

From the
Premier Breeder
of British Registered
Soay Sheep



SOUTHERN OREGON SOAY SHEEP FARMS

Viewpoint

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

Shipping Soay

by Kathie Miller

After returning from Europe, I had to quickly change gears to get ready to ship sheep.

The veterinarian was supposed to come for health certificate inspections two days after my return. When the schedule was changed to the day after I got home, I panicked. Fortunately, my house sitter volunteered to stay an extra few days to help me round up sheep so the vet would not have to deal with total chaos.

Unbeknownst to me, Rebecca, an extraordinarily dedicated vet, was seven and a half months pregnant. She was quite a vision in her rubber boots and overalls that would no longer zip up the front. The project went smoothly, all of us more concerned about Rebecca than the sheep, but each animal was inspected, had its

temperature taken, and blood was drawn from the three adult rams going to Colorado.

Each state has its own entry requirements, but generally lambs under six months only need a health certificate and no blood tests. Coordinating shipping takes planning: seven to 10 working days are needed to get blood test results back from the Oregon State Veterinarian's office; the health



Ron arrives
Photo by Laura Unsworth

certificate must be issued within 30 days of departure; and all this has to fit into the trucker's schedule which is a complex affair. I was trying to keep it all straight and make it work while still buried in a month's worth of laundry.

For the last few years, I have been using the trans-

portation services of Ron Keener. Ron is an amazing character who loves animals. He has a specialized trailer



Trailer's interior front pens, lower deck

which gives him great flexibility as he delivers door to door anywhere in the US. He is also one of the very few who is still providing this service. He uses *Yahoo Groups* to allow you to follow his trips in real time and keep track of how your animals are doing and where they are. Watching his progress is like waiting for Saint Nick: with each new sighting (post to the list) he

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An Early Christmas Story

by Kathie Miller

Ron's trailer is designed to accommodate any small livestock, and sometimes your critters ride on the floor level and sometimes they go on top.

This time my flock of 12 rode on the top with another group of sheep also heading east. A total of 26 animals, which were easy to load here in the daylight, but once on board were going to be difficult to catch and sort. Ron drove hard all day trying to beat an early Rocky Mountain snowstorm and arrived at his Colorado destination a

little after dark. He is a big man and in this situation unloading and sorting was going to be especially taxing.

Enter Brian, Heather's 7-year-old grandson, who scrambled up on the top tier with the sheep. I'll let Heather pick up the story: "Daughter-in-law Karen (holding 1-year-old Matthew) very accurate with numbers, checked off the tags. Little Andrew, age 4, held the spotlight. Brian, 7, hauled them out, and Fiona [Heather's daughter] and I carried and stowed them in



Lambs arrive
Photo by Laura Unsworth

their deep straw [in the barn]. "Then, daughter-in-law produced roast chicken, berry pie and WINE...and everyone agreed - NO ONE EXPECTED THEM TO BE QUITE THAT CUTE!"

Heather McLaren of Blackfox Farm contributed to this story.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Ron Keener

To contact Ron when he is not on the road (about services, prices and reservations):

rkeener@realtime.net

If you do not hear from him in 24 hours assume he is on the road.

To follow Ron's progress or contact him when he is on the road, join his Yahoo Group *TravelWithRonK* <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TravelWithRonK>

To view a photo gallery of his trailer and get an overview of his service, visit: <http://www.travelwithronk.com/index.html>

USDA Area Offices listed by state
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/

Contact your state office for information about enrollment in their scrapie programs and for ordering ear tags.

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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.

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gets closer and closer until, finally, he rolls into your farm with a sleigh full of animals. He makes four trips a year, each about two months long, crossing back and forth across the continent. His fees are very reasonable.

Air Cargo is another way to ship Soay long distances. It is faster than by truck, which can take up to 24 days from one coast to the other. Shipping by air takes careful planning and coordination by both buyer and seller, so start planning early. Airlines have very strict guidelines (including specifications for shipping crates and maximum temperatures) which must be followed, but are a good way to move sheep great distances in a relatively short time. Always pick the most direct route with the fewest stops or changes of flight. Our first ewe and rams from Canada were nearly left sitting at some airport halfway between Montreal and Portland because the flight was full and "who cares about a

bunch of goats anyway." Val and I, who were driving the 300 miles north to Portland,



Kathie secures sheep from Canada in the "Berci Box"

were unaware that the AIR BC dispatcher was about to leave our load behind because he could not reach us to confirm we would be there to pick it up. Little did he know that shipping these sheep had consumed our lives for the previous six months and there was no way we would not be there. Had it not been for the assurances of our husbands (who the dispatcher had bothered to call), three very tired, very stressed little sheep could have been stuck where and for who knows how long. And, worst of all,



Back of Ron's trailer

they had called them goats!

For short distances, a matter of hours rather than days, transporting sheep in dog crates is an easy option. They fit in the back of a pickup or SUV and two lambs or an adult ewe or young ram comfortably fit in a large crate. A sturdier box or container is advised for larger rams.

Sheep that *never* leave your farm do not need to be permanently identified with an APHIS approved (scrapie) ear tag, microchip or tattoo. Others do. Regulations and tagging methods are constantly changing, especially when exporting to Canada, so contact your state USDA District Animal Health Office for updates. Allow enough time for tags to arrive so the vet can have the numbers for the health certificate.

Well, I have to go back to following sightings of Ron. I still have ramblings on the truck with a very excited farmer on the other end waiting for Santa Claus to pull into her driveway. 🐏

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

- Plan breeding groups.
- Prepare pens for breeding groups.
- Put rams to ewes late October through November.
- Put visual barriers on fences between breeding flocks (landscape cloth works well) ideally on the inside of a double fence. Make sure they can't peek under or over barrier.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Purchase the large tube of Probios paste and load a 12cc syringe. From that you can load 3cc and 1cc syringes which are good sizes for adults or lambs.