



# Mountain States Lamb Cooperative

March/April 2018

## Newsletter

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Jw Nuckolls, a founding member and great supporter of MSLC, died at his home in Hulett, WY on Wednesday February 21, 2018, at age 84. Jw will be greatly missed by the entire Mountain States family.

He was born September 2, 1933, the youngest of Will and Myra (Lawrence) Nuckolls' seven children. He attended Barlow Canyon Country School and Hulett High School where he graduated in 1951. He had his heart set on attending college so he made a deal with his father: in exchange for the opportunity to get an education, he vowed to come home and work the land. Jw attended the University of Wyoming, majored in Agronomy, and graduated with honors in 1955. Shortly after returning home, Jw began to focus on the sheep business, where he met the love of his life, Thea Ellen, daughter of Sam and Patty Amspoker, from Douglas, Wyoming. Jw and Thea were married on September 13, 1959, and they raised five children on the G-G Ranch. Jw never knew a stranger, and he loved his friends, his family, and his country. He always enjoyed a good visit and was passionate about learning new things, whether from a conversation, a book, or one of numerous publications he kept all around the house, just in case there was a spare moment for reading. He believed knowledge was for sharing, not guarding, and was glad to impart what he had learned to help others. As a gifted analyst with an excellent memory, Jw had a knack for telling wonderful and enlightening stories, often linking detailed local history to present-day events and families. In return, he loved to hear a good story, whether told, read, watched, or ending with a clever punch line, and his bright blue eyes would crinkle and sparkle as he laughed at the wit. His word and his handshake were worth more than the formality of any contract he signed, and he was loyal to many things he believed in; go Pokes, go Red Devils, yes

to Agriculture, and vote Republican! Jw volunteered countless hours promoting and supporting agriculture and was an icon in the industry. He served on various boards: Farm Bureau, Wool Growers, Stock Growers, Grazing Association, Predator, and the American Sheep Industry. He was instrumental in establishing the Center of the Nation Wool Corporation, where he was involved for 58 years, as well as the Mountain States Lamb Co-op. Jw was elected to the School Board, was a County Commissioner, served as Chairman of the Crook County Republican Party, and was appointed to serve as a Director on the Wyoming Livestock Board.

In his daily life on the ranch, Jw treasured a fast-walking horse and a natural working dog. He loved country music, and you could sometimes hear his radio coming before you heard the pickup. His sweet tooth for double-helpings of ice cream and Thea's homemade desserts was only surpassed by his ability to never gain weight. He relished the chance to give a tour of the beautiful ranch he called home, and he so detested the sight of noxious weeds on his land that he would even pause a visit to take care of one. Forever plotting the next project and improvement, Jw was immensely proud of his land and its history, and he fulfilled a life-long dream when, at the age of 62, he climbed to the top of nearby Devils Tower with Zeta and Gary. Jw became a Christian at the age of 66, and was baptized in the First Baptist Church of Hulett in September of 1999.

Even as his heart slowly failed, he truly kept living his life right to the very end.

Jw is survived by his wife of 58 years, Thea, and his greatest legacy which is his family: children Nan (Tom) Neiman, Dawn (Shannon) Brengle all of Gillette, Zeta (Gary) Anderson of Devils Tower, Will (Laura) Nuckolls of Hulett, and Sam (Kristy) Nuckolls of Ft. Worth, TX, 12 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

### **Rupert, Idaho Promotes American Lamb**

Rupert, Idaho residents have been promoting lamb with two very successful annual charity lamb feeds (or dinners) for many years. Organizers of the events report residents of the town of 5800 look forward to these lamb feeds. Many report they have become lamb lovers after being introduced to our wonderful product in this way.

The largest event is the St. Nicholas Church and School Annual Basque Dinner. This year marked the 60th anniversary of the event. Once again, Mountain States Lamb was served family-style to 500 diners.

The Rupert Elks Club also features Mountain States Lamb at their annual January fundraiser feed, serving an estimated attendance of 250. The Mountain States Lamb Coop banner hangs at each of the events, thanks to the Etcheverry family.

Both dinners feature Mountain States Lamb BRT (boned, rolled and tied) leg. This product is easy to prepare and serve and is always a favorite of attendees. St. Nicholas reportedly never has to worry about having too much lamb. Any remaining cooked lamb is packed in emptied #10 gallon cans and quickly scooped up with \$75 donations.

If you are interested in featuring Mountain States Lamb at your event, contact the Co-op office. We are happy to answer your questions and set up your order and delivery. While BRT legs and chops are most commonly featured at dinners and BBQs, any lamb cut is available with enough lead time.

## **MSLC 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting July 18-20, 2018**

Our 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is coming up fast in Watertown, SD! You can make your room reservations now by calling the Ramkota Hotel and Watertown Event Center directly at 605-886-8011 and mentioning that you are with the Mountain States Lamb group. Our group rate is \$99. You will need to make your reservation by June 25 to get this rate.

Full meeting registration information will be sent out in May. The Welcoming Reception will be on Wednesday evening, July 18. The Annual Business Meeting is on Thursday, July 19. Friday, July 20, is reserved for the lamb tour and the event will conclude Friday night with a Lamb Banquet.

## **2018 Board Elections**

MSLC board elections are almost here! Nomination forms for the board position are included with this newsletter and are due on or before May 25, 2018.

The one seat up for election this year is the District I, Wyoming, director. This seat is currently held by Brad Boner of Glenrock, Wyoming. The District I position can be held by a MSLC member from Wyoming. Board seats have a term of three years.

Ballots for the MSLC board elections will be mailed out the end of May. A Mountain States Lamb Cooperative "A share" member receiving three nominations will appear on the ballot.

## **Important Tax Reminder**

Be sure to provide your tax preparer with the 1099-PATR from MSLC showing your DPAD Deduction. Based on your 2016 lamb sales through the cooperative this amount may represent a significant reduction in taxable farm income.

## **Pelt Market Update**

The strong wool market today has a huge impact on pelt credits. Chinese tanners are paying premiums for big and long, fine wool types. Typically, this time of year sees declining prices and credits because of seasonal deficiencies in leather quality. But the emphasis in the current market continues to be on fine wool recovery when the pelts are shorn in the tannery. Courser wool unshorn skins are less sought after and there is an abundance of medium and course wool shorn lambs on the global stage so those types are trading relatively low in relation to longer finer wool types.

The Napa and suede markets continue to be extremely depressed. These are skins that are converted into leather without the wool remaining on the pelt. In the raw state these will be skins that are less than 3/8-inch-long or skins with such poor-quality wool, the wool will have to be removed prior to tanning. In shearlings, even if the skin has an inch of wool, if the wool is breaking or slipping or lacks minimal density requirements, or is too course, it will be a Napa type. A positive development via the tannery is that we have developed some business that allows us to utilize shearlings with a wool length from 3/8 inch to 3/4 inch which means we no longer will be throwing away skins that have 50-60-day shear on them, if the wool type avoids being in the "Napa range". There is a substantial difference in the pelt credits if we can utilize these short wool types and not have to throw these types of skins in the trash.

It might be interesting to note that there has been and continues to be in many origins, a general movement toward "meat" sheep and lamb, like the dorper. This expansion in numbers may be partially responsible for two things; an oversupply in "Napa" type skins and thus little value or market in those types. And a globally declining supply of "Wool" type animals creating an overall shortage of fine wools and thus higher prices for finer wools.

We are expecting a steady to firm market in the coming months for a variety of reasons. We currently have very little unsold inventory and are in fact, a bit short by design. We are off to a big start in San Antonio as tannery orders are up 40% over last year. Australia, South Africa, France, and Spain are seeing much lighter kills now and we are expecting much lighter kills as we move into summer months and forecasted seasonal shortages of livestock. The double face business was good this past year. Cold weather in the north eastern United States, helped. While it came late cold weather has also been in abundance in Europe and Russia. A weaker U.S. dollar has also helped in generating better domestic pelt credits.

In short, we are well placed with sales and the market looks to be on sound footing for the foreseeable future, unless there is a disruption in the wool trade. As we get further into summer and eventually new crop lamb skins, bear in mind though that summer lambs will have less wool recovery as well as some discoloration so it is likely a price drop from the current big, long, fine wool old crops.

*Mike Wheeler*