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President’s Notes - Darrell Deneke

I hope everyone had a joyous holiday season and we can all look forward to the opportunities in a new year. Lambing time is just around the corner for many of us. For me it is an exciting time of the year as we anticipate the arrival of the new lamb crop.

You will be seeing the results of the Targhee starter flock committee in this newsletter. I would like to thank that group for the time and hard work they did with this project. The group included Jeff and Leslie Nevens, Gordon Sammons, Elisha Lewis, Charlene Von Krosigk, and Todd Taylor.

Expanding opportunities for our youth to get involved with the Targhee breed is one of the best ways for us to grow as an association and this program will provide an excellent means to increase interest in our breed.

2009 National Show & Sale

The Montana Targhee Sheep Association will be hosting the 2009 USTSA National Show & Sale in Miles City, Montana - July 16th-18th. USTSA Board Member, Jack McRae, of Jordan, Montana, is sale chairman (406-557-6266 or jmcrae@midrivers.com).

MTSA members met at the 125th Annual Montana Wool Growers Convention in December to discuss the event. They have the following noteworthy items to share with you. There will be no Wild & Wooly Class this year. Open Show classes are: NSIP Yearling Ram, Yearling Ram, Fall Ram Lamb, Spring Ram Lamb, NSIP Yearling Ewe, Yearling Ewe, Fall Ewe Lamb, Spring Ewe Lamb, and Pen of 3 Yearling Ewes. A fall lamb is born on or before December 31, 2008. A spring lamb is born January 1, 2009 or later. A maximum of 2 rams per membership may be entered. There will be a Jr. Show, Wool Show, and Photo Contest.

Entry and/or Event Registration forms will be available to download at the USTSA website (www.ustargheesheep.org) April 7th. Members can receive packets through the USPS by contacting the USTSA office. Please see the 2009 Targhee Timeline on P. 6 of this newsletter for important deadlines. Details about lodging and events will be available in the April newsletter.

Apply Now for the First Targhee Starter Flock!

The USTSA Starter Flock Committee, chaired by Jeff and Leslie Nevens, is pleased to announce applications for the first ever Targhee Starter Flock will be available January 26th at the USTSA website! The USTSA will award a Targhee Starter Flock to a deserving young person at the 2009 National Show and Sale in Miles City, Montana. The winner will also receive a $150 credit for use toward purchase of additional animals at the 2009 sale. The recipient is required to be present for receipt of the flock.

Applications are due in the USTSA office April 1, 2009. The recipient will be notified in writing by June 1st. Any youth ages 9-17, as of January 1, 2009, whose immediate family does not raise Targhee sheep is eligible to apply. The winner will be awarded one (1) ewe lamb, one (1) yearling ewe, and one (1) brood ewe donated by members of the USTSA. Each animal will be a USTSA registered animal, and at least QR in Scrapie Codon 171 genotype.

The purpose of the USTSA Starter Flock program is to promote growth and visibility of the Targhee breed, and to promote youth involvement and education within the breed. For more information contact Jeff & Leslie Nevens (608-592-7842 AandJNevensLivestock@verizon.net or the USTSA office.

Invest in our future donate to the Starter Flock
Contact Jeff & Leslie Nevens

950 County Line Road, Fort Shaw, Montana 59443  •  406-467-2462 phone/fax  •  roeder@3rivers.net
Meet Your USTSA Directors

Warren Nellis - Coleman, Michigan

1. Where were you born and raised? Is this where you now live?
   I was born and raised in Coleman, Michigan. We currently live ¾ of a mile from the
   home place. The farm I was raised on had chickens, pigs, and dairy cattle. We grew out
   our own replacement heifers and the steers as feeders. We generally had 17-21 dairy cows
   with a maximum of 25 head. I started milking cows at the age of 9 and continued until I left
   home. After getting married, we ran a dairy herd for less than a year.

2. When did you become acquainted with Targhee sheep? How long have you raised
   them?
   We had mixed breed sheep for training dogs, and the sheep were getting smaller
   and smaller. We thought both the dogs and the sheep should pay for themselves. Judy,
   my wife, was reading a book and saw information about Targhee sheep listed. This piqued
   our curiosity. We bought our first five ewes and a ram from Russ Stall of Wooster, Ohio in
   1994. One year later for our 25th Anniversary we vacationed in the Teton Mountains of
   Wyoming. We stopped at Von Krosigk’s and Innes’ and bought short term ewes and a ram.

3. What is your favorite Targhee trait?
   There are three favorite traits – versatility, temperament, and wool. The mixed
   breed sheep we had were Cheviot influenced. They wanted to take me out. Targhees
   don’t do that.

4. What is the greatest issue facing the sheep industry and/or American agriculture?
   The American economy is crushing. Our returns have not increased to com-
   pensate for energy/input costs.

5. Are you married? Do you have children? How many? Is anyone else in your
   family involved in the sheep industry?
   Yes. Judy is my wife. We have been married 38 years. I was working for people who were heading up
   a college age youth group. My employers were hosting a church activity at their home
   when Judy and I met. We have three daughters, 3 son-in-laws, and eleven grandchildren.
   One daughter and her children are involved in the sheep industry. They hope to enter
   sheep in the 2009 National Show and Sale in Miles City.

6. Do you have an occupation other than farming or ranching? What is it?
   For 36 years we have owned and operated Centrex - a cleaning, water and fire
   restoration business for private homes and commercial enterprises.

7. Other than raising sheep, what are some of your hobbies and talents? Do you volunteer your
   time for any religious or civic organizations?
   I raise, train, and ride Quarter Horses. We are active members of a Baptist Church.

8. What is your favorite book?
   My bible.

9. What is your favorite food?
   Next to candy . . . steak.

10. The one thing people would be surprised to
    know about me is: ????
East Meets West at the Sampsel Ranch
Tim Zeglin - Wisconsin Targhee Breeder

It’s not often that a person is lucky enough to combine business with pleasure, but just such a lucky coincidence happened to me in November of 2008 when I hunted the ranch owned by Betty and John Sampsel, home to the Hughes-Newford Livestock Company. Located about six miles southwest of Stanford, Montana, in the afternoon shadow of the Little Belt Mountains, the ranch supports a thriving population of mule deer, as well as an impressive herd of Black Angus brood cattle and a flock of Targhee sheep. Like so many Easterners in past centuries, the lure of riches coaxed me from my little farm in west-central Wisconsin’s coulee region to the heart of Big Sky country. On this trip, however, the riches were measured in inches of inside spread and pounds of ram lamb instead of gold nuggets.

Thanks to the Sampsel’s enlightened grazing management, the ranch grows enough grass to attract a sizable deer herd as well as to feed the cattle and sheep. I took my buck on the fourth day on the ranch, after spending the first three hiking over most of it to get acquainted with the place. I stopped counting does after the first day and passed up eighteen smaller bucks before targeting two of the best. One of these two spent his days holed up in a mile-long strip of pines on the ridge of a bordering ranch, moving down to graze with his harem of does on the Sampsel place only at night. Though I watched for him two mornings in the cold, windy moonlight, he always jumped back to the wrong side of the fence line before shooting light.

The second of the two was nice enough to spend all his time on Sampsel land, but protected himself by a harem of fourteen does, three or four of which were always on sentinel duty around him. I watched this buck for three days before he skylined himself at about 500 yards, but I passed up such a long shot. Next I tried to stalk within range, but when the does saw me the whole herd took off, and I passed up a running shot at about 300 yards. On the fourth day, I blew another stalk on this herd. As fifteen bounding deer disappeared into a ravine I thought I had seen the big buck for the last time. However, I power-walked over a ridge and up the coulee, trying to reach the saddle over which they had disappeared from my view the previous day. I almost didn’t make that rendezvous in time; I saw the last few does snaking over yet another ridge, with the buck trotting last in the line. I made up my mind to take the shot if the buck stopped, then sat down and wiggled into the sling for a steady position. Fate intervened; the buck stopped to sniff the ground. I held on the top of his shoulders and fired. An hour-long second passed in which nothing happened, but as I worked the bolt to chamber another round the buck slowly tippered over. I waited for a long time because he had simply disappeared, then I took a compass bearing on the spot before starting to walk. Three hundred eighty-six honest-to-God paces brought me up to the dead buck; I had just made the best shot of my life.

The purchase of a ram lamb pleased me almost as much as the shot on that deer. A substantial part of Betty’s sheep receipts comes from the sale of yearling ram lambs. Betty was kind enough to let me sort through her flock of ram lambs and to pick out a real winner, a twin-born, pasture-raised Targhee that weighed 130 pounds after his return to my farm. In the past, Easterners rushing out West usually lost all their money, if not their lives, but I felt pretty proud of myself for bringing ‘em back, dead and alive!

Way to Go Wyoming!

Congratulations to Garrett Von Krosigk and his Riverton FFA team for winning the Wyoming State FFA Competition on Agricultural Issues. The Riverton FFA members went on to place third out of 51 teams at the National Convention in Indianapolis. Proud grandparents Dean and Charlene, also report, Garret placed 5th individually out of 204 competitors!

This Newsletter’s good read - courtesy of Carolyn Green is:
Heaven Has a Blue Carpet
A Sheep Story by a Suburban Housewife
Author: Sharon Niedziinski

Check out the website:
www.freerice.com
How well do you know the meaning of words? Play a vocabulary game, and for each correct answer ten grains of rice are donated to the UN World Food Program.
Articles/Photos for the April Newsletter are due to the Association Office by March 10th.

John Chester “Chet” Mercer
Nov. 27, 1913 - Sept. 23, 2008

Funeral services for John Chester “Chet” Mercer of Hyattville were held Friday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m. at the United Methodist Church in Basin. Chet, 94, died Sept. 23. He was born Nov. 27, 1913, at the Mercer ranch home near Hyattville, the son of Asa and Stella Gardner Mercer. He received his early schooling at the Mercer School near Hyattville and graduated from Basin High School. The ranch was his base in life. He left only for brief periods other than during his service in the United States Navy.

As a young child, Chet became an avid fisherman and enjoyed catching trout whenever and wherever time allowed and a good stream was available. He was always most comfortable in the outdoors and was recognized throughout the area for his expertise at trapping and hunting.

He married Martha Marguerite Ziesman Jan. 1, 1938. They dedicated their lives to building a successful ranching operation and raising a family. Chet served on the Manderson-Hyattville School Board and on boards and committees of organizations dedicated to assisting livestock producers. He was a member of the Wyoming Wool Growers and the Wyoming Stock Growers Associations. He served on the Wyoming BLM Board and the Predatory Animal Control Board. He was proud of his induction into the Targhee Hall of Fame for sheep growers.

His parents, Asa and Stella Mercer, two brothers, Stephen and Leslie, and his sister, Pauline McKone Sievers preceded him in death. He is survived by his wife Martha of Hyattville; two daughters and sons-in-law, Richard and Carolyn Kelsey of Loganville, Wis., and Brad and Shelley Brown of Scottsdale, Ariz.; one grandson, Doug Brown of Newport Beach, Calif.; two nieces and a nephew.

Burial was in Mount View Cemetery in Basin.

A memorial fund has been established at Security State Bank, Box 531, Basin, WY 82410. Proceeds will go to the Hyattville Community Center.

Up Front - Ode to my hero.

By C.J. Hadley

It was about 1992, at a woolgrowers meeting in Douglas, Wyo. I was to speak during lunch. What I didn’t know was that the room would be the lobby of a ’70s-style Holiday Inn with a swimming pool smelling slightly of urine and chlorine as a centerpiece.

My podium was on one side of the water. The woolgrowers dined on the opposite side. The sound from the mike roared across the water and, I thought, must have spoiled everyone’s lunch.

Wyoming sheep rancher Chet Mercer was in the room. At the time he was 78. A spry, bright man who owned Mercer Land & Livestock in Hyattville, he listened carefully to my message—that RANGE’s purpose was to spread good news about cowboys and shepherders.

Within a few days of returning to Carson City, Nev., I received a double white envelope from Chet. The inside package contained a wad of $50 bills to help RANGE. I could put gas in my truck! Get supplies! Buy stamps! Find some help!

I wrote and thanked him for his generosity. The following month, another double envelope arrived. RANGE and I felt enormously wealthy. I thanked Chet profusely, but asked him not to do it again.

He called and said, “I like to give money to conservative causes. I like RANGE. It doesn’t matter that you claim to be a liberal Democrat from New York City. I sold the ranch and invested it well, my family is fine, so you are sharing my social security check!”

“Humility makes great men twice honorable.”

Benjamin Franklin

“If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.”

Sir Isaac Newton

Welcome New Members!

Fluer Family Targhees
P.O. Box 1443
Landers, WY 82520
307-332-4595
fluers@dishmail.net

Articles/Photos for the April Newsletter are due to the Association Office by March 10th.
For 16 years, every month, RANGE and I blossomed with Chet’s overwhelming and tender support. He would write notes with the cash: “Thank you for helping our western ranchers” or “We appreciate all you are trying to do.”

Many years ago Eric Grant interviewed Chet for RANGE, but Chet asked me not to run the story. He didn’t want applause or accolades. He said, “I just want to help.”

Chet was idolized by his teachers. He was the brightest kid in kindergarten and has forever remained in front of the pack. When he joined the Navy he served well, but he was called home in 1935 after his father died. His mother requested a special early release because he was needed to take over the ranch.

He made a success of that, too, and worked hard for all sheep ranchers. He was a world-class trapper and hunter. In his later years, well into his 80s, he would hire a plane, pay for it and the pilot, and hunt coyotes that were killing lambs. He sent me a gorgeous pelt that hangs in my office—always in view.

A few weeks ago, Chet suffered a stroke. I tried to call and visit with him but a nurse said he couldn’t talk. I am persistent so I asked if she would put the phone by his pillow so that I could at least share some words. When I said, “Chet, this is CJ from RANGE,” he answered in a strong voice that amazed the nurse, “CJ, this place is a torture chamber!”

On the following day, I took a truck, two planes and a rental car to get to Basin, Wyo., and the Bonnie Bluejacket Nursing Home. When I arrived, Chet was asleep on a Lazy Boy in the lobby, wearing a bright blue RANGE T-shirt that I had sent him as a joke. “Sheepherders don’t wear T-shirts!” he insisted.

His left side was paralyzed. He could barely move, but his strong right hand grabbed mine. He hugged me and said, “How good of you to come.” We shared dinner, breakfast and lunch—pureed stuff without a name—and then I came home.

My hero Chet was born on Nov. 27, 1913; he died on September 23 at the age of 94. His daughters Shirley and Carolyn buried the RANGE T-shirt on a hill overlooking his ranch next to some wildflowers. Shirley said, “Our father didn’t want to take it off.”

Chet, my loving friend, without you there would be no RANGE. You carried us through some hard times and got us to the good place we are today. How good of you to care.

C.J. Hadley is editor and publisher of RANGE magazine. “Chet,” she says “is the reason I’m still here.”

Letter to the Editor - Leo Pfister

Dear Tracie,

Just a few words to let you know how much I enjoy “Targhee Talk”. I read every word from cover to cover (and some of it twice).

I have followed the ram sales since I was a boy in the late 1930’s. The Casper Ram Sale was held in the Burlington Stock Yards so that the large ram producers could ship their rams in earloads by rail. Rams were sold in large pens as the large sheep companies wanted a pen of rams for each band of ewes. Also, the lambs from each band would be more uniform.

One year the Casper Sale sold a record 2,200 rams, a national record. It was a two day sale - white faced rams the first day, and black faces the second day. Montana breeders were big consignors - Sylvan Pauley, Deerlodge Farms with Rambouillets and Mount Hagen with Hampshires. Also, big consignments came in from Utah. It is hard to imagine sheep ranches with 25,000 sheep. And shearing sheds all along the U.P. Railroad that sheared two bands of sheep each day - one in the forenoon and one in the afternoon. One shearing shed had a Boston wool grader that graded the fleeces as they came off the conveyor belt. The graded wool was sacked according to grade and could be shipped directly to the woolen mills.

In one of your newsletters you mentioned Arthur Jewell. He and his daughter, Mrs. Brentlinger, from Texas, bought some ewes from us one Fall. One year Targhee sheep were sold as far South as Bolivia, and as far North as Alaska.

What can we learn from the past? Avoid their failures, imitate their successes. The show ring does not improve the breed, but production records do -

Thanks again,

Leo Pfister

Pfister Targhees - Whitney, Nebraska

Editor’s Note: Leo, is an original USTSA board member. His membership number is T-2.
From the USTSA Desk

Greetings from cold, snowy Montana! We finally have a real winter and a solid four weeks of 8-10 inches of snow on the level. I’ve lost count of how many times we have been drifted in. Our children even managed to squeeze one more day out of their Christmas vacation.

Over the course of the year, I visit with nearly all of you. I thought it would be good to share some of the topics of conversation about life in the USTSA office.

One common question is the difference between a Duplicate Certificate and an Individual Certificate (for a ewe originally listed on a Group Certificate). You should ask for a Duplicate Certificate when the original is lost, eaten, buried by the dog, or sacrificed on the altar of your desk or floor of the truck. The charge for Duplicate Certificates is $4.00 each. An Individual Certificate should be requested when a buyer has been found for a ewe listed on a Group Certificate. There is no charge. However, transfer fees still apply.

The “Over 2 Years Old Fee” is charged for sheep greater than 2 years old being registered. It is $2.00 per head. The question becomes - when does a sheep turn 3? The answer lies in an example. Let’s say registrations are sent in for ewes born in 2006, 2007, and 2008. From January 1 - December 31, 2009, the only sheep charged the late fee are those born in 2006.

The “Transfer Late Fee” is charged when sheep are transferred 45 days after the date of sale. The transfer fee of $5.00 doubles for a total charge of $10.00. I routinely assess this fee as recording transfers of ownership are critical to keeping the registry accurate.

People are curious about what I am paid. How many hours do I work? As your employee, I am happy to share the information with you. I receive $400.00 per month. In addition, half of the landline phone bill is paid, one third of the internet connection, and a quarter of a storage unit is paid by the USTSA for a total of about $44.00 per month. Long distance calls are paid by me through a flat rate plan I have purchased for our family. The USTSA is not charged for any long distance calls. I receive the “Over 2 Years Old”, Rush, and Pedigree fees. All other fees go to the association. The USTSA pays for travel, hotel, and per diem when I go to the National Show and Sale.

I generally work 10-15 hours per week for a total of 40-60 hour per month. Some weeks I work many more, and around the holidays I work less. I strive for a maximum of a three week turnaround when you send in paperwork. However, in the last 8 weeks I received 425 registrations. So, lately it has been closer to 5 or 6 weeks. But, I am nearly caught up. Registrations are processed in the order received. If you are ever concerned about where you are on the list, please don’t hesitate to call or e-mail.

I do not cash checks until the work is 100% complete. If a month goes by without a check being cashed, just keep watching. (I have lost exactly one check. The wind blew it out of my hand at the bank drive through.) A new request I had this year was from a few members who asked me to cash their checks before the end of 2008 for tax purposes. Certificates were then to be mailed out in January. If you send in registrations toward the end of the year, please let me know if this is important to you. I am happy to cash those checks. If you send in your work toward the end of a year, and I am not able to process it until the next year, I will not charge an additional Annual Fee. The Annual fee is charged with the first registrations of the new year.

In November I went in to the accountant for a 100,000 mile tune up on Quick Books Non-Profit. We decided to change the financial forms you receive. When payment is sent in with registrations, you will receive a sales receipt. If payment is not received an invoice will be sent. If 30 days go by and payment is not received, you will receive a statement with the original invoice stapled to it. Sometimes calculating payment for fees is difficult. Please call if you have questions. I do not generally carry credits on the books. If you have miscalculated and over paid, a refund check is sent. If you are short, a bill is sent for the balance.

Hopefully, this unlocks the mysteries of the USTSA office. I am always willing to visit with you about your registrations and billing. Together we can work through it until all questions are answered. Thanks for the privilege of being your Secretary. You make my job worthwhile. It is easy to get behind an organization when the people you work with are a joy!

Tracie

P.S. I have been researching several months for an article about Arthur Jewell and Targhee Sheep in Ohio. Visits with Glenn High, Charles Parker, and Leo Pfister have offered many details, but I am still missing a few pieces of the puzzle. If you have any pictures or memories of Arthur, I sure would appreciate hearing about them.
Junior Member Profile

Benjamin Purucker - Pender, Nebraska

1. Tell us about yourself? (age, grade, place you live).
   Ben Purucker, 18 years old, Senior at Pender High School. I live outside of Pender, Nebraska.

2. When did you acquire your 1st Targhee sheep? How long have you raised them?
   I acquired my 1st Targhee sheep in 2004 for my FFA Flock. I became a member of the Association in July of 2007 with my own personal flock number. I have raised Targhee sheep with Bill since 1993.

3. What is your favorite Targhee trait?
   I like the mothering ability that my ewes have. I like watching them in the lambing pens.

4. What is your best piece of advice to other 4-H or FFA members raising sheep?
   Have fun . . . remember life isn't always easy and sometimes things go wrong and it is out of your control . . . (Like them getting out of the pasture or things like that) . . . If you work hard on your flock and have pride in your breed things will be alright.

5. Is anyone else in your family involved in the sheep industry?
   Everyone . . . Dad, Mom, LeAnn and Blake all have Targhee sheep and Grandpa and Grandma Reppert have Polypay sheep as well as a commercial flock.

6. Other than going to school, do you have another job?
   I was a landscaper for a local businessman this past summer. I do a lot of the chores here on the farm.

7. Other than raising sheep, what are some of your hobbies and talents? Do you volunteer your time for any religious or civic organizations?
   I play drums in the high school band. I am in the National Honor Society which organizes the blood bank coming to our school for a community outreach program. We also tutor any students needing academic help in school. I am in the Pender FFA Chapter. I am the Chapter Vice President this year and am in charge of the Program of Activities. I do a lot of community service projects with the FFA chapter like all-city and highway trash clean ups. I am in the Cloverleaf Livestock 4-H Club and have been a member for 10 years. I have shown the Targhee breed at the Nebraska State Fair for the past 4 years for 4-H and FFA. I am quite active and do a lot for the community.

8. What is your favorite book?
   I read a lot of books so it just wouldn’t be fair to name only one.

9. What is your favorite food?
   A good rack of lamb is always the best.

10. When I am grown up, my future occupation might be:
    I want to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln next year majoring in both Computer and Electrical Engineering.

11. The one thing people would be surprised to know about me is:
    I have no secrets . . . most people that know me realize that what you see is what you get.
Targhee Starter Flock Applications
Available On-Line
January 26, 2009