



SOUTHERN OREGON  
SOAY SHEEP FARMS  
www.soayfarms.com

# Viewpoint

FROM THE PREMIER BREEDER OF BRITISH REGISTERED SOAY SHEEP

## Broken record

by Kathie Miller

February is the perfect month to catch up on paper work, update registrations, prepare annual scrapie reports (if you are in the USDA voluntary scrapie program) and make a list of names for this year's lambs.

I have always shamelessly nagged people about the importance of keeping up with RBST (Rare Breeds Survival Trust) registrations. Ruth Dalton, a RBST field officer, makes the case excellently in the Winter 2011 issue of *The Ark*. I have taken the liberty of quoting her here.

*"Are they registered?" I asked over the telephone. "No. But they are purebred," I am confidently assured. My heart sinks as I have to explain that, although my caller may be benefiting from the characteristics that make our native breeds so special, the breed itself is gaining nothing*

*from their ownership of these animals. In a world of paperwork and bureaucracy it is tempting to avoid extraneous forms and costs, but in the case of our rarest breeds, registration really is a vital part of saving them from extinction...*



Combined Flock Book

*It only takes one generation for a branch of the "family tree" to be lost, so if these animals are not registered, the available gene pool is narrowed.*

*We are also custodians of part of a data set that consists of the whole breed. If breeders are not registered with a breed society and registering the offspring of their animals, those*

*animals cannot be included in research into breed characteristics and parameters, giving at best an incomplete picture and at worst dramatically inaccurate conclusions.*

*All too often we hear about valuable pedigree registered animals that have been sold to keepers who do not register the offspring—as far as the breed is concerned, these animals might as well have been sent to slaughter.*

With RBST registration available to us in America, we too have a way to keep our sheep from being lost to the breed. One of the requirements for export from England in 1990 had been RBST registration. But in Canada this was not kept up, and those sheep might as well have gone to the butcher. The Canadian farmer, however, had kept excellent breed-

*continued on page 2*

## February Calendar

- ❑ Catch up on paperwork: last year's records, scrapie reports, etc.
- ❑ It is catalog season. You can request them online from many companies. Sheep shows are a great way to locate new suppliers.
- ❑ Restock your supplies: syringes, needles, wormer, penicillin, LA 200 etc.
- ❑ February is a hard month for keeping on weight; watch rams especially.

## A bad break

by Kathie Miller

I came out to check the barn one evening and Inga was lying in a corner. When she didn't get up as I approached I knew there was something wrong. I prodded her and she jumped up and hobbled off, carrying a back leg in the air. I confined her in a small pen for the night. Often these things are just sprains or bruises and are better with a little rest.

In the morning, when I lifted the leg just a bit I could tell that, while the skin was not broken, her foot was not

connected to her leg. Off to the vet we raced. She had broken both bones all the way through just above her foot. The vet put her in a cast and sent us home.

Two days later I found the cast lying on the ground and the little ewe looking "shockie" (my term). She had somehow pulled the cast off. It was late, so I bound the leg with Vet Wrap and took her back to the vet in the morning. Fixing the break was the easy part. Now my worry was



Inga with cast

getting her to eat.

She was grinding her teeth so badly that we gave her a shot of Banamine for pain. No matter what treat I offered, she refused and kept grinding, which probably

*continued on page 2*

## Resources

To register your sheep you must first join the RBST and the Soay Sheep Society (our breed society located in the UK). Then, contact Grassroots to obtain a flock number, prefix, and a password that will allow you access to the online database. There is a one-time fee. Registration and birth notification are limited to animals whose parents are both registered with the Combined Flock Book.

### RBST Membership

Overseas annual membership: £37.50 (\$60 presently); UK membership: £30.  
<http://www.rbst.org.uk/cgi-bin/ccp51/cp-app.cgi>

### Soay Sheep Society Membership

Overseas annual membership \$20. Can be paid thru PayPal at [soaysheepsociety@btinternet.com](mailto:soaysheepsociety@btinternet.com) Attn: Julie Suffolk

### Grassroots registry

There is a fee for registrations, but birth notification is free. Lambs need to be birth notified the year of their birth. Birth notification is used for lambs you plan to register later, are going to slaughter, or are castrates. [Christine@grassroots.co.uk](http://Christine@grassroots.co.uk)

© 2011 Southern Oregon Soay Sheep Farms. For reprint permission contact [kathiem@soayfarms.com](mailto:kathiem@soayfarms.com). 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)).

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.

This newsletter was produced by Overture Publications  
[www.overturepublications.com](http://www.overturepublications.com).

## Broken record *continued from page one*

ing records and most of the sheep were only one or two generations from registered ancestors.

In the summer of 1999, armed with the original registrations, Canadian breeding records, photos I had taken in Canada—plus intense lobbying on our behalf by friends in Britain—Val and I mounted a campaign to get the sheep back into the Trust's Combined Flock Book. In November of that year, we were issued a flock number (2646) and a prefix (USA0001), and notified that our sheep and their progeny would be accepted for membership. (It is still the only flock of any breed outside the UK that the Trust registers.) This gave our project a whole new depth. Not only did we have all of the records for all of the sheep in America, we were now able to trace them back to their origins in the UK—some to St. Kilda itself.

We also had a way to keep them segregated from the earlier crossbred Soay already here in the US. With only two exports to North America (1974 and 1990) and no possibility of any more, this gave us a tool that would

save the second importation from the fate of the first.

The Combined Flock Book of the RBST began in 1974 and contains a wealth of information. The oldest Soay flock in the book is number 10, the Sandle Flock (which is still listed), and the most recent is 4511. This number will give you a relative age of a flock and, with any history



Sandle Flock, 1976 Flock Book

you have about the farm, will enable you to make informed decisions when purchasing new animals or educate you about the animals you already have.

The study of progeny will also give you lambing histories, no matter where the ewe or ram now reside, alive or deceased. This is helpful with breeding strategies. For example, has a ewe had a lot of lambs over her career

or just a few; a large number of twins or more males than females; polled or horned? You should even "birth notify" lambs that die shortly after birth. They add to the breeding profile of their dam and sire.

When you sell a sheep born on your farm you can follow it throughout its life. Even if your buyer sells it, its present owner will be recorded on both your (the breeder's) listing and theirs.

The flock prefix will also give you a bit of information about where the flock is and where your sheep originated. Lambs carry the prefix of the farm where they were born, not where their parents were bred. Most American flocks carry a USA prefix which makes them easy to distinguish. You can also locate sheep from breeders who have dropped out of the program.

Registrations and birth notifications can now be made online, which makes it easy. So, once again, I plead with all US "British" Soay owners to please keep up their RBST registrations, so that their sheep will not be lost to the breed.

## A bad break *continued from page one*

indicated digestive distress. Banamine is a good painkiller but can cause ulcers and must be used with care. I gave her a large dose of Probios Paste and decided to apply a little sheep psychology—competition for food.

Juju, a ewe lamb whose mother had been sold, made a perfect companion. She was small and submissive, but for treats she would challenge Inga. It worked up to a point. Inga still wasn't eating much

and was still grinding her teeth, and more Banamine was not an option. As the vet suggested, I gave her a 20cc dose of Maalox (sheep like lemon cream flavor) which helped, and I continued with Probios for a few more days.

It is now a month later and my new problem is that I have two little sheep with severe cabin fever! It was fortunate that the break was on the lower part of the leg. Had it been above the hock,

my outcome might not have been as positive.

## Tip of the Month

**Practicing leg-wrapping before you need it makes it much easier when working on an injured animal.**