



# ISBONA

Icelandic Sheep Breeders of North America  
Newsletter - Summer 2016, Volume 20, Issue 2



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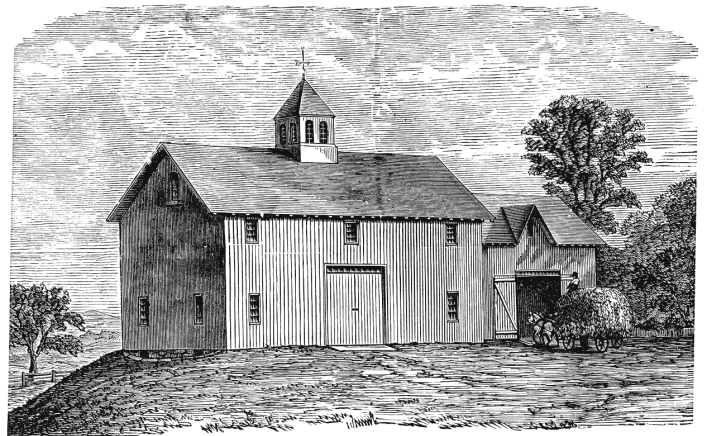
## NEWSLETTER

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Interested in attending the board meetings as a read-only member? ISBONA members in good standing are welcome to do so. Please contact the President and ask to be added to the email list for the ISBONA Board of Directors.  
Thanks for your interest!

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**Cover photo:**

**Le Biscornu**  
Natalie Chartier & Justin Audet

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this issue of the ISBONA newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of ISBONA, its Board of Directors, or the editor. No endorsement of these views is implied by publication. The editor welcomes submissions of alternate viewpoints.





### Message from the President

is such an honor and privilege to be the President of ISBONA one last time. These sheep and my fellow shepherds have played a key role in my everyday life for the last 20 years. The organization has grown and those few shepherds are many, and the sheep more numerous than was ever dreamed.

The time for change and growth in ISBONA is here, and many have stepped up to guide the organization through a revitalization and redesign. The by-laws, crafted those many years ago around a dining room table, are no longer meeting the needs of the members and the organization. A committee is being formed to rewrite the by-laws, with an eye to the future of ISBONA. It is charged with creating a set of rules to provide a framework for the operation and management of ISBONA that meets the needs of the organization, now, and as it continues to evolve and grow.

ISBONA is a vital source of information and community for its members. All are welcome and encouraged to participate, whether that is writing articles for the newsletter, updating the information on the website, sharing pictures, organizing regional shows or gatherings, sharing knowledge and experience to help the other members and bringing enthusiastic new folks into the fold.

The Board of Directors is always open to ideas and plans to promote the organization and the amazing Icelandic sheep that make it all possible. Contact any of the board members to offer your thoughts about the future direction you would like see for the organization, and any help is always welcome. Please do remember to renew your membership in August, as those revenues are what keep the ideas and plans funded. This will be the debut of the online newsletter. I am hopeful that it will be well-received and you will all be thinking of ideas to contribute to the next edition.

Though it is still far too hot, and the gardens and hay fields demand attention, the fall season will be upon us before we know it. Soon, we will all be making plans for those beautiful fleeces and breeding groups and next year's lambs.

Be well,

Elaine

### Submission Guidelines

Send articles/illustrations/photographs to  
**Laura Walsh, editor@isbona.com**

**Ads:** Send *camera-ready* ad, *all photos grayscale* to:  
**Terri Carlson, rbrfarm@centurylink.net**

—AND—

Send payment (see chart) in US or Canadian funds to:  
**Marge Jackson, Eight Pond Farm**  
**P.O. Box 194, Hermann MO 65041**

### Newsletter Ad Rates

<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Full Page Color	\$200
1/2 Page Color	\$100
Full Page B/W	\$35
2/3 Page B/W	\$30
1/2 Page B/W	\$25
1/3 Page Ad	\$20
1/4 Page Ad	\$15
1/8 Page Ad	\$10

### Upcoming Newsletter Deadlines

Fall 2016	August 15, 2016
Spring 2017	January 15, 2017
Fall 2017	July 15, 2017
Spring 2018	January 15, 2018



# ISBONA CALENDAR

## WINTER

### January

- ◆ January 15 - Deadline for article and ad submissions for the Spring 2017 newsletter.

### February

- ◆ Stay warm & enjoy your sheep!

### March

- ◆ Prepare for lambing. Look for the handy tear-out guide in the spring newsletter!

## SPRING

### April

- ◆ April showers bring lush pastures!

### May

- ◆ May 30 - Tentative date for the Spring board meeting.

### June

- ◆ Enjoy your sheep!

## SUMMER

### July

- ◆ Keep your sheep cool and happy!

### August

- ◆ August 1 - **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DEADLINE**
- ◆ August 15 - Deadline for article and ad submissions for Fall 2016 Newsletter.

### September

- ◆ Take photos of your sheep in their full fleeces.
- ◆ September 25 - Annual General Meeting at the Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival

## AUTUMN

### October

- ◆ October 15 - **FINAL REMINDER FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL.**

### November

- ◆ Stay warm & enjoy your sheep!

### December

- ◆ Enjoy the holiday season!



**Icelandic Sheep Breeders of North America**

**—Membership Form—**

2016-2017 **ISBONA** Membership Fees

Memberships run from August 1 through July 31.

**Junior Membership**

- \* ISBONA newsletter subscription
- \* access to all ISBONA activities
- \* member-only discussion group
- \* no voting privileges
- \* restricted to under age 18

**Newsletter Membership**

- \* ISBONA newsletter subscription
- \* access to all ISBONA activities
- \* member-only discussion group
- \* no voting privileges

**Full/Web Membership**

- \* ISBONA newsletter subscription
- \* access to all ISBONA activities
- \* member-only discussion group
- \* listing in online breeders directory
- \* one vote per membership
- \* requires CLRC flock code

Please check one:

New Membership  Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Website (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Flock Code (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

Junior Membership  
\$5/1 year (no multi-year memberships)

Newsletter Membership  
\$20/1 year, \$57/3 years, \$95/5 years

Full Membership  
\$30/1 year, \$81/3 years, \$135/5 years

Payments can be made online through our website,  
www.ISBONA.com, or by mail (checks payable to  
ISBONA) to:

**ISBONA**  
c/o Rosemary Brown  
4500 County Rd 115  
Meeker, CO 81641



**PayPal** also accepted! See ISBONA Website.



**From the Editor**

It has been a hot, dry summer, and for most of us, there is still more warm weather to come!

While it's true that the season brings with it a host of ovine ailments, from parasites to heat stress, I still find it supremely satisfying to watch my flock out on the pasture. The lambs are growing more independent, their mothers are regaining condition after nursing, and all are growing those beautiful fleeces we love.

For me, those minutes spent idly watching over the sheep are often accompanied by pangs of guilt: there is always much work to be done around the farm. Between stocking up on hay, vigilantly checking for signs of barberpole worm, cleaning out the barn, and a host of other chores that don't directly relate to shepherding, it is all too easy to fall behind, so staying on top of all these tasks is a priority!

Nevertheless, I hope you are all able to squeeze in many peaceful moments with flocks both large and small. May you have rain and sunshine a-plenty, may your lambs grow fat, and may the worms be few!

**Laura Walsh**  
Jolly Jumbuck Farm  
Stockbridge, MI



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[ajleighton@gwtc.net](mailto:ajleighton@gwtc.net)

**Alan Leighton**



# ISBONA NEWS IN BRIEF

*Welcome!* to our new members!

- ◆ Christine Bellmore
- ◆ Sharon Benson
- ◆ Jonathan DeMersseman
- ◆ Mary Egan
- ◆ Susan Engwall
- ◆ Christina Fink
- ◆ Kelly & Kelby Frame
- ◆ Gary Heims
- ◆ Charles & Michele Hinthorne
- ◆ Eva Jaycox
- ◆ Norman & Ann Lesch
- ◆ Jeremy Levin
- ◆ Nancy Mickel
- ◆ Marla Pond
- ◆ Cheryl Powell
- ◆ John & Sarah Scott
- ◆ Laurel Shelhamer
- ◆ Kristin & Brad Urmston
- ◆ Jonathan Starr & Brie Weisman
- ◆ Bradley & Susan West
- ◆ Barbara Winterson

## *Please Note:*

Memberships expire at the end of July. Please visit our website to renew and pay online; you may also send in the form on page 5 with your payment.

This will be the final paper version of the newsletter, which is moving to an online-only format for the upcoming fiscal year. Paper copies can still be mailed to you for an additional cost; paid subscription information will be forthcoming.

Welcome Marge Jackson to the Board of Directors as our new treasurer; thank you to Cassie Petrocelli, who remains on the board, for serving as treasurer.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on September 25 in conjunction with the Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival in Canby, Oregon. See additional information on page 10.



Hawks Mountain Ranch ram "Echo"  
photo courtesy of Red Brick Road Farm



## Minutes of the ISBONA Board Meeting (held online from 7/28/15 through 12/10/15)

Submitted by Melissa Erlund, Secretary

**July 28-30, 2015:** Board members discussed holding an election to elect new board members and re-elect Terri Carlson. It was suggested that the voting ballots be put in an upcoming newsletter and a voting deadline be set for January 15, 2016. Board members agreed on this action. Board members also discussed amending the by-laws in the future to allow members to vote electronically via an online survey.

**July 31-Aug. 5, 2015:** Board members discussed the upcoming newsletter and election ballots. Should we have a Sept. newsletter and a separate Nov. election newsletter with the ballots and biographies of the prospective board members? Or, should we have just one big newsletter in November? It was agreed that we should only have one large newsletter containing the biographies of members wishing to be elected as board members and the voting ballots.

**August 24, 2015:** ISBONA secretary Melissa Erlund posted the minutes of the October 2014 – July 2015 meeting. *[printed in Summer/Fall 2015 ISBONA Newsletter]*

**August 26, 2015:** ISBONA president Sue Faunce posted the minutes of the 2015 ISBONA Annual General Meeting *[printed in Summer/Fall 2015 ISBONA Newsletter]* and the *Jan. 1 – Aug. 12, 2015 treasurer's report.*

Icelandic Sheep Breeders of North America PROFIT AND LOSS January 1 - August 12, 2015	
<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$21,150.42</b>
Income	
Membership dues	\$2,186.00
Total Income	\$2,186.00
Gross Profit	\$2,186.00
Expenses	
100 Advertising/Promotional /Website	\$1,767.05
300 Office/General Administrative Expenses	\$90.65
Advertising / print	\$3,657.50
AGM	\$600.00
AGM Travel	\$983.87
Gifts	\$75.00
Newsletter	\$1,529.85
Postage	\$60.91
Show Premiums	\$375.00
Total Expenses	\$9,139.83
Net Operating Income	\$ -6,953.83
Other Income	
Interest Earned	\$5.43
Total Other Income	\$5.43
Net Other Income	\$5.43
Net Income	\$ -6,948.40
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$14,202.02</b>

Continued on pg. 8



**August 31, 2015:** ISBONA president Sue Faunce posted the membership report as follows:

Membership Report	
7 Honorary Members	
91 Paid Full/Web Members	
23 Paid Newsletter Only Members	
0 Junior Members	
114 paid members	

She also posted the webmaster’s report (which was lengthy), the fall meeting agenda, and the Treasurer’s report. Board members discussed the low number of members and ways to increase membership. It was suggested that we make a post on the Icelandic Sheep Owners Facebook page informing people of our new lower membership rates and our awesome new website.

**September 2, 2015:** A motion was made by Margaret Flowers and Melissa Erlund and seconded by Cassie Petrocelli to accept the treasurer’s report, webmaster’s report and fall/winter meeting minutes. The motion passed by a majority vote.

**September 2, 2015:** Sue Faunce brought up a member concern/request about modifying the ISBONA Facebook page to allow chatting between ISBONA members. Board members voted on this and it passed unanimously.

**September 2, 2015:** David Grote created an ISBONA Facebook that will allow chatting between members. ISBONA board members were all made administrators. There are now two official Facebook pages for ISBONA, one just for announcements, and one for chatting/posting photos.

**September 4, 2015:** Elaine Clark made a motion to nominate Amy Clare as a board member.

**September 8, 2015:** Marge Jackson made a request for ISBONA board approval for a budget line item in the maximum amount of \$180 for two months of website training and coaching from Blackbird Studio (the money not used would be refunded). A copy of the contract was submitted for study. A majority of board members voted to add this line item to the 2016 budget.

**September 10, 2015:** Cassie Petrocelli submitted the following as a proposed 2016 budget:

Proposed 2016 Budget	
Income	
Membership Income	\$6500 (we would need to have an additional 33 members at the \$30 level to reach this amount.)
Expense	
Website	\$200
Office / admin exp	\$155
Advertising Print	\$6000
AGM	\$600
AGM Travel	\$700
Gifts	\$75
Newsletter	\$4000
Postage	\$200
Show Premiums	\$375
Website Assistance	\$180
<b>Total</b>	<b>-\$5985</b>







**September 10, 2015:** Board members began discussing ways to balance the proposed budget by reducing expenses. Ideas included: moving the newsletter to an online version rather than a hard copy version, increasing membership, contacting members who did not renew their memberships to see if perhaps they had forgotten to do so, twice a year hard copy newsletters for those who choose to receive them and are willing to pay extra for the hard copy, allow advertising in the newsletter to generate some income, have a “member benefits” section on the ISBONA website to entice new members.

**September 11, 2015:** Sue Faunce reminded board members that nominees for the board need to have their brief bios ready for the newsletter by 9/15.

Kathy Boyden submitted a copy of the ad to be placed in “The Shepherd” magazine for board approval. Members discussed polling the membership to see what type of newsletter they would prefer receiving (electronic or hard copy).

**September 20, 2015:** Laura Walsh generously volunteered to help Kathy Taft Boyden with putting together advertisements for ISBONA. Thank you Laura!

**September 24, 2015:** Melissa Erlund agreed to create a survey using Survey Monkey to ask the membership which type of newsletter they favored. An introduction to the survey was submitted for approval. Some changes were suggested.

**September 30, 2015:** The introduction to and the survey for newsletter preferences was approved.

**October 13, 2015:** Melissa Erlund posted the results of the survey as follows: The survey was opened on Oct. 2, 2015 and closed on Monday, Oct. 12, 2015.

Membership Survey Results
46.6% (35 people) voted for online only newsletter.
22.67% (17 people) voted for hard copy 2x a year.
21.33% (16 people) voted for online newsletter with hard copy 2x a year with an additional cost of \$10.
9.33% (7 people) voted for hard copies 4x a year with an advertising budget decrease

**October 20-23, 2015:** Board members discussed ways of providing a hard copy newsletter at an additional charge to members who really wanted one.

**October 23, 2015:** A motion was made to move to a twice a year online newsletter beginning in August 2016 with the option of twice a year hard copies for those who would be willing to pay an extra cost for it which will be determined at a later date. The motion was seconded and passed.

**October 24, 2015:** Sue Faunce submitted a request for financial assistance for the amount of \$500 for two doctors from the University of Maine for a research trip to Iceland.

**October 25, 2015:** A motion was made and seconded to make December 15 the deadline for mailing in the paper voting ballots for electing/re-electing board members that was included in the newsletter. The motion was passed.

**October 30, 2015:** A motion was made to support the research trip to Iceland with a one-time donation of \$500. A vote was called on November 2, 2015. A majority of board members voted in favor of donating.

Continued on pg. 10



**November 7, 2015:** Kathy Boyden suggested updating and adding website content to our ISBONA website.

**November 18, 2015:** Kathy Boyden submitted a copy of the ad she and Laura Walsh created for the next issue of "The Shepherd" magazine.

**November 20, 2015:** Board members discussed the need to finish the budget and work on updating the by-laws.

**December 9, 2015:** Since the newsletter was mailed later than planned, the voting deadline was extended to January 15, 2016.

**December 9, 2015:** A request was made to sponsor a sheep festival in Florida for \$150. Board members decided that we should not donate at this time since our budget was not balanced.

**December 10, 2015:** Meeting was adjourned for the holidays and will resume in January 2016.



# ISBONA Annual General Meeting

The ISBONA Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in conjunction with the Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival in Canby, Oregon on September 24-25. Tracy Robertson is coordinating the ISBONA events; any help one can offer her will be welcomed (contact her at [tracylyn.robertson@gmail.com](mailto:tracylyn.robertson@gmail.com)). Various components of the AGM include dinner Saturday evening, a booth showcasing Icelandic sheep products, and show premiums (cash awards) for the livestock competitions. There is not a fleece competition at this festival.

For those planning to attend and/or bring animals for the show, the festival information and show requirements are on their website and Facebook page. Please note that there are registration deadlines for animal entries.

ISBONA will have a booth in the vendor area to display Icelandic sheep products, from spun and woven goods to soaps and cheese. There will be no sales at this booth, but contact information will be provided in flyers, business cards (supplied by the member), etc. Contact Tracy if you would like to send in any items for display; shipping costs are the member's responsibility.



## ISBONA AGM

Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival  
Clackamas County Event Center, Canby, OR  
<http://flockandfiberfestival.com/>



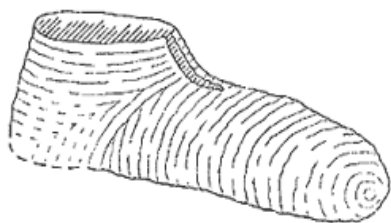
# Naalbinding: an introduction

Naalbinding, also called "needle-binding" or "single needle knitting," is a fabric-making technique of interlocking loops that predates both knitting and crochet, and can be traced as far back as the Neolithic period. The earliest examples are Egyptian sandal socks from the 4-6<sup>th</sup> century. Also from

Egypt, the region called Antioe, is a cap that dates from the 9-10<sup>th</sup> century. The most famous example of naalbinding is the Coppergate sock which was found in the Coppergate area of York, England. It dates from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Grave excavations in Iceland have given us two examples of mittens. The most photographed

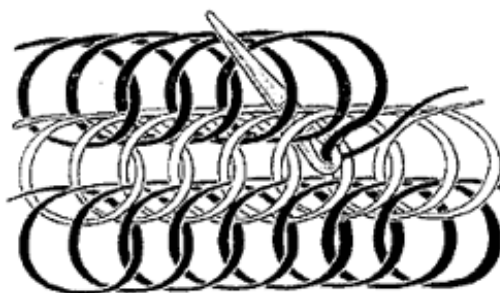


The Coppergate sock, from England (above)



done, in the mountainous areas of Central Asia.

Naalbinding is done with a blunt needle, with an eye large enough for a strand of yarn to pass through. In ancient times, needles were made from bone, antler, or wood. I made a needle from the tine of a deer antler by cutting out the rough shape, then grinding it to the proper shape with an electric grinder. A hole for the eye was then drilled in it with a drill press. Finally, the needle was sanded smooth with sandpaper. An easier way to obtain a needle is to purchase one from your local craft store. They are called "tapestry needles" and come in both plastic and metal. The size of the needle depends on the size of the yarn you intend to use for your project.



Any thickness and ply of yarn can be used for naalbinding. I have used single-ply yarn that I have spun myself and also double-ply yarn that I have purchased. Thin yarn will produce a thin "fabric" and of course, thick, chunky yarn will give you a much thicker "fabric." Unlike knitting and cro-

chet, where a ball or skein of yarn is used, naalbinding uses three- to five-foot separate lengths of yarn that are joined together as needed. Also unlike knitting and crocheting, your naalbinding project will not unravel if the loose end of the yarn is pulled.

During the dark ages, people like the Vikings wove yarn into fabric on upright warp-weighted looms. When the fabric was finished, the three-foot lengths of yarn that held the weights were cut off of the bottom of the fabric. Archaeologists believe that rather than waste these pieces of yarn, people developed a way to use them (naalbinding!).

Several different variations of naalbinding "stitches" exist. In fact, there are up to 1,024 variations! The Coppergate sock was made from a stitch called the "basic naalbinding" stitch. This is the only stitch I have learned to date. It is a tight, dense stitch that doesn't leave large holes in your project. The stitch used to construct a mitten that was found in Iceland called the Asle mitten is called, unsurprisingly, the "Asle stitch."

I have used the basic naalbinding stitch to make reproductions of the Coppergate sock that we use in our Viking re-enacting and I have also made mittens and hats. This article is meant to be an introduction to the ancient art of naalbinding. Future articles will, hopefully, teach you how to do the basic



The Asle mitten, from Sweden.

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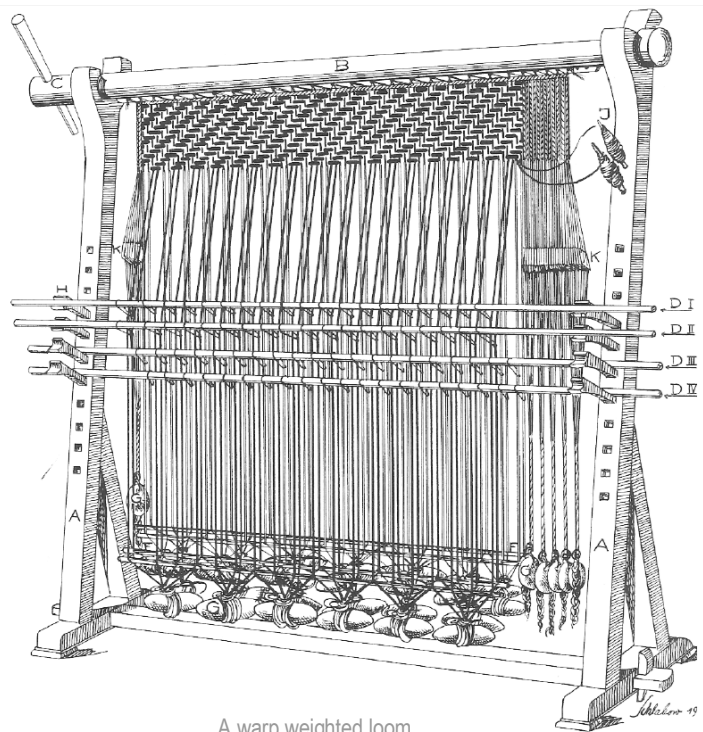


stitch and will then go into actually constructing garments.

Sources:

- Thor Ewing, Viking Clothing, Tempus Publishing Limited, The Mill, Briscoe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, England, 2006.
- Lundwall, Eva & Nockert, Margreta; Åsle Vanten: Description and Pattern; English Summary by Karen Finch; Riksantikvarieämbetets Textilsektion, Stockholm, 1982.
- Regia Anglorum – Anglo-Saxon and Viking Crafts - Naalbinding <http://www.regia.org/naalbind.htm>

*Melissa Erlund raises Icelandic sheep at Dark Horse Farms in Haughton, LA, along with seven horses, two donkeys, heritage turkeys, assorted chickens, three Muscovy ducks, a Goffin's cockatoo, two dogs, one cat, a tank with fish and a few native crawfish, and two children.*



A warp weighted loom.



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# Rejection!

## Lamb Coats to the Rescue!

by Margaret Flowers

I dragged myself out of bed in the wee hours, still half-blind with sleep, and staggered to the barn for the routine lamb check. I really wasn't expecting any action; there were a couple ewes that were full-term (barely), but at the previous late-night check, none had really full bags, nor any of the other tell-tale signs of imminent lambing. Imagine my surprise when I saw a first-timer cleaning off a little badgerface lamb.



Baxter watching over a 12-hour-old lamb rejected by its mother.

Then I saw the sight that nobody ever wants to see – the small lifeless form of another badgerface lamb on the far side of the pen from the ewe and her newborn, this little one clearly left for dead. Or perhaps the ewe hadn't realized there was another to tend to, and the little fellow hadn't been vigorous enough to catch her attention. Does this scenario sound at all familiar?

Of course, my first thought was, "Drat! There's a still-born one." But then I saw a slight movement, and my next thought was, "Drat! Now I will have to spend endless hours reviving this little lamb, and even if it survives, I'll have a miserable job trying to get the ewe to accept him, but I'll still end up with a bottle baby on my hands and a mother ewe that hates it."

Well, of course, I scooped him up, and rushed him into the house. His temperature was so low that it didn't even register on the thermometer. I was quite sure he was less than 5 hours old, so while I needed to raise his temperature, I didn't need to include an IP glucose injection (whew!). In retrospect, I should have put him (not including the head, of course) in a ziploc bag, and then put him into warm water to raise his temperature, but, as I said, it was the wee hours of the morning (I'm a night person) and I didn't think of that. I found a suitable container - my salad spinner - that was just the right size, and would fit into the sink where I could run water of the right temperature. Slowly his temperature came to nearly 99° and I dried him off well. Time for food. He did have a slight sucking reflex, but I thought that tubing him would be a better idea. With a tummy full of colostrum I'd put in the freezer

the year before, it was truly remarkable how quickly he found his legs. I took him back to his mother and brother, and rubbed him all over with the scent of both. Mama looked at him strangely, as if to say, "I thought I only had one." She seemed to accept him. I checked on him, and supplemented his food a couple more times in the day.

But at the night check, the ewe had pushed him out of

the jug. It was going to be very cold that night, so I thought that putting lamb coats on both lambs would be a good thing. The accepted boy got the red coat, and the rejected one got the blue. Then I decided that it would be a smart idea to bring the little one into the warm house, where I could keep an eye on him and feed him. Then I'd see what could be done in the morning.

Next morning, as I was in the process of returning the little reject to his mother (after a good bottle feeding), I thought of a strategy that was at least worth a try: I would switch the lamb coats, and put the red coat that had been on the accepted lamb inside out on the little reject, leaving the blue coat with the scent inside. During that day, I supplemented with a bottle a couple of times, and offered it as well to the brother. I didn't tie the ewe up and force her to let the lamb nurse; she did that on her own. Even though the lamb coats were different colors, they looked enough alike (sheep see red as gray), and the lambs smelled enough alike that she accepted both.

Fast forward two days. An experienced badger ewe (do we see a pattern here?) who had lambed with singles four previous times was in labor. All of the previous lambs had been some flavor of badger – some spotted, some not – but with the very distinctive badger face. Out came the first lamb: a badgerface ewe. Then came the second: black gray with very little gray showing. The ewe was up and cleaning them, and getting them both to nurse. Excellent!

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Only... three hours later there was the telltale glowering stare directed at the ram lamb, and the head-shaking. Not again!!! Mama didn't actually toss him, but she was pretty close to it. Since it seemed that the first ewe had become comfortable with both her ram lambs, I whipped off their coats, and got them washed and dried as quickly as I could. Red coat on the badger girl, blue coat on the gray boy. This seemed to do the trick – at least the mama was letting the ram nurse



when the ewe did, even if she wasn't thrilled about it. Problem solved again... I thought.

Before I release a jugged ewe and lamb (s) into the general population, I take them on a walk. This is a treat for the ewe, as this is the first fresh

grass she will get, and it shows me if she can communicate with the lamb(s), and whether they can track her. I usually do this on the second or third day after birth. I also like to take the first "baby pictures" then. Since things seemed to have worked out with the coats, I took them off before the little walk. Mistake. I got some great pictures, but it became obvious that the ewe again considered the gray ram lamb an alien being.

Back in the barn, I tried the same coat switch that I had with the other family, but it seemed to really confuse the ewe. So again, a quick wash and dry of the coats; then I put them back on the lambs the way they had been originally – red on the girl, blue on the boy. The ewe was again coolly civil, again letting the ram nurse only when the ewe did. But as the days progressed, the ewe and lambs all bonded. I let them out on a small pasture with other ewes and lambs, and had no difficulty in getting all back into the barn at night. I did not force the ewe to allow the ram lamb to nurse, although sometimes in the early days, I distracted her by whispering sweet nothings in her ear and plying her with alfalfa pellets. On the eighth day after birth, after seeing no evidence of aggression for many days, I removed the coats. Success!

Within a couple days of these events, I got a call from a frantic shepherd who had purchased some Shetlands from me the previous year. As luck would have it, a

first-timer lambed with twins in the night, and an experienced ewe who had not yet lambed stole one of them and cleaned her off. By this time the real mother wanted nothing to do with the one, while doting on the other (which looked very different). I suggested lamb coats... and now, several days later, things are progressing well; the ewe is letting both lambs nurse without being restrained. We are optimistic! Yesterday evening, I assisted a neighbor's Icelandic ewe though two malpresentations – a difficult birth process for all concerned. The ewe was exhausted, but seemed to be taking a shine to the first-born (a ram), but was not attentive to her ewe lamb. She wasn't fully aggressive... yet. My first thought – coats. Sure enough, on an early morning check the next day, my friend found that both lambs had warm mouths and full tummies. It's cold and wet and raw... so the coats will stay on another day or so. Just to be sure

This, of course is a small sample, but it does suggest a method of using lamb coats to combat the problem of lamb rejection. It is a process that takes a little time, but at least in these instances, seems to quickly take the edge off the aggressive behavior of a ewe towards a lamb she feels is not hers.

As for me... my lamb coats are now washed, dried, and ready... in case I need them again.



Margaret Flowers, of Trinity Farm, lives among the drumlins and glacial lakes of central New York with her motley crew of Labrador retrievers, several species of ducks, Icelandic chickens, and Icelandic and Shetland sheep.

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# Shepherding from Start to Finish

Our Icelandic sheep adventure began when I was searching for something to add to our farm for an additional income source, and I was getting very close to settling on alpacas! I had spent a lot of time with a local alpaca farmer learning about their care, and I was searching the internet one night looking for information on llamas as guard animals, when I came across Elaine

Clark's website. She had a lot of info about Icelandic sheep and it caught my attention. Her farm was very close to me so I decided to make a visit to talk with her. Little did I know that day was the beginning of a great friendship and mentorship. We already had a small fold of Highland cattle; my husband was the one in charge of them, and we had sold some beef.

I operated a wholesale greenhouse business, selling annuals to local garden centers, but I didn't have any previous real experience with livestock management. We had plenty of pasture, and our space under the three-story barn was perfect for them. Wide open, with entrances on two sides of the barn, I could move panels around to set up different pens during the year for the different needs of the flock.

My starter flock was purchased from Elaine in the fall of 2007. I got five ewes and two rams. I wanted both horned and polled, since I liked them both and didn't want to choose one or the other exclusively. Three ewes were older and established as good mothers, and two were ewe lambs that I would wait for another winter to breed. That following March I also purchased a bred polled ewe and a horned ram from Barbara Webb.

The first lamb born on our farm was from that polled ewe, and it was an AI breeding with the sire Ormur. It was single ram lamb that weighed in at 13lbs! I can't forget that excitement of the very first lamb being



born, and getting in there and grabbing those huge hooves to help pull him out. I was home alone, watching over the birth and calling Elaine every 30 minutes for advice. Thank goodness he was polled! We named him Hagrid, after the giant in the Harry Potter books. That first year also brought our first set of triplets and that was a thrill as well.

Elaine was a wonderful mentor and became such a good friend. I called on her every single lambing season, and countless times in between to help with sheep issues, and questions. She never failed me in lambing emergencies, and I don't know how we would have managed without her calm, sensible advice and wisdom. Luckily she lives just 15 minutes away, so I never had to! We spent many hours together over a cup of tea or a glass of wine. We worked together during shearing and skirted fleeces, we ate lunch while examining sheep poop under a microscope for worm egg counts, and we celebrated lamb births and mourned together over losses of sheep, young and old. We traveled together and brought sheep to the Michigan Fiber Festival and to Rhinebeck New York Sheep and Wool Festival. We worked together to organize the ISBONA AGM and VAI clinic in 2009 in New York, and spent many hours discussing AI sires, sorting frozen semen straws, and celebrating successful AI pregnancies. Her help and friendship is priceless and a great blessing and I know she helps many other shepherds near and far.

The original plan for starting the sheep flock was to utilize every possible product from them, to add income to the farm. I jumped in with both feet, selling fleece, roving, yarn, learning to spin and knit, milking and making soap with the milk, selling meat cuts at farmers markets and freezer lambs from our website. My breeding program was very focused on strong meaty conformations and great health, and ease of lambing, in order to offer the best quality breed stock

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animals for sale. We did well with all of these things, but I would say the top selling products financially, were cuts of meat and pelts.

The most fun and satisfaction, of course, came from breeding: seeing the quality of the animals every year improve, reflecting careful culling choices, and seeing them go to great new homes for others to enjoy their own flocks.

Our first lambing season went very smoothly, with eight lambs being born. The next year we jumped to 18, and all told, we had about 160 lambs born from spring 2008 to spring 2015. The largest total amount of sheep we had through one summer was around sixty. If I had to guess I would say we assisted with about 30% of births, and that was mostly due to big lambs from first time moms. We never had a ewe abandon her baby, we did have an occasional bottle baby due to mastitis, but we avoided that scenario pretty successfully for the most part.

The most memorable and stressful lambing episode we had was when one of my ewes had a uterine prolapse after lambing. Her entire uterus was turned inside out and hanging outside her body. Elaine came over, and with the help of my husband holding the ewe upside down on a tilted wooden pallet, the three of us got that uterus back inside her. Elaine and I were at the business end of it; she was manipulating the uterus and somehow managed to fit it all back in and get it situated, while I held up the extra parts on the outside. We also made good use of the Laura Lawson manual that night for the procedure, and I smile with wonder whenever I see those bloodstained pages of that book. That ewe went on to lamb again the next year!

My favorite ewe came to the farm in that very first flock purchase from Elaine. Her name was Delancey and she was the perfect ewe in every way: beautiful conformation, silky soft white fleece, parasite resistance, a great mother who often had triplets. She had amazing lambs, and she was loving and sweet and liked to be scratched and talked to. A beautiful, gentle girl, she always knew when we were up to anything that involved her submission and would fight tooth and nail to avoid capture. I had many sheep that were dear to me, but she was the queen of the flock and it was

such a blessing for me to be her person.

The daily list of flock management chores was, as most shepherds know, easy on some days and harder on others. Winter was the easiest time: just daily feeding, and watching and waiting to see fattening bellies and anticipation of spring lambs. Lambing season is its own little microcosm of emotional highs and lows, lack of sleep, and never wanting to be very far from the barn. Summer was getting hay in, constant monitoring of lamb growth; worm egg counts, FAMACHA scores, and pasture management. Fall included getting more hay in, picking breeding groups, sending meat lambs and cull ewes to process and heading to the fair to sell wool and yarn. At our busiest times we were managing the fold of about thirteen cattle, four pigs, the flock of sheep, including guard llama, and 75 chickens for meat birds. This along with my greenhouse business and a part-time job off-farm, and my husband's full time job off-farm as well. One year we managed to get a couple of volunteers from WOOF to come for a week and it was amazing to get so much work done with those extra hands!

Of course, all good things must come to an end. We made the decision that we would sell the farm and move to a smaller house. We raised four kids in our big old farmhouse, but it was too big for the two of us, and it didn't make sense to stay. In dispersing the flock, some went to meat, and I sold many sheep to different people around Maine, and am convinced that the special ones are in good homes, so that is a comfort to know. Elaine has Delancey's first daughter, Lilly, and a couple other special girls, so it's wonderful to be able to visit them! I loved being a shepherd and still enjoy helping to mentor others who have purchased sheep from me. It was a great choice for us to raise them, and something I will always look back on with gratitude.

*Sue Faunce raised Icelandic sheep for more than eight years on Pondview Farm in Limington, Maine. Throughout her time as a shepherd she was active in ISBONA and served on the Board of Directors, most recently as president.*





# Artificial Insemination of Sheep In Iceland - The System Described

Richard Brzozowski, PhD, University of Maine Cooperative Extension & Jim Weber, PhD, DVM, University of Maine School of Food and Agriculture

*In December 2015, Richard Brzozowski and James Weber of the University of Maine travelled to Iceland for the purpose of making connections with sheep researchers and learning more about the sheep production system in Iceland. A series of articles has been planned for the ISBONA newsletter in an effort to pass on information to Icelandic sheep breeders. This is the second of four articles planned. Brzozowski and Weber are grateful to ISBONA for providing funds to partially support their travel to Iceland.*

Artificial insemination (AI) of sheep is efficiently and intentionally used to improve the next generation of sheep on farms in Iceland in an effort to promote productivity and profitability. By using only the best rams, AI promotes specific traits such as performance, rate of gain, health and carcass quality.

Iceland's Sheep AI System – There are currently two AI stations in Iceland: one located in the south (Selfoss) and one in the western part of the island (Borgarnes). At each station, about 25 rams are kept year round. They are allowed to graze in enclosed pastures during the grazing season but are then housed in group pens for the winter months (November to May). These rams are selected for specific traits as well as their offspring's performance. Rams used for AI are also tested to be free of all sexually transmitted diseases of sheep.

Nearly 90% of Iceland's sheep producers cooperate to send performance data taken from their animals to a central database, where it is used to select top rams, as well as provide farmers with comparative data on their farm's performance. Data used in the selection of rams is compiled, assessed, and presented in a catalog. The ram catalog is published every year. The catalog is divided in two sections (south and west stations). A narrative describing the ram's background, lineage, and performance follows a color photo of a side-view for each ram. The data is presented in an easy-to-interpret chart that farmers use to quickly compare rams in making their selection for use on their farm. The annual catalog is divided into sections listing horned and polled rams. Growth and carcass qualities are the basis for evaluating most rams listed in the catalog. In addition, semen from a smaller number of rams



Veterinarian evaluating semen sample.

are featured for their wool, and semen from at least 1 leadersheep ram is available from each station. Once a ram qualifies and makes it to an AI station, he never returns to the home farm (or any other farm) for biosecurity reasons. However, he may be transferred to the other breeding station if a demand for his semen exists.

Rams that are outclassed by data and performance of better rams are eliminated from the breeding program. Such a ram would be retired when another ram is shown to be genetically superior based on performance data. Each ram's semen is consistently evaluated before and during the breeding season. Frozen semen straws of some of the best rams are kept as insurance or are sold to breeders in North America for frozen semen AI.

A list of the traits as recorded from this website, <http://icelandicsheep.com/semen.html>, includes:

- 1) Good meat type conformation with a numerical classification system for body depth and width, leg muscle, loin and strong feet and legs etc.
- 2) Eye muscle thickness
- 3) Fleece quality: fineness, thickness, color, uniformity and length
- 4) Progeny from these sires are tested for dressing weight, grade classification of the carcass of their slaughter lamb progeny, and the productivity of daughters and sons kept for breeding

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Semen and order form from a single farm.

The locations of the AI stations are based on convenience for ease of getting fresh semen to farmers in Iceland. There is a small airport adjacent to each station. However, most semen is transported by vehicle over the road. Farmers place their semen orders via phone or email each day, arranging their order for use on the following day. They specify rams and the number of straws needed from each ram. One straw has enough semen to breed 5 ewes. Each straw is identified by color and label.

Starting on or near December 1 each year, semen is collected daily from rams from whom orders were received. The team at the AI station is comprised of five people: a ram handler, a semen collector, a veterinarian, a lab technician, and a business person. The handler catches and brings each ram to a raised wooden platform where a ewe is held. The semen collector prepares and cleans the receptacles used to capture fresh semen. While collecting the semen, he verifies the identity of the ram. The veterinarian is charged with evaluating each semen specimen, assessing volume and color of ejaculate, sperm count, and viability. He uses a microscope and various methods for a series of assessments, then dilutes the semen to a uniform concentration with a nutritive "extender" fluid. The laboratory technician loads and seals the extended semen into straws labeled with each ram's identifying information. The technician then moves straws to proper cool storage before shipping that day. The business person handles all orders received by phone or email and transfers the order

sheets to specific team members. All this takes place in a three-room set up.

This is the routine for 21 days straight – starting at about 5:00 am until after 12:00 noon. At this time of year in Iceland, the sun does not rise until about 10:30 am.

Farmers may come to the AI station directly or have the fresh semen shipped to their farms for use that day (or the next). The fresh semen should be used within 48 hours - the sooner the better. Semen is kept cool and transported in stainless steel thermos containers. Several straws can be transported in one thermos. One straw of semen is valued at about \$6.00 (US).

Each farmer intending to purchase and use semen must participate in a special training on the artificial insemination of sheep. They complete a day-long workshop that explains the system, the science, semen handling, and how to inseminate ewes.

In preparation for the semen delivery, each farmer daily selects ewes in heat as the candidates to receive the semen. The farmer watches for ewes showing signs of heat (estrus). Icelandic ewes in heat display rapidly twitching tails and are generally fidgety. Some farmers bring rams into a pen of ewes as a way to determine which ewes are in heat. The ram is controlled by holding him by the horns (by hand or by a short length of rope). Ewes in heat will come to the ram. Those ewes identified as "in heat" are marked and separated into a group pen where the deposit will take place when the semen arrives later that day.



Sheep AI team at Selfoss.



Sheep AI facility at Selfoss.

When the semen arrives at the farm, breeding is performed quickly, as pregnancy rates fall during semen storage, even at cool temperatures. Artificial insemination on the farm usually involves two people. One person catches and holds the ewe by the neck or horns and the other person selects the proper straw, prepares the insemination tool, inserts the straw into the tool, and deposits the semen. The breeding of a ewe takes less than 3 minutes – from catching to releasing each ewe. Unlike AI in goats, where the insemination pipette is inserted into or through the cervix using a lighted speculum, fresh semen in sheep is blindly inseminated as far into the vagina as possible.

Approximately 90% of sheep farmers in Iceland utilize artificial insemination in some part of his/her flock. One does not have to be a large flock owner to utilize AI.

The system of artificial insemination of sheep that exists in Iceland is well used and quite efficient. With proper planning, such a system could be duplicated within a geographic region of the US. A fresh AI system would confer several advantages over present breeding strategies. First, genetically superior rams could be used to breed more ewes, and could cover multiple farms within a region. Many small Icelandic breeders now have limited ability to bring new genetics into their flocks, and fresh AI would be especially beneficial to them. The use of fresh AI would also improve animal health and farm biosecurity by decreasing the movement of rams and their diseases among flocks. In Iceland, rams cannot be moved from Scrapie-affected into Scrapie-free provinces, but fresh semen is non-infectious for Scrapie and can be moved among prov-

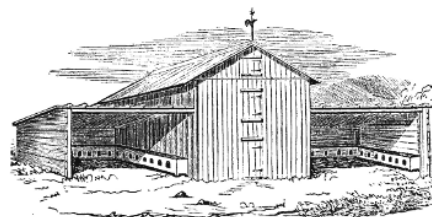
inces. North American breeders could use fresh AI to decrease the spread of other diseases of concern to the industry.

Dr. Weber at the University of Maine was recently funded to conduct a small fresh AI project that will be completed in Maine during the 2016 breeding season. Several participating farms will work with Dr. Weber to train rams, collect and process semen, detect estrus in ewes, and inseminate ewes on their farm. Ewes on other farms in the region may also be bred from these rams using fresh AI. We plan to compile our results from this trial and report to ISBONA members during the winter of 2016-2017.

*Artificial insemination (AI) of sheep was first documented in Iceland in 1939. Below is a link to an article that further describes its history and use. [http://old.eaap.org/Previous\\_Annual\\_Meetings/2007Dublin/Papers/S14\\_3\\_Dyrmundsson.pdf](http://old.eaap.org/Previous_Annual_Meetings/2007Dublin/Papers/S14_3_Dyrmundsson.pdf)*



Farmer inseminating a ewe.



# The AI CORNER

In each issue we highlight rams whose genetics are available through the Sheep Breeding Center of South Iceland - better known as Southram. Featured here are Sigurfari (polled) and Sokki (horned) as two rams whose offspring are a part of North American flocks.

## AI Sire Sigurfari (09-860)

from Smahamrar farm, Steingrimsfjordur, Northwest Iceland

White and polled with a broad, vigorous, and powerful head, Sigurfari has rounded, broad, and very muscled shoulders. He has a good rib shape and a broad, very muscled back, with an excellent rump and gigot muscling. His feet are strong and he is long-bodied: a powerful and vigorous-looking ram. His fleece contains some tan fibers, and the wool quantity is well above average. He has thick thel but rather short and fine tog.

Sigurfari was bought for AI after a very good results at his birth farm. His progenies are very mature and heavy with good conformation. In autumn of 2011, the average gigot muscling score of his sons was nearly 18. Sigurfari clearly produces lambs with great conformation and carcass grading. Sigurfari has few daughter records so far; but expectation is that they will have average prolificacy and average milking abilities



## Sokki (07-835)

from Brunastadir Farm, Fljot, North Iceland

Sokki is horned and black spotted. He has a good looking head with good horn curving, a short and very thick neck, and extremely broad and muscled shoulders. Displaying great conformation, he has a strong back with good muscling, a very well muscled rump, and exceptionally good leg muscling. He is rather short-bodied, but a very broad ram. His wool and thel quantity are above average; his tog is even, curly, and fine.



Sokki's progeny were tested at Brunastadir Farm in 2007 and 2008, resulting in very good carcass grading. Sokki produces heavy lambs with great meat qualities, very good conformation, thick eye muscle, and superb gigot muscling. Sokki's daughters are prolific with very good milking abilities.

For more information on using AI in your breeding, contact ISBONA breeders  
Kathy Taft Boyden, Elaine Clark, Margaret Flowers, or Alan Leighton.

# KNOW YOUR CHOPS



## *Rib Chops*

Rib chops come from the iconic rack. They're great for finger food and quick on the grill.



## *Shoulder Chops*

Shoulder chops do well with bold flavors and marinades. They're an economical choice for an everyday meal.



## *Loin Chops*

Loin chops are tender and flavorful. They're just like t-bone steak and the perfect 4 ounce serving.

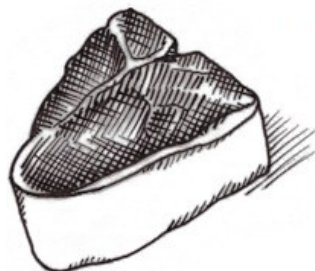


## *Sirloin Chops*

Sirloin chops the leanest chop. They're perfect for healthy summer grilling.

Courtesy of the American Lamb Board

## Grilled Lamb Loin Chops with Orange & Olive



### **Ingredients**

- 1-1/2 lb. lamb loin chops, 1 to 1-1/2 inches thick
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons plain yogurt, low fat or whole milk
- Juice and zest of one orange, divided
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped and divided
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 3/4 cup finely chopped green olives
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped flat leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

### **Directions**

Marinating these chops overnight with yogurt and citrus tenderizes the meat and adds bright flavor that complements the smoky char from the grill. A quick, fresh sauce is all you need to complete the chops, plus a bottle of wine. The day before serving, pat the chops dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Lay the chops in a shallow non-reactive pan such as an 8-inch square baking dish. Combine the yogurt, half of the orange juice and zest, and half of the garlic in a small bowl. Whisk the ingredients together and pour over the chops, turning them once to coat both sides with the marinade. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Remove the chops from the refrigerator 30 to 45 minutes prior to grilling to allow the meat to come to room temperature. Heat a gas or charcoal grill to medium-high, or preheat a grill pan over medium high heat. Remove the chops from the marinade and allow most of it to drip off. Lightly oil the grill or grill pan, and arrange the chops over the heat. Grill 3 minutes, turn each chop 90 degrees, and cook for another 3 minutes or until the chops are nicely charred. Flip the chops and cook on the other side for about 6 more minutes, turning halfway through. They should still be pink inside. Remove the chops from the grill and place on a warm plate to rest while you make the sauce. Combine the remaining orange juice and zest, and chopped garlic with the onion, olives, parsley and olive oil in a small bowl. Stir well to combine, spoon some sauce over each chop and serve immediately.

—Recipe courtesy of the American Lamb Board



# FROM THE ARCHIVES

## The Meat Market

Bonnie Swenson & Kristen Bolton

*Many of us are looking for new and effective ways of marketing our meat lambs. This column is dedicated to supplying creative ways for marketing your meat, information about butchering and processing, and providing ideas for using your lamb. With each newsletter this column hopes to bring you two ideas for marketing, some tips on having your lamb butchered, and a recipe for the season.*

### Encouraging word of mouth by hosting a BBQ

Every autumn we host a BBQ. In September the days are still warm enough to sit outside under the trees, and the sun stays high in the sky late enough to enjoy the view of the sheep grazing in the field until well after supper. We have a group of regular attendees (friends from our local Icelandic Horse club, family, and lifelong friends), but we always include a few friends we have met within the last year that have not been introduced to Icelandic lamb.

When selecting the meat lambs from our flock, and filling orders for those who have reserved lambs throughout the year, we always reserve one for ourselves. We have him slaughtered the week of the BBQ at a local butcher, and request that they NOT freeze the lamb. We decide what we will serve at the BBQ, and place the rest in the freezer.

Depending on the number of people we have attending, we will roast a leg, BBQ some ribs, and maybe grill some lamb chops. We usually have a potluck-style for the side dishes to take some of the stress and financial burden off of hosting such an event. However, we boil small potatoes and make a traditional Icelandic white sauce to serve alongside the lamb.

The mix of people is always refreshing. We take a short walk through the pasture while the lamb cooks, so that everyone can meet the sheep. My livestock guardian dog loves meeting new people, and often makes such a positive impression that the regular crowd looks forward to seeing him each year.

There are always questions about the sheep, about Iceland, and the traditional foods. It is a great chance to share your love for the Icelandic sheep, and to share some interesting facts with your guests. They love to hear that the meat is raised without chemicals or hormones, and that they have a happy and healthy life. They are often interested to hear that they are a mountain breed with a more delicate taste to the meat, and thrive on grass alone. I find many people have tried lamb from the grocery store, and have been disappointed. I love to watch these people as they try the Icelandic lamb. It's pure delight.

If you feel up to the task, invite local restaurant owners and chefs to your BBQ. You may be able to strike a deal to pro-

vide the restaurant with a set number of meat lambs for one season of the coming year.

Within a week after the BBQ people begin to call and reserve lambs for the coming year. I always end up with more orders than I can fill, just through word of mouth and from those that came to the BBQ and tasted it for themselves.

### Online Marketing

Creating a web site for your farm can dramatically improve your exposure. Many Icelandic sheep farmers have web sites dedicated to their farms to promote sheep and fiber sales. Those that acquire USDA approval also advertise meat cuts for sale on their web site.

Finding an inexpensive web host is easy. You can try "Yahoo!" or "MSN" - each offer web hosting for about \$10 per month. Once your web page is established, you can establish yourself on search engines, and even advertise on the web if you like. As a member of ISBONA you can have your website listed under "Breeder's Listing" on the ISBONA web site.

The challenges of owning a web site are: keeping it updated, looking professional, and having a site that is easily-navigated. Some tips for overcoming these challenges: Update your web site with new photos, new prices, or new text about every month, so that visitors feel like your farm is successful, current, and up-beat.

Change the look of your site as the seasons change, to give it a fresh look. When your lambs are sold, remove your lamb list and tell people to check back for new lamb info when you decide to sell more (such as, if you decide to sell bred ewes in the winter).

Keep your website clean and simple. A very easy way to make your site easy to navigate is to decide on a group of links (to pages on your web site) and have them available to the visitor in the same location on each page. This way the visitor can get to any one of your pages from the current page. Try to eliminate the need to press the "back" button. Always have a link to "home" on each page.

Use photos! Web sites are visual, and people enjoy looking at photos. When someone looks over a web site quickly, they remember the photos the most. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words!

A web site is a great way to gain exposure, and to show off your farm. Enjoy it! Make it a reflection of you, and have fun!

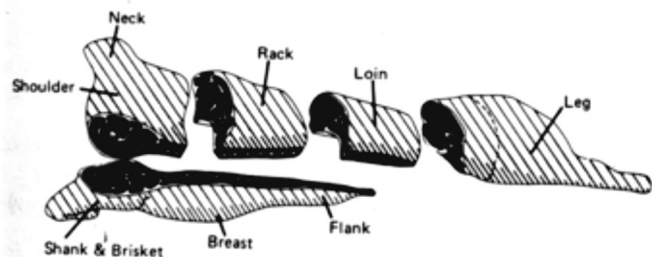
—Reprinted from ISBONA Newsletter Winter 2005.



## Lamb Cuts, 101

Kristen Bolton

As we kick off our regular meat column, we thought it would be useful to go over some basic cuts for lamb. This will be familiar to almost everyone, but we hope it will provide a common ground for other articles in future issues. While I have consulted my butcher, I am no expert, so please pardon any errors. (Thanks to Naomi Shirk of Shirk's Meats in Dundee, N.Y.) Also, your butcher may have his or her own special way of cutting up the meat.



This illustration, from *Raising Sheep the Modern Way* by Paula Simmons, shows the basic "geography" of your lamb: the shoulder, the shank/breast, the rack, the loin, the leg.

As with any meat, the most tender cuts are considered the choice cuts. The tender cuts from pastured animals come from the muscles which do the least work. The toughest cuts come from the muscles which do the most work. The toughness factor influences how you cook your meat, and to some extent, how you want your lamb cut up. That said, lamb meat is of course much more tender than the meat of adult sheep.

### Shoulder

The shoulder does a lot of work, and is one of the toughest parts of the lamb. However you get it cut, you will want to advise your customers to braise it (long, slow, moist heat cooking) to tenderize the meat. Typical cuts are a boneless rolled shoulder roast, or shoulder chops. In addition, you will have the neck meat, which you can have made into stew meat, or ground.

### Shank/Breast

The front legs give you the shank, which is quite delicious braised. You could also have it boned out and made into ground lamb. Our butcher tends to bone out the breast meat into ground lamb, but you could also have it cut into a lamb version of spare ribs.

### Rack

The rack comes from the rib cage and typically has 8 ribs in it. It's quite tender and creates a very choice cut. A rack is usually split down the spine into 2 single racks: left and right, if you will. You can have the rack "frenched," which trims out the intercostal meat, and the lean and fat over

the ribs, but leaves the tender, loin part intact. A crowned roast is made by tying two racks back to back in a circle. You can also have the rack cut into rib chops.

### Loin

The loin begins after the rib cage ends, along the spine. It is also quite tender, and is made into loin chops, or a tenderloin. The loin chops come off the vertebrae beneath the rib cage. Or you can have it boned out into 1 small tenderloin and 1 larger loin. These can be butterflied, made into steaks or roasts.

### Leg

The leg is not as tough as the shoulder, but not as tender as the loin or rack. You can have it made into a leg of lamb, or lamb round steaks. Direct your butcher as to whether you would prefer it with the bone in, or boneless. Many recipes recommend using leg of lamb as stew meat, since it is not as gristly and tough as the shoulder and neck can be. The bottom portion of the leg, below the knee, can be separated off into shanks.

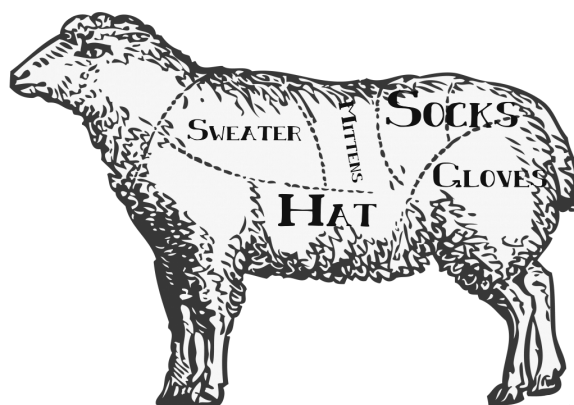
### Organ Meats

You will want to direct your butcher as to which organ or other meats you would like to save, such as the liver, kidneys, heart, tongue, etc.

In summary, think about your cut list for lamb as follows:

- neck: stew or ground
- shoulder: boneless rolled shoulder roast, or shoulder chops, or ground, plus shank
- breast: lamb ribs or ground
- rack: rack of lamb, frenched rack, or rib chops
- loin: loin chops or tenderloin and loin (made into roast or butterflied steaks)
- leg: leg (roast) or lamb round steaks or stew meat plus shank
- organ meats

—Reprinted from ISBONA Newsletter Winter 2005.



# Icelandic Sheep Standards

Courtesy of  
**Justin Audet**  
**Le Biscornu**

## Icelandic Sheep Standards

### General Appearance:

- A medium sized sheep
- Fine boned with an open face and legs
- Mature body weights, Rams: 90-100 kgs., Ewes : 60-65 kgs.

### Back, Loin, and Rump:

- Long, thick back-muscle with firm flesh
- Loin is broad, roundish, strong
- Rump is broad, well muscled, fairly long but can taper back a bit

### Feet and Legs:

- Legs are well muscled and thick, muscle reaching far down towards the hock
- Feet are short, thick, straight and squarely placed
- Pasterns are strong, angling about 45 degrees to the ground

### Tail:

- Tail is naturally short, fluke shaped, mostly covered with hair
- There should be a lot of wool
- Fleece comes in a wide range of natural colours
- Wool is dual coated; fine, wavy undercoat called thel and long, coarse corkscrewy outercoat called tog.
- Kemp in wool is undesirable

### Head:

- Short with a broad forehead to the nostrils
- Nostrils should be well open, lips thick and jaw strong looking
- Eyes should be bright and alert
- Horned and polled acceptable in both sexes
- Horns growing too close to the face is undesirable

### Neck:

- Short, round and broadening at shoulders so that where neck and shoulders meet is not noticeable
- Rams should have a much thicker neck area than ewes

### Shoulders:

- Broad, blending smoothly into body
- Rounded and meaty

### Chest and ribs:

- Broad and reach well in front of legs
- Wide chest cavity
- Ribs should stand well out and be well rounded

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