

March 14, 2023

Updates and Guidelines for Fleece Producers entering the 2023 Fleece Show & Sale

*** * * * 50 YEARS! * * * ***

Greetings, fleece producers! We are gearing up for the 50th MD Sheep & Wool Festival Fleece Show & Sale. The need for a way for fiber artists to get access to raw wool fleeces was a key inspiration for the first Festival, and in turn, it quickly became a place where producers could connect with a new market for their best quality fleeces. It's been an amazing evolution and we hope it continues to provide exposure, sales and motivation to produce the highest quality handspinning fleeces you can!

This information packet is being emailed directly to our past producer exhibitors and can also be downloaded from the Festival website (www.sheepandwool.org). Please let us know if you would prefer not to receive this message and we'll be sure to take you off the list.

THE USUAL REMINDERS:

1. **NO MECHANISM FOR ONLINE ENTRIES.** Please fill out paper entry forms and mail them with a check.
2. **NO LATE ENTRIES.** All entries must be **RECEIVED** by Thursday, April 27. No new entries will be accepted the day of fleece check-in (Friday, May 5th). If you have questions about the entry process, feel free to contact us ahead of time.
3. **FLEECE CHECK-IN:** 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ON FRIDAY, MAY 5th at the back of the building. No entries will be accepted after 4:30.
4. **WHOLE FLEECES ONLY.** Please DO NOT enter split fleeces or partial fleeces as separate entries. The Fleece Show & Sale is for the sale and evaluation of whole fleeces. There are other avenues for selling raw wool by the pound.
5. **DO NOT PRICE FOR NO-SALE.** Once again, we ask that you do not place exorbitant prices on fleeces in the hopes that they will not sell. If you wish to enter a fleece in competition to be judged but don't want to sell it, we recommend you take it to one of the other venues that have a no-sale option.

Coopworth and Cotswold exhibitors PLEASE NOTE: We have had so few entries in these breed specific classes that they are officially “on probation”! This means that if we don't get sufficient numbers/producers in these classes in 2023, we will no longer have those classes, and fleeces from those breeds will be entered in the Division I or II Longwool fleece classes.

REMINDER: To establish a new breed-specific class (Division III) we must be guaranteed a total of at least 10 fleeces from at least 3 different producers, and it must be applied for by January 1st.

What follows is the information printed in the Festival catalog regarding the Fleece Show & Sale, followed by some additional helpful tips for successfully completing your entries. In addition, we have included in this package the summary data from the 2022 Fleece Show & Sale that may help you determine your prices. In addition, full-page entry forms – in both .pdf and .xls formats are also included (the .pdf can be downloaded from the Festival website as well).

2023 Fleece Show & Sale

Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Lee Langstaff (Co-Chair), 24020 Old Hundred Road, Dickerson, MD 20842
301-908-9332; fleeceshow@sheepandwool.org

New This 50th Year !

Jacob Sheep Breeders Association Special Awards: Jacob Sheep will be the featured breed at the Festival this year and the Jacob Sheep Breeders Association is offering special awards for Champion (\$50) and Reserve Champion (\$35) Jacob Fleeces.

New Breed-Specific Class: A new class for Valais Blacknose Sheep fleeces will join the ranks of our Breed-Specific classes. As with all of the breed-specific classes, the fleeces will be judged to the breed standard as well as suitability for handspinning.

Fleece Entry Options: All fleeces must be for sale.

Show & Sale (\$7 per fleece): Fleeces entered in competition to be judged and eligible for awards, and also consigned for sale (Divisions I, II and III).

Sale Only (\$4 per fleece): Fleeces consigned for sale but not judged or eligible for awards (Divisions I & II only).

Maryland Shepherds Cup: Award for the best set of 5 handspinning fleeces from an individual Maryland shepherd/flock. Each fleece must be individually entered for Show & Sale in the appropriate Divisions and Classes. Only one entry of 5 fleeces per shepherd/flock. No additional entry fee.

Fleece Standards

- 1) Producers are urged to be selective in choosing fleeces to enter.
- 2) Fleeces must be from the current (2022-2023) wool clip and represent no more than 15 months growth.
- 3) Maximum of 7 fleeces per exhibitor. The same fleece may not be entered in more than one class or division.
- 4) Whole fleeces only (no half or partial fleeces).
- 5) Each fleece **MUST be well skirted** to ensure it is clean, dry, as free as possible of contaminants (e.g., vegetative matter (VM), chaff, burrs, manure tags & second cuts, etc.).
- 6) Minimum staple length of 2 inches. Note that 3 inches and above is preferred by most hand-spinners (as appropriate to breed type).

- 7) The Committee reserves the right to reject any fleeces not meeting standards (e.g., excessive dirt or VM, fleeces with active lice, excessively short fleeces, cotted, wet or moldy fleeces, etc.). Entry fees will not be refunded for rejected fleeces.

Entry Requirements

- 8) Fleeces must be in a clear, unmarked plastic bag that can be easily opened (no ties or knots).
- 9) Weights must be provided to the nearest quarter pound. The Committee reserves the right to re-weigh fleeces if entered weights are questionable.
- 10) Breed designation: Breed information on the entry forms should be designated in one of two ways:
 - a. For purebred single breed: Breed Name (e.g. Romney)
 - b. For crosses or mixes of more than one breed: Predominant Breed Name X (e.g., Romney X). Predominant Breed refers to the breed that is either the highest percentage breed in the cross OR the breed in the cross/mix whose qualities are most reflected in the individual fleece.

Additional details will be entered under the optional Fleece ID field and will print out on the tag that will be fastened to the bag.

- 11) Prices will be set by the producers. Producers are urged to be reasonable in the prices they set. A summary of the price ranges for different breeds and categories of fleeces entered last year is available on the Festival website and may provide useful guidance.
- 12) Entries must be RECEIVED no later than Thursday, April 27, 2023 accompanied by entry fee.
- 13) Entry fees are: \$4 per fleece consigned for Sale Only, and \$7 per fleece consigned for both Show and Sale.
- 14) Producers are responsible for entering their fleeces in the appropriate division and class. Judges may not re-classify fleeces once they are delivered.

Show & Sale Rules & Responsibilities

- 15) Producers entering fleeces are responsible for picking up ribbons in the Fleece Show & Sale office anytime after 11:00 am on Saturday. Premiums will be mailed to winners with their fleece sales checks.
- 16) Producers are responsible for picking up unsold fleeces (see schedule). Any abandoned fleeces will become the property of MSBA.
- 17) The commission on sales will be 10% for MSBA members (current as of April 27, 2023) and 20% for non-members. If you wish to join MSBA (or update your membership), membership forms can be found via: www.sheepandwool.org or www.marylandsheepbreeders.org.
- 18) It is the policy of the Festival to be a broker to make quality fleeces of all kinds available to spinners and other fiber artists and to provide a marketplace for wool producers.
- 19) MSBA will make every effort to display and care for the entered fleeces, but assumes no responsibility for damaged, lost, or stolen fleeces.

FLEECE SHOW & SALE DIVISIONS AND CLASSES

DIVISION I - Natural Colored (non-white) Fleeces

DIVISION II - White Fleeces

All fleeces in Divisions I & II will be judged on suitability for handspinning.

Divisions I & II will each have classes A, B, C and D, as follows:

- A. Fine:** Spinning Count 64s to 80s (17-22 microns) (e.g., Cormo, Merino, Rambouillet, etc.)

B. Medium: Spinning Count 50s to 62s (22-31 microns) (e.g., Cheviot, Columbia, Corriedale, Dorset, Montadale, Tunis, etc.)

B1. Down-Type Medium wool Show & Sale entries will be separated out for judging (e.g., Southdown, Suffolk, Hampshire, Shropshire, Dorset, Cheviot, Tunis, Clun Forest, etc.).

C. Long: Spinning Count 36s to 48s (31-40+ microns) (e.g., Border Leicester, Coopworth, Cotswold, Lincoln, Romney, Wensleydale, etc.)

D. Primitive/Double-Coated: (e.g., Icelandic, Karakul, Navajo-Churro, Scottish Blackface, Shetland, etc.)

Premiums for each class: 1st - \$20 2nd - \$15 3rd - \$12 4th - \$10

DIVISION III - Breed Class Fleeces

Judging will be based on breed standards and suitability for handspinning.

Div. III fleeces must be for Show and Sale (no Sale-Only entries).

Premiums for each class: 1st - \$20 2nd - \$15

2022 Breed-specific Classes:

Blue-Faced Leicester

Border Leicester

Coopworth

Cormo

Corriedale

Cotswold

Finnsheep

Gotland

Jacob

Karakul

Leicester Longwool

Lincoln

Merino

Rambouillet

Romeldale

Romney

Shetland

Valais Blacknose

Silent Auction Selected Special Fleece Show Award winners (designated below by *) will be placed on a separate table following judging and will be available for silent auction bids from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. Saturday. The starting prices will be the producer's asking prices. Bidding will close at 3:00 p.m. Saturday, and these fleeces may be picked up by the winning bidders after 3:30 p.m.

Schedule

- Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Fleeces accepted
- Friday, 11:00 - 4:30 p.m. – Show fleeces judged
- Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Fleeces for sale
- Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Silent auction for Special Award fleeces
- Saturday, 12:30 p.m. – Judges discuss show fleece placings
- Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Fleeces for sale
- Sunday, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. – Producers pick-up unsold fleeces

SPECIAL FLEECE SHOW AWARDS

***Grand Champion Fleece - \$100 and Rosette**

***Champion Fleece, each Division - \$50 and Rosette**

***The Pat Brown Memorial Award: Best Maryland Fleece - \$25 & Cup**

The Tyson Creamer Memorial Award: Best 4-H Fleece - \$25

Best Uncovered Fleece - \$25

Maryland Shepherds Cup - \$100

2023 Sponsored Awards:

Nat'l Blue Faced Leicester Union Award for Highest Placing BFL Fleece - \$50

Champion Leicester Longwool Fleece (sponsored by Budding Creek Farm) - \$50

Best Leicester Longwool Natural Colored Fleece (sponsored by The Ross Farm) - \$25

Best Leicester Longwool White Fleece (sponsored by Underhill Farm) - \$25

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR ENTRIES and ensuring a smooth check-in process!

1. To access a downloadable Entry Form online go to the festival website:
www.sheepandwool.org -> click on icon for **Shows and Sales** -> select **Fleece Show and Sale** -> select the downloadable registration form on the right.
2. **Fleece ID.** This field is for you to enter information that identifies the specific fleece and distinguishes it from your other fleeces, e.g., by name of the sheep or sheep eartag number, or some other way you wish to identify the specific fleece.
3. **Fleeces entered in Division III (breed-specific) classes** should, of course, designate the breed **but should not designate Class (A, B, C, or D).**
4. **Please DO NOT list estimated weights or prices you intend to change!** If you do not have accurate weights or prices for your fleeces at the time you fill out your registration forms **please leave those fields on the form blank** and bring us the correct information when you arrive.
5. **Covered vs. Uncovered Fleeces.** The space on the entry form to indicate whether a fleece/sheep was covered or uncovered **MUST** be filled out. This is critical if we are to continue to offer a prize for the best un-covered fleece.
6. **Producer Identification (and other information) with fleeces.**
 - **Sale-Only** fleeces may include visible information on or in the bag(s) upon entry if desired.
 - **Show & Sale** (competition) fleeces: any additional information must be inside a standard plain white envelope in the bottom of the clear plastic fleece bag. If you wish to place more visible identifying (or other) information with your competition fleece(s) you may do so **AFTER judging is completed.** You can check with us late on Friday (depending on how late the judging goes) or on Saturday morning about doing this before the sale opens, or do it anytime after the sale opens. Bring your fleece receipt slips to make it easier to locate and identify your fleece(s) by the number assigned to them.
7. **Lower Commission for Maryland Sheep Breeders Association (MSBA) Members:** MSBA charges a commission on all fleeces sold at the Festival: 10% for MSBA members (as of April 27) and 20% for non-members. Annual membership is \$25 and is open to everyone regardless of state of residence. To join go to: www.marylandsheepbreeders.org.
8. **How to ensure efficient and painless check-in process:**
 - ✓ **Check-in will be fastest, easiest, and cheapest for those who have registered with complete information (including accurate fleece weights) on their entry forms!**
 - ✓ **Open bags** - Bring your fleeces to check-in in clear plastic bags that are **open**. They must be open in order to place our paperwork in the bag. It takes extra time at check-in to undo knotted or tied bags. At the check-in table, our volunteers will knot the bags and staple tags to them with the appropriate amount of opening for judges and/or shoppers to view the fleece.

- ✓ **Incomplete or inaccurate entries:** If your registration information is incomplete or incorrect and requires changes or additions at check-in time, check-in will take significantly longer. If this happens to you, please be patient.

WANT TO HELP? As always, it takes a great deal of volunteer participation to make the Fleece Show & Sale a success. Volunteers are a critical part of the success of the Fleece Show & Sale – with tasks ranging from helping with sales, managing entrance and exit areas; ensuring tags are secured to fleece bags; and managing the pick-up of unsold fleeces. Assignments for two-hour minimum commitment are made *in advance* to ensure we have all critical jobs covered, so please contact us well ahead of time or check in with our volunteer coordinator on site so we can assign you. Working at the Fleece Show & Sale is a great chance to get exposed to a huge variety of fleeces and meet fellow fleece lovers and experts who are generous with their knowledge and experience. Please contact us at fleeceshow@sheepandwool.org.

We look forward to seeing you in May!

~ Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival Fleece Show and Sale Committee:
Lee Langstaff & Bev Swayze (co-chairs)

Attachments:

- 2022 MSWF Fleece Show & Sale Statistics
- 2023 Fleece Show & Sale Entry form – in .pdf and .xls formats
- Maryland Shepherds Cup Description
- Information sheet on Down-type fleeces
- Map