



THE VALAIS BLACKNOSE SHEEP SOCIETY'S

Valais Chalet

A VIRTUAL GATHERING PLACE FOR VBSS MEMBERS, FRIENDS & ENTHUSIASTS

SEPTEMBER 2022

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

We wish to extend warm greetings to each of our members as you receive our September 2022 Society newsletter. We look forward to sharing with you information on the Society's growth and development to date, and a vision for its future.

Each of your Board members has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to bring into being a cooperative and cohesive Registry that will be able to support each of you as you work to achieve our collective goal of a firmly established national flock. We hope you will support us as we continue to build on the foundation we have laid together. In this issue's "Spotlight" we're pleased to introduce ourselves to those of you we have not met.

*Warmest regards,
Joy*

SPOTLIGHT ON ...YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



I'm Joy Dally of Shepherds Lane of Oregon. I presently serve as President of the VBSS. My husband Martin and I have been raising rare and heritage breeds of sheep for decades and operate a company that imports ovine genetics from around the world and provides AI services and flock consulting called Super Sire. Many of you already know us well. Our love of sheep and our placement in the industry led us to the Valais Blacknose back in 2014 so we put our experience to work in bringing these genetics to our shores and getting a collective breeding program in place. Our flock now numbers around 60 head of high quality percentage and purebred Valais. Mentoring is a big part of our lives, and we are always excited to see the growth of new flocks across the country, bringing us closer to our goal of a sustainable breeding population!



I'm Emily Aune of Hidden Valais Ranch in Utah. I have served as the board Vice President for over 2 years. I have loved being on the board and watching this registry and breed grow here in the US. I started with my first F1's in 2018. We are currently "breeding up" from several different foundation ewes to see the progression of each generation with the unique foundation characteristics. When embryos arrived we jumped at the chance to have 100% Valais on our ranch. The Valais Blacknose Breed is my first experience with sheep and they have not disappointed. I am, and have been since a small child, a lover of all animals. My 5 children share this love and together with my wonderful husband, Josh, we have created a full and happy life filled with love and animal snuggles.

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I'm Anne Davis, acting Secretary. I was born on a farm in Portland, Oregon and have been involved in agriculture my entire life. I received a Bachelor's Degree in Crop Science at Oregon State University, then moved to Colorado for my Master's Degree in Plant Pathology. While at Colorado State University, I met my wonderful husband, Rob.

After 17 years as a plant pathologist working in the laboratory and out in the field with growers, I decided to transition to a full-time wife and mother. In 2020, we had the opportunity to purchase a flock of Scottish Blackface, F1 Valais, F2 Valais sheep, and purebred Valais semen from a family in Idaho. We considered it "The Deluxe Starter Kit" for the Valais Breed-Up program. Please check out www.davisfamilylivestock.com for more information. I've enjoyed meeting people and participating in the Valais Breed Up program. I especially enjoy helping families with young children get started and offering guidance through LAI and ET questions. I believe the strengths I offer VBSS is my detail oriented-organizations skills, customer service abilities and a strong desire to have VBSS advance and succeed for the benefit of its members.

I'm Ken Leman. I've been treasurer on the VBSS for the last three years. My Wife Nan and I own Wild Rose Farm on Whidbey Island in Washington state. We have been raising sheep for over 40 years. We've been in an up-breeding program with Wensleydales and Teeswaters for a dozen years or more. When we were introduced to Valais Blacknose we were smitten. With our experience (also a veterinarian for 42 years) it was not daunting to get involved and we're excited to help bring this breed to North America.



I'm Morgan Dawkins, the District 4 representative on the board. I'm a practicing veterinarian in Wilmington, DE. I had been doing laparoscopic AI in my personal sheep for many years, when the Valais breed-up program became available. I have to admit it seemed like a cool process to be involved in, bringing a new breed to the US when live animals couldn't be imported. I missed the first year of available imported semen but have been involved in the program since, including adding imported embryos when they became available. I have greatly enjoyed the process as well as the people I've met along the way.

Registry Report

It's always a pleasure to share positive news and we're happy to do that with this report on our membership base and our sheep registrations. Over the past three years we've seen consistent and steady growth in membership numbers and flocks. Our 2022 Active members total 139 with over 240 members on record and the year isn't over yet!

Today when we examine the database, we see a total of 2,172 sheep records with 985 of those being active in this year's pedigree activity. To date for 2022, we see 270 new ewes and 106 new rams being registered.

In looking over the percentages of all animals within the database, we see the greatest number at our 50% level which is an indicator of how strong the base of the program is as all other higher percentages must spring from this genetic pool. The numbers continue to grow in the 75% and 87.5% levels but at this time still contain less sheep.

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This is on course for an upgrading program at this stage of development and as time goes on, we will see the higher percentage numbers broaden and expand while the lower percentage's begin to decrease.

An interesting factor in what started out as an upgrading program using only imported semen, is the welcome introduction of imported purebred embryos. This is a game changer for this breed! We can now accelerate its progress by using these purebred offspring in both the upgrading programs we have started, and also in exclusively purebred flocks for continued genetic diversity. I can't wait to see what 2023 brings as these animals will be accelerating our database numbers significantly and tipping all toward higher percentages!

This phenomenal growth benefits all members as we can network with one another on genetics, breeding stock, and cooperative relationships...all tools toward building a sustainable future for these wonderful animals. We encourage each of you to build strong regional networks among members as this is the way to bring real enrichment into your personal lives and well as promote and grow your breeding programs.



MONTGOMERY SKY FARM

ASK YOUR REGISTRAR! REGISTRATION Q & A/REMINDERS

George and Lynn Morgan are the wonderful VBSS registrars. Together they run GLM Registry. (www.glmregistry.com) GLM's hours are 9am-5pm PST and they're available on weekends. Please reach out to them with ANY questions at vbss@glmregistry.com or 541-825-8580. Their mailing address is 19508 Tiller Trail Hwy Days Creek, OR 97429. George and Lynn are extremely knowledgeable and helpful! ~Joy

Q. What are some ways to ensure a smooth and streamlined registration process?

A. The most common paperwork issues that GLM sees are:

- Members not filling in all the required information or fields (Tag #'s or prefixes omitted, blood %, etc.)
- Filling in VBSS Reg #'s with VBN or other #'s that do not belong in that column, or members writing so much that it goes into the column where GLM needs to write information.
- Not providing GLM with a certificate of service
- Not verifying all the Codon/Parentage DNA matches their submission
- Not contacting GLM when doing so could have solved problems before they became problems (we're here to help!)
- PLEASE do not mail any paperwork until all the DNA information is returned to you from Flock 54 and you have double checked its accuracy.

MEET THE SHEPHERDESS



My love of sheep began when I was four years old. I remember being a small child on vacation in the South Island of New Zealand, the first time I laid eyes on black faced sheep. It was love at first sight and although they were not Valais Blacknose at the time, the black faced characteristic was one I would never forget. Fast forward a few decades and many years of waiting for the importation of Valais semen to be allowed into the USA, Montgomery Sky Farm in Western NC, is now home to its own flock of Valais Blacknose Sheep.

I should start by saying that none of this would be possible without dedicated breeders (and a very supportive husband, thanks Taylor). The individuals that devoted their lives to introducing the Valais Blacknose breed in this country and who have become friends and mentors since our involvement with the Valais Blacknose Sheep Society breed-up program, in 2020. Our search began in 2019 for foundation animals of our own and we were fortunate enough to stumble upon Anne Davis and her family of Davis Family Livestock. Anne and her family were kind, generous and incredibly knowledgeable and so, our journey from CO to NC began: a van with two humans and five Valais Blacknose Sheep. Upon meeting the percentage animals for the first time, we were amazed by their incredible wool, calm disposition and fabulous temperament.

Since acquiring our first foundation ewes (and a very special black faced wether named Popcorn), we were able to continue to grow in the program with the expertise and guidance of Joy and Martin Dally of Pure Valais and Shepherds Lane, OR. We were fortunate enough to be entrusted by the Dally's with the first purebred Valais Blacknose in the Southeastern USA, a beautiful ram named Reuben. Our farm has found the wool to be a great resource for fiber arts, but we are most impressed by the temperament and "willingness to please" nature of the Valais. They are sweet, will come running to you for scratches and love to spend time with their people. This temperament was precisely what we were looking for in the Valais Blacknose breed and we were thrilled to experience it firsthand with a purebred.



Montgomery Sky Farm hopes to continue to focus on the breed-up program in NC, producing not only beautiful animals but great temperaments. In 2022, Reuben sired several beautiful ewe lambs (F1-F3), and we anxiously await fall lambing in a few weeks! The greatest joy in life is getting to share your passion with others, something we aim to do with our Valais Blacknose program at MSF, for years to come. As our motto says, "the sky is limitless!"

-Fran & Taylor Montgomery
Montgomery Sky Farm-Valais Blacknose

THE VALAIS WAY:

A Word About Wool – by Anne Davis

Have you been wondering what to do with the Valais Blacknose Sheep (VBN) wool you are storing? Many of us have used Scottish Blackface Sheep (SBF) as their Foundation breed and have bags of SBF wool stored as well. Surely there must be a use for all this beautiful fiber!

We know that VBN and SBF fiber is ideal for hand spinning, weaving and feltings. With the recent interest in homesteading, these “old-fashioned” crafts are making a comeback. I attended classes at a local yarn shop to learn how to spin, weave and felt. Initially, I was awkward, slow and uncoordinated. But like with any new skill, with practice, I learned the beginning tricks and techniques. I would encourage any shepherdess to try their hand at these crafts. There is something satisfying about learning a new craft and using the fiber from your beloved sheep to make something special. Professional fiber artists have been creating beautiful pieces of work with these crafts for many years.



@AlisonRayAtkinson



@AlisonRayAtkinson

But what about other uses for large amounts of VBN and SBF fiber? Upon further research, the larger diameter of the fiber and other features, makes it an excellent choice for alternative uses such as carpeting and home insulation. These industries are currently in their infancy but filled with potential, especially with the increasing demand for natural products for the home.

But, while waiting for these industries to develop, the sheep are growing more wool, shearing continues as scheduled and more bags of wool get stored. We thought there must be a special niche that we could fill as a family farm.

After talking with other breeders, yarn shop owners, attending webinars and wool markets, we had enough information to know the next step was to find a woolen mill with knowledgeable, helpful, experienced people who were willing to experiment with new fiber. Most woolen mills in the United States have never worked with VBN or SBF fiber. We found such a mill and in January of 2022, my husband and I loaded the trailer with bags of raw VBN and SBF wool and started this wool adventure. We had some possible ideas and a desire to develop the wool side of our business, Davis Family Livestock, to see where it would lead.

In the next edition of The Valais Way Newsletter, we will share our experience at the woolen mill and some decisions we had to make along the way.



Mountain Meadow Wool,
Bufflo Wyoming