



June 2011

#### Letter from the President

With spring lambing coming to a close, and wet weather upon us, I hope that you have all had a successful lamb crop this year. The good news from the point of view of the weather is that our well should be full by now.

As you are probably aware, we have been working toward a couple of changes in how we host sheep sales (our annual Labour day one as well as the occasional Classics).

One relates to bio-security. With the occurrence in the province of a number of potentially problematic diseases that can be transmitted through contact with surfaces, it has become obvious that the use of our old reliable wooden gates is coming to an end. Although they are relatively inexpensive they are very difficult to wash and sterilize. As most of you are aware, tour gates have been used, not just for our annual sale, but also for sheep and goat pens for the Provincial Exhibition, the 4-H Provincial show, and, recently, in support of sheep research at Nappan.

We realize that the more these gates are used, the greater the likelihood there is of them being agents for the transfer of a number of diseases. We are currently looking into an alternative - the use of modular (pinned) gates made of light-weight steel (painted or galvanized). These are considerably lighter than comparable cattle gates, can be assembled into pens quickly. As well, being metal, they can be readily washed down with appropriate disinfectants, helping maintain a higher degree of bio-security that with what we use now. We are looking into several assistance programs for their purchase, and once we have these fully costed, will be approaching the general membership for direction with regard to buying them

The second relates to new statutory requirements related to the monitoring and reporting of sheep moving through common (auction) facilities - eg. our Fall sale. With the upcoming requirement (details not yet worked out) of tracking and reporting of all sheep co-mingling, we will have a need for an RFID tag reader with appropriate software compatibility. There is currently a program available that we should be able to tap into to assist in its purchase. Although this will not be needed for the fall sale, it will be required for the Classic in 2012.

If you have any experience or suggestions that can be used on either of these two initiatives, please contact Wade Sanford, who is leading these projects.

I strongly encourage each member to sign up for the Provincial Flock Health program. For those that have participated in the program, it has been a valuable tool for allowing for the significant advancement of the overall health of these flocks, as well as getting easier access to veterinary services. For more information, consult your farm veterinarian.



As well, I encourage each of you to continue support of our fall sale with entry of breeding stock. Rosemary Wort will be circulating entry forms in the near future.

I also encourage all producers to look into the newly-announced Genetic Enhancement program for the sheep industry in Nova Scotia. Please refer to:  
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/prm/programs/Genetic%20Enhancement.pdf> for further details.

### Passings

On March the 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, we lost one of our founding members and great supporters of the Purebred Sheep industry in Nova Scotia with the Passing of Jim Hewitt of Port Hilford, Guysborough County. He was know, nationwide as one of the premier breeders of North Country Cheviots, and for many years was Maritime Director for the Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers Limited as well as a member of the Canadian Sheep Council. We pass our condolences to his wife, Alice, and children and grandchildren. He will be missed by us all, but we are all the better sheep producers for having known him.

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#### PSBANS Website:

Our association is currently in the process of re-vamping our website! We anticipate that you will find our new website interesting, informative and user friendly, and a valuable tool for members of our association as well as to members of the sheep community! In an effort to ensure our website stays current and to make our website more interactive, we encourage all members to forward any sheep related photos, upcoming events, news pieces, etc. you feel may be appropriate to post on our website. Website submissions may be forwarded to [gfraser@nsac.ca](mailto:gfraser@nsac.ca)

The PSBANS website can be found at the following URL: <http://www.sheepnovascotia.ns.ca>

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### Genetic Enhancement Program and Genetic Evaluation and GenOvis

The announcement by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture of the implementation of the new Genetic Enhancement Program is a great opportunity for Pure Bred Sheep Breeders in Nova Scotia. It provides producers with assistance to purchase Purebred Registered Rams and Ewes and also to retain yearling ewes to improve and expand your flocks. **The Program also provides financial assistance to producers to participate in GenOvis. Participation in GenOvis is a requirement for all producers to access funding from the Program.**

The 50% assistance available to producers to join and submit data to GenOvis is a great opportunity for you as a producer to measure the performance of you flock and select the most productive ewes and lambs from your flock to retain in your flock. Using a program like GenOvis will allow you to make educated decisions when it comes to retaining breeding stock to maintain and build your flock.



Access to and participation in GenOvis also provides you as a purebred breeder an opportunity to market your breeding stock across the country, besides being listed as participating in the program you will be able to show producers how your stock is performing and that you are committed in improving your breeding stock. Breeders in Quebec and Ontario are used to looking for sheep that have genetic evaluation information available. As such this is an opportunity for Nova Scotia producers to access this market with your breeding stock. GenOvis and SFIP are well established and recognised in Ontario and Quebec. Recent changes in Ontario have resulted in SFIP being discontinued as a name and GenOvis being adopted as the name for the entire program nationally. SFIP and GenOvis have always been the same program operated under different names in Quebec and Ontario.

Workshops hosted by SPANS on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of June in Kentville and West River gave producers the opportunity to gain an understanding of the GenOvis program. If you were unable to attend or still have questions please feel free to contact me for more information about GenOvis.

Producers who have not done so should also consider making application to the Genetic Enhancement Program. You have to apply to the program and have your application approved. Once you have the approval you have until March 2012 to make your claim. More information about this program contact: NSDA Programs and Business Risk Management Division at 1-866-844-4276 or email [prm@gov.ns.ca](mailto:prm@gov.ns.ca)

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## FLEECE AND WOOL COMPETITION - 2011

The fleece and wool competition, which will be held for the fourth time this August, has become an annual part of the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition. Both whole fleeces and handspun skeins of yarn can be entered, and we have been fortunate to have the expertise of Delia Burge and Marilyn Rand as judges. They have not only spent hours judging the entries, but have been happy to explain what they are looking for and how they assess each submission.

The purpose of the competition is both to advertise Nova Scotia natural fibres and to show producers that a good fleece can be found in any breed of wool-bearing sheep; when the value of raw wool is so low, it is hoped that this might encourage more attention to be paid to fibre production and the possibility of an extra value-added product, even on a small scale for the hand spinning and crafts market.

For the first two years the competition was held in the Farm Museum; in 2010 it was moved to the Agridome, where it was well placed to attract interest from the public. In conjunction with the display of entries, spinning and needle felting demonstrations have always been popular, and



thanks are due to Crystal Fullerton, her son Connor, and Gillian Fraser for contributing to the demonstrations – and learning to spin!

In 2010 the champion fleece was a white Icelandic, entered by Ann Bishop and Jan Morell – an unbeatably clean, consistent, beautiful fleece; it was later entered in the fleece competition at the Royal Winter Fair, where it won its class; congratulations to Ann and Jan! The Reserve Champion fleece was a black Romney, entered by 11 year old Logan Vroegh. Although a fleece breed, this ewe was not kept primarily for her fleece; Logan says he just likes Romneys. And although the winners last year were both fleece breeds, any good fleece from any breed or cross can win the competition; crossbred fleeces from Ann Bishop and from Marg Zillig, and even an 11-year old Clun Forest's short-wool fleece, have placed as champion or reserve.

What are the judges looking for in a fleece? What kind of fleece is worth consigning? Fleeces have to be unwashed, rolled and tied or bagged, but stored away from damp, heat, moths or mice which will damage the fibres. Any clean fleece that has been well skirted at shearing time, and is heavy for that breed will yield a maximum amount of usable fibre; this is an important criterion. When the judges unroll each fleece for evaluation, they are looking for fibre strength and consistency, contamination, overall feel, or handle, crimp and luster.

Other criteria used by fleece judges include whether or not the wool is matted (cotted), discoloured (a yellow stain results if the fleece is poorly stored, insufficiently skirted or over-skirted resulting in too light a fleece, musty, or stained with unwashable marker spray.

It is quite easy to judge the quality of fleece on a live animal, particularly its consistency, crimp, relative cleanliness and handle. Any fleece that looks good on the sheep is likely to score well in a competition, unless mistakes are made in handling and storage. Rolled fleece should be stored in a bag, preferably burlap, but feed sacks are commonly used provided they do not shed little bits of plastic into the fleece – these are impossible to remove and cannot be dyed at the mill. Keep the bags away from damp, or too much heat, and enter them in this year's competition!

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The Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition is coming upon us soon, which means that the annual purebred sheep show is near. Doors open on Wednesday August 24<sup>th</sup> after 6:00pm and no other entries are permitted after 10:00am Thursday morning. The show takes place on Saturday August 27<sup>th</sup> followed by a market lamb show. All sheep entries must be pre-registered by Richard Hines, you can contact him by phone – (902) 351-2027 or by mail – PO Box 15, River John, NS. B0K 1N0. Come out and have some fun!