

## **Black Lincoln longwools Newsletter.**

**April 2024.**

Well, this year's lambing has been a challenge for many. Several breeders have reported problems with the Schmollenberg virus, with significant numbers of barren ewes and mal-formed lambs. Our lambing is very late as it appears both rams were no working at all. Still there seem to be a decent number of lambs and some people interested in starting new flocks. Here are some reports about black Lincolns from near and very far.

### **Hannah at the Rare breeds farm in Kent writes:**

Hi guys,

So this year has had a couple of firsts for me. We are an attraction farm open to the public all year round so normally lamb for the Easter holidays but this year I put wensleydales and coloured Lincolns to the ram early to have some lambs for February half and that went down a treat with our visitors. We did an officially "Meet the Lambs" hour explaining a bit about the breeds and letting the children pet them! We had to cross some of our ewes this year as didn't want to put them to their dad. So thought I'd see what coloured Lincoln Cross Wiltshire horn would look like!!! Let's see if we get a shedding long wool lol. You never know but they did come out bright white!!!

Hoping to get to some shows again this year including three counties and maybe some of the early lambs will also be big enough to go! Hope to see some of you there?! We are in desperate need of a new ram this year if anyone has anything please do get in touch.







**Kathy Smyth keeps her Lincolns in the north of the County.**

My friend Beccy came to visit recently and fell in love with my girls.

She'd never seen such beautiful sheep. I have to agree that Long Wools are exceptional, but I am biased!

She took lots of photos to show her friends and has added this portrait of Princess to her portfolio.

I know Beccy would be really proud. She's now a huge Long Wool fan (and prefers the blacks to the whites)!



- Kathy has also found a great way to use the fleeces:-

There is a local group of spinners and a felter.

I've made a few suggestions,

Initially, I thought the group might like to see my girls being shorn, then take their fleeces.

Old fashioned barter system, free fleece in exchange for a ball of wool.

All the fleeces are now reserved.

No cost to them .

But I'll get yarn or felt in exchange.

And even homemade cake if they come to watch the shearing.

If you don't know what to do with your fleeces there are crafting groups in most areas.

- And Kathy has been busy crafting herself:-

I've found another way of crafting with the fleece.

Empty Tube pens can be personalised with all sorts of things.

A friend recently told me about them. I've just bought some from Amazon, and have had fun filling them with wool and glitter.





## **A Black Lincoln Longwool Journey (Anne lives in Shropshire.)**

Hi everyone, I'm Anne. I live on a holding of a few acres on the beautiful Welsh Borders. I'd kept and bred sheep years before, mainly cheviots and Suffolk cross, and wanted to get back to sheep keeping. My partner had kept white Lincolns in the past, and I too fancied Lincolns. Back in 2020 I met Steve and Chris Higgins and purchased three beautiful Black Lincoln ewe lambs. And what a great decision it's turned out to be! As Black Lincoln keepers yourselves you'll know what terrific characters they are – friendly, easy to manage (if a little on the weighty side)! Fortunately they have proved to have very few foot problems, a little scald in spring but nothing else.



I'd decided my sheep will stay with me for life, and that I would not breed from them. Their fabulous fleeces come back slightly different each year - sometimes lighter sometimes a little darker - but always beautiful lustrous shades of silvers, greys and browns. I'd started using local fleeces of various breeds to make items on a pegloom - rugs, seatpads, cushions, bags. My Black Lincoln fleeces didn't work well with that process. However, they do make beautiful felted fleece rugs, sometimes called 'living rugs'. Felted rugs (and felted seat pads) are made by a process of laying carded wool on the back of the shorn fleece, adding

hot soapy water, and rolling until the backing wool is felted to the fleece. The trick is to felt the back and not the front!

And the joy of all this is that my girls (and all the other local sheep whose fleeces I use) are alive and well in their fields, growing a new fleece for next year!

I sell my rugs, seat pads and other items at craft fairs around



Shropshire. People are particularly fascinated by the felted rugs, and love the soft curls of the Black Lincoln fleece. Few if any have ever heard of Black Lincoln Longwools so I take every opportunity to promote the breed.

Do take a look at my website [www.emilysfleece.co.uk](http://www.emilysfleece.co.uk). I take commissions, so if any of you have Black Lincoln fleeces you'd like made into rugs or seat pads do get in touch. I can even needle felt the sheep's name on the back of your rug!



## **Peter and Mandy keep the Skylark flock in Yorkshire.**

They are well known for their enthusiastic showing, ably assisted by their talented grandsons.

“It’s been a bit of a struggle this year with constant rain, but we have had some lovely lambs. Our aim is to get the fleeces better and try to get them to shows.”



## **Anita keeps her Lincolns in the USA.**

Well, it was the British invasion at the 2023 North American International Livestock Exposition! We were very honoured to have Mr. Brian Larson as the Lincoln Longwool show judge and he called it according to the Lincoln Longwool standard. This should always be the case, however, here in the States, many breeders of all breeds have a hard time staying true to a standard. This has produced Suffolks that are literally larger than ponies and narrow framed Lincolns that have fleeces that favour Corriedale. Thanks to the Suffolk height race, the spider gene became a very serious problem in the Suffolks and other black face breeds that put a little Suffolk in the genetics to get that gold standard tall sheep. We now have to genetic test those breeds for spider gene carriers before breeding.

This very real problem of sheep being judged to fashion instead of standards is why we were so thrilled to have Mr. Larson judge. He doesn't just pull out his yard stick and place the class according to height, he judges the animal against the standard score card.

That said, my Lincolns and Hoddinott farm Lincolns did very well. Hoddinott farm is the Harvey Warrick line and my flock traces to Larson and Warrick origins and I have added UK semen. The Grand Champion white Lincoln ewe, and champion white ewe fleece, was Lincoln Hwy Greta, an April 2023 lamb that is 73.4375% UK blood. Her dams side has Tardebigge, Yaddlethorpe, Humby and Tattershall, which if I remember correctly is a New Zealand AI from the Warrick ewe I bought from Harvey the year Keith Harding judged NAILE in I think 2013. Keith liked Harvey's natural coloured ewe a lot and it was down to a ewe I had there and Harvey's ewe for 1st and 2nd place natural coloured yearling ewe. My ewe won that day but I too liked Harvey's ewe and took her home to our flock and she was a foundation to my current day flock.

Greta, the 2023 champion's buck was Shortwood Wooster which was in the most recent semen import from across the pond. Normally the older ewes get the champion honors because they are bigger, proven and more impressive in the ring however, Greta was not going to be overlooked as she has good size and width for her late April birthday and she has the most perfect fleece I have ever raised. The luster pops and the locks are textbook two finger wide, with crimp that curves a finger's width. I always find it hard to talk up my own sheep but she will not be denied the accolades as it is a stunning fleece. All the stars and



genetics aligned with her and I was happy to be able to bring her to the ring for a proper evaluation.

The Grand Champion natural coloured Lincoln Ram and champion natural coloured ram fleece was Lincoln Hwy Edgar, a yearling ram that is 26.5625% UK blood. His claim to fame is he is the son of Elsie, the 2019 Maryland Reserve Champion White Lincoln Longwool ewe. The 2019 Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival was judged by Ian & Louise Fairburn that year and Elsie was reserve to another ewe I had there. Elsie goes back to the Tardebigge, Yaddlethorpe, Humby and Tattershall genetics and Edgar's buck was a Payton ram from Oregon. Edgar was my second pick to go to NAILE. I didn't have time to get my best natural coloured ram Bingly, a 50% UK blood ram ready because we were literally just finishing corn harvest a few days before I had to check in at Louisville and Edgar had a shorter fleece that was clean enough to go from paddock to ring.

Bingly, is a Juggernaut, Shadow flock son. Juggernaut was semen Brian Larson imported quite some time ago but it is still viable and throwing some great Lincolns. Just today I had my first lamb out of Bingly and he is a cracker! I love when the lambs come out and they have the locks and crimp in perfect rows with big curls on the ends. I had never experienced that before getting the UK percentages up in my flock. The American line Lincolns tend to come out fuzzy without that fleece definition and luster. Edgar had a set of twins and one of the twins has that desirable baby fleece.

Bingly, who had a natural coloured dam, threw a white lamb while natural coloured Edgar, whose mother and father are white threw super dark black lambs. I would say I have pretty close to the 60/40 in my lambs born, 60% white and 40% natural colored. I truly don't care what colour they are as long as they have that classic Lincoln luster and lock structure. The UK influence has really taken my fleeces and frames to the next level. My rams always top 300# now and it isn't because they are tall, they are wide and thick. Thank you for raising and sharing Lincoln Longwools with us here in the States. It has been a real pleasure having the British invasion in my barn!

The photos show the quality of the Coloured Lincolns in Anita's flock.







Thanks to everyone who sent in stuff. It's great to see how much is going on. Here's looking forward to a warm, dry Summer with lots of opportunities to meet.

All the best.