

Bluefaced Leicester Union (BLU)

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BLU Registry: Associated Sheep Registries (ASR), 15603 – 173rd Ave, Milo, IA 50166 (Phone: 641-942-6402)

BLU

Serving the Breed and the Breeder

January 2009

Good New Year, BLU Members!

Things are looking good for another great crop of Bluefaced Leicester lambs in 2009! The record number of registrations and transfers is testimony to the outreach of individual members bringing the Bluefaced Leicester word to more people.

When you sell breeding stock, please make a point to either transfer the registration yourself as a courtesy to your buyer, or provide them with all the forms and information necessary to do it themselves.

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- BLU – THE REGISTRY

- New 2008 numbers are in!

- ASR reports that in 2008 BLU registered 350 BFLs and transferred 175! This continues the upward trend as the breed expands. Our BLU members are to be congratulated for their efforts in getting the word out and getting the breed into the flocks of interested shepherds.

- Form Update – ALL forms are available on the bflsheep.com web site

- Following up on suggestions on improvements to the registration process, changes will be made to the “Work Order” (you *are* using one with everything you send to ASR, *aren't* you???)

However, if you want a copy of your registration application, please make one yourself before sending the work to ASR. Besides giving you a copy for your records, you will have this original source to verify that the data you sent in was entered properly AND to enter the BLU registration number on the form.

Transfers: When you send a registration in for transfer to a new owner, after signing the back, please provide stamped envelope addressed to the new owner.

- BLU – 2009 DUES

The 2009 BLU dues are \$15 adult, \$5 junior, \$10 associate payable by check, money order, PayPal (bflsheep@net-link). Please mail checks and money orders to BLU, 760 West V.W. Ave, Schoolcraft, MI 49087. Many of you have already paid and I will publish a list of those soon. The cut-off date for 2009 membership is March 1, 2009; which gives me plenty of time to put the BLU member handout together for the Maryland show. Please pay promptly so you may be included in the handout.

- BLU –MEMBERSHIP

2008 Membership reached an all time high, with the junior group making large gains. BLU is sending a BLU t-shirt to each junior member at the time of enrollment in 2009. All the current juniors received new shirts in 2008.

2009 – New BLU Members

Carol Bator

Zephyr Sheep Farm

909 Bennett Road

Linden, IN 47955

765-543-3078

zephyrsheepfarm@yahoo.com



"My experience as a shepherd began in 1999 with the purchase of 3 Suffolk ewes and 2 llamas. These animals were mostly pets from whom I learned how to take of ruminants. A couple of years later I sold my sheep and llamas in order to deal with a financial crisis. After parting with the llamas, I promised myself that I would never own a hoofed animal that was larger than me ever again.

In 2002, I discovered Shetland sheep. I loved the colors and fleeces. I purchased my first Shetland sheep in 2003 and began breeding sheep for the first time that fall.

2003 was also the first year that I ever saw a Bluefaced Leicester. I was attending the Michigan Fiber Festival and saw these sheep with strange looking faces and strange looking fleeces.

Over time, as I learned more about sheep in general and developed an interest in hand spinning, I began to appreciate those Bluefaced Leicesters that I saw year after year at the Michigan Fiber Festival.

*I purchased my first BFL's in the summer of 2008 and found that they were everything that I was wishing my Shetland sheep were. The BFL's were **bigger**, they were truly a dual purpose sheep. The BFL's are **polled**, and although I was interested in developing a polled line of Shetland sheep, it is nice to have sheep who already have that trait locked into their genetic code. And the BFL's are surprising **docile**. I had thought that the description of docile BFL's would only apply to show sheep that are extensively handled, but I have found that "brood ewes" have been remarkably tame and easy to handle as well.*

Because I have only 4 acres of pasture, I have decided to simplify my life and keep only one breed of sheep. I plan to sell off my Shetlands and raise a small flock of BFL sheep. By purchasing the best ram that I can find every couple of years, I hope to produce show quality lambs from 6 to 8 breeding ewes. I will of course be selling beautiful BFL fleeces and market lambs as well."

The Frayley Sisters – Alexandria & Madeline - Juniors
Running Briar Farm
Paris, OH

Allen Fraley, the girls' father: *"After a few years at the County Fair it became clear that we would never compete at the same level as the "Jackpot Lambs". We would never spend the \$\$ on lambs and the show feed and the fitting, just to lose hundreds of dollars after the sale was over. We have 7 acres and I work in town, this is for the kids not farm income.*

The Sheep committee this year talked about a new Class, Born and Raised, prove that the lamb was born on the farm and the girls had a chance at a new championship trophy. That's when I started looking at Heritage Breeds. If you are going to put in the work then let's have some fun. I started cruisin' the internet for longer wool and breeding stock in Ohio. That's where we found an old working companion, Lisa Rodenfels.

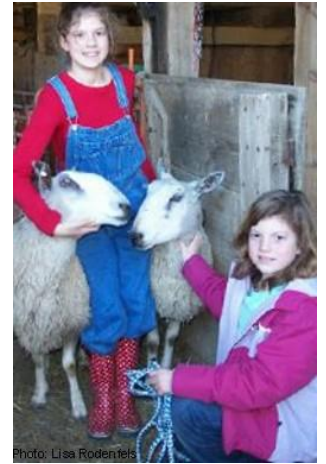
Lisa was very open about the breed and we planned a farm visit. Wow, so many sheep and the Rodenfels were great hosts. All the questions were answered and the girls, later that night, said yes to the funny looking sheep with big noses!

As you can see in the picture, the girls and the ewes bonded before they even got in the truck!

Alex is a 6th grader and has taken sheep for three years and this breeding project is just what she needed. Madeline is a fourth grader and last year took a lamb, pig and chickens to the fair. The girls will use these two purebred ewes to start a small flock that will carry them through high school."

Brooke Jakubos - Junior
1802 Newton Creek Road
Roseburg OR 97470

Brooke is BLU member Nancy Gilkeson's granddaughter. She is shown here showing sheep at the Black Sheep Gathering. She has her own group of BFLs and look forward to seeing her at the 2010 National BFL Show at BSG. Welcome, Brooke!



BFL EWES RELOCATED – Connecticut to Massachusetts



Lisa Westervelt is please to add 4BFL ewes to her fiber. Check out her web site: www.GoodWool.com *"It was, to my surprise, and pleasure, that a small Bluefaced Leicester ewe flock became available to me recently. I have crossbred BFL ewes in my flock, but no purebred ewes. These ewes were part of a 4-H flock. Unfortunately, this family became unable to continue with the flock, so I took them over. I am looking forward in working these ewes into my breeding program.*

I breed longwool sheep breeds. I've been focused on the rare breed "Leicester Longwool", most commonly known as 'English Leicester' in Great Britain and New Zealand, for 8 years. The breed was developed by Englishman Robert Bakewell in the mid 18th century. He was a brilliant breeder who also developed the Bluefaced Leicesters. Though the two breeds have significant differences, they both provide an abundance of quality wool. The wool is a strong wool and it is a lustrous wool. Both breeds were designed to be used as crossing sires onto other wool breeds, as well as meat breeds. Both types of crossing will prove to increase wool quality and clip. The wool is used for outerwear, blankets and expensive wool fabric for men's suits, creating very long lasting and strong fabrics. I've found that the lamb fleeces can be quite soft. I have also blended my Leicester wools with exotic fibers to increase softness to create a yarn suitable for clothing worn next to the skin. The Bluefaced Leicester wool is soft to the touch and also has a semi-lustrous sheen to it. I'm looking forward to the wool clip this year and making use of the lovely wool for handspinning. My fellow spinning guild members are already reserving their fleeces. That's good news!"

- CROSS VILLAGE RUG WORKS – BLU Member Cheryl Reed
Cheryl Reed writes to say that the Cross Village Rug Works is fully functional and the new web site will be up soon.
- And, too.....
Please note that I have a new BLU email address, bflsheep@hughes.net and personal one wardfarms@hughes.net - all part of the ongoing move to a new computer, programs and broadband. Please be sure your spam filters will allow these email addresses.

In Leicesters, blue is finer!

Kelly

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