

# Sheep Industry Could Be 'Endangered'

ORLANDO, Fla. — Producers attending the American Sheep Industry Convention said it could be the sheep industry that's "endangered" if significant changes are not made in the Endangered Species Act as it comes up for renewal in 1992.

The lines of conflict were clear as debaters squared off on the endangered species issue during a packed session at the American Sheep Industry Convention. Con-

nie Brooks, a well-known and well-versed Portland attorney specializing in multiple land use issues, faced Wm. Robert Irvin, counsel for the National Wildlife Federation, both drawing a mixture of chuckles, groans, and even boos as the debate rolled.

The one point of agreement was that the Endangered Species Act will be a hot topic in 1992 and it will be a year of challenge for both the environmental community and

multiple use groups like the sheep industry as each struggles to have its voice heard.

"This promises to be the fight of the century. The environmental community is united on this issue," Irvin said. The issue will be wrought with misinformation and "outright lies," he said.

"We are willing to work together, but we aren't going to retreat from the commitment to future generations to leave this

land as rich as we found it."

Irvin called on the audience of 300-plus sheep producers to recognize the myths around the Endangered Species Act and recognize its success in restoring balance in the environment. He argued that the Act is working successfully to restore species and that, under the law, it considers economic and human implications in listing a species.

"Opponents say the Endangered Species Act will bring civilization to a standstill, but the facts say otherwise," he said.

Brooks disagreed with both points. "The Endangered Species Act is not effective in protecting our rich resources," she said, pointing out the indiscriminate "emergency room" use of the Act on specific high-profile species and the high impact on agriculture and other landowners.

"There is no accountability and no access to the system," Brooks said. "It's open to significant abuse."

"There has got to be a better way," she said. "We have got to bring man into the equation, recognizing lands must maintain biodiversity. We have to realize preservation systems don't provide for a stable level of diversity."

Brooks called for an alternative to the current statute and said ecosystem management must be

considered. She also said the listing and "jeopardy" procedures must be clarified and improved to bring better accountability and accessibility to the system. "This Act finds the points of controversy, not the points of resolution," Irvin said, "The protection of a species is a national imperative. "We have got to invest today for tomorrow."

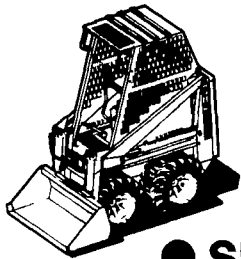
Brooks replied that the "key issue is compensation. The American people must understand conservation and ecology is not a free lunch, and it is unfair to put the burden on a small group of people."

Brooks said the issue of compensation for impacts from endangered species introduction must be considered. "No compensation has been paid unless the land has been acquired," she said.

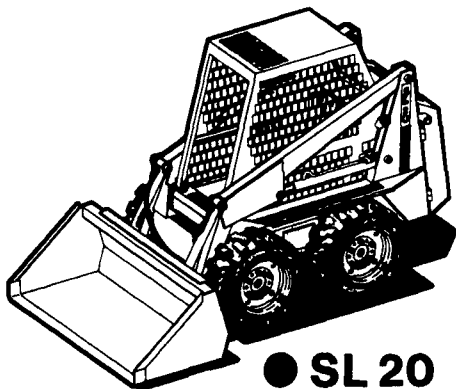


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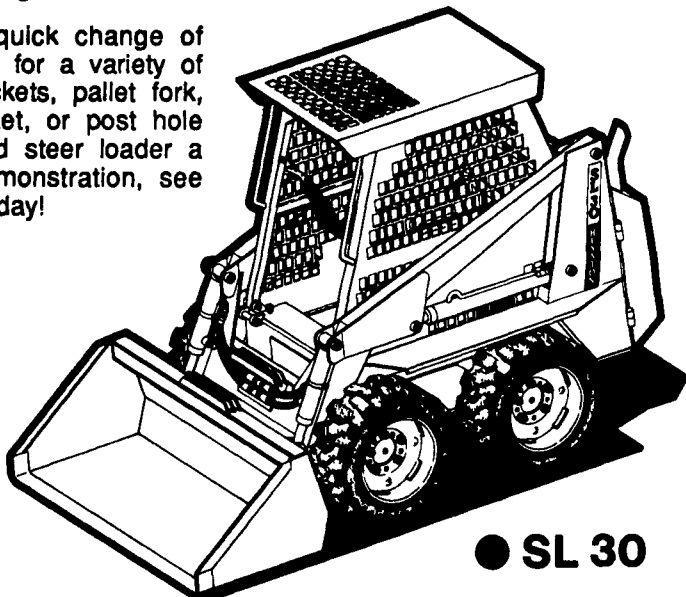
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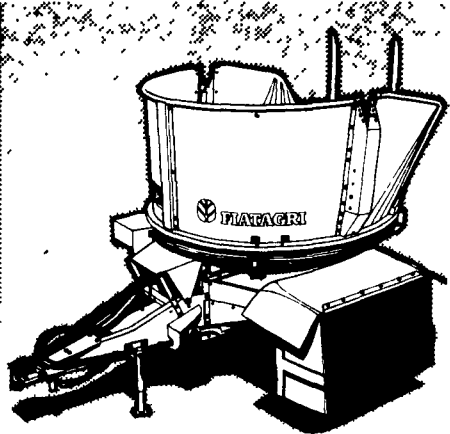
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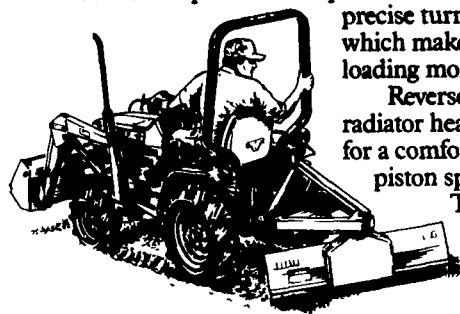
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