



Scrapie Research

J.D.Bobb

Research from Iowa State University conducted by Jacob Petrich has discovered a non invasive diagnostic tool to help identify sheep infected with scrapie. The eyes of sheep infected with scrapie return an intense, almost white glow when researchers shined a blue excitation light in their eyes.

The study began as a project funded by a grant from the US Department of Defense. Petrich and his team were working in slaughter houses looking for bacterial contamination on carcasses using a fluorescing spectroscopy device. One day they were using the device and saw the spinal cord shine through the skin with an intense light. The team of researchers began thinking of the possibility of a live test to help in the detection of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies such as scrapie or mad cow disease.

The researchers collected eyeballs from 73 head of sheep. Thirty five of these were known positive infected with scrapie. They found that the retina of sheep eyes infected with scrapie fluoresced a very bright white light and the non infected sheep did not.

This is a major breakthrough in the possible development of a live animal test to diagnose scrapie. At the present time, the animal needs to be euthanized and the brain and spinal cord removed to make the diagnosis. There is supportive research that indicates the change in an animal's retina when they are infected with a neurological disease. The development of such a test would be very beneficial in slaughter houses where large numbers of animals need to be screened.

Goiters in Sheep

Dr. G.F. Kennedy

Once in a while you get caught. For years I have advocated feeding iodized salt to prevent goiter. This year for the first time the condition occurred in my fall lambs. This is the first time I had seen it in my own sheep. Immediately I checked to see whether iodized salt had been fed diligently all summer and it had. In fact, records from this year matched or were in excess of previous years.

Now is the time to look for a cause. One has to wonder with the much more abundant rainfall we had this summer if it didn't deplete the iodine content of our forage. Ewes could easily graze four times normal stocking.

The thing I did discover is that you can supplement 100 times the recommended levels of iodine before toxicity. I have seen iodine toxicity in cattle before so I was concerned.

So, while treatment doesn't work very well, the condition can be remedied and prevented by feeding additional organic iodide. My standard recommendation of feeding iodized salt in this case didn't get the job done.

Reading also suggested that the condition may be congenital in Merino Sheep. Katahdins may require more iodine as well. Mine do.

The Big Gain people have already increased the iodine in their TM Salt several months ago. If we are going to be sure we have provided enough iodine add additional iodine to iodized salt. I am presently using organic iodide to get the job done.

As I think through this issue, I also wonder about selenium. It has never been a problem before in our area. It may be now due to lessened nutrient value of forage.

Hydrops Amnion



Before
Lamb still living



After
Swollen glands still born

Ewe was induced, three lambs were removed manually. One had a distended abdomen, and two others were premature and lived a few minutes. The ewe that survived probably has an abdominal hernia.

Straight Talk

Dr. G.F. Kennedy

It was in the beginning, 1960. Ninety percent of my classmates were to become large animal practitioners and there were no women graduates. Two women had graduated in the history of Iowa State University; one had been one of my instructors.

I took a job in Pipestone because there were no commitments attached and I had thoughts of going back to school. Those thoughts ended with the coming of Dwight Holloway and the Pipestone Sheep Program and with the opportunity to own some sheep of my own.

My veterinary experiences have not been restricted to sheep; I have just always had a strong interest in them. I have really done it all; auction market, cow calf, beef, feed lot, dairy, dairy export, swine and even some small animal; a jack of all trades, master of some.

My sheep practice experience started with a lot of feedlot work with numbers as high as fifty thousand head, but many were farmers that fed a thousand or two in the fall. As the supply decreased and with the arrival of the Pipestone Program the feedlot business was replaced by ewe flocks that supplemented crop farming and produced a market ready lamb in 120 days.

Finn sheep played an important role in the early days of the project and John Wichern, one of the pioneers in the program was first to market a 200% lamb crop.

My own sheep experience started with suffolks purchased from Olsen Bros of Utah. I met the truck on I-80 and met Clyde Morrison for the first time. He was getting Hampshire's. The black faced sheep from Utah changed the entire pure bred industry. I remember one time purchasing an Andrus ram in Sedalia. He stood 32 inches tall. He was the tallest ram in the barn.

Suffolks were good to us. I had the record selling ewe in 1980 at \$15,500.00. My daughter Diane sold her show ewe in 1982 to Dr. Ben Huff for \$15,000.00 and it was a Supreme Champion ewe at Louisville. By 1986 my daughters were all in college and the fast track of the Suffolk business was annoying. We dispersed the suffolks.

I purchased a few old style dorsets from Ohio and purchased a good Finn ram and played with them for a while. I then chose Rambouillets. Why? I had always admired the durability of the breed and if you missed a show no one would notice, in the Suffolk business if you missed a show they would think you were going out of business.

When my wife died in 1996, I dispersed the Rambouillets and was having a difficult time with life. Later when Deb and I got married I took her to Sedalia in attempt to review what I had done earlier in my life. We walked into the sheep barn; Larry Mrozinski was judging dorpers of which I knew nothing about. I liked the fact that they were easy to present and show. They also reminded me of the old dorsets. The rest of that story is history. I enjoyed the dorpers but they never caught on in the upper Midwest.

I am now fascinated with Katahdins. Their durability, low maintenance, and proficacy make them a sure bet for flocks in the mid west and elsewhere. I think they have the opportunity to be major contributors in stabilizing the sheep industry. I witnessed how the Finns contributed in their time. The potential for Katahdins is many times that. There is a new paradigm in the making.

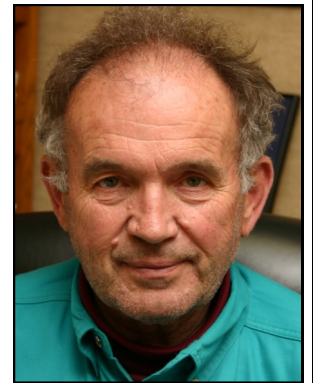
About our business, we have grown from a Veterinary Clinic with three veterinarians, one full time person and two part time employees to an agribusiness. Managed by veterinarians which now consists of 15 veterinarians at two locations and six hundred employees. Our main enterprise is managing sow farms and providing veterinary service and management to the farmers that own those farms. We manage 140,000 head of farmer owned sows at 34 locations in a five state area.

Our second largest enterprise is providing veterinary service and supplies to sheep and goat people locally and nationwide. Of our veterinarians, six have experience caring for their own sheep. We take pride and a great deal of satisfaction in that. We are one of few who provide this service to sheep and goat people. We view no producer too large or too small for our services. In addition to the above, we provide veterinary services to all types of livestock enterprises and companion animals.

How about the catalog business? I remember when I took a package down to the local fleet store and sent it UPS, which was the first. We now find ourselves as a major supplier of health products and information to the nation's sheep and goat industry. No producer is too small or too large to receive our help and we enjoy it.

In the beginning I relied on land line telephones, then radios, and mobile phones. Now I am able to answer e-mail questions on my Blackberry in the summer time on one of our sports fishing boats in Kodiak, Alaska.

Doc Kennedy isn't saying good-bye any time soon, God willing. I continue to practice and generally can answer your e-mail questions in 24 hours or less. It has been a heck of a ride and I'm still riding!



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Veterinary services, procedures, biologicals, and drugs mentioned in this publication represent the personal opinions and clinical observations of the contributing author. They are in no way intended to be interpreted as recommendations without the consent of the producer's own practicing Veterinarian. We strongly urge that producers establish a patient-client-veterinarian relationship that allows extra-label use when there are no drugs approved for treatment or if approved drugs are not effective. This procedure allows veterinarians to go beyond label directions when "prudent use" is necessary. The limited availability of drugs and biologics in this country is a major factor in restricting the growth of the sheep industry and allowing producers to compete in the world Market place.

North Star Sheep Sale Summary

Angie Degroot

Buyers from ten states attended the 36th Annual North Star Bred Ewe Sale on Saturday, October 30th in Pipestone, MN. Local consignors sold 105 head to average \$477.50 per head. The highest selling ewe was a Suffolk spring ewe lamb that sold for \$1100.00. The ewe was consigned by Rex Quam. Other sale highlights were a Hampshire yearling ewe, consigned by PA&C Bobendrier, selling for \$1000.00 and a Dorset yearling ewe, consigned by Sugarloaf Dorsets, selling for \$900.00. The highest selling Rambouillet ewe was a yearling ewe consigned by Lenard Chapman which sold for \$650.00. Overall, it was an outstanding sale.

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