

American Cotswold Record Association



It's Back! Introducing the first ACRA Newsletter in a few years!

Off and on over the decades, ACRA has had a bi-annual newsletter. Its time to make that happen again!

If you would be interested in helping with this newsletter by writing an article, a column or organizing it all, please contact a board member!

The ACRA Board has been meeting/zooming this past year focusing on 3 areas:

Current Board
members for
ACRA :



1

A NEW ACRA
WEBSITE

2

LIVESTOCK
CONSERVANCY
GRANT APPLICATION

3

BREEDING STOCK

Kathy Crow

President: Aleta Springs Farm in Churchville, Virginia
crowbird988@yahoo.com

Beth Ivankovic

Vice President: Priory Farms in Eau Claire, Wisconsin
sbivankovic@charter.net

Linda Schauwecker Secretary/ Treasurer:

Orion Acres in Plympton, MA
ACRAsheep@aol.com

Alexandra Springstube

Eastern Regional Director:
springstube9@gmail.com

Lisa Carpenter

Midwest Regional Director: Kline Creek Farm in Wheaton, Illinois
lcarpenter@dupageforest.org

South and West Regional Directors needed, please consider volunteering!

CELEBRATING

ACRA is a Livestock Conservancy Microgrant Winner!

This past fall, the ACRA board applied for a grant and it was approved! Big thanks to The Livestock Conservancy for approving the ACRA grant to help with a new website and a “flock book.” The monies will go a long way in helping our association and Cotswold sheep.

Cotswold sheep are on the conservation priority list under the “Threatened Category”. The Livestock Conservancy is a wonderful organization and there might be opportunities for your flock and farm through their website. Check them out at <https://livestockconservancy.org>

ACRA Breeding Stock

Our third goal for the year: how to find and manage breeding stock. Connecting with each other will hopefully help each of us find breeding stock that will work for our flocks but it is also important to plan for the future. As the website comes together, look for educational opportunities for us to do together. One idea is reading the book, “Managing Breeds for a Secure Future” by Dr. Phillip Sponenberg. This book is a great book for breed

associations especially heritage breed associations like ACRA. Do you have other ideas? Make sure to let us know!

If you are on Instagram or Facebook, don't forget a few hashtags! #ACRAcotswolds, #ACRASheep are two easy hashtags to add to **Instagram** posts. Be to sure to join the “**American Cotswold Records Association**” private group on **Facebook** and share information about your flocks! If you live in the south or west and would like to join the board, please let us know.

Shout out to Kaya Farrington on her Senior Showmanship Class win with a Cotswold! Great job, Kaya!





Kathy and Cotswold lambs from Aleta Springs Farm

President's Corner

Every new year is filled with lists of expectations, new hopes and new dreams. For a shepherd, the new year is filled with new weather challenges and of course lambing excitement. As the new President of ACRA, I am very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead in expanding our mission and reigniting our purpose. ACRA serves as one of the oldest recorded breed association in the US, but over the years, we've lost our purpose and allowed our importance to wane. This year's board is reinvigorated to make that better.

The ACRA board is enthusiastic to show Cotswold owners that we support our breeders and the importance of the animals we represent. We've been faced with challenges in genetics as well as marketing. Breeds come in and out of favor every year like the weather cycle. Maintaining a registry that is true to the Old English heritage which ACRA holds is imperative. Our short-term initiatives include our new ACRA website to be introduced in

Spring 2022 with emphasis on all things Cotswold. This includes breed standards, breed showing opportunities, videos, a classified area for selling or buying animals as well as updates on ACRA. We are also creating a new flock book focusing on breeders across the nation. Future Cotswold owners will have multiple ways they can find show animals, replacement ewes or a new ram. In addition to live animal marketing, we are exploring opportunities to find or sell fleeces for hand spinners or connect buyers to find meat to fill the freezer. We hope that the combination of online presence and the availability of the flock book should help both promote the breed, educate other's and ultimately create opportunities for Cotswold breeders.

Ultimately, we hope the efforts the board are putting into our breed will lead to more memberships in ACRA and growth of our registry. The preservation of the Cotswold breed is important in order to honor its heritage and to raise animals for the generations ahead of us.

As we work toward our goals, I invite you to participate in the on-line questionnaire, share about your flock on-line, and we welcome your input!

Have a wonderful spring, Kathy

Did you know?

From the Rare Breeds Trust website:
In the 15th century, it appears that early Cotswolds and their wool were largely exported, for in 1425 it was enacted by King Henry VI in order to remedy the date of things, 'that no sheep shall be exported without the King's license, 'and there is no record of the King having been asked to grant a license permitting the exportation



Linda Showing a Cotswold

Just a few notes from your Secretary/
Treasurer:

Dues are Due - Annual dues runs from
January 1 to December 31.

2021 Membership 23 members

2021 Registrations 126

2021 Transfers 45

ACRA Treasury Balance on December
31, 2021 \$7,321.64

Stay warm, Linda Schauwecker

INTRODUCTIONS FROM THE BOARD

From Linda:

Hello Members,

Hope your lambing is going well. Weather around here in Southeastern MA is a little crazy, 45 degrees one day, 20 degrees the next. Our brood ewes are getting wider and I'm cautiously hoping for not so many triplets this year.

Shows to consider for our youth: ACRA will be co-sponsoring the Cotswold show at the 2022 All American Youth Sheep Show, held this year in West Springfield, MA. The North East Youth Sheep Show has pushed their show back a week so the youth can participate in both without moving your sheep.

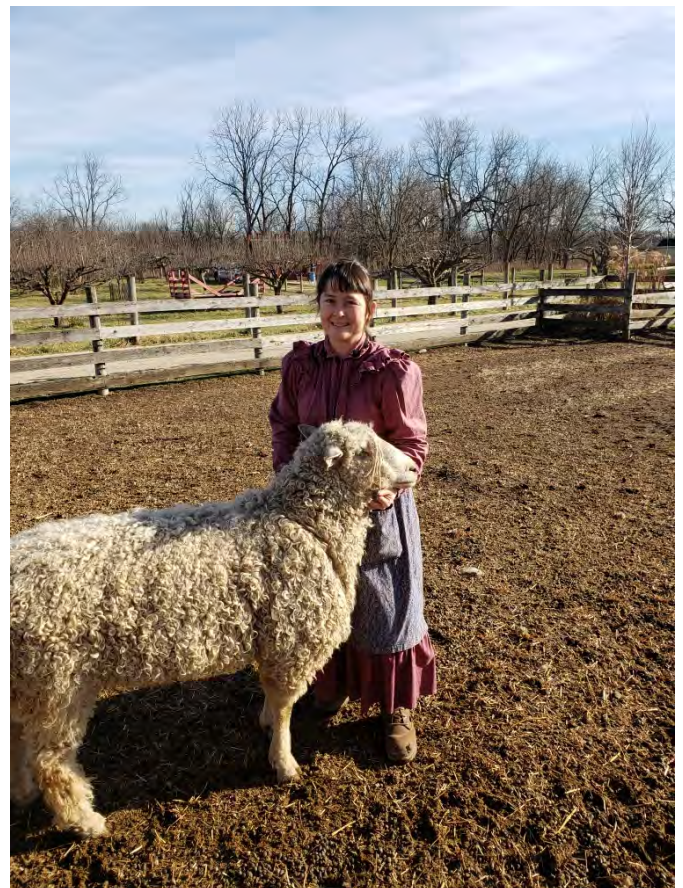
The All American is June 30th - July 3rd

[Home - All-American Junior
Sheep Show
\(allamericanjuniorshow.com\)](http://allamericanjuniorshow.com)

The NEYSS is July 8th - July 10th

[North East Youth Sheep Show |
neswga \(neswga.org\)](http://neswga.org)

Both at the Big E fairgrounds in West
Springfield, MA



Lisa at Kline Creek Farm

From Lisa (Midwest):

I work at Kline Creek Farm, which is an 1890s living history farm outside of Chicago. Our site includes an original farmhouse and farm buildings sitting on the farm's original 200 acres. We farm oats, corn, and hay with our Percheron draft horses and raise Heritage Shorthorn cattle and Cotswold sheep. We also have a flock of heritage breed chickens and seasonally keep Berkshire hogs on the farm. We got our first Cotswolds in 2019 and plan to maintain a flock of about 15 sheep. Sheep shearing and lambing are two of our most popular programs on the farm. I shear our sheep using blade shears—the technology that would have been most prevalent on farms of that period. I do a little bit of shearing on the side for small local flocks, and over the years I've done blade shearing demonstrations at various historical sites. Our goal is to educate the public about our agricultural heritage and preserve the old ways of doing things. By raising heritage livestock breeds, we are able to present the types of animals you would have seen on an 1890s farm in northern Illinois while also preserving those breeds.

You could say that I was born into agricultural history. My family still farms the land in Cass County, Michigan has been in our family since 1829. Farm records show that my great- great- great- grandfather bred Leicester Longwool and Merino sheep. My father raised Suffolk sheep for a time, but had moved out of the sheep business by the time I was born and focused on cattle, hogs, and grain crops. Fast forward to 2011, after my first year of history graduate school at the College of William and Mary, I got a summer job in the livestock department at Colonial Williamsburg. I had found my calling! I halter broke Milking Devon heifer calves for

the program, learned to blade shear the Leicester Longwool sheep, and eventually became Colonial Williamsburg's ox driver!

After Colonial Williamsburg, I worked as the farm manager at Historic Brattonsville in South Carolina, where I bred Gulf Coast Native Sheep. In 2018, I moved back to the Midwest, closer to my roots, to manage the farming program at Kline Creek Farm. Kline Creek Farm had show-grade Southdown sheep when I started, but I decided to transition to the Cotswolds so we could focus more on conservation breeding than show stock. Though both breeds are correct for 1890s Illinois, records show that there were more Cotswolds in the state at the time.

The Cotswold sheep are a great addition to our program. I hope to breed quality animals that conform to the original breed standard. I am a firm believer in culling and only keeping the highest quality animals. As you might guess from my background, historical preservation has always been a big part of my life. That's why serving on the board of the American Cotswold Record Association, the original Cotswold registry in the United States, is important to me.

Lisa Carpenter
Historical Farming Program Coordinator
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From Alex (East):

Hello everyone, my name is Alexandra Springstube and I am your Eastern Regional director for the American



Alex showing a Cotswold

Cotswold Record Association. As your new member on the board I am very devoted to preserving and promoting the Cotswold breed.

I've been raising and showing Cotswolds on my family's farm for over 15 years now. I chose this breed because of their friendly personalities, golden fleeces, and that they are considered a dual purpose breed that can be raised for meat and wool. I have competed with my Cotswolds at several local, regional, and national shows where I have met many other amazing Cotswold breeders. A proud moment for our farm was back in 2019 when one of our Cotswold yearling ewes won best

fleece at the Eastern States Exposition.

As we head into lambing season, I am excited to see what this year will bring. I hope that all of our members have a wonderful and successful lambing season.

If any of you have any questions or concerns about Cotswolds or ACRA, please feel free to reach out to me or any of the other amazing ACRA board members.

Happy Lambing, Alex

From Beth (Vice President):

Hello from Northwest Wisconsin!

About 5 years ago, I thought a few sheep might help some old pastures. I took a shepherding class and thought "Really, how hard could a few sheep be?" Long story short, I have learned a lot!

I picked the Cotswold breed due to their hardiness (we don't have a barn), gentle disposition, dual purpose and the fact that they have the cutest lambs in the sheep world (It is a fact!). We have fallen in love with them. They have worked really well on



Beth with some of her flock

the old pastures from grazing to pasture lambing to handling our winters. I've enjoyed learning rotational grazing to improve the soil as well as decrease the need for anthelmintics. Overall, I have found there is nothing better than a good morning "baa" from the flock.

Our farm is a member of our local Fibershed, The Three Rivers Fibershed based out of Minneapolis. Through that group, I've met many other shepherds who have small flocks of sheep. They are helping me learn the ins and outs of the fiber world. Joining the board of ACRA seemed to be the next logical step to learn the ins and outs of Cotswolds. Although I am still learning (daily) about sheep and farming, I hope my background as a pharmacist and the organizational skills I've picked up from other volunteer experiences will help grow ACRA and keep the Cotswold breed in this world.

Priory Farms currently has a flock of 21 ACRA Cotswolds. We pasture lamb in May hoping that all of the spring snow storms are gone by then. We have been learning to grow pasture raised chickens (not as fun as sheep but they do taste good) and I've just ordered 5 turkeys for this summer (heard they are hard to keep alive....so my simple goal will be: keep turkeys alive this summer.)

Looking forward to connecting and learning with all of you! Please feel free to contact at anytime.

Beth Ivankovic, Priory Farms, LLC

How can you help ACRA? 3 easy ways!

1. Please fill out the following survey through Google Forms:

<https://forms.gle/BNVczxpisxDC2X697>

2. Let us know what your farm and Cotswold sheep are up to! The next Newsletter will be out August 1st. Have your Cotswolds been in a show? Love to use Cotswold wool? Have a favorite Cotswold sheep? We want to hear from you! Send pictures or news to sbivankovic@charter.net

3. Selling sheep? Make sure to pass on information about ACRA to help increase our membership!



Thoughts from the members

Firstly we are so pleased to see ACRA up and going after a long and difficult hiatus. Our enthusiasm is based on the quality of our board of officers and a new sense of enthusiasm in preserving this historically significant breed.

A handful of breeders have hung in and kept this breed going despite a shrinking pool of breeding stock. We are pleased to be part of that group. Over the years we have seen the breed used on an increasingly frequent basis to introduce new American varieties of European breeds some rare and some not. We have from the very beginning of owning and breeding of Cotswolds felt we were obligated to support this breed and maintain its purity. To maintain the breed standard from 130 years ago is a noble act as it is a tribute to all those who came before in the long line of breeders stretching back centuries and most especially to those breeders in the states and across the pond who kept the breed going and then brought it back. A special word of gratitude to the Garne flock of Britain that was the last existing flock in the UK, before it's recent revival there, and to several notable US breeders like Bob Gillis, Vicki Rigel, Pat Fresella, June Reed Reisinger and several others whose hard work brought back this breed from the brink of extinction. Many of you will find on very extended pedigree research the farm names of these breeders. Bob Gillis as Gillis plus a flock number, Vicki Rigel as Orion Acres, Pat Fresella as Sheepsboro Cotts and June Reed Reisinger as Wiffle Tree Farm.

We began as a flock for our daughter's 4-H project. She had raised an orphan lamb that was a Lincoln Cotswold cross and used it as her first show animal. Deciding that she wanted Cotswolds as her breed we sought out breeders and found a ram at the NH sheep and wool festival and two yearling ewes from Pat Fresella. From that start she built a flock that improved year to year into one of the best in the country. That project along with her brother's Hampshire flock gave us a family project for 15 years. Our daughter still

helps at shows when possible and her children love the "baa baas" when they visit the farm.

Just a brief reflection on our love for this breed and the respect we have for those who came before us to help keep alive this beautiful animal with its reputation as the best wool in Europe for 500 years. We say let's go for another 100 years at least!

Max Crossman



Best of luck lambing!

Youth Conservationist Program

What is it?

The Youth Conservationist Program (YCP) strives to connect aspiring youth with established shepherds to promote the preservation of heritage breed sheep. It is an important tool in building the next generation of shepherds in the United States. Hosted annually at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival, the YCP has been the foundation of many successful young flocks around the country. Many of those youth go on to be heavily involved in the industry and donate back to the program when their flocks are on their feet.

Breeder Responsibilities

Breeders donate a registered yearling ewe to the youth of their choice, based upon essays and letters of recommendation. The program goes beyond just the physical donation of a sheep though; breeders are asked to mentor their young shepherd over the following year and beyond. From advising on management decisions to assisting in locating additional suitable breeding stock, the mentoring breeder's value is immeasurable.

Don't have a spare ewe to donate? Consider offering breeding services to a youth who may not have the resources to purchase an unrelated quality registered ram.

Youth Responsibilities

Open to all youth between the ages of 9 and 18.

Recipients agree to the following:

- They must exhibit their ewe a minimum of two times in the receiving year, one of which must be their state fair;
- They must breed their ewe to a registered ram of her breed in the fall of the receiving year;
- They must utilize the ewe's fleece, either by processing it themselves or by selling it to another crafter;
- They must prepare a one to two page report, with pictures, for the donor, to be displayed the following year at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival;
- They must promote the program at least once, whether through an article in their local paper or through a breed association newsletter.
- They must be present at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival to receive their ewe.

How to Apply

Applications must include the following:

- An essay answering the question: "Why would I like to help conserve a heritage breed of sheep?"
- Contact information for the youth
- Contact information for the parent or guardian
- Breed preference or whether they wish to be considered for all available
- Letter of recommendation from 4-H advisor, FFA advisor, veterinarian, teacher, or clergy.

Interested breeders and youth should contact ycpsheep@gmail.com for more information, to submit an application, or to commit to donating a ewe. All applications are due by April 1st and must be submitted in PDF or Word format.