

2016 Newsletter

With the winter of 2014/2015 in mind, we thought we would breed for more fall lambing and even back-off our "spring" lambing into March or so. Well, our plans for fall lambing weren't shared by the brood ewes as we didn't have a single ewe "stick" and the delayed "spring" lambing may have its problems too as some of the ewes didn't mark (or re-mark) until early December. Thank goodness for the NAILE as it was what delayed me from pulling rams out. And too top all that off, winter has been extra mild with just a few weeks' worth of frozen water tanks. It all just proves, we aren't all that great at predicting (or manipulating) Mother Nature.

But, things are still good. Lamb prices and even cull prices are still very strong as demand for American Lamb seems to be in a steady incline. Prices paid for breeding stock in 2015 were very good. At the National Oxford sale last June, the various classes of ewes averaged \$605 to \$1,175 and the rams averaged from \$596 to \$1,250 per head for the different age classes.

I was at a meeting of producers and livestock grazers earlier this month and many of those folks were commenting on a steady increase in interest of producers toward raising sheep; especially in the mid-west. The producers showing interest were both small scale and large scale and they were particularly interested because of the potential for a species more efficient in grazing and forage utilization.

Now the question is, do the sheep you produce fit this demand? I truly hope so. As we have said in previous newsletters; If we strive to produce a complete sheep, and then deliver those complete sheep, we will live up to our motto of "Oxfords, Truly the World's Best".

NAILE

The 2015 NAILE in Louisville saw some big changes. There was staff changes in the overall administration as well as in the management of the Sheep division. The Heartland Group (the same folks who have assumed the management of the Mid-West Stud Ram Sale) took over management of the Sheep division. The Heartland Group did a great job even with being brought in late in the overall planning process; look for bigger and better improvements in 2016 if these folks are left in that management position. In 2015, the Junior Market Lamb Show was held over a 2 day period, as was the Junior Breeding Sheep Shows. A supreme champion ram award was added to the Junior Breeding Sheep Show.

Speaking of the 2015 NAILE; the Oxfords added Best Headed Classes for rams and ewes in both the junior show and the Mary Blome National Oxford Show. There was a total of 68 Oxfords in the junior show; Champion Ram was *Perzee 133RR* (a January ram lamb) shown by Ty Miller (IN), Res. Champion Ram was *Wallpe 0017 "Stitch"* (a January ram lamb) shown by Annie Schoetmer (IN), Champion Ewe was *Misty Meadows 0750 "Lucy Goosey"* (a January ewe lamb) shown by Austin Grace (NH) and Res. Champion Ewe was *Double "A" 1538* (a March ewe lamb) shown by Ty Miller (IN).

NAILE cont.

In the Mary Blome National Oxford Show, the Champion Ram was *Double "O" Acres 15-033 NNRR "Sure Deal"* (a March ram lamb) shown by Double "O" Acres (IA), Double "O" Acres also had the Res. Champion Ram (a yearling ram) *Double "O" Acres 14-039 NNPRR "What A Deal"* and they had the Champion Ewe with *Double "O" Acres 15-026 NNPRR* (a February ewe lamb). Ty Miller (IN) had the Res. Champion Ewe with *Double "A" 1538*, a March ewe lamb (this was the same ewe that was Res. Champion in the Junior Show). There were 73 head of Oxfords in the Mary Blome National Oxford Show.

For a full set of show results, go to the AOSA website (www.americanoxfords.org) for a link or go directly to the NAILE website (www.livestockexpo.org).

Ewe Lamb Futurity Program

There were eight Oxford Junior members who showed 12 nominated ewe lambs throughout the 2015 show season. The national winner was Natalie Goodrich of New Hampshire; her winning ewe lamb was *Misty Meadows 0753* that she purchased from Austin Grace (NH) at the Oxford Showcase Sale during the Big Ohio Sale weekend. For a complete list of the 2015 Futurity Ewe Lamb program results, go to the AOSA website.

The Ewe Lamb Futurity program will be in its 8th year in 2016. A complete set of rules and all the forms are at the AOSA website or a consignor or junior participant may contact the AOSA office and hard copies will be mailed to you. Two additional sales have been added to the list of nomination eligible sales for 2016, bringing the total to 5. New eligible sales for 2016 are the Illini All-Breeds Spring Sale and the Indiana Premier Sale.

Consignors and buyers should read the rules for participation and be sure they follow all aspects. An important point of interest is that point forms must be sent to the AOSA office within 14 days of the show's date. Last year, Oxford breeders nominated 44 ewe lambs for the Futurity program at \$25 per head. All the nomination fees (100%) were paid-out to the junior members who purchased those ewe lambs and participated in the futurity program.

This is a great program and a good opportunity to promote breeding programs and for juniors to get recognition for a good eye at the sales and a study hand at the shows. We encourage all breeders to continue to nominate their ewe lambs for the Futurity program.

Office Work – 2015 and Future

As we said in last spring's newsletter, high lamb market prices continued to impact registrations and transfers of purebred Oxfords in 2015. We had 958 registrations in 2015 (up 41 from 2014, but still about 280 below the previous 10 year average) and transfers were at 502 (down 60 from 2014, down 120 from 2013 and down about 60 from the previous 10 year average).

Just a reminder, check your records and your animal inventory and make sure your registrations and transfers are all up-to-date and current. Do you have all those 2015-born lambs that you plan to keep registered? What about sheep you have sold to other folks; have you sent in transfers so the new owners are now the recorded owners? Avoid paying extra fees from rush work (double the regular fees), registering animals older than a year of age or transfers sent in more than 60 days after the sale date. Check your records and animal inventory now. And remember, be sure your annual dues are current for 2016 (Senior Members - \$20, Junior Members - \$6).

I am continuing my housekeeping of Oxford records as I keep reminding folks to help me “clean-up” registration and ownership information. If you have a question about who is the recorded owner of particular animals within your family flock, just contact the AOSA office. There may be animals that were registered in a junior member’s name but never transferred to the family or farm name once the junior member ended their show career. We can provide you with lists of animals registered to each member of a family; then you can determine if transfers are needed.

There are several forms and program descriptions on the AOSA website. If you would like a hard copy of any of these mailed to you, please contact the AOSA office with that request; we will be glad to send them to you.

Oxfords Reign Supreme

A special congratulations goes out to Wayne O’Brien and Family (Double “O” Acres) of West Union, Iowa. Their Champion Oxford Ram (*Double “O” Acres 15-033 NNRR “Sure Deal”*) was also selected as Supreme Champion Ram over all breeds at the 2015 NAILE.

“Sure Deal” goes back to “The RReal Deal” (a “Rumor Has It” grandson) on the top side of his pedigree and “Sure Deal’s” dam is a grand-daughter of “Rumor Has It” as well.

Double “O” Acres’ breeding program was certainly consistent for them at the 2015 Mary Bloom National Oxford Show as they also had the Reserve Champion Ram and the Champion Ewe, both with similar top-side pedigrees as “Sure Deal”.

Congratulations to the O’Brien Family!

Email Addresses

Just a reminder that when you renew your annual AOSA membership and pay your dues, please send in a completed membership form (found on the AOSA website). This gives the Association an update of any changes you may have made or changes that the postal service may have made. This will assure that you stay current on mailings and contact information. Like it or not, email addresses have become increasingly important as the preferred method of communications. Please update your contact information annually.

Special Recognition / Awards

- *Oxford Foundation Flock Award* – The Foundation Flock Award is presented annually at the National Oxford Show and Sale. The purpose of this award is to help establish a new Oxford flock and breeder each year. The actual award consists of young brood ewes and/or ewe lambs and a young ram. These animals are donated by various established Oxford breeders. The deadline to apply for this award is **May 8, 2016**. If you know of a person or family who would like to get a start with Oxfords, encourage them to apply. Justin O’Brien, chairperson of this committee, informs me that the group of donated animals this year will perhaps be the best they have ever offered.
- *Oxford Hall of Fame Award* – The Hall of Fame Award was initiated in 2000 to recognize those people who have made significant contributions as supporters and promoters of the AOSA and the Oxford breed. A list of past honorees can be found on the AOSA’s website. The application/nomination deadline for this award is **May 15, 2015**.

- *National Oxford Queen* – The AOSA has an annual queen contest for junior members who are between the ages of 16 and 21 as of December 31 in the year of application. This past year the Association had no queen since we had no applicants. It is important that we have a representative at the various events that come during the year. If you have questions, please contact Stacey Gadsby, Oxford Queen Committee Chairperson. The deadline to apply for the 2016 National Oxford Queen contest is **May 15, 2015**. Queen candidates will be interviewed at the National Show and Sale and the winner will be crowned at the AOSA Annual Membership Meeting on June 17, 2016.

Application information and forms for all 3 of these programs can be found at the AOSA's website or printed copies of the information and forms can be mailed to interested persons by contacting the Association's office.

All-American Junior Show

The All-American Junior Show will be held at Michigan State University (near East Lansing, MI), June 30 – July 3. This is a great facility and I encourage families to add this show to your summer schedule. Show information is now posted at the show website, www.countrylovin.com/AJSS.

Oxfords were one of the originating breeds of this show nearly 25 years ago and has been a charter sponsor since the show began. The AOSA hosts an auction of donated items at the Association's Annual Membership Meeting and one of our breeders has graciously donated a "Big Ticket" item to be sold at the National Sale each year (such as a ewe lamb or last year, Shelley O'Brien donated one of her paintings). Both of these fund raisers help secure support for our Oxford youth to participate in this show.

We are still looking for that "Big Ticket" item for this year's National Sale. Please consider this as you look for a special way to support our Oxford youth. Also, please donate auction items for the benefit auction at the Annual Meeting. Contact one of the directors of the Association or David Trotter to make those donations, or better yet, bring your auction items to the Annual Meeting.

Another way you can help support the All-American Junior Show is to purchase raffle tickets. Enclosed in each of the Senior member's newsletter are a few raffle tickets for your opportunity to be a supporter. Junior members will get their tickets from the AAJSS office. If you decide to purchase the tickets, complete your contact information on the ticket stub and return them with payment to the AOSA Office (make checks payable to AAJSS). Stubs will be placed in the drawing at the show, you don't have to be present to win. If you would like more tickets, just let us know.

National Show and Sale

Enclosed with this newsletter is the entry information for the 2016 National Oxford Show and Sale. Again this year, we will be joined by other breeds in the barn at Springfield, IL (last count there were 6 other breeds committed). We will continue to publish just 1 sale catalog for all breeds so it is really important that entries be received by April 15, 2016. If you have questions, please contact the AOSA Office.

AOSA Annual Membership Meeting

The American Oxford Sheep Association will hold its Annual Membership Meeting on Friday, June 17, 2016 at approximately 6:30 PM at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 2801 West Street, Springfield, IL 62707. Be sure to notify the AOSA Office at about 2 weeks ahead if you plan to attend the annual meeting; tickets for the meal and meeting will be available at the fairgrounds and at the door. You may also attend the meeting (no charge) without taking part in the meal. Minutes of the 2015 Annual Membership Meeting are enclosed with this newsletter.

