

From the  
Premier Breeder  
of British Registered  
Soay Sheep



SOUTHERN OREGON SOAY SHEEP FARMS

# Viewpoint

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

## Moving Mountains

by Kathie Miller

**All winter I stewed about my barn. It had three years of accumulated debris/manure on the floor and I could no longer open or close the interior gates.**

My tractor was too big to get inside the barn, and building another barn was not an option. There are many advantages to maturity, but the diminishing ability to handle manual labor isn't one of them. My health had precluded annual spring cleanings, and I could no longer just add fresh hay. I also seem to have become a Soay Sheep Destination Resort (to my delight) with lots of out of town guests coming to learn about British Soay and their care. A clean barn was essential to my mission.

An even more important reason to reclaim my barn was coccidiosis. I am a

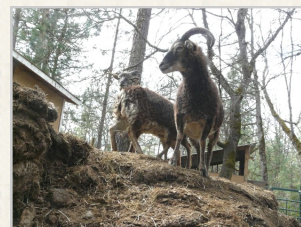
prime candidate for this problem with lambs because I keep a lot of sheep on a dry lot. A certain level

of coccidea contamination is part of having sheep. Ewes carry the parasite and shed it in its infective stage through their manure; transmission occurs via oral ingestion of the eggs. Efforts to reduce this in the environment can



A mountain of muck

help with clinical outbreaks which can start in lambs between three and six weeks old. Nursing and growing lambs can develop the disease. Bottle babies are especially vulnerable. Those that do get it generally appear depressed, and scouring



King of the Mountain

(diarrhea) develops about 17 days after infection, which occurs shortly after birth. Elevated temperatures are seldom exhibited;

however, secondary outbreaks of pneumonia can occur. Once infected, lambs can then contaminate each other and onsets are often associated with any kind of stress, especially at weaning or shipping. Many lambs will often recover without intervention. In my experience, however, I have had to treat infected patients with injections.

Breaking the cycle by hauling manure out of the area, putting down fresh bedding and using a strategic de-worming program managed by your vet to reduce coccidia in ewes are the keys to reducing clinical eruptions. A thick layer of fresh straw or hay will keep the lambs bedded above a damp

*See "Mountains" page 2*

## Of Trials and Tractors

by Kathie Miller

**When I started collecting Social Security, I decided it was time to retire my wheel barrow and pitchfork and get a tractor.**

I explained to the fellow at the tractor store that it was critical he deliver it by 2:30 as I had to leave. Naturally, at 2:30 he arrived. So I got a 15 minute "crash course" in how to drive the thing.

Later, as I lay on the table at the cancer center being nuked, all I could think

about was that shiny red machine waiting for me at home. Radiation is exhausting, but I had a sudden burst of energy the moment I got back to the farm and saw the Mahindra sitting in the driveway. I climbed aboard, fired him up and headed to the barnyard. What fun!

Within five minutes, I had accidentally dumped a load of manure on my head, ripped out a fence line, and pulled a cemented fence post out of the ground. Worse

yet, I dragged an 8" deep, 4' wide swath across my newly planted lawn because I forgot to lift the box scraper. Maybe I needed a little more instruction.

I decided that it would be best to not ride "Big Red" again until I had the energy to repair all the damage I was probably going to do learning how to drive him. But once I had recovered, I became a driving fool. And he isn't shiny and new looking anymore. ☹️

## RESOURCE GUIDE

### Toro Dingo Compact Utility Loader.

Also called a skid steer loader Unless you are going to use this marvelous little machine every day, you will want to rent one rather than purchase it. Purchase price I was told was about \$18,000. However, I found some on ebay for \$6000. The rental was \$135 for four hours; \$200 for a whole day. Well worth every penny.

**Deccox** feed additive is available through your veterinarian. The brand I use is manufactured by Western Stockman's Inc., Caldwell, Idaho. Available in a 50 lb. bag. The last bag I purchased was about \$75. Feeding 35 ewes daily takes about two bags a year.

**Denis Brinicombe Tubbys** free access minerals with coccistat:  
[www.brinicombe.co.uk](http://www.brinicombe.co.uk)

**Viewpoint** is a monthly publication of Southern Oregon Soay Sheep Farms. If you have enjoyed this issue, please subscribe ([kathiem@soayfarms.com](mailto:kathiem@soayfarms.com)) to have each new issue emailed to you. To be removed from our mailing list, please unsubscribe ([kathiem@soayfarms.com](mailto:kathiem@soayfarms.com)).

Visit our website:  
[www.soayfarms.com](http://www.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.

## Mountains *continued from page 1*

floor, which harbors the eggs, further reducing exposure. At my veterinarian's suggestion, I worm my sheep four times a year with fecal examinations about three weeks after worming.

Parasite control regimens are highly variable and subject to your own situation—a one fits all program does not exist. Your veterinarian can help you work out a routine that's best for you. My plan also prescribes supplementing my ewes with a Deccox supplement year round because of my high density and environment. Mixed with beet pulp and sheep nuts, they devour it.

There are many anticoccidial drugs and vaccines but which one you should use will depend on your location and individual circumstance. In the UK, Denis Brinicombe produces a series of Coxi-Clear medicated mineral licks (prescription required) which can be used to treat lambs or prevent the condition. About 5 gallons each, these "Tubbys" can be

placed in shelters out of the rain for free range use. I have yet to find anything comparable in the States.

Though it was critical to clean out the barn, I had no



The Toro Dingo at work.

idea what to do. Enter Kerry, a friend who is like a son. Having a contractor/builder/electrician/plumber/auto mechanic living on your place is not a bad thing. I knew he would have the answer. "You need to rent a Dingo," he said. I had no idea what he was talking about and I didn't find out until the fellows at the rental yard loaded it onto my trailer.

It took Kerry three hours to get the floor back down to

its decomposed granite base which would leave plenty of room for fresh straw. Now I was faced with two new challenges: a one foot gap below the gates that the sheep could crawl through, and two giant piles of muck outside the barn. The first was an easy fix and the second was taken care of by a friend's son, a 15 year old who thinks the sun rises and sets over my Mahindra tractor. I think he would have paid *me* to move those mountains of muck. I do not have a spreader (and unfortunately we do not seem to have the "Mini Muck" in the US or I would get one), so rather than scatter the manure across the fields, I let the piles age for a year in a remote spot and then move them to my garden.

Well, as with most things with my sheep, the girls are suspicious of any change. They think the barn is too clean and won't go inside. 🐏

## TIP OF THE MONTH

Fasten a bucket bail to a wall to secure long-handled tools.



## APRIL CALENDAR

- ❑ Take fecal sample to vet one month before lambing
- ❑ Worm as necessary with products that are safe during pregnancy. Do not use Valbazen wormer during pregnancy.
- ❑ Clean-up barn and put down fresh straw or hay.
- ❑ Vaccinate ewes a month before lambing.

© 2009 Southern Oregon Soay Sheep Farms. All Rights Reserved.  
For reprint permission contact [kathiem@soayfarms.com](mailto:kathiem@soayfarms.com).