

BLU
Serving the Breed and the Breeder

June - July 2008

Hello BLU Members,

It was a delight to see all the green on my trip west to Estes Park CO and Eugene OR. There was no lack of water (too much in parts of the Midwest!!), snow remained in the higher elevations. Last year at this time many parts were having the worst drought in nearly 20 years; thankfully, that's not the case 2008.

Time to be thinking about the breeding season and summer is moving on.

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- **2008 WEST**
ESTES PARK CO & BLACK SHEEP GATHERING OR

Estes Park Wool Market

The Bluefaced Leicesters were well represented at this year's event. I believe Estes Park is the only municipality that sponsors an event of this kind. The superintendents, Dana Ruhlman and Curtis Chong, are unfailing in their good cheer, courtesy, willingness to accommodate any request. All the exhibitors are to be commended for their friendly, helpful attitude. The weather was perfect the entire weekend. Good crowds came through the sheep tent with much interest in the Bluefaced Leicester in breeding programs and interest in the fleece among fiber artists.

Jared Lloyd, Molina CO, was the chair for the separate sheep show that also included mule sheep. His brother, John Lloyd, created the outstanding awards that were highly coveted by the exhibitors. We were pleased to meet their sister, Jenna, too. Keith Padgett, well known Colorado fleece expert, was the judge.

Kathy Davidson, Glen Rock PA, drove all the way to Estes by herself, stopping in Missouri for two days to meet with new BFL breeders. Kathy ran a communal booth of BFL items for sale, making many friends for our breed. She was awarded "Pen Mom" for seeing to it we were all taken care of with cold water throughout the show. Teri Peterson, Platteville CO, exhibited her new BFLs and we were pleased to have her join our ranks. Robina Koenig, Bend OR, came with daughter, Callie, and exhibited an impressive group of yearlings. Peg Lauver, Mifflinberg PA, flew in with three friends for the weekend, cheering us on in the show ring. Becky Utecht, Mora MN, came in with her friend, Kim Nicolai.

The highlight of the weekend was the lamb dinner that Jared prepared on the fair grounds Saturday night – several of his own lambs’ legs, boned and marinated, then slow cooked; accessorized with wild greens salad, vinaigrette dressing, and a tasteful selection of Colorado wines. The group feast continued through Sunday when Kathy Davidson sliced the remaining meat for sandwiches to keep us going through that day’s shows.

After a thoroughly delightful weekend, we packed up Sunday afternoon and headed to Wyoming for the second leg, the Black Sheep Gathering, Eugene OR.

Black Sheep Gathering <http://www.blacksheepgathering.org/>

There was a separate white Bluefaced Leicester show at the 2008 BSG in Eugene OR, with our colored sheep showing well in the long-wool classes for ‘other than NCWGA flocks’ under Mark Eidman’s judging. Perfect weather favored the weekend with the BFL pen grouping in an optimum location. The BSG show committee is to be congratulated, as usual, for a finely tuned show.

Competing in the shows were BFL breeders Judy Colvin (MT), Robina Koenig (OR), Sue Gustafston (CA), Natalie Redding (CA) and myself. Other BFL breeders there were Rick Prestbye (MT), Nancy Gilkeson (OR), Virginia Hall (OR); plus longtime sheep friends, Ingrid Painter (WA), Sherry Carlson (CA), Myrtle & Roy Dow (CO) and Martin & Joy Dally (OR).

Saturday night is a most enjoyable part of this long-established show. During the day volunteers set up the tables and chairs on the grass, the lamb is roasting on the grills, and the shade falls over this area. The fair grounds close down to the public. The exhibitors, vendors, workshop presenters, BSG volunteers gather to enjoy a fun potluck from the various dishes that have appeared on the long banquet tables. A small group is playing live music, the cash bar is open and the scene is set for a tranquil evening of meeting a wide variety of people.

The last event of the evening is the Shepherd’s Lead where the Bluefaced Leicester was well represented by Judy Colvin, Robina Koenig, Sue Gustafston and Natalie Redding, displaying their creativity with fiber from their own animals.

In Conclusion.....

The long trip home gives much time for reflection. The sum is always the same. Sheep breeders are by and large great people, sharing a love of species, relishing the role of shepherd, giving much of their resources to promote a way of life. The potlucks, the meeting of many people, friends made from coast to coast, all are positives that were brought about by the common thread of sheep.

‘The Black Sheep Newsletter’

Robina Koenig is heading up the Bluefaced Leicester event for 2010 at Black Sheep Gathering; building on the terrific reception our breed has had in the west through advertising in ‘The Black Sheep Newsletter’ and exposure at this show. There are many, many fiber enthusiasts in the west because of this publication. The fleece show is exceptional.

Subscription and/or ad information for ‘The Black Sheep Newsletter’: 25455 NW Dixie Mountain Road • Scappoose, OR 97056; 503-621-3063 email: BSNewsltr@aol.com

- **BLU – THE REGISTRY**

The BLU registry has its voice here. New and existing items that need to be stressed will be found here. It is important that all breeders – new and experienced alike – please take the time to review the information contained.

Make out your checks or money orders to “BLU”.

Send your registrations to ASR in Milo, Iowa at the address on the form.

To register and/or transfer your sheep with the registry, you must use the appropriate forms. They can be downloaded from the bflsheep.com web site under “Downloads”. *You will need a “Work Order” every time you use the registry.* Please read the “Rules for Registration” prior to completing the forms.

Repeat, but necessary: All Bluefaced Leicesters can be registered regardless of membership in BLU or not. If you ARE a member in good standing, the fee is a flat \$4.00 per head for each registration or transfer. If you are NOT a member, the fee is \$5.00 per head for each registration or transfer.

A few thoughts on registrations.

- ✓ Get your lambs registered in the year of their birth.
- ✓ When you sell sheep, transfer the registration yourself. Make it a courtesy to your buyer and know that the transfer is completed.

- **BLU 2008 MEMBERSHIP & NEW BLU MEMBERS**

There are several new BLU members. Appreciation is due our members who actively promote the breed and work together for the good of the breed.

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- **MISSOURI MISSION - Kathy Davidson, Potosi Sheep Farm, PA**

Not only did I share Estes Park with good BFL friends but I also had the opportunity to meet 3 new Missouri BFL breeders on my way west. I think Missouri will be the new hotbed of Blues with the enthusiasm of Darlene Megli, Caryn Miller, and Jennifer Fitzwater.

Their flocks arrived from the east and west hectically in the same week. Judy Colvin sent some beautiful ewes and rams from MT and I hauled 7 ewes and a 2 week old ram lamb from PA. The ewes were packed into my pickup so little guy rode next to me in a cat carrier, stopping every 2 hours for a milk break. At first he wasn't too happy without mom or with my choice of audio tapes (just like Molly) but he finally stopped crying about 50 miles out. It would have been a long trip if he hadn't. At one fueling stop, a man in a large van asked if his kids could pet my sheep. He must have been PT Barnum for when he opened the van it was like the clown car in the circus...11 kids popped out. When asked if they were all his he replied, "Oh, no,one's my sister's."

Since it was so hot I made it all the way to Cameron Mo. in one day so I could unload the flock. We went to Jenn's first. As soon as my ewes smelled her wonderful pastures there was mutiny. Grass has been pretty spotty here this spring so everyone wanted at it at Jenn's. Jenn has Border Leicesters, Shetlands and some crosses. I think she would like to get into crossing for mules and the tier system. She showed me some beautiful hand made bags that she has made from her fiber. She is an artist who makes the best cup of coffee for miles around. Jenn got into sheep through her Border Collies.

Next stop, Caryn Miller's near Kansas City. Caryn and her husband Joe allowed me to stay with them while we waited for Darlene to arrive. If I ever run away from home, I'm "Goin' to Kansas City" to Caryn's. Caryn and Jenn work together on their sheep venture. They met through the Border Collie rescue. Like Jenn, the dogs are Caryn's first love but the Blues have really captured her enthusiasm. Her ram is a Carry House R1 from Judy. Caryn's energy is contagious and it is obvious she will be a great shepherd.

Darlene came to pick up her flock the following day. Darlene has had sheep for many years. Right now she is focusing on Romney and Blues. She is a vendor at wool shows in the midwest. Darlene's sense of humor makes her such fun to be with. Darlene got my yearling ewe with the tiny ram lamb. I felt deserted when Darlene pulled out with the cat carrier in her truck and one of my favorite ewes in her trailer. Oh well, ya can't keep 'em all. BFL fiber will be a big seller for her. The word is out.

Driving through dark clouds in Kansas was lonely without my little "Toto" next to me, but I really felt good about the new homes my flock had found. I hear from Jenn that they are fat from all the Missouri grass this wet season has brought. Can't wait to see how my little guy turns out too.

Thanks Caryn, Jenn and Darlene for being so welcoming. The BFL breed has gained some really wonderful shepherds. I can't wait to visit you again. That's a threat.

- **AND, TOO.....**

Keep on promoting your Bluefaced Leicesters. I've found they make friends wherever they go!

In leicesters, blue is finer!

Kelly

Photos are still needed for the bflsheep.com web site!