rulemaking effort is designed to strengthen and improve our administration of grazing permits across the West, and we welcome public and stakeholder ideas and perspectives," said Acting Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management Casey B. Hammond in a statement.

But some environmental protection groups, including the non-profit Western Watersheds Project, contend that the potential new changes will lead to less oversight and more unauthorized grazing on public lands. They also disagree with the agency's assertion that increased grazing could reduce the risk of wildfires.

The agency has yet to publish its revised regulations. Public scoping meetings about the proposed new grazing regulations will begin in early February. Then, it will draft an environmental impact statement.

Legislative Update

Trump Administration Finalizes WOTUS Replacement

Jan. 23 - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) announced the finalization of the "Navigable Waters Protection Rule," the Trump Administration's replacement for the Obama Administration's expansive 2015 Waters of the United States ("WOTUS") Rule.

In 2015, the Obama Administration finalized a WOTUS Rule that vastly expanded the regulatory jurisdiction of the EPA and Corps, giving the agencies unprecedented permitting authority over water features like ephemeral waters (those that contain water only in response to rainfall) and even over often-dry land features. Agricultural and business interests fought the 2015 WOTUS Rule at the agencies, in the Capitol and in the courts (going all the way to the Supreme Court).

Fortunately, with President Trump's election came a promise to repeal and replace the 2015 WOTUS Rule, a promise that has been fully kept after Thursday's action by the EPA and Corps.

Importantly, the Navigable Waters Protection Rule limits the scope of the EPA and Corps' jurisdiction, specifying which categories of waters are not subject to federal control. These waters include ephemeral waters, groundwater, most farm ditches, prior converted cropland and stockponds.

The 2015 WOTUS Rule was repealed in September of 2019, a move that environmental groups have challenged in the courts. Likewise, agricultural and business interests expect that environmental groups will challenge the Navigable Waters Protection Rule in court in the coming weeks and months.

USDA Announces \$10.2 Million for Vaccines

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced \$10.2 million in awards through the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network. USDA also announced a Request for Proposals to acquire Food and Mouth Disease vaccine for the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (Minn.), and House Agriculture Livestock and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee Chairman Jim Costa (Calif.) issued the following statement. Both Peterson and Costa led bipartisan efforts to include mandatory, long-term funding for these programs to ensure the United States has tools to address disease risks including African Swine Fever, Avian Influenza, Virulent Newcastle Disease, and Foot and Mouth Disease.

"In the last Farm Bill, we fought hard to establish and fund the NADPRP and the new National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank as well as reauthorize the National Animal Health Laboratory Network," Peterson said. "As our committee oversees Farm Bill implementation, we are pleased to see USDA moving forward on all three of these programs. These important tools will help prevent and respond to animal pests and diseases, help keep animals healthy and ensure markets stay open. We look forward to seeing these programs address an even wider range of prevention and mitigation activities in future years."

House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member K. Michael Conaway (Texas) said, "One of my top priorities in the 2018 Farm Bill was to strengthen our nation's animal pest and disease response capabilities. Today's announcement is another crucial step toward that goal, and I am proud that experts at the Texas Animal Health Commission and Texas A&M University are among the recipients. I am also pleased that USDA is moving forward to acquire a stockpile of Foot and Mouth Disease vaccine. We made a historic investment in the 2018 Farm Bill to protect our nation's livestock sector, and it's good to see that progress is being made on these important programs."

California Ram Sale Celebrating 100 Years

The California Ram Sale will be celebrating 100 years on April 18th in Porterville.

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: Complimentary Buyer BBQ Lamb Lunch
- 1:00 pm: 100th Annual California Ram Sale



Selling over 500 range rams from California, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, and Utah. Breeds offered include: Crossbred, Hampshire, Suffolk, Composite, Dorper, Merino, 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 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 2020 Ram Sale will be assigned a Ram Index Value. The Ram Index helps 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), 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.
- Will benefit the industry as whole in producing a more desirable product for the consumer.

CALIFORNIA WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Lamb Market Updates

January 1 Sheep and Lambs Inventory Down 1 Percent

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), all sheep and lambs in the United States on January 1, 2020 totaled 5.20 million head, down 1 percent from 2019.

Breeding sheep inventory at 3.81 million head on January 1, 2020, decreased slightly from 3.82 million head on January 1, 2019. Ewes one year old and older, at 2.98 million head, were 1 percent below last year.

Market sheep and lambs on January 1, 2020 totaled 1.39 million head, down 1 percent from January 1, 2019. Market lambs comprised 94 percent of the total market inventory. Market sheep comprised the remaining 6 percent of total market inventory.

The 2019 lamb crop of 3.23 million head was down slightly from 2018. The 2019 lambing rate was 108 lambs per 100 ewes one year old and older on January 1, 2019, up 1 percent from 2018.

The California sheep and lamb inventory totaled 570,000 head, up 20,000 head or 4 percent from last year.

The report shows 17 states where the flock size increased: California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, New England Region, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wisconsin

Shorn wool production in the United States during 2019 was 24.0 million pounds, down 2 percent from 2018. Sheep and lambs shorn totaled 3.32 million head, down 2 percent from 2018. The average price paid for wool sold in 2019 was \$1.89 per pound for a total value of 45.4 million dollars, up 6 percent from 42.8 million dollars in 2018.

Sheep death loss during 2019 totaled 219 thousand head, up 1 percent from 2018. Lamb death loss was unchanged from last year at 388 thousand head.

To view the full report, visit <u>www.nass.usda.gov</u>

November U.S. Lamb Exports Trend Lower

November exports of U.S. lamb were 1,253 mt, down 10% from a year ago, while value also dipped 10% to \$2.19 million. Through the first 11 months of 2019, lamb exports remained well ahead of the previous year's pace in volume (14,507 mt, up 23%) and value (\$23.7 million, up 11%). Led by strong demand in Mexico, lamb export volume is the largest since 2011 and export value is set to exceed \$25 million for the first time since 2014. In addition to Mexico, growth markets in 2019 included Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Guatemala and the Philippines. *Source: U.S. Meat Export Federation*

Lower Lambing Percentage for New Zealand Sheep Farmers

B+LNZ's Economic Service estimates the number of lambs tailed in spring 2019 decreased by 2.4 percent or 552,000 head on the previous spring to 22.7 million head. Most of the decline occurred in the South Island.

The lower number of lambs tailed in the South Island is expected to have reduced the number of lambs processed for export in the first quarter of the 2019-20 season, from October to December.

The lambing percentage was 127.1 percent, 1.5 percentage points lower than in spring 2018. This means 127 lambs were born per hundred ewes, compared with an average of 123 over the prior 10 years. For spring 2019, a one percentage point change in the New Zealand ewe lambing percentage is equivalent to 170,000 lambs.

The tonnage of lamb produced is expected to decrease 4.4 percent due to a combination of fewer lambs and a slightly lower average carcass weight. <u>Source: Beef & Lamb New Zealand</u>

American Lamb Board Issues FY 2019 Annual Report

The American Lamb Board (ALB) closed out a successful 2019, highlighted by branding and website updates designed to better align with today's food and marketing trends, and continued use of social media, seasonal contests and events to put and put American Lamb in front of consumers.

ALB reports these highlight result for its 5 Core Strategies:

Measure the effectiveness of our programs.

Through an extensive Return on Investment Analysis, ALB learned the American Lamb Checkoff Program added 2.4-2.7% to the annual value of retail lamb, due to increased consumption of lamb and a modest retail price increase. In short, each \$1 invested in the Checkoff Program yielded a return of \$14.20.



Grow awareness and increase usage of American Lamb among chefs and consumers.

Two educational ranch retreats took media, chefs, nutrition professionals and food bloggers to American Lamb ranches to learn about lamb production. Their subsequent social media action reached an additional 1 million consumers.

ALB worked with USMEF to reintroduce American Lamb to Japanese markets. In the US, events like the popular Lamb Jams in target markets, allowed consumers to not only see how they can prepare American Lamb, but also taste it. In 2019, 65% of Lamb Jam attendees were new to the event, and 75% said they would attend again. The message hit the mark, as 55% said they were more likely to ask for lamb after attending.

ALB worked with more than 20 Lambassador food bloggers to curate 60 new recipes and photos that were shared across their social channels. New Global Flavors Booklet and Culinary Institute of America videos reached both established and up-and-coming foodservice trendsetters.

Promote and Strengthen American Lamb's Value Position in today's food environment.

Today's consumers care where and how their food is produced. ALB has embraced this trend, and in 2019 developed new recipes and photography for chefs, as well as new story-telling tools that highlight why consumers should feel good about eating American Lamb. These new promotional assets will go into full use during FY2020.

Improve the quality and consistency of American Lamb and support efforts to increase production efficiencies.

The first ever American Lamb Summit, held in partnership with Premier 1 Supplies, worked to give all segments of the industry increased knowledge of production efficiency, lamb quality improvement, and industry insight, as well as provide collaboration and networking.

Flavor research continued, focusing on correlating flavor profiles and meat composition to consumer preference panels, and a Seasonality Analysis provided information for producers about options for adjusting production methods to meet seasonal demand.

Collaborate with industry partners and stakeholders to expand our efforts to address strategies.

ALB continued to support local promotional efforts through grants and materials. Actively participating in the Lamb industry Roundtable, where representatives from the American Sheep Industry Assn., the National Lamb Feeders Assn. and packers discussed industry challenges and issues, facilitated transfer of information and input into programs.

The complete report can be downloaded at <u>www.LambResourceCenter.com</u>.

American Lamb Board: FAQs

Building awareness and expanding demand for American Lamb and strengthening its position in the marketplace are ongoing efforts, and the ALB board of directors is dedicated to the cause.

While the American Lamb industry has some familiarity with the American Lamb Board (ALB), questions still come up. Here are answers to frequently asked questions.

Q: What does the ALB do? The American Lamb Board's 13 members determines the direction of programs conducted on behalf of US lamb producers who contribute through the American Lamb Checkoff. The work of the ALB is overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the board's programs are supported and implemented by the staff in Denver, CO.

Q: What programs does the ALB conduct? ALB conducts promotion, research and information programs with the goal of creating greater demand and profitability for the entire industry. ALB does not promote imported lamb. It does not promote wool. ALB is not funded by dues and is forbidden by law to influence legislation. It exists to promote lamb to consumers and provide information to help producers raise lamb more efficiently and effectively.

Q: How is ALB funded? The program is funded through mandatory assessments collected under the federally mandated Lamb Checkoff program. There is a live weight assessment of \$.007 per pound paid by the seller of sheep or lambs and a first handler assessment of \$.42 per head assessment paid by the entity who owns sheep or lambs at the time of slaughter. The assessments are remitted to the ALB. The Board's expenditures for administration are limited to 10% or less of projected revenues. All remaining revenues are expended on programs related to promotion, research and information for the American Lamb industry.

Q: Who is represented on the ALB? The Board represents all sectors of the American Lamb industry including producers, feeders, seedstock producers and processors. The 13-member Board, appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, serves without compensation. Members are nominated by qualified organizations, including the American Sheep Industry Association and National Lamb Feeders Association.

Young Leader Opportunity

The American Lamb Board (ALB) is seeking three candidates to represent the U.S. in the Young Guns Leadership Program at LambEx. American Lamb Board believes producer education is of the utmost importance for the industry's long-term viability of the American Sheep Industry. The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is pleased to share this opportunity with its Young Entrepreneur stakeholders.

The program is intended to broaden the understanding of new innovation and technologies in sheep production practices. This leadership development forum will provide innovative and progressive opportunities for our young producers to increase U.S. production efficiencies and provide a consistent, high quality, premium product for continued lamb demand growth and increasing the U.S. market share.

Each country (AUS, US, NZ) will select 2-3 producers between the ages of 22 and 40 years of age who exhibit future leadership potential to participate in the forum. The program July 1-3, will kick off in Melbourne at the 2020 LambEx. Airfare, hotel, and other travel expenses will be covered for the participants that are selected by the ALB's selection committee to represent the U.S. Participants will be responsible for some meals as well as incidentals.

Applicants must complete the written application, which is available at <u>https://americanlamb.wufoo.com/forms/w1q62tlmoppa6dm/</u> or by contacting the ALB office at 303-759-3001.

Applications are due on February 28th. For questions and more information contact the ALB office at <u>info@americanlamb.com</u> or 303-759-3001.



California Sheep Shearing and Wool Classing Schools Update

John Harper, UCCE Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, Mendocino/Lake Counties

Many of you who have expressed interest in my annual sheep shearing school and the American Sheep Industry (ASI) sponsored wool classing school probably don't know that due to budget cuts at the Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC) the Superintendent made the tough decision to reduce the flock from ~500 ewes and rams to only 150 ewes. For me to put on the school and to promise that students would be able to shear sheep if they completed the 5 days of training, I could not accomplish that goal with that few sheep and keep the same number of instructors and offer the 28 slots for students.

Fortunately, I have not only found a private producer, **Kaos Sheep Outfit** to provide 300 ewes but have also found a venue that is easier to get to then HREC. Many have asked why we didn't just bring the extra sheep to HREC. Unfortunately, due to on-going sheep research and HREC animal health protocols, outside sheep are not allowed on the grounds.



Kaos Sheep Outfit is owned by Robert and Jaime Irwin and their operation is nomadic, meaning that they don't have a home ranch with a shearing shed. Robert, also a shearer, uses a portable shearing trailer to have their 1000's of sheep sheared. As can be imagined, the shearing trailer is too small a space to teach in. I'm especially grateful to Robert and Jaime to undertake the hassle of bringing wooled sheep to us every day and picking up the shorn sheep at the end of the day!

The new venue is Twining Pastures, owned by Eloise Twining and is a very short drive from south Ukiah where many of our newest hotels and restaurants are located. Check out their website at <u>www.twiningpastures.com</u> for location and contact information. Eloise told me that when she was little that the barn had been used for shearing the ranch's sheep.

That covers the good news. Now for a little bad news. The dates for the shearing school won't be in May as has been the tradition. Kaos Sheep Outfit shears in late February and early March. To accommodate the shearing school, they're holding the 300 head for us. **The 5-day school will be March 9 to March 13, 2020**. If you have any power over the weather, please keep it from raining that week!

Due to the location changes and additional modifications, I expect will be needed for the sheep and our 7 shearing stations, the per student registration fee is going to be \$600. I feel very bad about the increased fee to the students (last year the cost was \$450). As in the past, I'll contact our two local sheep Assn.s in Mendocino/Lake and the North Bay Wool Growers to see if they will offer support for shearing students from those areas. I encourage all of you to see if your local Assn.s would offer support for your training.

The other bad news is that this year we won't be offering an advanced course. For those interested in the ASI Wool Classing School, I will see if I can get that arranged (can't promise this year) and will let you know via this email list serve.

This year I will send out the registration survey link on February 4th, 2020 and the registration survey link will be live on February 8, 2020 at 8 pm.

If history repeats, the class will be filled and the registration closed quickly thereafter. I will allow 34 slots to be registered. The six over the 28 maximum slots will be put on an alternate back-up list in case we have cancellations.

If you have questions, email me at jmharper@ucanr.edu or call my office number at 707-463-4495.

To be notified about future Wool Classing or Sheep Shearing schools please complete the survey at <u>https://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=11489</u>.

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.



- 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, whiteface 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.

CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Quarterly Wolf Management Update

Field Work

Lassen pack: The breeding female's (LAS01F) collar appeared to cease functioning in November, but the new collar on female pup LAS02F continued working through the end of the year. The Lassen pack appears to be expanding landscape and habitat use beyond its previously defined home range.

Dispersing wolves: OR-54 During the quarter, OR-54 traveled a minimum distance of 1,013 miles, covering Butte, Lassen, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, and Tehama counties. She first left her natal pack on January 23, 2018, and since then she has covered a minimum distance of 8,712 miles at an average of 13 miles/day. However, her radio collar appeared to cease functioning in December.

More information about these and other wolves can be found on the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Gray Wolf webpage in a document called "<u>California's Known Wolves – Past and Present</u>".

CDFW continues to receive and investigate reports of wolf presence from many parts of California. Public reports are an important tool for us. Please report wolves or wolf sign on the CDFW Gray Wolf web page: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Gray-Wolf/Sighting-Report.

Livestock Interactions

Depredation investigations

During October - December 2019, CDFW and USDA Wildlife Services (WS) staff investigated two reported possible depredations that were found to have died of non-predation causes. Details are as follows:

Date	Determination ¹	Туре	Wolf Pack/Area	County	Investigators
10/3	Non-Depredation	1 calf, dead	Lassen	Lassen	CDFW, WS
12/9	Non-Depredation	1 adult cow, dead	Lassen	Lassen	CDFW, WS

¹The individual Determination reports are available at <u>www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/mammals/gray-wolf</u>

Use of deterrent tools

USDA WS staff removed fladry from one leased fall pasture and installed fladry on 3 private winter pastures. Foxlights are in use on one private winter pasture.

Communication

CDFW biologists have been in regular and frequent communication and coordination with CDFW wardens, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA WS, US Forest Service, livestock producers, range riders, conservation organizations, and private timberland owners and managers.

Engagement events:

- October 2 Presentation at the American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society Joint Annual Conference. Reno, NV
- October 10 Update to Lassen County Fish and Game Commission. Susanville.
- October 18 Working Circle and rancher update. Conference call.
- October 22-24 Human Wildlife Coexistence Summit. Pray, MT.
- November 14 Update to Sacramento-Shasta Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Mount Shasta
- December 10 Update to Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors
- December 19 Update to Nevada County joint Fish and Game and Ag Commissions, Nevada City

CALIFORNIA WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION

National Scrapie Eradication Program December 2019 Report

Performance Measures – The percent of cull black-faced sheep found positive at slaughter and the percent of cull sheep found positive at slaughter and adjusted for face color remains at 0 percent. The retrospective 6-month rolling average of the percent positive, black-faced sheep sampled at RSSS collection sites has been 0 since June 2016.

Scrapie Testing Results – In October 2019, lymph node tissue collected from a lamb at slaughter had suspect staining on IHC. Genotype of the lamb was AA at codon 136 and RR at codon 171, which is considered to be resistant to classical scrapie. Additional testing, using three alternative antibodies to scrapie, produced mixed results. Due to the unusual staining, results for this animal were reported as 'inconclusive' for classical scrapie. Further testing was conducted on the flock which was depopulated for diagnostic purposes and all samples were not detected by IHC. This case has similar staining to an RR lamb tested in April 2018.

Infected and Source Flocks - There have been no infected herds identified in FY 2020. One flock in Texas has an open infected status since April 2016, but there are no exposed animals on the premises. Cleaning and disinfection of the premises has to be completed before the status can be closed. The peak in designated infected and source flocks was in 2005 with 180 flocks.

Scrapie in Goats –The total number of NVSL confirmed positive cases in goats is 44 since FY 2002. Samples from three of these positive animals were collected through RSSS, one in November 2014, the second in July 2018, and the most recent in June 2019. The remainder of the positive cases have been found though testing of clinical suspects, testing of exposed animals, and trace-out investigations.

Scrapie Free Flock Certification Program (SFCP) – As of December 31, 2019, there were 232 flocks participating in the Scrapie Free Flock Certification Program (SFCP). Statuses of these flocks were 45 export monitored, 42 export certified, and 145 select monitored flocks.

ID Tags

The National Scrapie Eradication Program, is providing up to 100 plastic flock ID tags free-of-charge, to first time participants in the sheep and goat identification program through fiscal year (FY) 2020 or until the available funds are expended. Producers will need to purchase the compatible applicator from the tag manufacturer. APHIS is working with sheep and goat organizations to develop a plan for transitioning toward electronic identification to improve our nation's ability to quickly trace exposed and diseased animals in the event of an outbreak.

APHIS discontinued the availability of no-cost metal tags for producers on 8/31/19. Dealers and markets may continue to receive metal serial tags at no cost through FY 2020 or until the available funds are expended. Flock ID tag numbers are the producer's flock ID assigned by APHIS or the State followed by an individual animal number. Metal serial tag numbers have the state postal abbreviation, 2 letters followed by 4 numbers. Plastic serial tags have the state postal abbreviation, a letter and a number in either order, followed by 4 numbers.

To request official sheep and goat tags, a flock or premises ID or both, call 1-866-USDA-Tag (866-873-2824).

Submitting Mature Heads

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) provides shipping boxes and labels for the submission of heads for scrapie testing at no cost to producers. Many veterinary diagnostic laboratories also accept heads for scrapie testing. To request a box or more information on sample submission, contact the veterinary services field office for your state. Field offices can be reached through the toll-free number, 866-873-2824. State contact information is available at

www.aphis.usda.gov/animal health/downloads/sprs contact/field office contact info.pdf.

For information on ordering official sheep and goat ear tags/devices visit www.aphis.usda.gov.

New Year, Same Animal 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 protest, and a farm who gave them 100 animals. 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.

New Resources on Understanding Activism, Farm Security and Consumer Engagement

One of the Animal Agriculture Alliance's newly updated resources is the animal rights activist groups web. The web details how activist groups are connected through funding, project collaboration and flow of staff and volunteers. "The purpose of this web is to show that while some groups publicly represent themselves as moderate and others are more upfront about their radical views, they are all connected with the same agenda of ending animal agriculture," said Kay Johnson Smith, Alliance president and CEO. To view the web, visit <u>https://animalagalliance.org/initiatives/monitoring-activism</u>.

The Animal Agriculture Alliance has more in-depth resources and information available to anyone about animal rights activism at <u>AnimalAgAlliance.org/Protect</u>.

CWGA Comment - Sonoma and Stanislaus Counties were hot spots for animal activist activity in 2019. Similar activity is expected to continue in 2020. While the focus of the acitivity is on the dairy and poultry sectors, please be aware of your surroundings and review the information above in the event you experience any activity at your operation.

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Mark Your Calendars

April 17, 2020 CWGA Board of Directors Meeting Porterville, CA

April 18, 2020 100th Annual California Ram Sale Porterville, CA

> April 24, 2020 Bakersfield Ram Sale Famosa, CA

May 2, 2020 Cloverdale Ram Sale Cloverdale, CA August 1 – 2, 2020 4th Annual CWGA Online All Breeds Sheep Sale

August 14 – 15, 2020 160th Annual Meeting & Convention Morro Bay, CA

Do you have an upcoming event to share with other sheep enthusiasts? Contact the CWGA office to have your event listed.

