

Powell Rambouillets

(Continued from Page A29)

on the ground for consideration for next year's show. "We've had about 35 fall lambs and will be having lambs again in January, February, and March. Most are due in February," said Powell.

What's the secret to having champions? Strausbaugh noted that you have to get the lambs on the ground and get them growing.

"We try to feed as good of feed as we can to get the lambs growing and healthy," he said. "The other thing is figuring out which rams to breed to which lambs or ewes to try to get some consistency."

Although the supreme champion has been sold, Powells already have some of his offspring on the ground. In February, they expect to have some of their other champion ram's offspring born.

"It takes a while to see what will be your good lambs. You have to look at your growthiness. Later on, they can tell what kind of fleece they have on them," said Strausbaugh.

Each breed of sheep places different emphasis on different parts of the animal. The Rambouillet score card emphasizes conformation with 60 percent of the points with the type of fleece totaling 40 percent. Among

meat breeds, the fleece may be only worth five to 10 percent.

"The difficulty in the Rambouillets is that you have to choose for good fleeces as well as size and scale and correctness. You're basically trying to put three different pieces of the puzzle together to get a good sheep," said Strausbaugh. "There are some sheep with good fleeces that aren't quite big enough and then you have some that are really big, but their fleeces aren't as nice."

At Powell Rambouillets, the emphasis has always been on fine fleece. Judges look for uniformity in the fleece and the diameter of each fiber. The thinner the diameter, the better the fleece.

"We save some of our nicer fleeces for some area hand spinners. I don't spin," said Powell. "I have a spinning wheel in the corner, but I don't have the time."

While Powell and Strausbaugh are away at the shows, Powell's sons, Rich and Geoff, man the farm. Powell's father, Kenneth Moore, who is 90 years old, still gets out every day to check on the sheep. In fact, he still owns four animals.

"My Dad always had horned Rambouillets and he always put a lot of emphasis on fleece. We've just continued with that," said Powell.

Access To Argentina Complete For U.S. Pork Producers

National Pork Producers Council President (NPPC) Craig Jarolimek announced recently that early in the new year, U.S. pork producers will have the opportunity to ship bone-in as well as boneless pork products to Argentina.

The Argentine market just recently opened to boneless pork exports from the U.S. Now, bone-in products from the U.S. will also be accepted. The Argentine market for imported pork is estimated at 30,000 metric tons a year.

While it will take time to build

market share in Argentina, opening the market to U.S. pork is another victory in a worldwide effort to eliminate barriers to free trade.

"Step by step, we are making steady progress toward a world market for pork that is free of all tariff and non-tariff barriers," said Jarolimek, a pork producer from Forest River, N.D. "The U.S. pork market has been wide open for many years and everyone is free to compete openly with us. We practice and encourage open competition because we have confidence in the

quality, consistency and value of U.S. pork."

Full approval for U.S. pork shipments to Argentina comes on the heels of direct meetings between Argentine officials, Jarolimek and other officials of NPPC and representatives from USDA. Jarolimek pointed out that U.S. pork producers are principled in their support for allowing sound science to determine whether a foreign product was safe for importation and expected Argentina to do the same.

Jarolimek thanked U.S. Trade Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky, Agriculture Secretary Glickman and members of Congress led by Sens. Charles Grassley (R-IA), Max Baucus (D-MT) and Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-NE) for their support in the effort to gain approval for U.S. pork shipments to Argentina. Jarolimek also said that USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Isi Siddiqui deserved high praise for the time and effort he dedicated to the issue on behalf of U.S. producers.



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