



# THE BLUE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUEFACED LEICESTER BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

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## YOUTH CONSERVATIONIST AWARD PROGRAM

BY CURTIS VONALLMAN

**M**y name is Curtis VonAllman. I am 13 and in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at River View Jr. High School. I am a member of the Spring Mountain Climbers 4-H Club, and the Junior Ambassador for the Coshocton/Tuscarawas Lamb and Fleece Association in the State of Ohio.

I like the Youth Award Program because it starts people out at an early age understanding the importance of maintaining the purity of a Heritage Breed and preserving sheep breeds in general. The sheep the youth are awarded come from breeders that care about promoting the breed and are willing to advise and help through the care and maintenance of the breed. The program helps to motivate and give a jump-start to young people that enjoy working with sheep and are willing to promote and preserve their particular breed.

I decided on the Bluefaced Leicester because I read an article about them from The Blue News. I like that they don't have horns, are docile, prolific sheep and of course, the blue-look face is very interesting.

My Bluefaced Leicester's name is Penny and she is more than I hoped for. She is calm, easy to handle and seemed

to be okay with people right from the beginning. Although, she had never been on a lead, not long after we got home she walked with one like she'd always done it. Also, the Bluefaced Leicester breed's wool growth is naturally crotched and none grows on the underbelly. This makes it easy for lambs when they are born. They are known to be good mothers and hardy. Penny is even helping me halter break my market lamb.

I will be purchasing a ram this fall from Brenda Lelli, the donor breeder of my Bluefaced Leicester ewe and also, the owner of Beechtree Farm in Coopersville, Michigan.

Penny has made parade appearances and has more to come. She will show in my fair in open and breeding classes. In the year 2006 I plan to show Penny, her offspring and the Bluefaced Leicester ram as much as I can and certainly at State Fair. I also plan to go more into the uses of my breed's wool with local spinners.

The Youth Conservationist Program is a really good thing. You get a start and advice from experienced, successful breeders. To the donor breeders, a BIG THANKS!!!

*Curtis VonAllman*



**Curtis VonAllman with Penny**



**Curtis VonAllman, Brenda Lelli and Penny**

# GUIDELINES FOR FEEDING THE BLUEFACED LEICESTER

(BIRTH - YEARLING)

Brenda Cannon-Lelli

The following are some general guidelines for feeding the Bluefaced Leicester from about 2 weeks sold to about 1 1/2 years. Adjustments would have to be made for the amount of pasture or hay consumed, and if the ewe lamb has been bred to lamb as a yearling. I base my decision of exposing the ewe lambs according to their weight. I like them to weight 110 - 120 lbs. by the 1st of Oct. to be bred in November.

This is what I have found to 'work' for me.

**2 weeks of age:** I offer a pelleted 'complete' lamb Starter creep feed in the creper. This typically has a 20% protein level and I also like the ones with DecCox added for coccidiosis prevention. this is offered for about 4 weeks or until lambs are at least 40 pounds. This can be top dresses with a small amount of cracked corn, to appeal to the lambs to nibble on, as they are already used to getting some corn from the ewe's feeders.

**1 -2 months:** I switch the creep pellet ration to the Grower pellet, which has a 15% protein level, sticking to the same brand and increasing the quantity of pellets offer per feeding, twice a day. Allow for plenty of feeder space to prevent crowding and gobbling of the feed, and possibly causing choke\*.

**2 - 3 months:** I start mixing in more cracked corn, and also adding a feed mix that I have made up at our local feed mill. (Recipe to follow). By this time the lambs are weaned and either have access to their own pasture, or 3rd cutting alfalfa hay, or a combination of both. By the end of the 3 month mark, the grain ration is formulated as such; 1 part cracked corn: 1 part creep pellet: 2 parts feed mix.

I feed the grain at a rate of approximately .75 - 1 lb/ head/ day - split into AM and PM feedings.

You may at some point also notice a slight dewlap or fat pouch on the lambs throat at this age, this is due to high

levels of protein in the diet, not to be confused with bottle jaw, a parasite problem.

**4 - 5 months:** At this point all the lambs have had a series of three CDT vaccinations. Starting at 3 or 4 weeks of age, continuing every 21 - 28 days until the series is complete. I can now safely increase the feed amounts if necessary without worry of Overeating Diseases. The lambs also have free choice to fresh water, and a mix of TM Salt w/ Selenium. I also offer access to the loafing area of the barn for shade form the hot summer sun and temperatures. I also add barn fans if needed for air movement and cooling. If we experience an extended, extremely hot period for our region, I also make sure that if they are grazing, that I offer hay in the feeders, so that they can fill their rumens in the cool of the morning and evening., and are allowed to lounge and cud chew during the heat of the day. This seems to agree with them and reduces any stress caused by lack of grazing time or feed intake.

We also do routine fecal checks and wormings with several different wormers as needed. To keep my lambs gaining and growing I prefer to keep the parasite counts as low as possible for the climatic conditions.

**5 - 12 months and beyond:** I gradually change my feed ration mixture over to using whole shell corn, and begin transitioning them to a 34% pellet, added to the feed mix at a rate of 2 parts whole corn: 4 parts feed mix: 1 part 34% pellet. (This would follow the label instructions for the pellet of mixing 6:1). If my group of ewe lambs has been exposed to the ram, I make sure they stay on this feed ration until coming out of the lambing pen. At this time they would join the aged ewes in the Nursery group and receive whole shell corn with the 34% protein pellet added. AS I get ready to wean, I cut out the protein pellets, to straight corn, then gradually cut out the corn a few days to a week prior to weaning to reduce milk production.

**Post weaning:** The yearling that has weaned her lambs will summer on the pasture with the other aged ewes. If at the beginning of August of September they are looking in need of extra feed, I sort them off into a yearling ewe group and start giving them a bit of corn to add body condition prior to breeding season.

\* **Choke:** A term used for horses when the esophagus gets impacted with whole or partially chewed food.

Typical symptoms in the lamb would be a lamb that rushed to gobble up the gain, but quickly separates itself from the group and is either standing in a corner salivating and foaming out its mouth and nose, or hopping around like it was bitten on the end of its nose, shaking its head. Careful observation is needed of these lambs, and adults. Sometimes they can clear the blockage on their own, but more times than not they need assistance.

In the grain room of my barn I keep a three foot section of clear flexible tubing at ready, in 1/4" and 3/8" diameter size. I also now keep a spare in my traveling 'show box'.

To clear a choke, position the lamb between your knees, backed into a corner both facing forward. Measure on the tube, the distance from the nose to approximately its chest area. Slowly and being careful, to not traumatize the esophagus, slide the tube down their throat from the side of their mouth, towards the middle of the throat. Insert the tube the estimated length and slowly withdraw the tube. You might notice the tube stopped up with grain or pellets. Clear out the tube and be prepared, if necessary to repeat the exercise.

Give the lamb a few moments to rest to see if it free of the blockage. You will know for sure if it joins its mates and begins eating once again. If it is still shaking its head and salivating, you will have to repeat these steps.

A caution to remember is to prevent the lamb from chomping off the end of the tube. I've not had one bite off the tube yet. Knock on wood!

## FEED MIX RECIPE

200	lbs.	Oats
50	lbs.	Cracked corn
32	lbs.	Soybean meal or pellets.
12 1/2	lbs.	Bran
7 1/2	lbs.	Linseed pellets
5	lbs.	CCC
2 1/2	lbs.	ADE
1/8	lb.	SEL 90
1/8	lb.	Vit. E
35-40	lbs.	Molasses (wet)

# THE HEALTHY BLUE

## MENINGEAL WORM

Meningeal worm is also known as the:  
Deer worm or Brain worm.

**Organism:** Parelaphostrongylus tenuis (P. tenuis)

**Normal host:** White tail deer (no ill effects)

**Species affected:** in order of severity:

Elk & Moose- fatal

Llamas and goats – highly susceptible

Sheep- susceptible

**Route of transmission:** Grazing areas contaminated with the intermediate host (slugs and snails) the L3 larvae within the snail migrate to the central nervous system (CNS) of the recently infected host. P. tenuis migrates to the spinal canal causing various neurologic signs.

**Signs & Symptoms:** You should suspect P. tenuis if you see a sheep that displays hindleg weakness, knuckling over, unsteadiness or wobbling gait, the inability to stand, or vestibular syndrome (head tilt, etc.). Progression of symptoms for the disease can have slow or sudden onset. Most animals do not appear to be in pain and most will maintain a healthy appetite.

**Suggested treatment:** Involves high doses of injectable Ivermectin at the rate of 1cc/ 55 lbs (double the suggested cattle dose) for at least 3 days. Followed by double-the-dose of Fenbendazole (Panacur or Safeguard) for 5 days, or Thiabendazole (10x the therapeutic dose). Also anti-inflammatory drugs like flunixin meglumine (Banamine) or Dexamethasone (non pregnant females only) to reduce the inflammation associated with the nerve tissue damage. Supportive use of Vit. E, Selenium., Vit. B complex, and Vit. A are useful to healing neural tissues.

**Duration-Recovery-Prognosis:** Prognosis for survival is based on the severity of the clinical symptoms. Recovery may take from several weeks, to months, to years. Many animals suffer permanent neurologic deficits but can remain productive members of the flock and as pets.

**Prevention:** Prevention of Meningial Worm is difficult. Suggested prophylactic treatment against migrating larvae may be achieved with monthly administration of injectable Ivomec at the normal recommended cattle dose (1cc/ 110 lbs) during the high risk periods. Also, if feasible, minimize co-habitation with whitetail deer and fence off low-wet areas to reduce exposure to slugs and snails. Prevention is paramount to avoiding or reducing the incidence of this devastating disease.

### Links:

[www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/deerworm.html](http://www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/deerworm.html)

[www.tennesseeatgoats.com/articles/menworm.htm](http://www.tennesseeatgoats.com/articles/menworm.htm)

[www.vet.ohio-state.edu/378.htm](http://www.vet.ohio-state.edu/378.htm)