



Dakota Lamb Growers Co-op News

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Greetings from DLGC President Travis Fowler

Hello from southern Minnesota! The weather has been crazy, we've had all four seasons in just one week. We're on a total 'Polar Coaster' going from a nice day of 40 to a weekend blizzard, only to scorch at 85 before plunging back to the 30s. Perfect weather for sick animals.

I hope lambing is going well for everyone. We are just about done with our first group of ewes. It's always fun to see the new lambs being born and finding out if we made the right choices in the rams we put with them. Lamb prices have been strong this year so far.

There is a new grant opportunity for US sheep producers. The ALB has received a grant from USDA and Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP). The initiative is designed to help producers improve efficiency and increase productivity. There is additional information later in this Newsletter. You can also check out the American Lamb Board web site.

Remember that if you have any questions about sheep or the Co-op please feel free to call me or any other board member. Hopefully everyone has a great and safe spring. Happy Easter and God Bless.

Travis Fowler, President



The Sheep Detectives A New Breed of Mystery Movie



The Story Line:

George Hardy is a shepherd who loves to read murder mysteries to his sheep, never suspecting that they can understand him. When George is found dead under mysterious circumstances, the sheep decide to solve the crime themselves, even if it means leaving their meadow for the first time and facing the fact that the human world isn't as simple as it appears in books.

Release Date: May 8, 2026.

Check your local theater.

Please Welcome these New Members

Kelly Jackson, Woonsocket, SD

Sheep Producer since 1965
800 Ewes (Crossbred, El de France)

Paul & Karolynn Holler, White, SD

Sheep Producer since 2018
70 Ewes (Commercial White Face;
Hampshires)

Timothy & Katelyn Kennedy, Rushmore, MN

Sheep Producer since 2010
170 Ewes (Finn/Dorsett; El De France)

Spencer Lindner, Florence, SD

Sheep Producer since 2018
165 Ewes (Polypay, Hampshire; Targhee)

Cory & Kim Niefeld, Belgrade, MN

Sheep Producer since 2024
60 Ewes (Targhee, Polypay)

Faith & Ryder Olson, Canby, MN

Sheep Producer since 2010
160 Ewes (Dorset; Natural Colored;
Lincoln; Blacknose Valais; Commercial
Crossbred)

For Sale

Please send any **Wanted** or **For Sale** ads to Phyllis. They will be added to the weekly carcass market report, posted on the DLGC webpage, and put in the next newsletter.

FOR SALE: Ile de France Rams and Ewe Lambs. Visit our website hasbargenlandcattle.com to view current sale offerings.

FOR SALE: LGD Pups ready to go May 1st. Are being raised with sheep and from actively working parents. Please contact Cindy at 507-450-5453 for more information.

Dewormer Classifications

Jaelyn Whaley, SDSU Extension Sheep Field Specialist

Across the U.S., we are seeing increasing resistance to dewormers, particularly albendazole, ivermectin, and levamisole. Resistance occurs when genetically resilient individuals pass on drug resilience to the next generation of worms. To get ahead of resistant worm populations, use dewormers from different classifications, as each class has a different mode of action.

As you purchase your 2026 dewormers, determine which classification your current dewormer is, and look at alternatives from another class (see table below). You may also want to consider a product that covers more than just worms, as several common dewormers also combat external parasites and flukes (ivermectin, doramectin, and moxidectin). The American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control recommends using a combination of dewormers. By utilizing more than one deworming product from different classes, you can target a larger percentage of worms. Additionally, you don't want to mix the products; rather, administer each product separately. Combination deworming is most suggested for operations that have struggled with regular worm troubles or have resistance concerns.

All too often, producers discover resistance the hard way, when they experience large losses even after giving a dewormer. Get ahead of internal parasites by using a new dewormer this year. I would also encourage you to be proactive in your dewormer decisions, as some dewormers have been on backorder!

Drug Class	Drug Name (Tradename)
Benzimidazoles	Fenbendazole (Safe-Guard, Panacur) Albendazole (Valbazen) Oxyfendazole (Synantic)
Nicotinic Antagonists or Cell Depolarizers	Levamisole (LevaMed, Prohibit) Morantel (Rumantel) Pyrantel (Storongid)
Macrocyclic Lactones (avermectins & milbimycins)	Ivermectin (Ivomec, Noromectin) Doramectin (Dectomax) Eprinomectin (Eprinex) Moxidectin (Cydectin, Quest)

In Memory

Julie Marguerite (Homme) Essame, 83, of Belview, Minnesota and Green Valley, Arizona, died peacefully at home on Friday, January 9, 2026, after a recent Leukemia diagnosis. Julie and her husband John raised and bred thousands of sheep. When John took over the Sheep Program in Willmar Tech, Julie took over the lambing shed. With help from neighbors, Julie could allow John to coach sheep production in Central Asia, and three times they both took Minnesota sheep producers to see British flocks.

Julie and John were Siremax terminal sire founders and made a huge difference in sheep producers lives from Willmar to Kazakhstan. We thank them for their International support to the sheep industry.

Superior Farms

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Happy Spring and Greetings from the Superior Farms Livestock Team! It is two weeks from Easter and right in the middle of a handful of other Lamb eating holidays!

We decided to break this update for the newsletter up a little, each giving a little update for the benefit of DLGC members.

Mark's take on the Lamb Market:

Market update looks very strong, we are getting resistance from the retail side, but the overall numbers look to be tight, so I don't see the market faltering any time soon. Keep doing a good job finishing your lambs and market them when they are ready to take advantage of this high market. Always keep quality in the forefront so that we can put out the best possible product to our consumers. Thank you for being apart of the Superior Farms program. As always feel free to call with any questions or concerns.

Wyatt with a Denver Camera update:

I just wanted to give an update on where we are with the camera grading system. As you know it has been quite the journey to get it up and running. We have hit many roadblocks along the way from software problems to rail adjustments. As of right now we are in the home stretch to finish this up, I am collecting sample data from the camera and comparing this to USDA grades to present to the camera team. They will use this data to further calibrate the grading algorithm to ensure we are getting as accurate grades as possible. After the point of re-calibration, we will get the camera USDA certified and will be able to put the camera online.

Karissa's ALB Grant Update:

At the South Dakota Sheep Growers meeting last fall and during the DLGC December meeting I mentioned there was hopefully going to be a grant available through ALB. Be on the look out on the American Lamb Board website and sign up for their eblast (emails) every Thursday as it is going to be announced in the next week or so with the application as well as eligibility! I will also share a direct link to the application with Phyllis when it is available. Once it is announced if anyone has questions or needs help with the application please reach out I would love to help you!

Please reach out to any of us with questions! Happy Easter!

Lamb Markets and Trends

Traci Trostad, NDSU Extension ANR Agent, Nelson County

Lamb markets can feel like they change their mind faster than a lamb in a fresh gate opening, so it helps to watch a few reliable indicators as we head into spring. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) notes in its Sheep, Lamb & Mutton Market Outlook that the latest USDA-NASS Sheep and Goats inventory report showed breeding sheep inventories decreased, while market sheep inventories increased, and 2026 lamb and mutton production forecasts were increased. Those inventory shifts matter because they influence near-term supplies and can affect price tone depending on how lambs are moving through the system.

For a broader national snapshot, USDA's Livestock and Poultry Outlook also points to the same theme; overall sheep and lamb inventory down slightly, breeding inventory lower, but market sheep and lambs a bit larger heading into the year, along with commentary on production and imports. Even when local markets don't perfectly match national trends, these reports are helpful for understanding the bigger supply picture behind the scenes. Conversely, our freezer inventory is at historical lows leading to the currentness of markets and industry price support for the spring.

On the "what's happening right now" side, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) provides two useful weekly signals. The Estimated National Lamb Carcass Cutout report tracks wholesale values using a rolling weighted average of FOB plant prices, giving a window into downstream demand for lamb cuts. And for auction movement, AMS's Livestock Auction Weighted Average reports provide recent price comparisons and market commentary, including week-to-week changes for slaughter lambs and ewes. These reports can help explain why buyer interest may feel stronger (or softer) from one week to the next.

If you'd rather not chase multiple reports, the American Sheep Industry Association pulls together a Weekly Sheep, Lamb & Wool Market Summary that links market info and data sources in one place (www.sheepusa.org/market-info/market-summary). It's a handy starting point, then you can dig into USDA-ERS for outlook context and USDA-AMS for the week-by-week market pulse.

Past and Upcoming Sheep Webinars

International Trade and Economics Webinar hosted by UMN and NDSU Extension

Live presentation on March 18th; available soon. Please check out the archives including my favorite, **Creating Your Sheep and Goat Management Calendar** featuring Dr. Angie Varnum, on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/@uofmextensionsheepandgoats2944>

Livestock Guardian Dogs

April 23 @ 7:00pm

Register: z.umn.edu/GSDogs

Janet McNally will share her expertise and experiences with livestock guardian dogs. She lives near Hinckley, Minnesota and has effectively integrated guard dogs as teammates for raising safe and healthy sheep while utilizing her grazing management program.

Producer Spotlight- Matti Boomgaarden

June 10 @ 7:00pm

Register: z.umn.edu/GSBoom

Matti, and her fiancé Kyle, are beginning sheep farmers and featured for our producer spotlight as they develop their sheep operation. Matti is the University of Minnesota Extension Educator for Murray and Pipestone counties and is excited to share learning experiences of their May-June lambing season.

U.S. Lamb Analysis

Travis W. Hoffman, NDSU/UofMN Extension Sheep Specialist

For 2025, lamb muscle cut exports totaled 2,765 mt, up 38% and the largest since 2013. In December exports of U.S. lamb muscle cuts down 10% inventory, but increased 11% in value with growth driven primarily by Mexico and the Bahamas. Export value climbed 29% to \$15.2 million, the highest value since 2014. Shipments posted strong year-over-year growth in Mexico, Canada, Central America, and Trinidad and Tobago. Mexico's demand continues to expand to a wider range of items, including underutilized cuts from the breast and shoulder (USMEF). USDA trade data summarized by Livestock Marketing Information Center Lamb reported that lamb imports were down 6 million pounds (-2% AUS; -3% NZ; -2% Total) to 303 million pounds in 2025. In 2025, Australia accounted for 75% of total U.S. lamb imports while New Zealand accounted for 24%.

The volume of U.S. lamb increased with U.S. fresh lamb retail sales increased 7.4% in 2025 and dollar sales up 9.4%, with further progress of value-added lamb value increasing 11.2%. Increases in the export market was 60% to Mexico and 8% to the Caribbean and Dominican Republic. Our preferred Caribbean partners are Bahamas (\$2.4 million), Netherland Antilles (\$1.7 million), and Leeward-Windward islands such as Antigua and Barbuda (\$1.2 million). The export value of American Lamb accounted for \$7.76/head of all sheep harvested.

With productivity, consistency, and year-round availability as future hurdles our American Lamb Board is striving for progress via funding four research proposals, regional grazing and productivity workshops, and the exciting launch of SHEEPIQ.com, a hub for online sheep and lamb industry information.

At ASI convention, Dr. Tyler Cozzens, Livestock Marketing Information Center, explained the status of economy, forages and crops, and supply and price of sheep and lambs in the U.S. He noted that we have seen wool value increase in Fall 2025. In 2026, producers cashed checks from \$225/cwt slaughter lambs and +\$350/cwt non-traditional slaughter lambs, and we have the highest national lamb cutout value since July 2022. With comparatively lower carcass weights and current nature of sheep and frozen lamb, price support is expected for 2026.

Attendees had the tremendous opportunity to hear insight from a talented panel: David Fisher, Karissa Isaacs, Dan Lippert, and Nick Forrest, moderated by Dr. Travis Hoffman. The discussion of opportunities, challenges & innovation retrospectively looked back at the 2013 Lamb Industry Roadmap, and provided focus for next steps for American Lamb supply chain progress in the future. The four primary industry goals are: 1) Productivity Improvement, 2) Product Characteristics, 3) Demand Creation, and 4) Industry Collaboration.

Discussion was diverse from improving productivity with production management to adding value of lambs merchandised through our marketing options. Our industry has evolved in the past 13 years with examples such as the emergence of solar grazing and the continued shift of lambs harvested at lighter weights. Our ASI Lamb Council audience completed a survey (n = 86) and identified the action steps with the highest impact: 1) Adopt value-based marketing, 2) Increased use of quantitative genetic selection, 3) Explore alternative market pathways, and 4) Build industry-wide communications effort. Our panelists agree that now is a great time to grow our domestic supply to ensure consistent year-round availability and recapture domestic demand at foodservice, retail, and consumer plates. Eat American Lamb

New Grant Opportunity for U.S. Sheep Producers to Increase Productivity

U.S. sheep and lamb producers now have a new opportunity to enhance the profitability and sustainability of their operations.

The American Lamb Board (ALB) has received a grant through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) program. This initiative is designed to help producers improve efficiency and increase productivity by integrating technology and sustainable management strategies. The program also aims to expand market opportunities and support the next generation of sheep producers.

A total of 150 producers will be selected to participate. Each will work with a Technical Service Provider (TSP) to develop operational plans, implement recommended improvements, and organize farm data to identify best management practices that both mitigate emissions and enhance productivity.

Producers accepted into the program may receive up to \$23,000 to develop and implement improved sheep and land stewardship management plans. Additional benefits of enrollment include:

- ◆ Access to a Technical Service Provider
- ◆ Electronic livestock identification system
- ◆ Soil sampling services
- ◆ NSIP ultrasound and genetic consulting services

Applications are open now through May 1. Selected applicants will be notified by June 1, 2026. Once eligibility documentation is completed, individual producer programs will begin and run through September 30, 2028.

Eligibility Requirements: To qualify for the program, producers must:

- ◆ Establish farm records with the USDA Farm Service Agency
- ◆ Complete Form AD-2047 (Customer Data Worksheet)
- ◆ Certify they are not a foreign entity
- ◆ Certify they are not receiving funding from other government programs (such as EQIP) for the same practices on the same acreage
- ◆ Agree to share farm data to support analysis of production efficiency and land stewardship practices
- ◆ Participate in required educational workshops and webinars

Participant Responsibilities: Approved producers will be expected to:

- ◆ Work with a TSP to evaluate current operations and develop an implementation plan
- ◆ Adopt on-farm strategies and best management practices outlined in the plan
- ◆ Provide production data for surveys and analytical tools
- ◆ Complete self-monitoring documentation, including before-and-after photos
- ◆ Participate in on-site verification of implemented practices

“This program is about more than just financial support—it’s about equipping American sheep producers with the tools and data they need to steward their land for the long term,” said David Fisher, chairman of the American Lamb Board. “We hope the grant will help producers strengthen both the resilience and profitability of their operations for the next generation.”

For additional details, visit LambBoard.com.

Fan of Lamb Classes

Release date: Feb 12, 2026

The American Lamb Board (ALB) is excited to partner with Homemade and beloved chef Joel Gamoran to bring lamb lovers together in a one-of-a-kind cooking club. This community is all about celebrating American Lamb through monthly cooking classes, flavor-packed recipes, and a welcoming forum where home cooks can connect, swap tips, and talk all things lamb. Whether you're new to cooking lamb or already obsessed, this club is designed to inspire confidence, creativity, and a lot of delicious meals.

Now, we're taking the lamb magic to a brand-new home on YouTube—and it's better than ever. You'll find the same chefs and same incredible community, plus more live classes, on-demand videos, and easy access to every recipe whenever inspiration strikes. **To watch the live classes, you must sign up to the Homemade Class.**

(<https://www.homemadecooking.com/upcoming-classes/red-wine-braised-american-lamb-shanks>).

Ready to join the club? Subscribe on YouTube so you never miss a class or a new lamb creation. Thank you for being part of this journey with us—we can't wait to keep cooking, learning, and celebrating American Lamb together.

