



# THE BLUE NEWS

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## Wisconsin Field Day Littledale Farm Graham & Margaret Phillipson

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 was a very busy and active day at Littledale Farm when the Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Co-op met for their 7th Annual Field Day Event. Preparations began several weeks before with Breakfast and Lunch menus being provided by "Passages" a local Family Shelter and all the other attendant necessities being organized.

The day was fine with bright sunshine with a possible threat of showers later in the day. With registrations starting at 8am visitors began arriving early and in droves. By 9am the official program start time we had around 60 people signed up and settled. Our program subjects covered L.A.I. using Imported U.K semen, the U.K 3 Tier Stratified Breeding system with an explanation of the major breeds used, a comparison of typical U.S breeding, the use and demonstration of Border Collies as a management tool for moving stock and a discussion on pasture and drought management practices.

Presentations on LAI technique, methods and requirements were made by Randy Gottfredson of University of Madison and we provided pictures of our ewes while "in process" last October 20th.

The introduction of this subject is a totally new field for most Wisconsin breeders who were extremely interested in methodology and results. To demonstrate results we had several example pens set up in our barn which showed L.A.I.'d Scottish Blackface ewe with lambs; L.A.I.'d North Country Cheviot ewe with lambs; both Scotch and Cheviot Mules with their Terminal sired lambs; and English Suffolk's that had been L.A.I.'d with their lambs.



These comprised a typical example of the entire 3 Tier Stratified System. The combination of Randy's presentation and the actual results proved to be of tremendous interest.

Following this Dr Dave Thomas, Geneticist, Animal Sciences of the University of Wisconsin Madison presented an explanation of the U.K 3 Tier system showing how and why it works. Having lived in the U.K for six months some years ago, Dave had first hand knowledge of this stratified system, placing great emphasis on the tremendous benefits of the crossbred maternal ewe bred from the Bluefaced Leicester sire. We (Littledale) provided practical evidence of Scotch and Cheviot Mule maternal ewes and their resultant market lambs from our English Suffolk Terminal sires. In the U.K there are distinct breeders for each level within the Stratified system. Breeders of Hill breeds specialize in them and sell 4 year olds + as draft ewes to be put to the Bluefaced Leicester to make Mules. In turn Mule breeders specialize in producing Mules and sell them on to market lamb breeders who obtain their Terminal sires from specialist Down or Terminal sire breeders.

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In the U.S, other than at Littledale, there are few sources of ready made Mules of any type and ours are in very limited supply. Therefore a possible comparable breeding program using readily available base ewes was discussed. Due to the diversified nature of U.S breeds there are really no directly comparable breeds available but some combinations might be of benefit for using the BFL as a Crossing sire. However, Dr Thomas placed great emphasis on breeding the Bluefaced Leicester with another purebred ewe, preferably a Hill breed, to produce the Maternal Ewe thus passing on the hardiness and thrifty nature of the Hill breed and the better prolificacy and milkiness of the Bluefaced Leicester based on grass fed practices.

Following the breeding discussion Littledale explained their origin going back to the 1940's and our experiences operating a B&B as Agri-Tourism. We also had a display of wool types showing the progression from it's raw state to finished garments and processed wool with value added interwoven garnishments. For some attendees this display was of great interest and gave them a new appreciation of wool types they were not familiar with.

Following Lunch, we gathered up around 200 ewes and lambs showing the great benefits of working Border Collies in stock management and control. This is always a popular feature and greatly appreciated by all. At this time all components of the 3 Tier system could be seen along with the purebred Hill breeds of Scottish Blackface and North Country Cheviots and the now 3/4 bred English Suffolk Terminal sires and ewes. Later a collection of 20 mature rams of these breeds were gathered and explained to the entire Group. During this portion of the day local U.W Extension and USDA pasture forage specialists led a discussion on pasture grasses and growth, and rotation management techniques.

During this event, it started to rain, not so much at first but regrettably it increased over the next 1/2 hour and we had to move back inside, where a panel of six presented and discussed drought management which has been a problem in some areas of the State for the past several years.

By the time this was completed it was 3:45pm and many began to wend their way home. Hopefully a bit wiser than when they arrived!

For more on Graham & Margaret Phillipson, Littledale Farm please visit: [www.LittledaleFarm.com](http://www.LittledaleFarm.com)

To learn more about the use of the UK's 3-tier Stratified System in the USA, go to: [www.MuleSheep.com](http://www.MuleSheep.com)

## THE HEALTHY BLUE

### LUMPY JAW IN SHEEP

Mark Lelli, DVM

“Lumpy jaw” in sheep and cattle is caused by the bacteria *Arcanobacterium pyogenes*, (*A. pyogenes*), formerly named *Actinomyces bovis*.

*A.pyogenes* is a commensal and opportunistic pathogen of economic importance in cattle, swine and sheep. As a commensal, it can be cultured from the digestive tract lining in most ruminants, often gaining entrance to underlying tissue via penetrating wounds to the oral mucosa. The typical resulting lesions are chronic draining abscesses involving the underlying bone. Treatment is rarely successful in chronic cases in which there is extensive bone involvement because of the poor penetration of antibiotics to the sight of infection. Systemic iodine treatment has met with some success.

Occasionally flocks or herds are affected with atypical forms of infection. The organism has been implicated in diseases as diverse as abortion, arthritis, endocarditis, uterine infections leading to infertility, mastitis, pneumonia, liver and lymph node abscesses as well as the more common bone form, osteomyelitis. Sheep affected with atypical disease from infection with this organism may develop abscesses of superficial or internal lymph nodes, pneumonia, or mastitis. When an abscessed lymph node of the head and neck region is found in a member of the flock, it is very important to make the distinction between Caseous Lymphadenitis and *A. pyogenes*. The best way to do this is with tissue culture.

Treatment of the two diseases and their implications on flock health are very different. Once *A. pyogenes* is cultured from an individual in the flock, it may be well to consider the possibility of other individuals in the flock being affected internally. These individuals may exhibit subtle, non-descript signs of disease. Atypical mastitis, low grade chronic pneumonia, or weight loss may be the only outward signs of infection. In OPPv test negative flocks, treatment can be rewarding through the use of appropriate antibiotics and a serum antibody product produced by Colorado Serum Company called BOVI-SERA. This product is approved for use in sheep as an aid in the treatment of many bacterial diseases affecting sheep including *A. pyogenes*.