

Maryland sheep and wool festival set for May 4-5

WEST FRIENDSHIP, MD — Mention of the 12th annual sheep and wool festival immediately conjures up sheep shows and craft

people. But, according to Mary E. F. Streaker, general chairman, this is only the beginning of the image.

"Actually," she says, "the festival is an extension of the philosophy of the Maryland Sheep Breeders Assoc.—to provide an

opportunity for the sheep producer to market his wares and for the consumer to purchase such commodities in a convenient manner."

Dates for the festival are May 4 and 5. Location is the Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Md., just I-70. This unique festival is believed to be the largest such event in the country, hosting more than 10,000 last year.

Maryland Sheep Breeders Assoc. was formed many years ago as a non-profit organization. Aside from the fellowship of those engaged in a similar agricultural pursuit, perhaps the foremost purposes were to operate a wool pool and hold a spring market lamb sale.

The wool pool, held each June in Timonium, collects, grades and sells the annual clip to one mill, thus affording the producer a market for his wool. Traditionally, the organization held a market lamb sale each spring, again to provide a market, this time for meat animals. This since has evolved into a feeder lamb sale and a carcass contest.

Under sponsorship of the Maryland Sheep Breeders Assoc., the festival began 12 years ago at Carroll County Fairgrounds. Many of the participants have been, and are, both producers and crafts people.

Hand spinners had for some years haunted the wool pool for fleeces, especially naturally colored ones, which, incidentally, are treated as 'reject' at the pool since colored wool is unacceptable to the manufacturer. The practice resulted in so much confusion that the wool pool authorities 'invited' the spinners to go 'elsewhere'. The 'elsewhere' became the festival, where both white and colored fleeces were offered. This still is

the custom, but a fleece competition has now been added. Hand spinners now buy their fleeces at the festival, or make arrangements with producers to visit their farms to obtain wool.

As the festival grew, a larger location was sought and the Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, became home. A huge building houses more than 100 crafts, but competitions such as fine arts, garment and skein and fleeces. The availability of so many buildings guarantees both participant and spectator an 'under-roof' situation.

Activities include shows for white wool sheep, natural colored sheep, purebred Romneys and feeder lambs. An auction of breeding sheep was included last year and will be a featured attraction in 1985. More than 500 sheep and lambs were penned at the fairgrounds last year.

In addition to the sheep brought to the festival to compete in the shows, representatives of more than 30 different breeds of sheep will be displayed in one barn. An effort is made to exhibit so-called "exotic" breeds not normally shown at county and state fairs.

A welcome addition last year, according to Mrs. Streaker, was the lamb cook-off contest, to be repeated this year.

Other activities include a shearing contest, working sheep dog demonstrations, lamb cutting demonstrations, fashion show, king and queen contest, spinning contest, sheep to shawl contest, 4-H and FFA sheep judging contest.

"If it has to do with sheep or wool, we will cover the subject," promises Mrs. Streaker. "There truly is something for everyone."

Admission and parking are free. Grounds will be open from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. both days.

Breeder benefits from Jersey genetic recovery program

COLUMBUS, Ohio — When Tom Cooperrider was about to graduate from Ohio State University, he was pretty sure he wanted to return to his father's Jersey dairy farm. "But I didn't want to do it unless they were registered," he said.

At the same time, Dick Kellogg, a Genetic Recovery agent for The American Jersey Cattle Club, was visiting unregistered Jersey herds in Ohio's Licking County and stopped in at the Cooperrider dairy near Croton.

Tom's father, Theron, had always milked Jerseys, but registration papers were never important to him. When Tom met Dick Kellogg, he enrolled in the Genetic Recovery program without a second thought.

Genetic Recovery identifies and records unregistered purebred Jerseys. Since its adoption in 1975, over 75,000 Registered Jerseys have resulted.

"We had records going back I don't know how many years," explained Tom. "Dick came by in 1978, sorted it all out and got us organized."

The result was Tom's dream: his Buttercrest Registered Jersey herd. Milk production has increased dramatically, the herd has gone from Owner-Sampler to official DHIR testing, all cows are scored under the AJCC's Type Traits Appraisal Program and Buttercrest Jerseys are promoted in each month's issue of the Jersey

journal. Where surplus heifers used to be sold at common market prices, promotion and top genetics have encouraged buyers to look for Buttercrest consignments at top state, regional and national Jersey sales.

In addition, having well bred and well managed Registered Jerseys has captured the attention of several national artificial insemination organizations. Cooperrider has contracted for the sale of young bulls with Select Sires in Ohio, American Breeders Service in Wisconsin and Carnation Genetics in California.

Top genetics and top management have combined to produce the top Jersey herd in Ohio for milk production. The most recent rolling herd average on the 123 cows was 14,445 lbs. milk, 5.1% fat, 729 lbs. fat, 3.8% protein and 553 lbs. protein.

All animals, including heifers, are bred AI, using only the top high PD bulls and selected young sires. An aggressive feeding program is followed which includes alfalfa hay, corn silage, wet brewers grain and a pelleted grain. The milking cows are fed 8 times a day.

"Everything is going quicker and better than I thought it would," mused Tom. "It's hard to understand why everyone with unregistered Jerseys doesn't jump on the Genetic Recovery bandwagon."

York wool sales

YORK — York County's sheep growers received about \$19,559.50 for their 1984 sales of shorn wool and unshorn lambs, according to Harry Wolf, chairman of the Agricultural Stabilization and

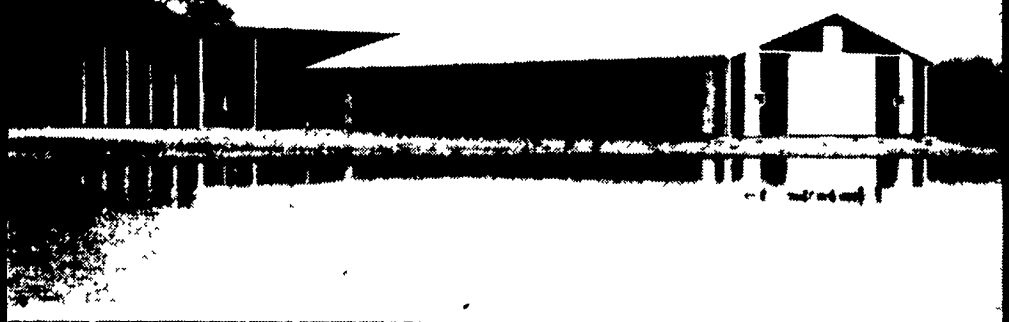
Conservation Service. In 1983, wool incentive payments totaled \$14,254. ASCS began issuing wool payment checks to 118 local farmers on April 9, 1985.

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