

# *the* Tunis Shepherd

Official Publication of the National Tunis Sheep Registry

*New feature:*  
**Sheep & Stuff for sale**

## April 1999

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### *From the Editor...*

Being a “southern” breeder, my lambing season has ended--actually a lot earlier than in previous years. I don't know about you all, but I was blessed (or cursed) with A LOT of ram lambs this year! Well, they use to be rams lambs, now I have wether lambs for 4-h'ers to show and to go in the freezer. I won't have to worry about increasing the size of my flock this year by keeping my ewe lambs--I guess I will have to spend money to increase it this year!

I thought my lambing season was going to be uneventful (first time ever!), but at the very end had some minor problems, losing 2 lambs. Several breeders I spoke to, joined us in being plagued by some large lambs (17-26 pounds) this year.

This time every year, I get excited about the upcoming shows and events, after a winter of inactivity. I miss all our sheep friends and the preparations. I hope everyone will participate in their local sheep events and promote our breed. Speaking of promotion, our web site has been receiving a lot of interest. Since I posted the site in February, we have had 230 visitors. I can see visits getting larger weekly, as more people seek information about the Tunis. I have also seen a large increase in my email from people interested in purchasing some Tunis sheep. I have two requests that I cannot help, so if anyone can help, please contact these people.

This site was last updated  
05/21/2001

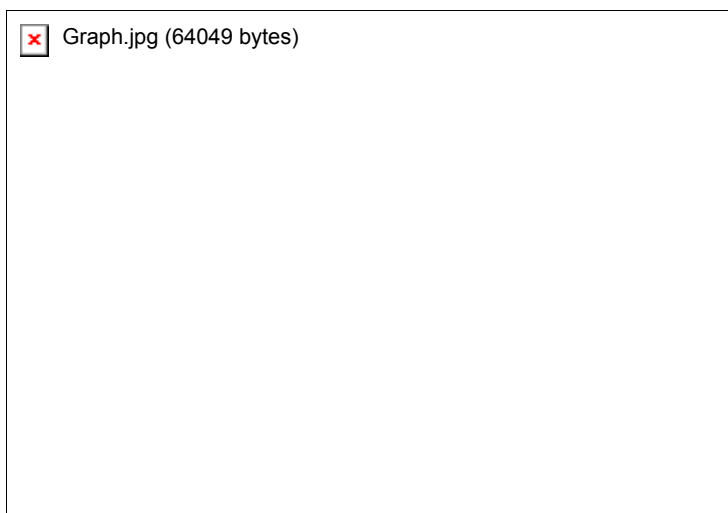
This site developed and  
maintained by [Sonshine Design](#)  
□ 1999

email the editor at  
[pbrashea@icx.net](mailto:pbrashea@icx.net)

- Cindy from Alaska would like to start a Tunis flock. She can be reached at [cindy@sinbad.net](mailto:cindy@sinbad.net).
- Amanda Roberts from Middle Tennessee would like to purchase 2 bred Tunis ewes. She can be reached at (931) 788-6814.

### ***From our Registrar...***

Registrar, Judy Harris, wanted to thank everyone for the great response on getting membership forms in. If you haven't done so, please complete your membership form (included in January newsletter), and mail to Judy with your fee. This way we will have a complete membership list. This year is the 200th anniversary of the Tunis Registry. Judy reports that there will be some special activities planned for later this year. Some ideas are for a photography contest and a contest for handmade or crafty sheep items. Judy will provide more details in our July issue. Judy also provided me with the following 3-year summary of our registrations and transfers. It looks like we were down in 1998, lets work to get it back up!



### ***Special Instructions for "RUSH" Orders***

Since this is the busiest time of the year for registrations, Judy has a special request for all “RUSH” orders. Please send all of your “RUSH” registrations in a separate envelope and mark “RUSH” plainly on the front. She will handle those envelopes first, and get them back to you.

*Let's Go to Michigan - Louise Darling (reprinted with permission from MERTA)*

Mel and Karen Smith, who started with Tunis in 1960 share their humble beginnings...“I bought 3 aged □ blood ewes (12 years old) in 1960 from a neighbor who was culling old ewes from his flock. He used a Tunis ram on his white-faced ewes every fourth year to introduce a meatiness in his lambs. I gave him \$10 per head for the three. I bred these to my dad’s Corriedale ram. They raised twins each of the next three years. My children wanted to show breeding sheep at the fairs and so, of course, I bought registered Tunis from Isaac Hunter for my start and have had Tunis ewes ever since. With over 30 odd years of Tunis, I can’t understand why the other breeds exist!”

Mel and his family live on a 40 acre farm near Stockbridge, Michigan. He purchased the last 40 acres of the farm his dad had farmed for more than 50 years! Mel is a retired employee of Warner Lambert Research and had farmed part-time during those years by raising some cattle, hogs, chickens and horses. They tried other breeds of sheep including cross-breds, but the Tunis seem to fit the family the best and for the last 20 years have just raised the Tunis.

Mel writes...“We have 57 ewes and 4 rams at this time and we will lamb in late March or early April. Contrary to what some breeders like, I cull fat-tails in our flock, also the fat pack rumps. I do not feel this has a place in today’s market. Without this FAT, our lambs topped the market twice this year at the Michigan Livestock Exchange with Wolverine Packing buying all of this year’s lambs. All of the breeding sheep are registered and we keep unrelated rams, so we can make up unrelated starter flocks and also to have a blood pool to draw from to develop the ‘Ideal Tunis’ for our flock.” Mel continues the story by telling that he has sold Tunis in Canada and 11 states along with producing some of the best freezer lamb and market lambs available. “We are making the Tunis a breed that counts and is recognized for palatability and a lamb that has the most ability to convert roughage into edible meat.. THE MOST EFFICIENT BREED.”

Mel’s family consists of his new wife, Karen, who is very interested in the Tunis and 3 children who grew up raising and showing Tunis. Kenneth, Kim, and Kathy have added grandchildren to the Smith family and currently are all involved in some manner on a small farm with livestock.

Mel credits Isaac Hunter with being the most help to him initially and then followed by all of the other Tunis breeders that he has dealt with...“Sheep people by and large are always helpful and

congenial!” Dr. Clifford Beck, who worked with Mel at Parke-Davis and also had crossbred Tunis, was a big help until his death.

When asked about advice for someone just starting with Tunis, Mel writes...“Buy your starter flock from Smith Farm, 16626 Doyle Road, Stockbridge, MI 49285, phone 517-851-8111. And, obviously, the Smith Farm has learned many lessons over the past 30+ years that might save some of us time and mistakes as we venture into the Tunis breed. Thanks, Mel!

## **YOUTH**


### **Message from the Youth Director...**

Youth Director, Dan Swartz reports that its time again to submit your application if you are interested in becoming the 2000 Tunis Youth Representative, or for the National Scholarship Award. Both events will be awarded in September at the National Tunis Show at the Big E. If you want more information, please call Dan. Applications can be obtained from Dan, Judy Harris, or Patti Brashears. Dan also wanted to mention that the National Tunis Youth Show will be held at the KILE show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We will have more information in the next newsletter, or you can call Dan.

### **Tunis Promotion - Adam Hensley, Tennessee Tunis Youth**




In addition to showing his Tunis ewes, Adam Hensley reports that he has been busy promoting the breed by setting up displays at various sheep and livestock events in Tennessee. Last year, he set up Tunis displays at the Tennessee Junior Sheep Breeders Conference, Tennessee Sheep Expo, Ramsey House Heritage Day, Farm Day for Loudon and Roane county, and at the Tennessee Valley Fair. He believes he probably reached over 5,000 people with his displays. His display features a brief Tunis history, characteristics, breeding traits, and lots of photos. He has the NTSRI brochures with the display, and for the kids a fun game which was designed by Amanda Powley, a former 4-H Tunis showman, now a freshman at Carson Newman College. Adam was East Tennessee’s Junior High 4-H Sheep Project Winner for 1997, 1998, and submitted his records for 1999 last week. Adam’s younger brother, Ryan, is following in his footsteps--he was the Junior 4-H Sheep Project winner this year! Congratulations and Good Luck to both! We’ll find out more about Ryan’s activities next newsletter.

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bytes)**Don't Miss This...**

Ken Mayes reports that during the sale at the Empire Spring Classic in Syracuse, S&T Tunis will be donating a lamb to be auctioned. The proceeds will be divided for each youth present purchasing Tunis sheep. This is a wonderful showing of support for our youth. THANKS S&T!

**WANTED!** Photos, bios and articles from our youth. Please send them to the editor by June 20th for the July newsletter--we all want to know what's up with our Tunis Youth. Make new Tunis friends with other youth members all over the US and Canada!

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