

June 3, 2025

Spring/Summer
2025 Issue

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The ACRA Newsletter

The American Cotswold Record Association: Spring 2025



Coping with Coccidia

By Maggie Brand

Many shepherds are or soon will be in lambing season – the fifth season of the year for shepherds. Managing our precious lambs through their first few days can be fraught with problems and sleepless nights but once everyone seems to be doing alright you start to breathe easier. However, when lambs begin to forage for hay or grass and eat grain another problem can arise: coccidia.

MIDWEST GATHERING! July 19th

Kline Creek Farm in West Chicago, Illinois

Keep reading for more info!

(Coping with Coccidia, cont.)

Between 4-8 weeks you may notice that some lambs appear lethargic with a loss of appetite and have dark, foul -smelling diarrhea, sometimes with mucous and blood. Other signs can be straining, a hunched-up appearance, and a loss of weight and body condition. These are signs of a possible overload of harmful coccidia and if untreated could result in death.

What are coccidia? They are one-celled organisms (protozoa) that infect the gastrointestinal tract of sheep. Several species of coccidia infect sheep. Most are harmless and may even provide beneficial effects. Only two species are harmful, *Eimeria ovinoidalis* and *Eimeria crandallis*.

A normal healthy lamb will build an immunity to the harmful coccidia as their rumen develops a healthy biome from eating hay or grass. Weaker lambs, such as the smaller of twins and triplets, who have had less colostrum and milk and who start to nibble bedding at an earlier age, do not have the strength to resist the harmful coccidia. Older lambs who are weakened from other parasites or diseases are also susceptible. This is especially possible if they are exposed to a stressful event such as docking, castrating, weaning, extreme weather or transportation.

The lifecycle of coccidia is 2-4 weeks and takes place entirely within the sheep and its feces. Lambs eat the eggs (oocysts) when they nibble on bedding, fecal laden hay/grain in their creep or contaminated pasture grass. The oocysts break open in the intestines releasing 'daughter' cells which attach themselves to the gut lining. There they multiply by asexual division. When the population of coccidia inside a gut cell becomes too dense, the cell ruptures spewing the new 'daughter' cells further down the gut. Within 10-14 days their number will have increased a million-fold. The coccidia cells then change into male and female cells. The female cells are fertilized, secrete an oocyst wall around themselves, release from the gut wall and are shed in the feces where they are ingested again.

Clinical coccidiosis occurs when the gut lining is so damaged that it can't function properly causing the diarrhea and nutrient deficiency. Often if the lamb survives, it won't thrive and will be stunted for life.

(Coping with Coccidia, cont.)

Oocysts thrive in humid, warm conditions but can be killed by heat, direct sunlight and drying. They are impressively resistant and can survive hot, dry periods as well as freezing temperatures for long periods of time – even over winter. Detection of coccidia can be difficult as some lambs exhibit no symptoms while carrying a heavy load. By the time diarrhea and other signs are present, the coccidia may be well entrenched. Fecal counts can be misleading because many other species of coccidia may be present or the sample may have been taken at the wrong time in the life cycle. Only a specie specific count can be trusted and is often done post-mortem.

The best management practice is prevention: Keep the bedding dry. Prevent fecal contamination in and around creep feeders and pooling or wet conditions around hay and grain troughs. Supplement feeding of weaker lambs for better nutrition. Avoid overcrowding. At weaning, avoid high stress levels by removing ewes, and leaving lambs in their familiar surroundings. Turn lambs out on uncontaminated pasture and avoid putting late lambs in with older lambs. Coccidia are present in every flock and initial infection is often caused by low level shedding of oocysts by ewes. Finally, quarantine new animals brought onto the farm and clean their pen when finished.

Timely use of medications called coccidostats complement good hygiene practices in preventing coccidiosis. They work by reducing the number of oocysts shed into the environment and can be given in water, milk replacer, grain or minerals Two such medications labeled for sheep are decoquinate (Deccox®) and lasalocid, (Bovatec®), an ionophore or antibiotic.



(Coping with Coccidia, cont.)

Amprolium (Corid®) can be used as both a treatment and preventative for coccidiosis but is not labeled for sheep and should be used wisely. It is sold in liquid or powder form. When coccidia ingest Corid®, they develop a thiamine deficiency and die from malnourishment. Though rare, polioencephalomalacia due to thiamine deficiency has been reported as a side effect of treatment with amprolium.

Using Coccidostats is tricky because of several reasons: they must be given early in the coccidia life cycle before clinical signs show up (difficult to detect), must be given at the prescribed dosage (difficult to judge if given in feed or water) and must be given strategically because prolonged use causes Coccidia resistance. Other products are available but off label and should be used only with the knowledge of their risks. Anthelmintics used to treat worms have no effect.

The most promising natural control is the legume sericea lespedeza (*lespedeza cuneata*), a warm season legume used to help control barber pole worms. Its condensed tannins provide the anti-parasitic properties. It can be overseeded into pastures but is also available in some places as hay or pellets although they are pricey. Prolonged feeding of sericea lespedeza is not recommended because the tannins cause reduced digestion and absorption of nutrients in the rumen.

In general, coccidia and coccidiosis are difficult to manage, especially on small acreage. Some flocks never have problems while others with similar management practices have annual outbreaks. Flocks with limited space have fewer options to change how their space is used. Creative planning and attention to weather and flock conditions are crucial. Good hygiene, good nutrition, and knowledge when to use coccidostats are key. And as always, an observant shepherd is a good shepherd.

ACRA's 2025 Board of Directors

President Kathy Crow
Vice President Lisa Carpenter
Secretary/Registrar Beth Ivankovic
Eastern Regional Director Kaya Farrington
Midwestern Regional Director Kay Lytle
Member-at-Large Director Maggie Brand
Member-at-Large Director Bob Viewrow

To find contact information for board members, check out the website:
<https://cotswoldacra.com/contact-us/>

June 3, 2025

Thoughts from our President

This year seems to provide an ever increasing level of uncertainty and craziness. My day job (after taking care of my flock) is as a Financial Planner. The world and government have been unsettled and created constant change. Many of us can appreciate the solitude that the farm gives us as sometimes an escape from events out of our control. I know it does for me. Spring lambing is always a welcome to some of that same uncertainty. The newness of life and the excitement of lambing tests even the most experienced shepherd.

ACRA is growing by exceeding our membership goals and continues to increase registrations annually. It was wonderful seeing many of you at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Show. Again, this year ACRA had multiple shepherds showing our beautiful animals in their Cotswold specific classes and the ACRA Cotswolds also did very well!

This spring, we can welcome our flocks to do what they do well. Raising babies can be a welcomed constant regardless of weather, economic uncertainty or political unrest. I wish for all of you to savor the solitude our farms create and cherish the constant they provide.

My best for a successful Spring!

Kathy

AND VP

Please join us this summer for the

ACRA Midwest Gathering!

Date: July 19

Location: Kline Creek Farm, 1N600 County Farm Rd, West Chicago, IL

Schedule:

9:30-10:30am—arrive at Kline Creek Farm and watch cow milking

11am—Horse-drawn wagon ride tour of the farm.

Noon—Lunch for ACRA members (featuring Cotswold lamb)

1-1:30--Tour of the 1890s farmhouse

1:45-2:15pm—Card grading demonstration/discussion

2:30-3:30pm—Cotswold fiber arts demonstration/breed discussion—this will be advertised on social media for Kline Creek Farm visitors to come learn about Cotswolds from ACRA members

RVSP for lunch to Lisa Carpenter, Vice President at lcarpenter@dupageforest.org by July 6.

From the Secretary

June 3, 2025

Greetings from Wisconsin,

First my apologies, I had meant to e-mail this by March but life happened and then lambing happened. As shepherds, I know that you all know how getting behind happens!

On our farm, we finished lambing a few weeks ago. The flock is now out on pasture which I rotate every 2-4 days to a new part of pasture. One of my favorite parts of shepherding is opening up the fence and watching them run into the new area. The older ewes all want to have the first crack at their favorite plants and lambs bounding after moms is just a joy filling moment to witness. I see that and it makes up for all of the no sleep of lambing!

As the ACRA secretary, I've had a few interesting phone calls this spring involving auction purchases of Cotswold sheep with no registry paperwork. The purchasers have just been told the sheep they bought are registered. If you buy a sheep at an auction, make sure you receive the paperwork with the animal! Unfortunately, I cannot register an animal without it. I want to thank everyone who has sold animals this past year and have sent me the transfer paperwork. This is the BEST way to ensure ACRA cotswolds and their offspring continue to be registered. Great job everyone!

Another interesting phone call I had was with a gentleman from Wyoming calling from another breed association (not cotswolds). He was wondering if ACRA would do their registry paperwork as what they are currently doing doesn't seem to be working well for them. While I declined to help them out, our conversation showed how small the sheep world can be. I had a sheep mentor who passed away at the age of 92 a couple of years ago also from Wyoming. This gentleman knew him! He also knew my shearer's grandfather. Such a small world! This call also reinforced how important it is to have a good group of volunteers on our board and members who are actively raising Cotswolds!

I am looking forward to our midwest gathering at Kline Creek Farm in July. Although we are spread out across the country, any gathering whether it is at your local fair to a larger sheep and wool festival to farm days help spread the wonders of our Cotswold breed. Please send me pictures and information about what you are doing with your Cotswolds!

Hope your lambing has gone well, enjoy your summer and hope to see you in Illinois! Beth

Do you calculate in-breeding coefficients before you breed?

Check out the following websites for more information as well as an easy calculator to use.
Let me know if you need any backgrounds of any of your animals.

Aiming for under 3% COI is best for rare breeds.

https://abri.une.edu.au/online/pages/inbreeding_coefficient_help.htm#:~:text=Understanding the Inbreeding Numbers&text=A low inbreeding coefficient means, and over 40% are rare.

[https://www.sobczyk.eu/inb/?lng=en.](https://www.sobczyk.eu/inb/?lng=en)

June 3, 2025

Secretary and Registrar Updates

2024 Totals: 111 ACRA/BCR registrations and 57 transfers

As always, thank you for payment of your yearly dues and registrations. With the new bylaws, memberships expire a year from the last payment. Please let me know if you have any questions with registrations or transfers especially with the website.

When selling sheep, please fill out the back to transfer, sign and send the registration forms to the Secretary (Beth Ivankovic, 55001 William Court, Eau Claire, WI 54701) and I will send them to the new owners. This is a great way to keep registered sheep and bloodlines available for the future. Including this in the cost of selling your sheep.



From the Midwest

Spring seems to be just around the corner here in Oklahoma. My ewes should start lambing in March and go through early April. One ewe, # 6, already has a good sized bag that seems full, so I'm watching her each day now. Shearing day will be here before I know it. The flock is doing well. Most of the flock is coated for clean fleeces. I am thrilled with Wilbur's fleece. He's a wether that has made a place for himself here for life. His fleece is superb in consistency

and quality, with almost no britching.

I'm planning on letting him grow out a full year's fleece to produce a very special high quality spinning fleece.



Word seems to be spreading about our wonderful breed. I've had 3 people contact me recently about getting lambs. Since I'm trying to grow my flock, I'll be hard pressed to let go of any ewes, but we'll see. One shepherd contacted me about getting a ram lamb to use as a terminal sire. She wants to add in wool quality and length without losing meat qualities. This year will hopefully see a new ram added to the flock so my breeding program can move forward. That will be a very exciting step forward! - Kay

Member at Large Director: Bob Vierow



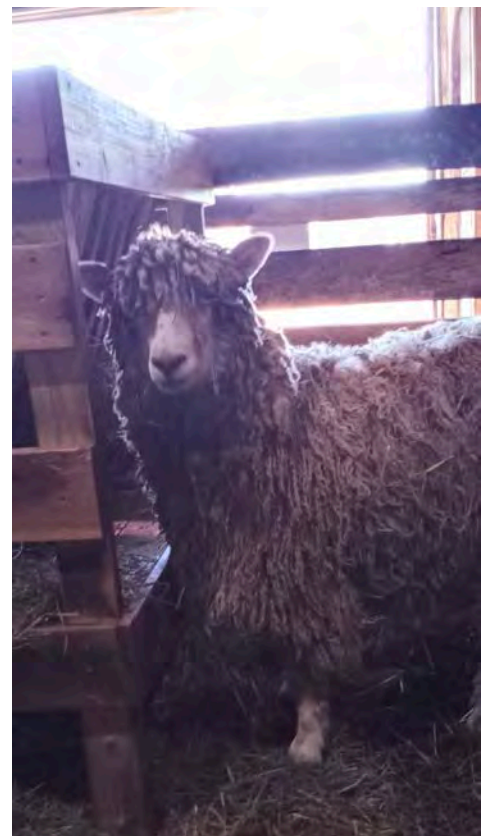
I work for the Bensenville Park District at Fischer Farm in Bensenville, Illinois. We are located approximately 16 miles west of downtown Chicago in DuPage County.

Conrad Fischer purchased around 1,000 acres in 1837 and shortly thereafter established his homestead. We have three pre-Civil War buildings here at the farm, including the original 1837 farmhouse; and built in 1919 an American Foursquare style home that the Fischer family moved into with their 8 children.

In the spring of 2023 I was hired to oversee the initiation of a vegetable and livestock program here at the farm.

Currently we have 86 laying hens consisting of 4 breeds, 4 dwarf Nubian goats, and again this spring we will bring in up

to 6 hogs for our 4-H program. Of course, the stars of the farm are our Cotswold sheep Laverne and Shirley. I was introduced to Cotswold sheep at Kline Creek Farm in West Chicago Illinois by Lisa Carpenter the Historical Farming Program Supervisor there at Kline Creek Farm. It is our intention to start a breeding program here at the farm in the fall of 2025 with our first lambs born in the spring of 2026. This will be the first livestock birth here at Fischer farm since the 1960's when the last of the dairy herd was sold off and suburbia encroached. I am looking forward to sharing our sheep stories with the public here in DuPage and western Cook Counties. - Bob



2025 Board Goals

1. Midwest gathering at Kline Creek Farm. July 18, 2025.
2. Membership and Registrations - continue to grow ACRA to ensure the conservation, development, and promotion of the breed our Cotswold sheep. Goal: 10% increase for both registrations and membership.
3. Improve marketing ideas of ACRA Cotswold sheep. The board will come up with standards for the use of the ACRA logo on yarn and meat products for members.
4. Develop a census for Cotswold sheep within the United States.

2024 goal review: What a year we had in 2024. Cotswolds were the featured breed at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival. We had a 57% increase in registrations! WOW! For a small breed still listed in the "Threatened Category" by the Livestock Conservancy, that is fantastic. We hit our new membership goals as well. All board positions have been filled with volunteers. The grant we received from the Livestock Conservancy allowed us to hire Sue Benjamin who has both a background in databases and excel but also historical projects. She was able to input registrations from 1996 to 2022. A total of 6558 lines of sheep records!. The board has talked about applying for another grant this year, rehiring Sue to continue improving our registry.

For 2025, the board would like to continue to work on the 3rd and 4th goals listed above. While we have done fantastic work increasing our registrations, the numbers of Cotswolds in the US are low. Are we actually at the "Critical" level and not the "Threatened" level. We would like to find out. If you see a census, please take it and let us know what is on your farm. As always, these goals cannot be accomplished without volunteers like you. If you can help either by serving on the board or volunteering in another capacity, please let us know!

Breed Standard Fun

This summer at Kline Creek Farm, a few of the sheep will go through a process called Card Grading. The process is a relatively simple one. A sheep is put in a pen with a few judges. The judges look at the animal and rank it in one of 4 ways against the breed standard:

Blue Card = Excellent example of the breed

Red Card = Good example of the breed

Yellow Card = Acceptable example of the breed

White Card = Unacceptable

For the breeder, card grading helps one visualize the breed standard and evaluate our own animals to help improve the breed.

For anyone who has been to a sheep show, a common observation is distinguishing between a Cotswold, Lincoln, or Leicester sheep and how difficult that can sometimes be. That shouldn't be the case. Another commonly heard comment is the biggest animal seems to win which is not good for a rare heritage breed. Focusing only on breeding size and not other important qualities such as the fleece will lead to a cotswold that isn't a cotswold! Card grading is one way to improve on these concerns.

To get us all thinking about card grading, this spring we will focus on the Cotswold head. Written in 1878, the breed standard states:

The Head should be wide between the eyes, and the eye itself, full, dark and prominent, but mild and kindly, and in no way coarse between the eyes, but not too flat, and should run of much the same width to the nostrils, which must be well expanded and somewhat broader than the face, with the skin on the nose of a dark color. The cheek is full and, as is the face, well covered with white hair; a just perceptible blue tinge on the cheek and around the eyes being rather "fancied". The ear, long, but not too heavy, of medium thickness, and covered with black spots on the points of the ears are not considered objectionable.

The top of the head should not be coarse or bald, but covered with wool, not hair, and the Cotswold is to be distinguished by a fine tuft of wool on the forehead. The head should be sufficiently long to save it from being called short and thick, but it should not have a long, lean appearance.

Grey faces still crop up occasionally in all the best hill flocks.



This drawing was published in 1841 in London.

It is of an 8 year old ewe bred by Joseph Hewer in Enslington, Gloucestershire who would be 192 years old if she was still alive today!

GREAT HEAD.

This Cotswold Ewe's Beautiful Bangs Need No Curl Papers.

The picture presents a typical head of a Cotswold ewe. It is by Artist John W. Hills and is reproduced from The Breeder's Gazette.

The Cotswold breed, one of the most famous of the long woolled, white faced families, has been brought apparently to perfection. These sheep are as long woolled and curly as a poodle.

Breeders have been improving the Cotswold for eight centuries at least. History says it was introduced from Spain into England in the twelfth century by Eleanor, queen of Henry II. Thenceforward for several hundred years



COTSWOLD BANGS.

the breed was guarded and confined to England by royal decree. In those times the people of different countries were not so willing to share with one another, even for profit, the good things they possessed. In our times anybody will do almost anything if he is paid for it.

The fleece of a modern Cotswold ram frequently weighs as much as 18 pounds, that of a ewe 11 to 16 pounds. The wool is much finer than it was originally and the sheep heavier, a large animal of this breed occasionally tipping the beam at 350 pounds. Owing to the heavy fleece Cotswolds need to be well protected from wet and storms.

This article came from The Inquirer (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) on Saturday, May 28, 1898 page 7.

To try out Card Grading:
Follow the link below and answer
the questions about the
headshots. There are no wrong or
right answers. Grade each picture
against the breed standard as you
see it.

The link: <https://forms.gle/4EW5BPDsurYV72ov6>

A BIG thank you to all who sent
in headshots from their flocks.

Next Newsletter....send in pictures
of neck, shoulder, and ribs. To
capture these areas take side shots
of a few of your sheep and send
them to info@cotswoldacra.com

ODDS and Ends....

June 3, 2025

Welcome to new members

Nicholas Tsimekles (We missed acknowledging last year! Sorry!)

Jill Hepburn

Kyle Jones (Old World Wisconsin)

Cotswold Winners at Maryland Sheep and Wool

Reserve Champion Ram Lamb:
Chris Crossman

1st Place Young Breeders Flock:
Chris Crossman

2nd Place Yearling Ewe:
Chris Crossman

2nd Place Yearling Ram:
Kathy Crow

Way to go!!!

A bit on the morbid side but....

Do you have your heritage Cotswold sheep mentioned in your will?

The genetics running around our barnyards might be essential for the Cotswold breed to continue. Make sure to have a plan with your family or executor of your will as to where your animals will end up.