

## Issue At A Glance:

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Research Update  
News and Nuggets  
Leadership  
Events/Classifieds



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# HERD THE NEWS!

September/October 2021

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

I hope all is well with you, your family, and your sheep. Lambing time is coming on soon. I know of some who have started already. It is always exciting to me. Lambing is the beginning of the cycle and it always gives me high hopes for the coming year. From the information I am getting, it sounds like prices will stay steady and will be good for us this coming year. I have been looking at the NOAA weather projections and it looks like the Northwest is supposed to get rain this year and once the LA NINA pattern sets up the storm systems could start dipping further down into California than they did last year.



Let's keep praying for rain. Our convention and annual meeting were held at the Marriot Hotel in Bakersfield the last weekend of August. It was a good time and very informative. We had a fun time and a great meal at the Woolgrowers Basque Restaurant. Our speaker's program was very informative on a variety of topics pertaining to sheep and current happenings in the Sheep Industry. David Anderson, an economist from Texas A&M, spoke to the fact that lamb prices should stay high into next year. The Master Shepherd Award was given to Rob Rutherford for his years of service to the CWGA. The Golden Fleece Award was given to George Soares who has worked so hard with us on the Labor-Wage issue. The Marketing Award was given to Andree Soares, Vice President of the CWGA and President of Star Creek Land Stewards, Inc. for her promotion of Targeted Grazing not only through her company but promoting Targeted Grazing in general and tying it to the Labor-Wage issue. Congratulations to all the award winners. There have been several turns of events in the Labor-Wage issue just recently. The Labor Committee, co-chaired by Andree Soares and Ryan Indart, decided that litigation was the next step in fighting the overtime issue. The committee interviewed 3 attorneys and chose Ann Grottveit, a litigator from George Soares' firm. The Guard Dog Fund Committee met and approved the use of the current funds, \$10K+, for the hiring of Ann. The Board of Directors met in a Special Meeting on 10/6 and approved the use of the Guard Dog Funds for the hiring of Ann Grottveit. Ann will research if in fact we have a viable case to bring to the state and if so, the best direction for us to go. She will meet with the Board of Directors at a special meeting with the results of her research and a way forward will be chosen by the Board. If litigation is the way forward it will be very expensive, \$250K to \$750K depending on how far the case goes. Andree Soares along with the Guard Dog Committee and other Board members will be working on different funding strategies which will also be presented at the meeting. Lots going on in our fight to get the current overtime legislation changed. Our fiscal year ended on October 1. Phil Esnoz, the CWGA Treasurer, and our Office Manager Susan Taylor are working on having our final financials for the 20-21 fiscal year for our December Board of Directors meeting. For now, it looks like we will have a deficit of about \$4,100 compared to the previous fiscal year of \$50K+. I would say we are going in the right direction. If you are out of the smoke, I hope you are enjoying some beautiful fall weather. My favorite time of the year. All the best.

*Ed Anchordoguy*

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## USING ELECTRONIC ID TAGS TO IMPROVE FLOCK PRODUCTION AND HEALTH

by Julie Frinzel, UC Davis Cooperative Extension

Using electronic ID tags to track and record individual animal performance data streamlines genetic selection in sheep flocks. Producers who have used EID's say:

"...saves ranch hands time and labor while increasing information accuracy."

MT producer

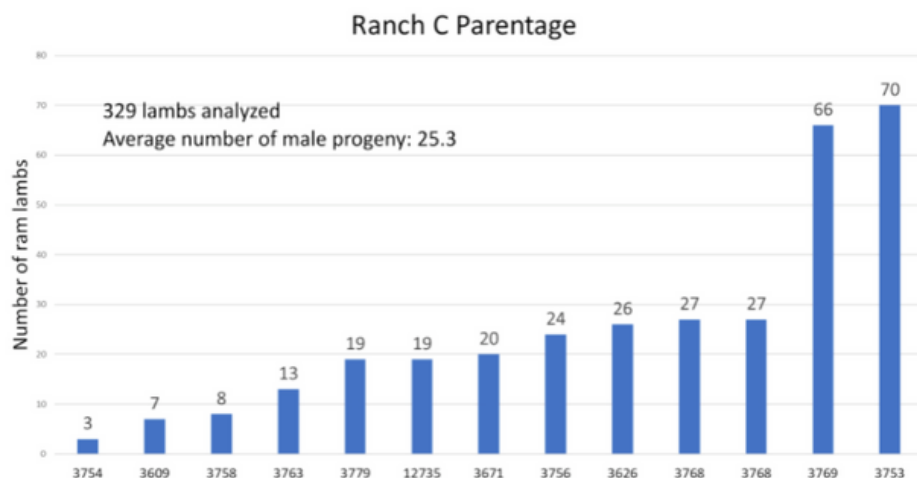
"We culled ewes that were costing us money and decreased grafting in the lambing shed." MT producer

"Increased percent lambs weaned from 85% to 115% and decreased medical costs per ewe by more than \$10/head." CA producer

### EID's and Large, Commercial Flocks

Given the potential for EID's to facilitate genetic change that improves the bottom line for sheep producers, we wanted to do a study that considered opportunities for the application of EID's in large, commercial sheep flocks. Working with five ranches across California we tagged and sampled about 2,500 rams and lambs; mostly lambs. Genetic samples were submitted to Superior's Flock 54 program. Using the genetic analysis we determined parentage and connected lamb carcass traits to sires, see Figures 1 and 2. Data analysis presented is preliminary; we hope to have a more complete review and detailed analysis to share within 6 months.

Figure 1. Number of lambs sired per ram for Ranch C



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Figure 2. Carcass data summaries for Ranches A and B.

	Hot Weight	Yield Grade	Quality Grade	Breast	Rack	OCC Yield
Ranch A (n=209)						
AVERAGE	73.5	2.7		8.9	8.2	67.8
STD	10.2	0.5		1.8	1.2	1.1
MIN	50.4	1.4	Good	4.4	5.1	63.9
MAX	102.4	4.2	Choice	14.2	12	72.6
Ranch B (n=315)						
AVERAGE	76.1	2.7		9.5	8.7	67.3
STD	11.6	0.5		2.0	1.4	1.1
MIN	41.1	1.4	Good	3.4	4.3	64.3
MAX	106.9	4.6	Prime	14.6	12.5	71.4

There are two key points to keep in mind when considering transitioning to EID's as a tool for genetic selection:

- Desire to see improvement in your flock
- Clearly defined objectives

In the case where a producer is mostly satisfied with the performance of their flock, EID's may not be the right choice. If a producer sees opportunity for improvement in their flock and they have some key areas in mind, EID's could be an effective tool. For example, maybe a producer would like to increase the number of lambs weaned per ewe exposed. There are a few traits that could be tracked using EID's to increase the number of weaned lambs, they include: birthing rate of ewes (percent ewes bred and lambbed), twinning rate of ewes (more lambs born), mothering ability of ewes (ewes that can count to 2), and lamb vigor (greater lamb survival in the first critical hours after birth).

There are many things to consider when transitioning to using EID's. One idea is to test the tags and process on a portion of the flock first and scale up later. It's important to monitor progress towards goals and be patient as breeding stock changes and replacement animals reach maturity. In some cases, producers may be interested in EID's but looking for a way to make simple changes in their flock first. The most effective way to create change in a flock is through careful sire selection. If a Suffolk ram has two productive years he will produce, on average 80-100 lambs. The most productive ewe will likely only bear about 10 lambs during her lifetime. Producers can use Estimated Breeding Values (EBV's) to select the best rams available for their flock. Careful culling of non-productive animals is also a highly effective way to create rapid change.

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After a record high of 56 million sheep in the U.S. in 1952, sheep numbers have steadily declined and continue to fall 1-2% each year. Meanwhile, over 60% of lamb consumed in the U.S. is imported. In other words, there is incredible opportunity in the lamb industry in California and across the U.S. to supply a high-quality, in-demand, domestic product. Careful selection of breeding stock through strategic culling, using EBV's to select rams, or using EID's to track important production traits are some of the tools producers can use to take advantage of this opportunity.

## Resources:

Macon, D. 2018. Electronic Identification Systems for Small-scale Livestock Producers: A Case Study. Publication #31-1009. November 2018  
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/Livestock/files/294788.pdf>

Sheep Stuff Ewe Should Know Podcast: Tech Tools to Better Manage Data. June 4, 2020

American Lamb Board - Lamb Resource Center – Productivity Resources  
<https://www.lambresourcecenter.com/productivity-resources> (scroll down...)

Leading Edge Sheep Production – Mickel Brothers Sheep Company and NSIP rams  
<http://nsip.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Leading-Edge-Final-Report.pdf>

National Sheep Improvement Center and Sheep Genetics USA. <http://nsip.org/>  
<https://sheepgeneticsusa.org/>

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**WHO OWNS THE WEST?**

**FOREIGN INVESTORS ARE BUYING U.S. FARMLAND. WHO'S INVESTING AND WHY?**

***By Sierra Dawn McClain (Capital Ag Press)***

Recently, investors from foreign countries have been buying up farmland in the United States, amounting to about 35 billion acres, or an area larger than New York State. This is rather a controversial topic among American farmers. Some see it as a threat to our national security and food resiliency, where others see it as a chance to expand markets and access to capital. A bill was proposed to Congress over the summer that would ban the Chinese government from buying American farmland.

Dan Newhouse, a congressman from Washington states "Allowing this practice to continue would lead to the creation of a Chinese-owned agricultural monopoly and pose an immediate threat to U.S. national security and food security." Top investors in Oregon agriculture include Canada, Luxembourg, Sweden, Portugal and the U.K. Some of these countries have investments in other states as well.

**For More Information:**

**<https://tinyurl.com/CWGAOwnsWest>**

**HOURS OF SERVICE EXEMPTION EXTENDED FOR LIVESTOCK HAULERS**

***By Ben Nuelle (AgriPulse)***

In August, it was announced that the hours of service exemption for livestock haulers was to be extended through November. The current requirements state that all livestock haulers are required to rest for 10 hours after being on duty for 14 hours. This is difficult for them because if the destination has not been reached after those 14 hours, stopping for that many hours puts the animals' health at risk. Truckers hauling livestock can't just stop on the side of the road or in a truck stop for that long of a time.

**For More Information:**

**<https://tinyurl.com/CWGALivestockHaul>**

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## LAMB PRICES UP BUT WAGE RULE WORRIES SHEEP RANCHERS

*By Cecilia Parsons (California Farm Bureau Federation)*

As lamb prices continue to rise in California, which would typically be a cause for optimism, the concern about the new overtime and wage rule outweighs the optimism. For many California sheep ranchers, this would force them to lay off employees, cut down flock sizes or sell out entirely. The new wage order will result in 119% wage increase, causing monthly salaries to rise from \$1,955 to \$4,286. This would increase their wages to twice what is paid to similar sheepherders in other states. Cole Baake, who runs IOU Sheep Company in Tulare County has concern about this bill. With the wage increase, his family would be forced to sell a third of their flock and lay off a third of their staff.

For full article, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/CWGAMarketWage>

## US LIFTING BAN ON IMPORTS OF BRITISH LAMB

*Source: BBC News*

The United States is finally lifting its 32 year ban on importing British lamb. President Biden has been meeting with the Prime Minister and UN leader to discuss removing this ban. The policy was put into place in 1989, when a breakout of mad cow disease was seen in the UK. Similarly, a ban was lifted last September on imports of British beef that had been in place since 1989. The USDA has been hoping to lift the ban since 2016, when discussions began. Revoking this policy would add about 35 million pounds to the economy in the United Kingdom. Boris Johnson, the prime minister of the United Kingdom said "the ban was totally unjustified" and was "discriminating on British farmers and British lambs."

For more Information: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-58654045>



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## CALIFORNIA RAM SALE SUMMARY

The 2020 (100th) California Ram Sale was held online because of the restrictions brought on by the pandemic. The sale committee worked hard to serve the consignors and the buyers in the 100th sale held by the California Wool Growers Association. Although the 2020 sale was successful, the opportunity to have a face to face sale in 2021 was a highlight for the committee, the consignors and the buyers. The 2021 sale was held at a new location which turned out to be well received by all who attended. The International Agriculture Center in Tulare was great to work with and the penning of the rams, the flow to and from the ultrasound area and the sale ring was efficient as was the load-out of the rams after the sale.

Rams were consigned from California, Nevada, Idaho, Utah and Colorado. Three hundred seventy-two rams sold for an average of \$668.

High selling crossbred pen was sold by David Hansen of Utah for \$900 per head. The top Suffolk pen sold for \$975 per head and were consigned by Mike and Kandi Duff of Idaho, while Blair and Gina Summey from California sold the high selling pen of white-face rams for \$750 per head. John and Anita Phillips from Idaho sold their Suffolk individual ram for \$1500 and their individual white-face ram for \$900.

All of the rams were ultrasound and weighed and the results were entered into the California Range Ram Index, which is designed to provide the buyers with data to allow them to make more informed selection decisions in their purchase of rams to sire lambs with superior growth rate and carcass value. The ram sale committee would like to thank Silverdale Farms of Oregon and Lloyd McCabe of California, the sponsors of the Range Ram Index competition, which provides useful information for the buyers and friendly competition among the consignors.

The Overall Best Consignment went to John and Anita Phillips of Idaho, while the Top Suffolk Consignment award went to Kurt and Carol Heupel of Colorado. Brian Olson of Utah had the ram with the largest loin eye, David Hansen had the highest indexing black-face ram and Phillips had the highest indexing whiteface ram. First, second and third highest indexing pen of rams were consigned by Matt Olsen, Brian Olsen and Matt Olsen, respectively.

The Ram Sale Committee is busy planning the 2022 California Ram Sale which is scheduled for April 9, 2022 at the International Ag Center in Tulare, California.

*Wes Patton & John Olagaray, Co-Chairs*

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Andree Soares - Vice President  
Phil Esnoz - Treasurer

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Finance/Budget - Phil Esnoz  
Legislative/Government - Florence Cubiburu  
Member Services - Lloyd McCabe  
PERC - Morgan Doran  
Ram Sale - Wes Patton & John Olagaray  
Trust Fund - Andree Soares  
CA Guard Dog Fund - Andree Soares

## INTERESTED IN JOINING?

visit  
<https://californiawoolgrowers.org/join>  
for more information on membership!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Pete Yriarte - Los Banos

LEADERSHIP



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December 11, 2021

Chico State Sheep & Meat Goat Educational Day  
Chico, CA

January 19-22, 2022

ASI Annual Convention  
San Diego, CA

April 9, 2022

California Ram Sale  
Tulare, CA

## **FOR SALE**

10 Rambouillet fall & spring ewe lambs.  
Open - Registration papers available.  
Call or email for details. DO NOT TEXT.

Mike Mann  
New Cuyama, CA  
661-428-1233