

SOAY SHEEP FARMS

www.soayfarms.com

## January Calendar

- ☐ If you haven't done so already, merge rams back into bachelor flock. Watch for excessive fighting. Hormone levels will begin to drop by February, and eating will become more interesting than fighting.
- Remove visual barriers from fences.
- Merge breeding ewes together, but keep separate from nonbreeder flock until after lambing.
- Check feet. Trim as necessary while hooves are soft.
- Continue watching for coughing and runny noses. Treat as necessary.

# FROM THE PREMIER BREEDER OF BRITISH REGISTERED SOAY SHEEP

# Soay futures

Presently, there are about

375 registered British Soay

ewes living in North Amer-

ica, not enough to secure

the future of the breed

in theory, where they learn the skills they need for a career in by a less

Animal Science. It isn't just the skills, though. They are taught technical reading and writing,

Tracking the sheep's cross country journey

here yet. Finding new shepherds who are committed to their conservation and the expansion of their numbers is critical and has always been the biggest challenge of this project. It has long been

my view that exposing young people to heritage breeds, with the hope it will spark their interest, is important to the future of any program such as ours. You can imagine my joy when Shelley sent me the following story about what she is doing with her sheep and her students.

—Ed.

Lesson of the Day

As a proud soon-to-be Soay shepherdess and a science teacher at a vocational school for high school students in New York, I just had to include my Animal Science/Vet Asst. students in the excitement and introduce them to these amazing primitive creatures.

The Animal Science/ Veterinary Assistant program where I teach is a hands on learning system. The students spend a portion of their time which includes lab reports, resumés, and professional writing along with how to read manuals, pharmaceutical inserts, and scientific journals. Math skills aren't left out either. Everything from ration

calculations, dosing, and dilutions is taught and practiced. I come into the picture with the science

lessons. We do dissections, bacteriology, and a myriad of other projects.

The Soay Lesson started with a history lesson on the domestication of all livestock, focusing on sheep and the ancestral breeds of all domestic sheep. This was followed by a lesson on the characteristics of primitive breeds as well as the primitive breeds still in existence today, with a

by Shelley Bouyea

focus on the Soay. As the arrival date for my starter flock loomed ever closer, I showed a copy of the DVD, "Soay - Sheep on the Island at the Edge of the World". Well, that did it. Most of the students and both of the program instructors were hooked and couldn't wait to get the chance to see the Soay in person.

A field trip to my farm was scheduled, and nearly every day of the Soay's 12-day journey from Oregon I was quizzed on location and potential arrival date. Then it happened: They arrived!

It was a Monday, so I

s k i p p e d school. On Tu e s d a y, I entered the class-room with photos in hand and the date was set for the field trip. Wow, what a day



Arrival day

we had! I shamelessly copied information from the basic care section on the <a href="www.soayfarms.com">www.soayfarms.com</a> website to create guided notes for the students to follow during the lecture in the barn, as well as

continued on page 2

#### Resources

Since the study Shelley cited, there have been cases of rabies in Oregon, including one in Merlin in November 2010. A goat also died not far from here earlier in the year. Vaccine is available for sheep and is increasingly recommended by veterinarians in known rabies areas. The vaccine must be administered by a veterinarian. Fees vary from state to state. The fee I was quoted was \$15 per animal. In New York, the state has set the fee at \$20 an animal. With large flocks, this becomes prohibitive for most. An alternative is a dual fencing system with livestock dogs patrolling a corridor between the sheep pasture and the property line, which discourages foxes and raccoons from entering the fields, thus reducing exposure.

For more information, visit:

Vaccinations for sheep and Goats—<a href="http://www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/flockyaccinations.html">http://www.sheepandgoat.com/articles/flockyaccinations.html</a>

Rabies Prevention in Livestock—<u>http://ohioline.osu.</u> edu/vme-fact/0001.html

© 2011 Southern Oregon Soay Sheep Farms. For reprint permission contact kathiem@ soayfarms.com. Viewpoint is a monthly publication of Southern Oregon Soay Sheep Farms. If you have enjoyed this issue, please subscribe (kathiem@soayfarms.com) to have each new issue emailed to you. To be removed from our mailing list, please unsubscribe (kathiem@soayfarms.com).

All advice in this newsletter has been used successfully on our farm. It is important to remember that every animal and situation is different. Before you try any of our suggestions, we urge you to consult your veterinarian.

This newsletter was produced by Overture Publications www.overturepublications.com.

### **Soay futures** continued from page one

information about how the sheep arrived with the itinerary from Ron Keener's yahoo group <a href="www.travelwithronk.com">www.travelwithronk.com</a>. I also used the RBST site, <a href="www.rbst.org.uk">www.rbst.org.uk</a>, for the other primitive breed information. There were maps of the US with push pins showing all the stops from Merlin to my place, as well as a world map with push pins marking the historical locations of

the other primitive sheep. I had posters about f i b e r grading and how the fleece was used by the



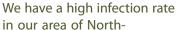
Dr. McCormick's participation.

Dr. McCormick is a local vet who has agreed to care for my flock. She has practiced medicine for over 25 years. She

has treated everything from an elephant to a guinea pig, but has a soft spot for horses, sheep, and kittens. The latter she rescues, and always has plenty available for adoption. She espent about an hourchecking out the paperwork, explaining the health certificate and nutri-

tional needs, especially in areas with a selenium deficiency. She added that along

with the vacci-nations that the lambs had already received, we were adding rabies to the mix.



ern New York and Vermont. In 2005, there were no documented cases of rabies in Oregon, but in 2007 there were enough cases in my area that the USDA dropped medicated bait for raccoons to help lower the

Field trip

number of cases in our part

of New York. This was great a bit of information for the students. As for the Soay,

she just loved the little guys.

New arrivals were calm

Dr. McCormick's interest extends well past that of veterinarian. She is an artisan weaver, hand spinner, and knitter who can't wait



Hands-on education

to get her hands on the fleece, and she answered some of the textile questions about fiber diameters,

raw hank, etc.

It was a very busy day. The students and instructors enjoyed it. I enjoyed spreading the word about primitive breeds and teaching out of my barn. I need to find a way to do that more often! The Soay even seemed un-phased by the attention. The ewes stayed away from the gates, but weren't jittery or acting skittish. The boys really hammed it up. The ram rubbed his horns on the gate



Getting acquainted

and kept chomping away as if this was a normal day. "Jordan" the wether, baa'd and baa'd. It seemed every time I finished a point he would second it with baa. It was really amusing.

All photos courtesy of Shelley Bouyea.

# **Tip of the Month**

Research sheep supply catalogs online.