



# Winter 2021 Newsletter



## Letter from the President:

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all off to a great start on 2021, preparing your flock for lambing season or in the thick of it right now. We are working through lambing our 30 ewes here in central Ohio, and in the midst of a rather cold winter, I'm thankful we raise such a hardy and maternally gifted breed of sheep.

The previous year certainly had its challenges and uncertainties, but breeders and producers showed so much resilience by finding safe and creative ways to market their breeding stock and meat lambs. We navigated many online sales, collaborated with other producers to haul sheep around the country, and learned new sanitation protocols when conducting private sales and selling at markets. That certainly kept us busy, and on top of that, several of our members worked with the kNSIP committee to apply for a grant to develop Genomic EBV's (GEBV) for Katahdin Sheep. And of course, we founded the Eastern Alliance for Production Katahdins and welcomed our new membership of talented breeders and producers.

This new organization will grow and succeed with your help. We are forming committees focused on our Symposium, Annual Sale, Mentorship, Communications + Education, Website + Social Media, and Technical. Please volunteer for a committee that might interest you! You need not be an expert in the area; we need eager people of all levels to participate. We are also continuing to develop educational resources to help you improve in many areas of NSIP Katahdin Sheep production, and would welcome any topic submissions or ideas you may have. Your participation will solidify an exciting future for the EAPK. Thank you for being here,

Brad Carothers  
President

## New on the EAPK Website

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[BLOG POST: Body Condition Scoring](#)  
[NSIP Concept Sheets](#)

[BLOG POST: NSIP: What's in it for Me?](#)  
[Membership Directory](#)



# Timely Topic

## JOINT (NAVEL) ILL IN YOUNG LAMBS

Joint Ill is a relatively common bacterial infection in lambs 1-4 weeks of age. The bacteria (*Streptococcus*) enters the bloodstream via the navel, after tagging or castration. **Early signs** include a sudden onset of lameness in one or more legs, warm & swollen joints (polyarthritis), fever and anorexia.

Often the lambs appear hunched and unthrifty. **Early treatment with antibiotics effects outcome.** A 5-7 day course of antibiotics should be initiated early to prevent severe acute infection or death. Failure to complete the full course of antibiotics will often result in intermittent flare-ups and permanent joint damage. Effective antibiotics include Penicillin, Oxytetracycline and Nuflor. Dexamethasone is often used to reduce joint pain and swelling.

**Prevention:** Dip navels with iodine soon after birth. Use an antiseptic during invasive procedures, keep bedding clean and dry to reduce bacterial contamination, and avoid crowding. Lambs who have received adequate colostrum are less likely to become effected due to a stronger immune system. **For more information** or to print out Cornell University's SOP on Joint Ill in lambs **click here:** [JOINT ILL \(wpmucdn.com\)](http://wpmucdn.com)



## KHSI Update:

**By: Dan Turner**, KHSI BOD, kNSIP Chair and EAPK Member

The KHSI NSIP (KNSIP) Committee has been busy, meeting every month and working to enhance the NSIP experience and resources for KHSI members. We have cleaned up many parts of the NSIP tab on the KHSI website, and have "showcased" the Katahdin Buyer's Guide, which is a must-read. The Buyer's Guide helps breeders identify and purchase NSIP animals that will help meet their flock goals both genetically and economically. The Guide can be downloaded from the KHSI website ([www.katahdins.org](http://www.katahdins.org)) or copies can be purchased for \$3 by contacting KHSI Operations ([info@Katahdins.org](mailto:info@Katahdins.org)).

The KatPlus program has been given a boost with KatPlus ear tags now available to designate groups of commercial ewes for sale, as being sired by a registered ram. The KatPlus program is designed to promote the sale of commercial Katahdin ewes sired by registered Katahdin rams. For more information, check out the KatPlus tab at [katahdins.org](http://katahdins.org).

The KHSI BOD met recently in Nashville to discuss these and many other issues including the **upcoming Katahdin Expo slated for August 4-7 in Mexico, MO.**



# Industry News

## Southwest AREC Ram Test and Sale Update

By: Lee Wright, Superintendent SWAREC, EAPK Board Member  
lrite@vt.edu

Greetings EAPK membership, and congratulations on joining what has the promise of being a fantastic educational organization. Please know there is a group of hard working, dedicated, and committed Katahdin (NSIP) producers doing all they can to make this organization work for us all. It is truly an honor to be serving with this group of individuals as one of the inaugural board of director members, and I look forward to doing what I can to help move EAPK to becoming an elite, educational and production oriented organization to advance Katahdins, and genetic improvements of our breed to the next level and beyond.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to give you all an update on the VA Tech Ram Test. After unfortunately having to cancel the 2020 test due to Covid-19 concerns, ***we are planning to get back on track in 2021, and host the test once again.*** Please see the below ram test website for the most up to date information available regarding the test. We will soon be posting the new schedule of 2021 events. ***Nominations of rams will be due in early May.*** In case you missed it, the recording of our virtual Field day, as well with some great information is still available on our website at this [LINK](#).

Also come visit the [Southwest AREC website](#) to see other projects going on at the Center, as well as our [new Facebook page](#) to keep up with events, and happenings at the SWAREC. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I look forward to seeing you all sometime this year at SWAREC, or EAPK events!



# Timely Topic



## PREGNANCY TOXEMIA / KETOSIS

During the last 4 weeks of pregnancy the rapidly growing lambs vastly increase a ewe's requirements for energy, while the bulk of the growing lambs decreases her capacity to eat large amounts of food. Pregnancy toxemia/ketosis results when the feed is not energy dense enough to allow the ewe to maintain her blood glucose levels. **Overly thin and fat ewes are at increased risk.** Initially you will see a ewe that is depressed, separate from the other ewes, not eating well and unsteady when walking. Unless she is treated promptly, the ewe will progress to weakness, inability to get up, tremors, blindness, seizures and eventually death. A urine sample will test positive for ketones. **Treat** with propylene glycol drench and banamine, also add electrolytes. Hypocalcemia presents with similar signs and the two conditions often occur concurrently. The prognosis for a ewe that is already down is poor, especially if she is fat. Inducing labor or a c-section can be tried if not responding to treatment. **It is best to prevent this condition** by breeding ewes at an appropriate body condition and supplying an energy dense diet in the last weeks of pregnancy. Make sure you have enough bunk space for your rapidly expanding girls.

<https://www.sheepandgoat.com/pregtox>



# NSIP Update

By: **Rusty Burgett**, NSIP Program Director



Although 2020 was a challenging year for everyone, the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) was able to adapt to the changing times and continue advancing to better serve the U.S. sheep industry.

For anyone who might be new to the industry, **NSIP's mission is to provide quantitative genetic evaluation services to the U.S. sheep industry. We are a non-profit organization that converts performance records that you collect on your farms and ranches into relevant decision making tools called Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs).** These EBVs estimate the genetic potential of an animal for various traits and are an extremely powerful tool to have in your genetic selection “tool box”. We offer EBVs for a wide variety of economically important traits including body weight at various ages, prolificacy, mothering ability, parasite resistance and carcass composition. For more detailed information about EBVs and what is available, please visit our website at [www.nsip.org](http://www.nsip.org) and check out the “Resources” section.

An exciting project that was recently completed was **updating the NSIP Online Searchable Database.** With nearly 500,000 records in the NSIP databases, we developed an online searchable database to help producers filter through the vast amount of data to find breeding stock that are well suited to benefit their particular flock. Recent **updates include the ability to search the dataset based on registration numbers, find details for a particular flock and being able to automatically generate percentile reports which provide you with a benchmark for comparison of the EBVs.** Check out [www.nsipsearch.nsip.org](http://www.nsipsearch.nsip.org) to generate your own custom queries of the NSIP dataset and fine-tune your genetic selection to suit your unique needs.

Along with the administering the quantitative genetic evaluation, NSIP is also trying to foster a community and network of support among sheep producers. **New in 2021, NSIP will host monthly open discussion forums via Zoom at noon central time on the first Wednesday of every month.** These online meetings will provide a platform to ask questions and spur discussions among members and NSIP personnel. To access the schedule of meetings and login information, visit <http://nsip.org/nsip-member-services/>.

With all the new and exciting technologies being developed and the solid foundation of the quantitative genetic evaluation, the U.S. sheep industry is positioned very well for progress. If you would like more information on NSIP or would like to be a part of the organization, visit our website at [www.nsip.org](http://www.nsip.org) or email Rusty Burgett at [info@nsip.org](mailto:info@nsip.org).



## Timely Tip:

One of the cheapest and easiest tools you can use is to simply spend time every day observing your sheep. Not only will you be able to spot problems early but it's relaxing and fun.

# EAPK Committees

EAPK is an all-volunteer organization. All our activities begin with committee work, then recommendations are sent to the BOD for approval. Dynamic committees are necessary if EAPK is to remain relevant, and **we invite member participation**. Our current committees are listed below with a brief description of their responsibilities. While members are encouraged to join any committee that matches their skills and/or interest, **we especially need a few select volunteers in the Symposium & Sales committee and the Communications & Education committee**. Interested members are encouraged to contact the chair of the committee(s) they are interested in joining.

**Communications + Education** – this committee is responsible for developing written materials for EAPK, including creating the quarterly newsletter and writing blogs and educational content for the website. Co-chairs: Roxanne Newton and Kathy Bielek.

**Website + Social Media** – this committee is responsible for developing and maintaining the EAPK website and keeping social media such as Facebook and Instagram up to date. Chair: Robert Walker.

**Technical** – this committee will develop materials to answer NSIP questions such as submitting and interpreting data. They will also take the lead in developing standard operating procedures for some of the more complex protocols and concepts. Chair: Tom Hodgman.

**Symposium + Sale** – although two separate subcommittees, they work closely together to plan and organize the annual educational symposium and associated sale of NSIP animals. Chair: Brad Carothers.

**Mentorship Program** – this committee is currently developing a mentorship program to help EAPK members increase their knowledge and build the skills needed to meet their flock goals. Once the program is up and running, the Mentorship Program committee will be responsible for matching mentees with specific mentors that can best provide the needed assistance and support. Co-chairs: Brad Carothers, Roxanne Newton and Kathy Bielek.

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## Timely Tip:

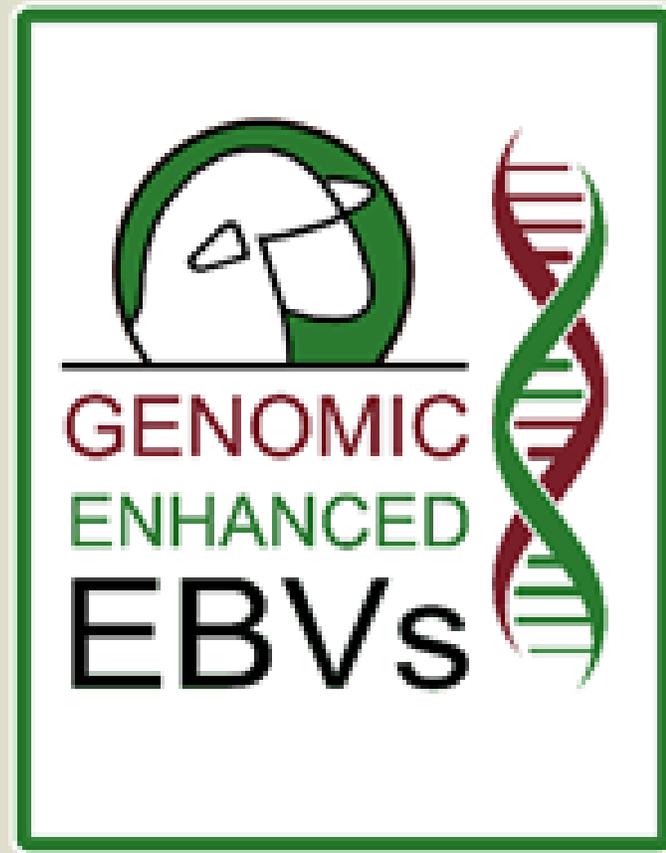
Ear tags can be used for much more than just animal ID numbers. Strategic use of tag color or placement (right or left ear) can indicate sex, year of birth, sire, problems (cull) and/or single/twin/triplet. For more ideas, see [Ear Tags—An Essential Tool in Livestock Management - Premier1Supplies](#).



# Genomic Enhanced Breeding Values Expected in 2021

**By: Tom Hodgman**, EAPK Vice President, NSIP  
Breed Coordinator

Many experts believe that genomics is the gateway to the next level of genetic evaluation for the sheep industry and it appears that the Katahdin breed is at the forefront of that effort. Thanks to years of research by Dr. Joan Burke and Dr. Ron Lewis (and the cooperation of many EAPK member flocks) together with a recent grant from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center, Katahdins will be the first breed in the U.S. to have Genomic-enhanced Estimated Breeding Values (GEBV) commercially available for NSIP producers. Genomics, an advanced DNA technology, looks at the unique markers at tens of thousands of locations on an individual animal's DNA. Each marker may only contribute a minuscule amount towards that animal's genetic potential for a specific trait, but taken together (i.e., added up) it becomes an important tool for better selecting replacement ewes and future stud rams. This helps us to advance genetic improvement and ultimately achieve our management and production goals in a shorter amount of time.



We are anxiously awaiting full results from the first run of the evaluation which included genomic data for the Katahdin reference population. According to Dr. Ron Lewis, NSIP Technical Advisor, "the preliminary results are promising but producers should be careful not to expect large improvements in accuracy". Dr. Lewis further cautioned that "we have several steps left to complete to properly validate the results". Katahdin breeders should expect a more thorough presentation of the results in the coming weeks. And that's good news because with winter lambing season already upon us, many breeders are itching to collect DNA from their lambs to see what improvements in accuracy they may achieve with GEBVs.

Whether you're a seedstock producer marketing replacement ewes and stud rams or a commercial producer focused on marketing finished lambs, or anywhere in between, the enhanced accuracy of GEBVs should shave years off the time necessary to prove the genetic merit of your animals. Selection for production traits such as growth to market weight, parasite resistance and especially number born and weaned will be enhanced by this technology. We hope to see lambs, especially stud ram prospects, with GEBVs consigned to sales as early as this summer. [Click here for the Genomics Overview Document.](#)

# Upcoming Events

## Genomic Webinars

**By: Andrew Weaver, Ph.D**, Asst. Prof. NCSU

It is an exciting time to be raising Katahdin sheep. This year will be the start of a new age in sheep breeding with the introduction of genomic-enhanced estimated breeding values (GEBV). As many of you know, Dr. Joan Burke and Dr. Ron Lewis have been working on collecting genotypes on Katahdin lambs for the last several years. Through their hard work and that of many others, we are finally ready for commercialization of GEBVs. To bring everyone up to speed on what's been done, where we are going, and opportunities available for Katahdin breeders, we have developed a webinar series. This webinar series will serve as an educational introduction to this new technology. The schedule and registration information can be found below and in the attached flyer. I hope you will be able to join us.

### **A New Age in Sheep Breeding- February 16, 2021 7 pm**

Rusty Burgett, NSIP Director

[Register HERE](#)

### **What are Genomic-Enhanced Estimated Breeding Values?- March 2, 2021 7 pm**

Dr. Ron Lewis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

[Register HERE](#)

### **How do Genomic-Enhanced Estimated Breeding Values Impact Selection?- March 16, 2021 7 pm**

Dr. Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech

[Register HERE](#)

### **The Genomic Sample Collection and Data Submission Process- March 23, 2021 7 pm**

Lynn Fahrmeier and Tom Hodgman,

[Register HERE](#)

## **EAPK Symposium + Sale**

More information including dates and location for our 2021 Symposium and sale will be emailed to members soon.

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## **KHSI Expo + Sale**

The 2021 Expo has been moved to Mexico, MO August 4-7.





## How Can WE Help YOU?

In order for EAPK to succeed, we will have to meet the needs of our members. **We want to identify topics of interest that will benefit you.** Your input will guide us as we continue to develop website content, write newsletters, plan the annual meeting and develop an effective mentorship program.

Look for an email in the next couple weeks with a survey to help us identify your needs. **Your input is important.**

HEAD TO THE WEBSITE FOR MORE RESOURCES!

## Board of Directors

Brad Carothers - President  
Tom Hodgman - Vice President  
Kathy Bielek - Secretary  
Roxanne Newton - Treasurer  
Lisa Weeks  
Robert Walker  
Lee Wright

