

## BLU Serving the Breed and the Breeder

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October 2008

Hello BLU Members,

After a weekend of talking about our wonderful breed and touching base not only with our members, but with the many people interested in the BFL I've been reflecting on what BLU is about. The purpose of BLU is to serve the breed and the breeder. Through the registry and the annual flock book the breed is served, its future assured. Through BLU advertising in many areas using the [bflsheep.com](http://bflsheep.com) web site as the main portal to all BFL information, filtering requests for breeding stock and fiber to members who can provide these things, and featuring the people in our group; in all these things BLU serves the members. It is what BLU is about.

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- **BLU – THE WEB SITE – [bflsheep.com](http://bflsheep.com)**

There are a few updates to the BLU web site.

1. The monthly e-letter will be posted there from now on under “News”.
2. LeeAnn Richert sent the photo of a really beautiful BFL ewe lamb. It's posted on the “Forms” page. Take a look!  
<http://www.bflsheep.com/images/forms.htm>

Please take the time to check out your listing on the web site, let me know of any changes or corrections.

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- **NEW BLU MEMBERS**

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Please welcome our newest BLU members. Read more about them in the next BLU e-letter.

- **BLU – THE REGISTRY**

\*\*\* New banking regulations have been enacted and the banks making a crack down on checks deposited that are NOT made out to the registered business name of the account. So, please, make your checks out to "BLU" when doing registry business.

1. Make out your checks or money orders to "BLU".
2. Send your registrations to ASR in Milo, Iowa at the address on the form.

\*\*\* ALL 2008 LAMBS MUST BE REGISTERED BY DECEMBER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE REGULAR RATE; AFTER THAT TIME IT WILL BE DOUBLE. It is so important to keep our purebred Bluefaced Leicesters registered and accounted for. If you have sold stock to new breeders, please follow up and double check to be sure they are registered.

- **SPECIAL REPORTS**  
**Graham Phillipson – “WSWF Mule Sheep Show”**

(Many thanks to Graham for keeping BLU abreast of mule developments.)

The first Mule Sheep Show in North America was held on September 7th, 2008 in conjunction with the Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival in Jefferson, Wisconsin. The Show was sponsored by the North American Mule Sheep Society, the Bluefaced Leicester Breeders Association, the Scottish Blackface Breeders Union, the Texel Sheep Breeders Society, the North American Clun Forest Association and Sydell.

Thanks to these sponsorships and a generous donation from the U.K Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders Association, it was possible to bring David Cruickshank and his wife, Jane over from Castle Douglas in Scotland to judge the Mule Show. David also judged the Bluefaced Leicester competition. David Cruickshank is President of the Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders Association in the UK and has bred Scottish Blackface, Scotch Mules and Bluefaced Leicesters over the past years.



The Mule Show was judged in the British style, where all the sheep were allowed to walk freely in the ring to be judged. This led to some lively activity in the ring with some rounding up having to be done at the end of the initial judging.

Entries included Scotch Mules, Cheviot Mules, Clun Mules and Shetland Mules, and both ewe lambs and yearlings vying for Champion Mule. A total of 17 Mule Sheep participated, which represented good breeder interest when compared to other sheep breeds shown at the Festival.

The Champion Mule was a Scotch Mule ewe lamb bred by Littledale Farm, Richland Center, Wisconsin and the Reserve Champion was a Clun Mule yearling bred by Muleflock, Coopersville, Michigan. Classes included Hill Dam w/Mule ewe lamb, Mule dam w/Terminal Sired lamb and Bluefaced Leicester Ram w/2 Mule daughters. Littledale Farm was awarded 1st place in the Hill Dam class with a Scottish Blackface Ewe/Mule and also 1st place in the Mule Ewe w/Terminal sired market lamb with a Scotch Mule ewe and Hybrid English Suffolk sired lamb. Muleflock was awarded 1st place in the



Bluefaced Leicester Ram with 2 Mule daughters with Clun Mules.

Educational presentations were given by Graham Phillipson, Littledale Farm and by Mark Lelli, Muleflock. Utilizing the 3-Tier System and the Bluefaced Leicester's link in the system was explained and questions were answered about the breeding of Mules in general.

While spectator attendance was not as high as we would have liked, we have confidence that this event will spur on commercial breeders to look more closely at Mule sheep as a vital link to a management system that will produce market lamb on grass alone. The hardiness of the hill sheep, the prolificacy and milkiness of the Bluefaced Leicester all contribute to the performance of the Mule as a superior dam for market lambs sired by heavy meat breeds.

(Text and photos courtesy G & M Phillipson, Littledale, Richland Center WI)

### **Kathy Davidson – "My Trip to Cape Cod"**

(Kathy continues to be "Roving BFL Ambassador"!! Thanks for sharing!)

Late in September, I took 4 Blues to Cape Cod. (In fact it was the week prior to my trip to Minnesota where I also met some new and old friends.) Cape Cod is a short 9 hour ride from here but through East Coast traffic. My friend, Sheila, offered to ride along for the adventure. On the way to we picked up a small flock of Black Welsh to deliver in NY. Pack those sheep in so they don't get bounced around is my theory. I had also stuffed many pounds of wool for processing in every available space in the cab and around the cage. My friend and I didn't bounce around either. Sheila learned how to hold gates and halters very quickly as well as deflate plastic bags of fiber so we could get our bags in and see.

Mark Stephens and Kathy Mealy live on a unique 11 acre farm in the middle of the very residential Cape. They also have a woollen mill in their basement. Mark and Kathy have a Cormo flock. When they got a BFL/Cormo wether from Kat Smith the fleece processed so beautifully that they decided to get a BFL ram for their Cormo ewes. Their one ram purchase turned into BFL sheep fever. Mark and Kathy now have a flock of Blues to go along with their Cormos, goats and alpacas. The BFL ram they bought has found his way into their hearts and house on occasion.

We spent 3 days at the Cape with Mark and Kathy. On Sunday, we had a party with lots of Cape friends. 2 pound lobsters were served along with shellfish of all kinds. It was a feast like we had at Rhinebeck last year and in Estes Park. My sheep delivery turned into an amazing vacation, with

hospitality that Sheila and I will not forget. The people on the cape will not forget us either since I parked the sheep truck in many very posh locations to sight see. It was a blemish amidst the highly polished Lexus' and Mercedes' but it made us laugh. It's a workin' truck.

Got my processed fiber from Mark and Kathy at Rhinebeck. It is perfectly done "idiot spinning".....which means so well processed that any idiot can spin it! Their mill is THE BILTMORE WOOL MILL in Brewster MA. We stuffed the colorful clouds of roving in my Honda Civic, again not being able to see or move. It looked like a deployed air bag in technicolor. My UK friend with me worried all the way home that the police would stop us.

2008 has been such a fun year for me travelling with my Blues. I have met so many great people and had such a good time in Missouri, Colorado, Minnesota and Cape Cod that I'm anxious for the 2009 travel season! Everyone... enjoy your BFL sheep and see you on the road.

- **RHINEBECK NY – NY SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL REPORT – Kelly Ward**  
Letty and I left on Tuesday, arrived on Wednesday. Chuck Simmons was busily working on finishing touches to the pen areas. Letty had a two-day rug work shop ("The Shepherd's Rug" - shameless plug!!) Thursday and Friday. I helped a bit with that, mostly in the fetch category.

Saturday was the Romney featured breed show. Enormous classes and equally enormous kudos are due longtime friends, Cindy Ciecawa and Margaret VanCamp (MI), for their many first places with both their white and colored Romneys under judge Bill Gardhouse of Canada, another long time acquaintance. Huge classes that had Bill wondering what he had gotten into, I'm sure. An impressive collection of the pottery awards went home to Michigan.

Sunday's 'all other breeds' shows were bigger than the Saturday shows, endlessly split the whole day. Margaret VanCamp's two BFL ewe lambs did very well in the white long wool classes.

Kelly Mansfield (WV) entered two BFLs in the Banner sale. I don't know the results of that. It's unfortunate she is dropping out of BFLs, but I hope she will return to them again. Greg Deakin, Banner Magazine, was his tireless self; an ever ready promoter of the sheep industry. Speaking of which, Kathy and Ken Kark, Shepherd Magazine, were there. The Karks surprised me by publishing a BFL ram photo I had sent them years ago, in fact about 12 years ago! Our breed has come a long way with the boost newer UK lines have given to the original imported stock.

BLU didn't have an optimum space for its booth because of the tight penning from so many Romneys entered in the featured breed. However, I adapted the set-up to the space available enabling access to our BLU handouts. Longtime friend and BFL breeder, Joan Chapin (NH), helped out with manning the booth/answering questions while I was busy elsewhere.

Kathy Davidson (PA) came by with her friend, Isabelle, from England, who had to return suddenly due to ill health. Debbie Oxby (NS) and her cousin Peggy also of Canada were there in an enthusiastic burst of 'therapy shopping'!! Barbara Thompson (RI), Meredith Myers (MD) and mother Connie, Kris Barndt (PA) - a shame there was no room to display her note cards; David Hinman (NH) came by to take my BFL/Wensleydale ewes to his place; Anne Priest (NY) and Kat Smith (VT) had booths, Lewis White (AL), Little Barn Alabama, had some wonderful packets of BFL fiber at his tent that Patty had put together; and past BLU member Maggie Alexander (NY) had a booth. Old friends Roy and Myrtle Dow (CO), drove their motor home/stock trailer rig cross country; going down to SAFF (TN) for the next weekend's show, where Letty was also going after touching base back home for two days.

This is our last road trip together for the year. 2009 starts off with the January Michigan Shepherd's Weekend in Lansing.

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

It's great to see the flock newly shorn; giving a better opportunity to judge conformation. Most importantly, the really good news is that I can see the bred ewes are settling in to gestation. I hope things are looking good at your place!!

**In leicesters, blue is finer!**

*Kelly*

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