

Cornell Program Strengthens Northeast Sheep/Goat Industries

ITHACA, N.Y. — The Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program at Cornell University was established in January 2001 to improve the marketing infrastructure for sheep and goats in the 12 northeastern states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. The program is funded by the Lamb Meat Adjustment Assistance Program, which resulted from legal actions taken by the American Sheep Industry Association to limit cheap lamb imports to the U.S.

Bob Melchior was highly effective in the marketing coordinator position for the program until his unexpected death in early August.

To continue to serve producers in the Northeast and fulfill the obligations of the grant, Cornell University elected to fill the marketing coordinator position. Susan Schoenian, a University of Maryland (small ruminant) Extension Agent and sheep and goat producer assumed 50 percent of the responsibilities of the position and concentrates her efforts in the southern half of the 12-state region.

Chris Parsons, a goat producer

and custom processor from Pine City, N.Y., performs 50 percent of the duties and focuses his efforts on the northern half of the region. Susan can be reached at (301) 432-2767 ext. 343 or ss80@umail.umd.edu. Chris can be reached at (607) 732-4987 or cgparrsons@prodigy.net.

The Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program has accomplished many of its stated objectives. Regional Marketing Summits were held in the northern, middle, and southern parts of the region at the beginning of the granting period to publicize the program and get feedback on methods to improve marketing infrastructure in our region.

Program staff and an advisory board with representatives from each of the 12 states have implemented several pilot marketing projects. Graded tele-auctions have been organized at various locations in New York State.

A successful marketing pool has been established whereby a group of a half dozen producers, representing 1,200 ewes on accelerated lambing programs, is supplying 10 to 20 "premium quality" lambs per week to a retail market in New York City.

A marketing pool to sell animals direct to New York City live animal markets will undergo its

trial run for the Thanksgiving holiday season.

Development of a Kosher/Halal kill floor for small and medium sized plants has also been a goal. A safer slaughter knife for Halal slaughter successfully underwent testing at several sites and a "humane" restraining system for ritual slaughter (Kosher and Halal) was also successfully tested at a plant in southeastern Pennsylvania.

One of the primary accomplishments of the Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program is the establishment of a sheep and goat marketing Website at www.sheepgoatmarketing.org.

The site includes program information, news, links, calendar of events, links to regional auction prices, an ethnic calendar, articles on marketing, and a directory of producers, feeders, dealers, buyers, sellers, auction houses, retailers, wholesalers, and processors.

The grant providing funding for the Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program will expire on January 21, 2003. Regional Marketing Summits are planned in Fall'02/Winter'03 to determine how the program can continue to serve producers in the Northeast region and discuss

• Friday, Jan. 10, 2003 at Harrisonburg, Virginia in conjunction with the Virginia North Carolina (Mid Atlantic) Shepherd's Symposium. The marketing summit will consist of a marketing panel followed by an open discussion with the NESGMP as the focal point. Both sheep and goat producers are urged to attend. For more info contact Susan Schoenian at (301)432-2767 ext. 343 or ss80@umail.edu.

• Saturday, Jan. 18, 2003 at the Cornell Sheep Farm, Harford, New York in conjunction with the Quinterly Cornell Sheep Farm Field Day. Both sheep and goat producers welcomed. For more info contact Dr. Michael Thonney at (607)255-2851 or mlt2@cornell.edu.

For more information about the Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Program contact Dr. Michael Thonney, Cornell Animal Sciences Department, (607)255-2851 or visit the Website at www.sheepgoatmarketing.org. Additional information about sheep, goats and many other topics can be found at Cor-



The Halal/Kosher restraining device developed by the Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Project. Note that the feet of the lamb are off the ground and the lamb is supported by the double rails and the sides of the chute. Animals held in this manner remain very calm.

nell's Small Farms Program Website: www.smallfarms.cornell.edu.

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the formation of a Northeast Sheep and Goat Marketing Association.

Additional funding is being sought to continue funding for a marketing coordinator. Producers can help extend the efforts of the

program by participating in the Regional Marketing Summits, by adding their names to the program mailing list, and by providing input to Cornell University, Susan and Chris, and/or the advisory board, all of which have contacts on the Website.

The dates and locations for the Regional Marketing Summits are as follows:

• Saturday, Dec. 14, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Chichester, New Hampshire, Town Hall. For more information contact Bruce Clement at bruce.clement@unh.edu or Mike Thonney at (607) 255-2851 or mlt2@cornell.edu.

SPOTLIGHT ON FAMILIES IN ANNUAL FARM SHOW ISSUE

The new and expanded Farm Show opens to the public on Saturday, Jan. 11. And one of our largest, and best issues, is soon to hit mailboxes. The Jan. 11 issue will be *Lancaster Farming's* own Farm Show Issue, which highlights the newly expanded, largest indoor agricultural event in the country. Included that issue: Farm Show family highlights, Keystone Degree recipient biographies, events schedule, and maps. It's a brand-new Farm Show this year. We hope to see you there!

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