



California Wool Growers Association

Unifying the voice of the California Sheep Industry since 1860

Herd the News

May/June 2017

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

Sheep Producers Show Interest in Composite Rams – Cecilia Parsons, Ag Alert

Composite rams, a new addition to the 97th annual California Ram Sale, received the high bid of the day at \$6,750 for a pen of three.

Nancy East of Alturas sold the stout, speck-faced rams, a composite of Suffolk, Texel and Columbia breeding. East sold a total of six composite rams at an average price of \$1,925 per head. Average weight of the rams was 270 pounds.

A total of 447 range rams, used by commercial sheep producers in California to sire their lamb crops, were sold at the Porterville fairgrounds at the auction hosted by California Wool Growers Association.

“Sale of these rams validates the concept of composite genetics,” Ryan Indart, president of California Wool Growers Association, said. “As the sheep industry evolves and improves, these types of rams will continue to be a component of the ram sale. These rams work and they have longevity.”

The one-half Texel, one-quarter Columbia and one-quarter Suffolk rams were sold to commercial sheep producers who will use them to produce market lambs. The Texel is a smaller, stouter European breed that has gained popularity in recent years for its heavy muscling. The whiteface Columbia adds size and the Suffolk adds early growth and maturity. Indart said Suffolk rams, which have been the backbone of the California sheep sector as a terminal sire, would continue to be valued by sheep producers for their genetics. Indart said some sheep producers are already breeding and using composite-type rams in their operations to improve lamb carcass yields.

“The market spoke. Producers value genetics they believe will give them better carcass yield,” Indart said.

The sale itself was a success, Indart said, with higher prices this year, as producers were optimistic about lamb prices and better feed conditions.

“We always would like more consigners and buyers and we appreciate all that come out to make the sale a success,” he said.

For the second year in a row, ram buyers were given an index number on each ram that estimates the potential carcass merit of the lambs they sire. The index uses loin eye area, fat thickness and ram weight. All rams were ultrasounded prior to the sale to determine this index.

The index is calculated using a base value of 100 for comparisons.

According to the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, genetic selection for larger loin muscle will improve carcass merit and value in lambs.

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Presidents Message – *Ryan Indart*



Dear CWGA membership,

The rays of the early morning sun were not yet warm enough to cut through the brisk chill of the 40 degree high alpine morning air. The sun was still low on the horizon, just barely peaking over the eastern snow laden mountain ridge behind us. The clear, deep alpine water of Huntington Lake shimmered from the light breeze coming off the high country just beyond Kaiser Ridge. It was a beautiful, peaceful, very quiet, and very cold May

28th morning.

With sweatshirt hoods covering their heads and ears, the girls were freezing, yet teeming with the excitement and anticipation of finally catching their first rainbow out of the lake, without Daddy's help, and without the help of worms, salmon eggs or power bait. Those are bad words in our family even though we keep them on hand just in case we get skunked trying to earn our dinner! We were spread out across the cove where Lower Line creek comes gushing into the 7,000 ft. lake from the snow melt off Kaiser Peak 3,000 feet above. If the fish were anywhere – they would be here. I had my trusty Meps 2 Gold spinner on the end of my line and I decided to let Lucia and Ceci take turns, 4 casts each then switch, using their Shakespeare Big 5 \$20 special, with my best lure on the end of the line – The Blue Fox. Maggie, at 4 ½ years old, was very content just watching and throwing rocks in the water, just often enough to slightly annoy the team of Anglers. If the blue Fox wouldn't catch them a rainbow, then nothing would. The water in the cove was a bit murky from the snow melt, so you would really need to put the lure right in front of their nose to bring one in. After about 30 minutes of peace and serenity and no fish, I hear a blood curdling screech from Ceci about 10 yards to my right – "Daddy! Daddy! I think I caught a fish!" I thought, "No way, really?" And to my amazement, there it was, splashing in the water as she was reeling in her first 11 inch rainbow! I ran over to her, net in hand yelling, "Don't reel it in all the way!" afraid she was going to knock it loose on the rocks and lose her precious prize. I netted the fish and the rest is history. She then caught a second one not 5 minutes later! The next day, Lucia caught her first one as well – a beautiful 12 inch German Brown! I was so proud of them that weekend, and like many of you know and understand I caught it all on my smart phone, memorialized forever!

I share this story with you not because sheep and fishing have anything in common, but because who the heck wants to talk about sheep all the time? We live sheep – we can talk about sheep anytime. But catching your first fish out of a lake by yourself – now that is a priceless experience worth sharing. But maybe there is an analogy between sheep and fishing – it is a numbers game. The more times you cast, the more chances you have of catching a fish. The more years being in the sheep business, the greater the chances of having a good year, and seeing good prices! Maybe we are catching our fish this year?

I am also sharing this story with you because every Memorial Day weekend we go to Huntington Lake as a family. We go there to get away from everyday life and reflect upon what the true meaning of Memorial Day is – the one day set aside in

our calendars to honor our fallen heroes who died to protect the freedom we hold so dear. We are teaching our girls that Freedom and Liberty are not free – that some pay the ultimate price to protect that freedom, and Memorial Day is that day for us to say a special thank you – to gather around the table and say Grace and a special prayer of gratitude to our fallen soldiers.

What a great Ram Sale we had! I want to personally congratulate Nancy East for a job well done on her first sale of Composite Rams. She set the bar high that day! I also want to thank all the buyers, consigners, committee members, volunteers and sponsors. The Ram Sale is a huge endeavor and a lot of work, and it is so important, not only for our Industry, but also for our Association. Most importantly, I want to thank our fearless leader Erica Sanko for successfully completing what I believe to be one of our best Ram Sales yet. We had our little glitches like always, which is to be expected, but with her leadership and teamwork we got through them. The good thing is we learn every year how to do things a little better.

We are making significant progress on the Footrot and Blue Tongue vaccines. Nancy and her team will give us a thorough update at the Convention in August. I was contacted two weeks ago by Hygieia Biological Laboratories about submitting sheep for the Bluetongue vaccine trial. I decided to do the trial on my Replacement Ewe lambs. For those of you who have offered to help with the trial – thank you for your support and commitment to our Association. I am hopeful and confident that it will result in a vaccine that will benefit our entire Industry. I have seen the devastating effects of Bluetongue first hand as two years ago we had 20% of our ewes dry after lambing due to this terrible virus. No commercial producer can afford that many dry years in and years out. I am sure most of you feel the same way, but I will be extremely grateful to have a new vaccine to protect my sheep.

Finally, I hope to see all of you Cambria at the Annual Convention in August. Erica has put together an impressive and exciting schedule once again. This year's schedule will be slightly different from prior years in that we decided to hold the Board Meeting on Friday and the General Membership meeting on Saturday. Personally, I am looking most forward to the Sheepherder Golf Tournament!

I am sure by now most of you have turned your rams into your herds and flocks. It's amazing how fast the cycle starts over again! I hope you all have a successful breeding season and great summer. See you all in Cambria!

Member Information & Updates

The CWGA Office Has Moved

The CWGA office has recently moved to 25 Cadillac Drive, Suite 214 Sacramento, CA 95825. The new office is located east of downtown Sacramento, near Sacramento State University and a few miles off U.S. Hwy 50. Please update your files with our new mailing address.

For those members who visit the office to pick-up your vaccines there is plenty of free parking available. As always, please call ahead to make the necessary arrangements.

Welcome New Members

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

Diane Abair, Redding, Ca
Rachelle Arroyave, Woodland, CA
Chase Carson, Salem, UT
Raul Carson, Salem, UT
Mike Duff, Blackfoot, ID
Katy Evans, Lower Lake, CA
Dean Gottlieb, Penryn, CA

Kurt & Carol Heupel, Weldona, CO
Justin & AJ Olsen, Manila, UT
Catherine Salamon, LaMesa, CA
Bianca Soares, Los Banos, CA
Chris Stavros, Salt Lake City, UT
Jim Stavros, Fairview, UT
Deborah Stuhr, Red Bluff, CA

Member Information & Updates

CWGA California Legislative Day Format Changed, Rescheduled for Fall

In an effort better develop and strengthen our industry relationships with State Assembly and Senate Representatives, CWGA's Legislative and Government Affairs Committee decided a local approach is a better fit for CWGA members and the Association.

This fall CWGA will be organizing meetings at State Assembly and Senate Representative's District Offices. In meeting at the District Office versus in Sacramento, it will not only allow for more members to participate but it will provide a better opportunity to discuss our industry issues and develop relationships with District Offices. The District Offices and their staff play an integral role in relaying constituent issues to State elected officials. Participating members will be provided with talking points, issue briefings and packets for the meetings.

In addition, this year's Annual Meeting and Convention will include a media/interview training session focusing on meeting with local, State and Congressional Representatives and Staffers. The session will discuss how to prepare for the meeting, how to present information such that your point is clearly received, how to respond to questions, and much more.

Remember, as part of CWGA's role to advocate for the California sheep industry, what better way than for you, our members, to meet with your State Assemblymen and Senators to discuss the issues facing our industry on a local and state level. If you are interested in participating, please contact the CWGA office at 916-444-8122 or erica@woolgrowers.org.

Calling All Sheep Photographers

CWGA invites you to enter the 2017 CWGA Photo Contest. All photos will be judged at this year's Annual Meeting Welcome Reception on Friday evening. Photos may be used in a 2018 California Sheep Industry Calendar and CWGA publications.

All photos must be taken as a high resolution, digital photo. Photos are to be submitted electronically via email to info@woolgrowers.org. Limit three (3) photo submissions per person. **Entry Deadline: July 15, 2017.**

CWGA's Need Your Email Addresses

As we live in an increasingly digital world, email is a timely, cost effective means of communication. Sometimes CWGA does not have enough notice on meetings, events, or breaking news to mail out written notice. But these important updates can be sent via email as soon as received. So it is critical that we have an email address on file because more information will be sent via email.

Last year, CWGA introduced *Herd the News Weekly*, a weekly electronic email update with industry news, information, and events. This publication is emailed to members every Friday. In addition, those with an email address receive the American Sheep Industry *ASI Weekly* newsletter with national industry news. We realize not everyone likes email, but having an email on file helps CWGA in its efforts to keep you up-to-date and provide member support.

If you are not receiving CWGA emails and you do have an email address, please contact the CWGA office at 916-444-8122 or info@woolgrowers.org to update your contact information to ensure you are receiving the latest information from CWGA.

Thank you for your continued support for CWGA & your California Sheep Industry!

CWGA's Annual Meeting is August 18 – 19th in Cambria

The 2017 CWGA Annual Meeting & Convention will be held on August 18 – 19, 2017, at the Cambria Pines Lodge in Cambria, CA.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND DETAILS WILL BE SENT IN EARLY JULY.

Lodging Information



Call 800-966-6490 and mention the CA Wool Growers Association. For online reservations <http://www.cambriapineslodge.com/grouplogin%20with> and enter the following: Group code: CWGA, Password: cwga.

Deadline to reserve rooms is July 28, 2017.

Tentative Schedule of Events

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2017

Afternoon Local Industry Tour

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2017

Morning Shepherders Golf Tournament

10:00 am – noon CWGA Committee Meetings

1:00 – 5:00 pm Improving Your Show Lamb & Seedstock Operation Workshop

1:30 – 5:00 pm CWGA Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 – 7:00 pm Welcome Reception

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2017

8:00 am – noon CWGA Annual Membership Meeting

12:00 – 1:00 pm Past Presidents Lunch & Tri-Lamb Presentation – *Ryan Mahoney*

1:15 – 2:15 pm Economic Tools for Sheep Producers
 – *Bridger Feuz, Univ. of Wyoming Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist*

2:15 – 3:15 pm Wildlife Restoration Project & Sheep Grazing on the Topaz Solar Farm
 – *Katie Tierney, Althouse and Meade & Frankie Iturriria, F&I Sheep Co.*

3:15 – 3:30 pm Break

3:30 – 5:00 pm Media/Interview Training – Meeting with Your Legislative Representatives
 – *Chase Adams, American Sheep Industry*

6:00 – 7:00 pm Cocktail Reception

7:00 pm Shepherds Ball & Banquet

Things to do in Cambria

Nestled amid majestic pines and the glimmering sea along California's Central Coast, Cambria is a lovely village with countless scenic wonders. From historical attractions and natural preserves to popular entertainment venues and premier dining, Cambria puts you in a prime position to enjoy the area's top attractions. For things to do visit - <http://visitcambriaca.com/>.

Sheep Producers Show Interest in Composite Rams, *cont'd*



Shane Brooker, above, representative of New Zealand-based Hdale, demonstrates the company's chute system that is designed to handle and sort hundreds of sheep per hour, making it easier for the operator and for the animals. Several hundred rams, like the ones at left, were purchased at the annual California Ram Sale.

Highest indexing ram of the sale was a whiteface ram consigned by Mike Cox of Fairview, Utah. The ram had an index of 110.84. One of the composite rams sold by East had the second-highest sale index at 106.22.

Long-time ram sale consigners John and Anita Phillips of Paul, Idaho, received the award for the best overall consignment. The couple sold a total of 85 rams in the sale. This award is made by the quality sift committee that checks each ram for suitability as a range ram. Rams are also sifted by veterinarians for health.

Joe Olsen of Spanish Fork, Utah, also a long-time sale consigner, received an award for the top Suffolk pen consignment. Sale consignors bringing rams with the largest loin eye measurements were Larry and Linda

Pauly of Delta, Utah; East; David and Nash Hansen of Fairview, Utah; and Jim Neumiller of Healdsburg.

Ram numbers were up slightly over last year when 423 rams were sold. Average price was up significantly at \$832 a head, compared to \$668 in 2016. The 275 head of Suffolk rams averaged

\$875 per head. The 146 crossbred rams averaged \$747 a head. The 16 Hampshire rams sold averaged \$778 and the 26 whiteface rams averaged \$569, down from the previous two years.

This year's ram sale featured demonstrations of an innovative sheep handling and sorting machine designed to save on labor costs. That feature was not lost on Clearlake sheep producer Robert Irwin, who invested in the \$18,000 machine after traveling to Australia to see how it worked.

"We are always looking to be more efficient in our operation and this presents a huge potential to save on labor costs," Irwin said. "If you want to stay in business, you have to cut costs."

Irwin estimated that he could replace two workers with the handling equipment and that would pay off the machine in two years.

Built in New Zealand by Hdale, the chute system is designed to handle and sort hundreds of sheep per hour, depending on the needs of the producer. It is designed to be operated by one person who can use a remote control to open gates, weigh and restrain individual sheep. The rubber-lined floor and sides also make this system much quieter than conventional chutes with tilt tables. The table, which clamps individual sheep and turns them on their side, enables workers to trim hooves, ear tag or vaccinate sheep with less stress, said Hdale representative Shane Brooker, who did the demonstration at the sale.

Irwin, who does targeted grazing with his flocks in Yolo, Colusa, Lake and Mendocino counties, said the ability to move the system to where the sheep graze is another plus for his operation.

Source: AgAlert June 7, 2017. Cecilia Parsons is a reporter in Ducor. She is a member of the CWGA Communications Committee. She may be contacted at ceciliaparsons8@gmail.com.

CWGA Range Ram Index: Ram Sale Review

In an effort to improve lamb carcass consistency and quality and increase production efficiency, CWGA developed the Average Range Ram Index (Ram Index) in 2016. Each lot of rams sold in the 2017 California Ram Sale (Sale) was assigned a Ram Index Value. The Ram Index estimates the potential carcass merit of the lambs sired by range rams with superior carcass characteristics. When purchasing rams at the Sale, the Range Ram Index helps to identify the ram's potential genetic merit in passing genetic traits such as loin eye size or weight onto the ram's offspring.

It is proven in other livestock sectors that those carcass characteristics desired by consumers translate into a higher carcass value and thus return for the producer, a fact that is evident in a value based pricing system. This suggests there is a financial incentive for producers to incorporate such genetic information into their breeding programs, particularly to terminal sire breeders and those producers that market lambs on a carcass/value based pricing system. Thus, buyers are expected to place a higher value on rams with a positive Ram Index value as those rams are projected to sire progeny with improved lamb product characteristics.

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 the other rams at the Sale. The Ram Index is calculated using a base value of 100 for which comparisons can be made between rams with differing Ram Indexes. Rams with average carcass characteristics are assigned a Ram Index value of 100. Rams with a Ram Index over 100 (e.g. 110) will exhibit more desirable carcass characteristics (i.e. larger LEA, less BF) relative to the rams at the Sale. Rams with a Ram Index below 100 (e.g. 85.2) will exhibit less desirable carcass characteristic relative to the other rams at the Sale. There is potential economic incentive in selecting rams with higher Ram Index values.

Each lot of rams sold in the Sale was assigned a Ram Index value calculated as an average of the individual Ram Index values for those rams in each pen. At this year's Sale there were a total of 65 pens or 222 rams with a Ram Index value greater than 100. The average sale price for those 65 pens was \$861.00 per head or \$37.00 per head higher than the average sale price for those pens with a Ram Index value below 100. Blackface pens with a Ram Index above 100 averaged \$48.00 per head higher than those pens with a Ram Index below 100. Whiteface pens with a Ram Index above 100 averaged \$12.00 per head higher than those with a lower Ram Index.

2017 California Ram Sale Range Ram Index Average Values

<i>Breed</i>	<u>Index Over 100</u>		<u>Index Below 100</u>	
	<i>Head</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Average</i>
BLACKFACE	196	\$858.00	219	\$810.00
COMPOSITES	6	\$1,925.00	0	\$0.00
WHITEFACE	20	\$571.00	6	\$563.00
ALL RAMS	222	\$861.00	225	\$824.00

In 2016 and 2017, pens with a higher Ram Index value sold at a premium compared to those pens with a lower Ram Index. There are many factors that determine the value of a ram in addition to the genetic information provided at the Sale. Nonetheless, buyers and consignors appear to be showing a greater interest in having more genetic information such as loin eye area when selecting range rams at the Sale.

CWGA strongly encourages the use of the ultrasound technique to determine rib-eye size or eye-muscle depth on potential breeding rams (especially of the meat breeds routinely used to sire crossbred-market lambs), and the measurements be available for buyers at ram sales, other points of commerce and for the use in genetic-evaluation programs to generate Expected Breeding Values (EBVs).

Thank you to the California Sheep Commission for sponsoring the ultrasound data collection at this year's California Ram Sale.

Thank You....California Ram Sale Supporters

Thank You to this year's Ram Sale Buyers:

Bob Beechinor, E&B Sheep Co.
Brent Shepherd
Emigh Livestock
Florence Cubiburu, FC Livestock
Francisco Damboriena, McPherrin-
Damboriena Sheep Co.
Frank Iturriria, F&I Sheep Co.
Freddie Iturriria, A&F Sheep Co.
Jeanne McCormack, McCormack Ranch
Joe Esnoz
Joe Mattos, IOU Sheep Co.
John & Florence Cubiburu, Cubiburu Livestock
John & Diane Peavey, Flat Top Sheep Co.

John Olagaray, Five-O Ranch
Kenneth Rairden
Martin Etchamendy, Etchamendy Sheep Co.
Melchor Gragirena, El Tejon Sheep Co.
Paco & Miguel Iturriria, I&M Sheep Co.
Peter & Beth Swanson
Phillip Esnoz
P.J. Phillips, Nissen Ranch
Ramon Echeveste
Robert Carreiro
Robert Irwin, Kaos Sheep Outfit
Steve Elgorriaga, Elgorriaga Livestock
Tom Rich, Rich Livestock Co.

For the California Ram Sale to be a success it requires a limitless amount of support from a number of industry stakeholders. THANK YOU to all the buyers, consignors, committee members, sponsors, volunteers, and everyone that attended this year's Ram Sale.

Thank You to this year's Ram Sale Sponsors:

Anchordoguy Olive Oil
Animal Health International
Bayer Animal Health
California Sheep Commission
Fresno Livestock Commission
Utah Wool Marketing

LiveWire Products, Inc.
Roswell Wool
Silverdale Farms
Superior Farms
The Banner Magazine
Vigortone-Cargill Animal Nutrition

2017 California Ram Sale Results

	<u>Suffolks</u>	<u>Crossbred</u>	<u>Hampshires</u>	<u>Composites</u>	<u>White Face</u>	<u>All Rams</u>
Average:	\$875.00	\$747.00	\$778.00	\$1,925.00	\$569.00	\$832.00
Total Sold:	275	124	16	6	26	447

CWGA Introduces Online Specialty Niche Breeds Ram Sale

In response to member requests, CWGA will be hosting an Online Sale this fall for producers that raise specialty niche breeds. The sale is being offered for those producers raising specialty niche breeds such as Southdown Baby Dolls, colored wool breeds, hair sheep, etc. that do not have an outlet to market their rams to fellow producers.

Sale details will be published in the July/August newsletter.

If you are interested in consigning, please contact the CWGA office at 916-444-8122 or info@woolgrowers.org.

California Legislative Update

CA AB 8 Mountain Lion Depredation Permit Pulled from Committee

Earlier this year, Assembly Member Bloom (D-50) introduced AB 8 to amend Section 4803 of the Fish and Game Code relating to depredation permits for mountain lions.

Assemblyman Bloom decided to pull the bill from the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife hearing on Tuesday, April 25th. The bill was previously pulled from the April 4th Assembly Committee Hearing as well. AB 8 is no longer active for the 2017 Legislative year.

However, the issue remains and CWGA, along with California Cattlemen's Assn. and California Farm Bureau Federation will continue to work on this issue to ensure producers have the tools necessary to manage predators.

Thank you to those members who contacted their representatives and committee members to put a stop to this bill moving forward.

Plan Ahead....New California Antibiotic Regulations Take Effect January 2018

Last year Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 27: Livestock: Use of Antimicrobial Drugs. The law requires the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) to: 1) develop antimicrobial stewardship guidelines and best management practices on the proper use of medically important antimicrobial drugs; 2) gather information on medically important antimicrobial drug sales and usage, antimicrobial resistant bacteria, and livestock management practice data; 3) California law will prohibit the administration of medically important antimicrobial drugs to livestock, unless ordered by a licensed veterinarian through a prescription or veterinary feed directive.

Change is on the Horizon

- Injectable and all other medically important antibiotics must be administered with a prescription or veterinary feed directive (VFD) ordered by a licensed veterinarian thru a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR).
- Over the counter antibiotics will still be available at licensed retail stores with a prescription.
- Use of all medically important antibiotics for growth promotion will be specifically prohibited.

What is the difference between the VFD and this change?

Source	Federal	California
Drugs	Medically Important Antimicrobials	Same
Formulations	In feed and water	All (injectable, intra-mammary, feed, water, etc.)
New Systems	Feed: VFD w/VCPR Water: Rx w/VCPR	Rx or VFD w/VCPR
Indications	Treatment, control and prevention	Same
Limitations	No use for growth promotion or feed efficiency	Same, plus preventative use in a regular pattern
Effective Date	January 1, 2018	January 1, 2018

Email questions to [CDFA AUS@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:AUS@cdfa.ca.gov). Visit the CDFA webpage for more information and updates at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/AUS>

Member Spotlight: Grazing the Weeds Away – Andrée Soares, Star Creek Land Stewards

By Ching Ling, March/April 2017 California Bountiful magazine



Sheep and goats provide nature's answer to brush removal.

It's hard not to do a double-take at the sight of 400 sheep and goats moving through the streets of Half Moon Bay on their way to their next big meal.

This was no casual dining excursion. The hungry animals were dispatched to clear overgrown weeds and brush in a region revered for its natural and scenic beauty. From now until the end of summer, the flock will graze where needed—around the perimeters of a parking lot in downtown San

Francisco, on the hillsides of Oakland or private properties too mountainous to mow with machinery.

The traveling weed whackers belong to Merced County rancher Andrée Soares, who runs Star Creek Land Stewards, a commercial sheep and goat business that specializes in contracted grazing.

"We've been called to graze in some pretty interesting places," she said.

Public agencies, municipalities and other private landowners increasingly turn to ranchers such as Soares to graze their properties because they see the benefits of using livestock to manage vegetation, especially as a way to prevent wildfires.

Scott Boynton, maintenance supervisor for the city of Lincoln, which uses Star Creek's grazing services, said sheep and goats not only eat invasive plant species such as starthistle that the city wants to control in its preserves and open-space areas, but the ruminants also prevent the accumulation of thatch, dead-plant matter that increases fire risk and causes invasive plants to thrive.

"The sheep and goats eat the thatch," he said. "They also trample it down into the soil, which helps to naturally fertilize the soil so that it flourishes every year."

Depending on the topography and the type of vegetation on a grazing project, Star Creek will deploy only sheep, only goats or a mixed herd. As grazers, sheep eat grasses and lower bushes, while goats, which are browsers, are good at taking down taller shrubs and trees, explained Bianca Soares, Star Creek project manager and Andrée Soares' daughter. Goats also can tolerate plants that are poisonous to other animals.

"Goats will go through poison oak like nothing," Andrée Soares said. "One of my favorite things to show is the before-and-afters of poison oak, because they just clear it out so well and people are able to use land that they haven't been able to use before."

A Natural Solution

Catastrophic wildfires that have ravaged the state in recent years also have reinvigorated people's interest in vegetation management for fuel reduction, said Ken Tate, a University of California, Davis, professor and rangeland watershed specialist. As these fires destroy homes and threaten entire communities, the idea of using livestock as a tool to manage vegetation becomes more widespread, he added.

"That goes along with people being interested in local food and wanting local agriculture," Tate said. "It definitely connects our rural and urban communities together. It connects local agriculture. It humanizes it for people in a community that are not in agriculture."

Coastside Land Trust, which holds a conservation easement on a piece of coastal property owned by the city of Half Moon Bay, has been using sheep and goats for the last five years in its habitat restoration efforts. Executive Director Jo Chamberlain said the city used to mow the 3-acre parcel with equipment that kicked weed seeds, dirt and dust everywhere.

"I think (the city is) much happier with this type of management," she said. "We're delighted with (Star Creek) because now we're getting some native shrubs, native wildflowers and native grasses to come back."

The novelty of working sheep and goats in Half Moon Bay's residential setting usually draws a crowd of spectators and local media, with the land trust inviting the public to what has become an annual community event. Bianca Soares said the public attention allows her to explain to onlookers why the animals are there and what they can do for the land.

"People are very interested," Andrée Soares said. "They have lots and lots of questions. And they love to see the animals moving. Whenever we're walking animals from one spot to another, people love that. They love to see the dogs working."

Experienced herders from Peru stay with the animals 24/7, year-round. Trained border collies assist with herding and moving. Great Pyrenees and Akbash guard dogs also live with the herds to protect them from predators. At the end of their nomadic grazing season, usually in September, the sheep and goats return to their home ranch in Los Banos, where they have their offspring.

For most projects, Star Creek uses goats that are a Spanish-Boer mix and dorper sheep, a South African breed that sheds its coat during the summer. Andrée Soares said dorpers are more versatile and hardy and can handle tough terrain well. Because dorpers don't produce wool and lanolin, they're also better at not dispersing weed seeds that tend to get trapped on wool sheep.

"That's advantageous if you're trying to control vegetation and not spread noxious weeds," she said.

Saving the Ranch

Though the mother-and-daughter team comes from a long family history of sheep ranching—Bianca Soares being the fourth generation—continuing that tradition was not always in the cards for the two women. They noted the economic volatility of the sheep business and the steady decline of U.S. sheep operations.

Having grown up around sheep, Bianca Soares said she has always loved the animals and loved hanging out with her grandfather—who still owns a commercial sheep operation—whether he was herding, shearing or moving the animals.

"But I never saw much of a future in it," said the young woman, who's currently studying managerial economics with a focus in agriculture at UC Davis.

That all changed in 2014, when Andrée Soares saw an opportunity to get into the contracted grazing business. Like her daughter, she said she also had a love for the animals but did not see any viable opportunities for her in the business. Until last year, she worked as a full-time neonatal nurse for 28 years.

It was her father's foreman, Emilio Huarte, who first saw the potential of contracted grazing as a new type of business for ranchers, she said, and encouraged her to look into it. Huarte now works as Star Creek's operations manager.



Grazing the Weeds Away, Cont'd

"It's a whole different twist on running a livestock business, where I'm now being paid to feed my animals at least 50 percent of the year as opposed to buying feed for 100 percent of the year," she said. "I am able to be paid for feeding my animals while they're breeding and multiplying."



As business took off, Andréa Soares decided to quit her nursing job last spring to focus on ranching. Though her daughter has expressed interest in working outside the family business for a few years when she graduates college, she said she takes comfort knowing she can come back to ranching and maybe someday take over the business for her mom.

"I'll definitely be involved with sheep and agriculture, no matter what," Bianca Soares said. "But now, I actually see possibilities—and a future."

Have you been featured in a recent media publication? Know a member who should be featured in the Herd the News? If so, please contact the CWGA office at (916) 444-8122 or info@woolgrowers.org.

CWGA Updating Its Targeted Grazing/Eco-Grazing Contact List

CWGA receives a number of calls from businesses, landowners, and public agencies looking for producers that provide targeted grazing services.

If you are currently offering this service or plan to in the future, please complete the information below and return via email to info@woolgrowers.org or mail to CWGA, 25 Cadillac Drive Suite 214, Sacramento, CA 95825.

The current directory can be viewed on the CWGA website at – <http://www.cawoolgrowers.org/Eco-Grazing%20Directory%202016.pdf>.

Targeted Grazing/Eco-Grazing Contact Information	
Name:	
Ranch/Business Name:	
Phone: (cell, office, home)	
Email:	
Website:	
Location: (Where you serve/provide grazing services)	
Types of Projects: (vineyards, open range, fire/fuel breaks, vegetation, wetlands, etc.)	
Species: (Sheep, goats)	



YOUR NATIONAL LAMB CHECKOFF PROGRAM

The American Lamb Board (ALB) is an industry-funded research and promotions commodity board (national checkoff program) that represents all sectors of the American Lamb industry including producers, feeders, seed stock producers, and processors. The 13-member board is focused on increasing demand by promoting the freshness, flavor, nutritional benefits, and culinary versatility of American Lamb. The work of the American Lamb Board is overseen by the US Department of Agriculture and the Board's programs are supported and implemented by the staff in Denver, Colorado.

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 harvest. The assessments are remitted to the American Lamb Board. The Board's expenditures for administration are limited to 10 percent or less of the projected revenues. All remaining revenue are expended on programs related to promotion, research and information for the lamb industry.

For more information and to sign up for the ALB's monthly industry newsletter, visit www.lambresourcecenter.com. If you have questions or an upcoming industry event to add to the calendar, please contact the ALB office at 866.327.LAMB (5262).



lambresourcecenter.com



NSIP Launches Certification Program

In 1986, the National Sheep Improvement Program, secure in the knowledge that quantitative genetic selection works, began its efforts to collect pedigree and performance data and create a database of Estimated Breeding Values. Other segments of the livestock industry, such as beef and swine, had proven the theory and approach.

Yet, only a small number of early adopter seedstock producers subscribed to the program. Others relied on their own in-house systems of genetic tracking. Others, still, resorted to visual assessment of desired breeding stock.

That changed in 2013 when the Sheep Industry Roadmap identified quantitative genetic selection as a priority and the push to bring the entire industry on board began. With funding from ASI, the American Lamb Board and the Let's Grow Initiative, NSIP began in earnest to spread its message and method, and producers – both seedstock and commercial – began to see results.

“The main breeds that have used the technology effectively have made considerable commercially relevant progress,” says NSIP Program Director Rusty Burgett, citing 10 years of data from NSIP-adopting breeds to prove the point.

Over the last decade, the Polypay breed has increased total weight of lambs weaned per ewe by 10 pounds. The Suffolk breed has increased market weight by five pounds, while increasing loin eye area and decreasing fat. The Targhee breed has increased total weight of lamb and wool produced per ewe by 10 pounds, while maintaining wool quality. And the Katahdin breed has increased total weight of lambs weaned per ewe by more than six pounds, while increasing internal parasite resistance.

In addition, a 2016 study conducted in Utah by the Leading Edge Sheep Production Group, proved NSIP-sired lambs weighed an average of 3 lbs. per lamb more at market than those in the non-NSIP control group.

“Enhancing the genetic potential of an animal is the foundation for improvement in productivity,” says Burgett. “We want to help create market demand by improving lamb and wool consistency, quality and quantity.” That includes using terminal sires selected for carcass merit to produce lambs with specific product characteristics like lean meat at an accelerated rate of gain and maternal sires to raise those lambs and shear a premium wool clip.

“It also means improving industry collaboration by aligning seedstock providers with the needs of commercial producers and lamb feeders to assure all lambs entering the production chain have the genetic potential to produce a high-quality product, thus helping all segments achieve a common goal,” he adds.

To facilitate that goal, Burgett says NSIP is ready for the next step – a certification program that will allow all segments of the industry, up and down the line, to have increased confidence when purchasing feeder and market animals bred based on NSIP Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs).

The Certified NSIP Lamb Sires, Certified NSIP Maternal Sires, and Certified NSIP Fine Wool Sires programs are the result of a needs assessment study conducted by Demeter Communications, also funded by the American Lamb Board. The certification program's main focus is to improve utilization of EBVs in the commercial sector, and then pass those benefits onto feeders and packers.

“The designation offers commercial producers an additional marketing strategy for their feeder lambs, as well as added confidence when purchasing breeding stock with the ability to increase their productivity,” says Burgett.

This first of its kind initiative for NSIP includes a logo to help producers readily identify animals bred with EBVs.



“This logo will tell seedstock, market lamb, and wool buyers that these animals were bred with performance in mind,” says Burgett. “It’s a quick, visual credential that helps all segments of the industry know this animal meets the certification quality criteria.”

NSIP’s plan also includes an educational component. Information will be presented to commercial producers, followed with heavy educational emphasis to feeders and packers. Burgett says based on previous participation in workshops and training sessions, NSIP plans to reach around 400 commercially oriented producers with the message.

Members of the Fine Wool Consortium and the Leading Edge Production Group will also be trained in program details to help spread the information to their customers and others throughout the industry.

“Our goal with this, as with all our efforts, is to increase productivity and profitability throughout the sheep industry,” says Burgett. “Reaching that goal starts with using the best genetics possible. This will help producers identify those genetics and utilize them in their operations for maximum results.”

Industry Resources Available to Help Improve Your Operation

ASI’s Let’s Grow Your Flock Program



A variety of resources and materials focusing on how to improve the productivity of your sheep operation have been funded through the American Sheep Industry’s Let’s Grow campaign. These materials include webinars, articles, factsheets, and other items focusing on a wide-range of topics including genetic selection, nutrition, parasite management, and ewe performance.

All information including webinars, articles, and factsheets are available on the Let’s Grow Website at http://www.sheepusa.org/Growyourflock_Resources_EducationalWebinars.

Lamb Industry Resource Center



The Lamb Resource Center is your one-stop shop for industry resources and information. This site has a number of resources including best practices factsheets that address a variety of production related topics (e.g. animal handling, reproduction management), customizable marketing materials for direct to consumer marketing, an ethnic marketing retail toolkit, lamb meat pricing calculator and much more.

Visit www.LambResourceCenter.com to access these materials.

ASI Website Resources

The American Sheep Industry (ASI) websites offer a wealth of information on the sheep, lamb and wool sectors including lamb market reports, research on animal health issues, wool quality programs, and much more. To access information on the ASI website visit - www.sheepusa.org and scroll over Research & Education, and Issues & Programs.

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 Rangelands Drought Hub, which features research and extension information for producers and rangeland managers. You can access the Hub at rangelands.ucdavis.edu/drought.

For more information and resources from UC Rangelands go to - <http://rangelands.ucdavis.edu/>

Protect Your Flocks Health with Health Products from CWGA

As a CWGA member, you have access to discount pricing on over 40 sheep veterinary supplies, vaccines, and nutritional products including dewormers, vaccines, marking paint, feed supplements, and sheep protein tubs.

Cash in on your CWGA member benefit and order now!

For product and pricing details please contact the CWGA office at 916-444-8122, info@woolgrowers.org or download the pricing list at the following link - <http://cawoolgrowers.org/vaccines/vaccines.html>.

Bluetongue Type 10 Available

CWGA has a limited supply of Bluetongue Type 10 vaccine available at member discounted pricing. Purchase it now before supplies run out. Pricing: \$16.00 per 50 dose vial plus shipping.

Bluetongue Vaccine Development Update

Safety trials are underway for CWGA's new killed all-strain Bluetongue vaccine. However, the new vaccine is not expected to be available until this fall. Therefore, CWGA's Animal Health Committee recommends members take precautions and vaccinate with the Bluetongue Type 10 vaccine this summer. CWGA will continue to keep members posted on the status of this new vaccine.

Footrot Vaccine Development Update

CWGA continues to work on developing a footrot vaccine. CWGA is re-collecting samples and biopsies this spring and summer. CWGA will continue to keep members updated on this ongoing effort.

California Elite Sheep Mineral – Developed by Sheep Producers for Sheep Producers

California Elite Sheep was developed to address sheep specific nutritional and health needs and issues. California Elite balances the most advanced technology trace mineral, macro minerals, and vitamins at the correct levels to address footrot, lameness, and mastitis issues, selenium and thiamine needs, and animal fertility.

This product was developed through a collaborative effort involving Craig Edling (Animal Health International), Dr. Larson (Zinpro), Dr. Tomlinson, Dr. Nancy East, DVM, UC Davis (ret.), and California sheep producers.

California Elite Sheep is exclusive to and available through Animal Health International and CWGA. For questions or more information please contact John Garino (916-768-0174, john_garino@cargill.com), Craig Edling (209-531-7037, craig.edling@animalhealthinternational.com) or the CWGA office (916-444-8122, info@woolgrowers.org).

California Elite Sheep is available to CWGA producers for \$39.39 per bag or \$1,575.60 per ton (40 bags). Contact the CWGA office at 916-444-8122 or info@woolgrowers.org for a product tag.

Reminder to Protect Your Vaccines from Heat, Cold, and Sunlight

Vaccinations are a key component to preventative care in any producer's herd health plan and proper handling of vaccination drugs is critical to maintaining the product's efficacy. Producers should be aware that heat, cold, and sunlight can affect the efficacy of vaccines during storage or handling.

It is important to keep vaccines at the storage conditions recommended on the product label, which is typically between 35-45 degrees Fahrenheit at all times, including while in transit and inoculating animals. It is also important to keep vaccines out of the sunlight because ultraviolet rays can also affect the efficacy of vaccines.

Utah Wool Marketing Association



Marketing Wool to the World

Contact: Will Hart Griggs – Manager

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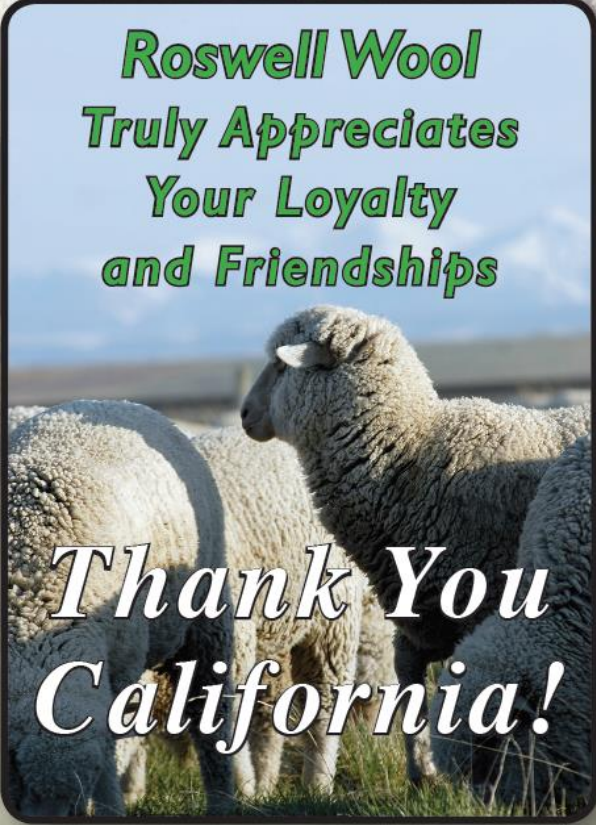
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Looking forward to speaking with you, Bill & Susan Shaul



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Mark Your Calendars

June 11, 2017
Northern California Wool
Growers Assn. Annual Picnic
Ferndale, CA

June 13, 2017
UCCE San Benito, Monterey, & Santa
Cruz County Sheep & Goat Workshop
Hollister, CA

June 14, 2017
Livestock, Wolves & Other Predators:
Discussions & Demonstrations for
Reducing Conflict Workshop
Hat Creek, CA

June 25, 2017
Sheepmans's Festival
Kern County Basque Club
Bakersfield, CA

August 18 – 19, 2017
CWGA Annual Meeting
Cambria, CA

September 15 – 17, 2017
California Wool & Fiber Festival
California CA National Wool Show
Ferndale, CA

December 8, 2017
CWGA Board of Directors Meeting
TBA

*Please submit all liability insurance requests
10 days prior to your event to ensure
adequate processing time.*



California Wool Growers Association

Unifying the voice of the California Sheep Industry since 1860