



the Tunis Shepherd

Official Publication of the National Tunis Sheep Registry

New feature:
Sheep & Stuff for
 sale

October 2000 Newsletter

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Note from the Editor

I have received a lot of good articles/information from our Tunis youth, so this issue is dedicated to them. This is the future of our breed, so let's give them recognition and support. If you don't have a youth program in your area, check with your local 4-H agent to become a volunteer leader and start one; or find other creative ways like AnnaRae Hodgin of North Carolina (see page 4) to get youth involved in raising and promoting Tunis.

On another note our Tunis sales in the south has been great again this year. I know that most of the exhibitors at our state show sold ewes and could have sold more if they had them. I am getting numerous email requests from the

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NTSRI website as well as my own site for information on “where can we get Tunis”. That tells me the Tunis breed is in for a major growth spurt - so hang on! I would like to add a new feature to the web site and newsletter - a classified ad section. Send me a list of your sheep and equipment for sale and I'll put it on the site for \$5.00 for 3 months.

A Tunis Interview with Laurie Bero - Louise Darling

I'm not sure we would call Laurie one of our “youth” members or one of the older breeders - but as she finishes her “youth” career with the title of 2000 Pennsylvania State Lamb and Wool Queen, we do know that she has made her mark!

Laurie Bero calls the Hillside Shepherd Farm at Alum Bank, PA her home, but we find her now finishing her last term at Penn State in State College, PA. Laurie will graduate in December, 2000 with a degree in Animal Science. While at college, she has worked at the PSU sheep barns caring and showing their Polled Dorset Flock. The Tunis breeders have benefitted from her college experience as she shares her sheep knowledge with us by writing educational articles in the MERTA newsletters and by giving demonstrations at various Tunis gatherings. (I heard the carcass demonstration at the Tunis Trade Day was excellent.) Laurie writes “once graduated, I would like to stay as actively involved in the sheep and wool industry as I am now! I hope to soon be able to devote more time to my Tunis flock as being away at school has kept me away from my flock.” So let's find out more about Laurie's flock.

More than nine years ago, Laurie was first attracted to the Tunis by their red color, their docile nature and their easy keeping ability. Over the years, Laurie and her family have raised Border Leicester, Suffolks, X-breds, and Romneys. Currently, the Bero's have about 25 head of Tunis that feature Pine Ridge, Mende and Mayes bloodlines. The Bero flock is noted for deep red color and structural

correctness. And Laurie says “they are not big or tall by any means.” Laurie’s parents, Rosemary and Edward, have taken care of the flock since she has been at college. Her older brother, Steven, is more interested in the equine area than the sheep. Laurie has also raised horses, burros, chickens, and an occasional cow or pig and some goats over the years.

When asked about the goal for her flock, Laurie writes, “My family and I are hand spinners and therefore, enjoy and appreciate a good Tunis fleece.” Laurie credits the Griffin family and Ken Mayes as the people who have been the most help to developing her flock. She advises that the new breeders should “Save your money, research the breed, visit with many breeders and their flocks, and then decide from which breeders to select your starting flock or animals.”

When asked what one perfect answer do you still need concerning your Tunis, Laurie says... “How do you make the ‘perfect’ sheep? There’s always something that could be improved on - whether its that they’re too spoiled or just too old and you can’t part with them!”

Now I do know with Laurie around, we Tunis breeders, have access to someone who can give us educated answers to our questions! See those “youth” members can be of assistance!

Thanks, Laurie....and she can be reached at lkb127@psu.edu.

Triple S Production Sale a Success - Roy Davis

On September 5th Triple S Farm had a production sale at the World Sheep Festival in Bethel, Missouri. Guest consignor was S&T Tunis from Attica, New York with 10 brood ewes. There were 59 Tunis auctioned off with an average sale price of \$210. The sheep went to 6 different states with 18 separate buyers. The high selling ram brought \$475 and was purchased by Eugene Fluke of Avon, Illinois; the high selling ewe brought \$1,250 and was

purchased by S&T Tunis. This was our first production sale and we hope to establish it as an annual event. It was encouraging to see so many Tunis staying in the Midwest and hopefully establishing new Tunis breeders.

Marg Finnegan at the Wool Gathering....

On September 23rd and 24th at Yellow Springs, Ohio, Marjorie Finnegan of Ostrander, OH set up an ALBC (American Livestock Breeds Conservancy) exhibit featuring the Tunis sheep. The event, "A Wool Gathering", was presented by the Midwest Festival of Fibers. The exhibit attracted lots of attention, with people examining ALBC materials, handling Tunis fleece/roving/yarn samples, and petting her two April-born Tunis ewe lambs. Interest was high and comments were positive. The little redheads brought a lot of smiles from children and adults.

Rare chickens, sheep fill professor's retirement....

I received a wonderful article about one of our Tunis breeders and wanted to share it...

He retired as president of Bucknell University five years ago, but Gary Sojka is still very much working. His focus these days is on teaching, and raising rare sheep and chickens. Gary and his wife, Sandra, have 35 American Tunis and some cuckoo dorking chickens on their 200-acre farm in Snyder County. The lineage of the sheep and chickens can be traced back to Europe.

In addition to the farm, Gary teaches a full load including a biology course. The farm serves as a laboratory for him and his students. He is currently working on research on his narrow-faced sheep, including trying to determine if they are descendants of the two given to George Washington by an official from Tunis in 1791. He is trying to develop a genomic profile of the breed. When he does he hopes to get samples from other North African sheep. He has his students take blood from his sheep to do DNA testing. He traveled with his students this past summer to Nicaragua to help build a medical

facility.

In October he received the Sheepskin Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities. Although it was for distinguished service to higher education in the commonwealth, some people thought it was for raising rare sheep. He was also cited for his accomplishments as Bucknell's 13th president, including raising money to pay for construction of nine buildings, more than tripling the endowment fund and attaining enrollment targets every year.

2000 brings many firsts for Ohio - Nancy Schmidt

It has been a great summer here in Ohio for Tunis! We have seen several counties open Tunis classes. Tunis are usually shown in the "Any Other Breed" classes if available (some counties do not even have this class).

Logan County had a Tunis Class for the first time - thanks greatly to Louise Darling. This is a good show to try to get to as you take the sheep on Saturday, show Sunday afternoon, and you take the sheep home Sunday evening. It is held around the 3rd weekend in July.



Louise has volunteered to have a sleep over for all interested. So, remember this for next year! This year at Logan County there were a total of 19 head of Tunis - I believe one of the largest classes. David Bradshaw of Edison, Ohio had Grand Champion Ewe in both Open and 4-H classes. Jeffrey Titlow had Reserve Champion



Ewe in both. Others participating in open classes were Louise Darling of West Liberty, Ohio; Molly Kleman exhibited her first and only Tunis so far (I hear she likes them so well she's

getting more), and Nancy Schmidt of Collins, Ohio.

Medina and Huron Counties saw a Tunis ram lamb owned by Jozi and Matt Best take home Supreme Champion Ram. Quite an accomplishment as Medina has one of the largest "Open Class" sheep shows in the area.

Lorain County, one of Ohio's largest county fairs and a large sheep show has no Tunis class. They are shown in "Any Other Breed" class. Jozi and Matt Best took home Grand and Reserve Champion Rams and Ewes.

Geauga County, Ohio's oldest fair, has its own Tunis class. It was the largest class there with a total of 27 head being shown. It was the only breed there which had more than 2 flocks being shown. Jozi and Matt Best took home Grand and Reserve Champion Ram and Ewe. Others participating were Steve Blair of Loudon, Ohio; Lloyd Riebel of Plain City, Ohio; and Nancy Schmidt of Collins, Ohio.

Hardin County (also with its first Tunis class) saw Lloyd Riebel take home all the honors.

Several counties have Tunis classes for 4-H only. Tunis did very well. Also, there was a sheep day for 4-H'ers at the State Fair grounds early this spring. They made a Tunis class where the kids did very well. Tunis were shown in the Sheep Lead contest at the Ohio State Fair. I have heard that other counties around the state are going to make Tunis classes at their fairs. This is good news and I hope it comes to pass. Not only have Tunis done well in shows around the state but, more and more are being displayed at Heritage Day Events. This is important also, this lets interested people see how Tunis can work on small farms as a low maintenance animal. Some that have participated in these events are Marg Finnegan (see article); Hollie Carter of Carrollton, Ohio; Ray and Susan Romo of Akron, Ohio; and Nancy Schmidt of Collins, Ohio.