

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Dear Susan,

Congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of ISBONA this year.

I am glad to learn that the theme: **Healthy Sheep**, will be dedicated to the memory of Stefanía whom I knew well.

We at the Agricultural Society of Iceland, representing the breeders of Icelandic sheep, always supported Stefanía, and I was involved in preparing the exports, particularly in 1990, as well as facilitating the exports at the same time to Britain.

Her main problems here concerned veterinary authorities, mainly before the 1985 exportation. I think this was partly due to the fact that Stefanía was exporting some **adult** sheep whereas in 1990 only 4-5 month old **ewe- and ram lambs** were exported, no older sheep then. These were certainly not the first exports of live sheep from Iceland as, for example, in 1973 lambs were exported to Denmark and to England in 1979.

I met Stefanía not only in 1985 and 1990. For example, in 1987, when she was considering further exports she had become more interested in the wool and she took with her to Canada several fleeces from my small flock of sheep which I gave to her.

She was always determined in succeeding in establishing her own flock of Icelandic sheep on her Yeoman Farm with the good support from her husband and their daughter.

I helped to plan the ISBONA-group visit in the fall of 1998, arranged for a meeting+refreshments in the library of the Agricultural Society which then had been renamed the Farmers Association of Iceland after organisational changes. I remember meeting Stefanía, Susan Mongold and others there, a happy gathering. Then they were preparing semen exports which we at the AS supported and Southram arranged since they kept the AI-rams as they still do.

The interview with Stefanía from 1995 is very informative and has considerable historical value. I corresponded a great deal with Susan too in these years, and I could have corrected a few facts in the text she published in 2008. Thank you for the link. She did not ask me, however, to read it through.

Here are some errors in the text:

1) Rams from **Finland** have never been imported into Iceland. **Karakul** sheep from Halle Research Station in Germany brought Jaagziekte, Maedi/Visna and Johne´s Disease into Iceland in 1933 with devastating effects (Icelandic sheep immunically naive). The Karakuls were certified by veterinary authorities there as disease-free. The purpose was to establish **lamb skin/pelt production** in Iceland. Nothing to do with meat and wool.

2) The Minister of Agriculture referred to was Jón Helgason að **Seglbúðir Farm** (not Hunkubakkar Farm) concerning the 1985 exportation.

3) The support payments for goats started in **1966**, no linkage with the project of Halla Eygló Sveinsdóttir just after 1990 when she worked for a short time on Yeoman Farm, a good friend of Stefanía. I supervised this goat project and published a paper with Halla on it in 1994.

4) No changes were made in the law concerning exports of live animals from Iceland between 1985 and 1990. The situation is basically similar today, great care taken to export only healthy livestock, free from many well known diseases overseas.

5) In October 1990 only 4-5 month old **ewe- and ram lambs** were exported as mentioned before, Stefanía with 74 lambs and British sheep breeders with 58 lambs.

6) The false positives diagnosed in blood samples of some of the lambs due to be exported in October 1990, in both groups, were all due **Brucella abortus**, which has never been found in Iceland. Possibly carried by seabirds as rightly mentioned in the article. This was not **Chlamydia**.

I am really glad to learn how well ISBONA is developing having been in contact with you from the beginning. My efforts to assist Stefania in exporting Icelandic sheep to North-America certainly bring back good memories.

With best wishes,

Ólafur