

The ACRA Newsletter September 30, 2025

The American Cotswold Record Association: Fall 2025

Fall 2025 Issue

- Annual Meeting
- Midwest Gathering
- Board Updates
- Run for the board
- Lambing essentials
- Cotswold Census **



Summer Midwest Gathering 2025

On July 19, Kline Creek Farm in West Chicago, Illinois hosted the ACRA Midwest Gathering. We had a total of ten participants, both ACRA members, prospective breeders, and folks just generally interested in Cotswolds! I had told the board that I was willing to host the gathering if I only had one person show up, and the attendance exceeded expectations! Our president Kathy Crow travelled all the way from Virginia and Secretary/Registrar Beth Ivankovic came down from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Board member Bob Vierow from nearby Fischer Farm also attended, as well as Caitlin Cummings and her mom from Gwenyn Hill Farm in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The Schamber family joined us from Indiana to help them decide if Cotswolds are the right breed for them to start raising. (Cont. page 2)

Annual Meeting November 18th

7pm EST/ 8pm CST

The morning of the gathering, folks were able to watch and participate in hand milking our Heritage Shorthorns. We were able to fit in a brief horse-drawn wagon ride and just dodged a downpour. We took shelter in the wagon shed and visited with Kline Creek Farm's blacksmith before lunch. Amy, Kline Creek Farm's domestic arts specialist, prepared a delicious Cotswold leg of lamb luncheon with sides from a period cookbook! After lunch, Amy gave the group a tour of the 1890s farmhouse. We spent the rest of the afternoon at the sheep shed, doing a card grading activity and fiber arts demonstrations.



Card-grading is a form of judging that awards “cards” based on how well that animal fits the breed standard, as opposed to traditional judging where animals are judged against each other and ranked. Card-grading also usually uses three judges that must agree on a card rating. The Livestock Conservancy promotes this form of judging for rare breeds in particular:

<https://livestockconservancy.org/resources/evaluating-breeding-animals/>

Each animal is awarded one of the following:

- **Blue Card** – An excellent breeding animal conforming to breed standard and free from any genetically based unsoundness.
- **Red Card** – A good breeding animal which shows most of the breed characteristics and is free from genetically based unsoundness.
- **Yellow Card** – An acceptable, average breeding animal with no disqualifying deviations from breed standard nor genetically based unsoundness.
- **White Card** – An unacceptable breeding animal which does not conform to breed standard, is of another breed, or is genetically unsound. These animals are excused from the show (and sale) and should not be used for pure breeding. (Cont. page 4)

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Cotswold Winners around the United States

Congratulations!

Kathy Crow's Grand Champion Ram at the North Carolina Mountain State Fair

Kaya Farrington's Grand Champion at the Big E (bottom left)

Chris Crossman's Champion white Cotswold Ram and best White Fleece at the Big E.

Make sure to share your wins with the ACRA newsletter! info@cotswoldacra.com



ESE Ag & Ed
6d · 🌐

Grand Champion White Cotswold ewe open and junior show. Senior ewe lamb shown by Kaya Farrington, MA



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(Cont. from page 2) We all have biases by nature, but when judging the animal, we should do our best to judge the animal by the written breed standard approved in the bylaws, not what our personal preferences are. Our breed standard can be found on our website:

<https://cotswoldacra.com/about-cotswolds/breed-standard/>



It's also important to consider the weight that each characteristic of the sheep carries in your overall decision:

<https://cotswoldacra.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Show-Card.pdf>

A lot of us (including me!) look at nose color a lot and get frustrated if we get anything less than a pure black nose. But we should remember that body structure, legs, and the fleece outweigh nose color by far. I still look for a ram with good dark nose color since he's most of the genetic influence on my flock, but a ewe with some speckles in her nose shouldn't be culled if she's a good animal in every other way.

Kathy, Beth, and I card graded several ewes and a ram. We talked a lot about fleeces and uniformity from front to back of the animal. We were particularly critical of the ram (who again has the biggest genetic influence on the flock) and faulted him largely for his low pasterns. We talked about the size difference in sheep between our flocks. I only feed grain for flushing ewes and lactating ewes, so my sheep are smaller than those in some other flocks. I also keep my ewes around a body condition score (BCS) of 2-3 for maintenance, but it sounds like many other breeders keep them at a higher BCS.

Information on body condition scoring sheep:

https://www.apsc.vt.edu/content/dam/apsc_vt_edu/extension/sheep/programs/shepherds-symposium/2012/12_symposium_greiner_bcs.pdf

At the end of the day, several of us gathered at a local barbecue place, had some fun, talked some business, and agreed that we want to do this again in the future!

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Lastly, I want to let the membership know that we have applied for another grant from the Livestock Conservancy to continue the registration transcription project that we started last year. We should hear by the end of the year if we have been selected!

Lisa Carpenter (VP of the ACRA Board)
Historical Farming Program Supervisor
Community Engagement-Kline Creek Farm



(Right)ACRA Board Members attending the 2025 Midwest gathering at Kline Creek Farm: Bob Vierow, Lisa Carpenter, Kathy Crow, and Beth Ivankovic

(Page 2 picture) Lisa Carpenter, Historical supervisor at Kline Creek Farm

(Page 4 picture) Lisa, Kathy, and Beth Card grading Cotswold sheep at Kline Creek Farm

Watch for the Spring newsletter for next summer's ACRA gathering. One idea we have is to hold an event in Eau Claire, Wisconsin over the Blue Ox festival weekend (June 25-27, 2026).

<https://www.blueoxmusicfestival.com/>

Ideas the weekend could include: Card grading Cotswold Sheep, pasture walk, a combined day with our local Fibersheds or the Wisconsin Farmer's Union, and a Lamb dinner gathering? Throwing these ideas around. Watch for more info next spring!

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Kline Creek Farm is a working historical farm outside of Chicago in DuPage County. Make sure to visit the next time you are in the Chicago area! It is a must do along with Fischer Farm (see below). On Sunday, we had a tour of Fischer Farms.



Laverne and Shirley are the start of the Cotswold flock at Fischer Farm located in Bensonville, IL near O'Hare Airport. Fischer Farm is run by the Park's District. The old home was built in 1838. Check out the history of this place: <https://www.bvilleparks.org/parks-facilities/fischer-farm/>



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The original barn and a picture of the gardens for the CSA from Fischer Farm farm.

Thoughts from our President

"Everything Has a Season – Lessons from the Cotswold Flock"

As the seasons turn, so too does the rhythm of life on the farm. Raising Cotswold sheep teaches us patience and timing—there's a season for every task and every stage of growth. Spring brings lambing, a time of new life and careful attention. Summer offers lush pastures for grazing, when the flock grows strong and wool begins to flourish. Autumn is shearing season, when the golden locks of the Cotswolds are harvested with care. Winter slows everything down, a time for rest, reflection, and preparation for the cycle to begin again. Just like the sheep, we must learn to honor each season—working hard, waiting patiently, and knowing when to let go. The wisdom of the flock reminds us that everything has its time, and in that, there is peace.

Hoping that many of you had good rain and lush pastures this summer. That you are prepared for Winter with a bounty in the barn and healthy animals ready to hunker down for a long winter. Many members are wrapping up their show season and prepping to breed their animals. Please remember to get your animals registered and consider joining us on a member call.

As the season is changing take time to appreciate the peace that your flock creates and the beauty that is all Cotswold. Life comes at us at such a fast pace we need to be reminded that there is a season for everything.

My best,
Kathy

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From the Secretary

Greetings from NW Wisconsin!

We are finishing a lovely September. The sheep are still grazing and it looks like we will be able to continue that for a few more weeks and maybe into November. We had a bountiful crop of lambs and they are all growing really well.

Last weekend I attended the <https://www.nahillsheepshow.com/> in Escanaba, Michigan. I attended as a vendor and didn't bring any of my flock but did take time to walk the sheep barn and watch a few of the sheep shows. All of the judges were from the UK and they judged the UK way. The show ring is part typical American show ring and part card grading (check out the website). I liked the sheep moving around the pen without the owners handling them. There is a difference. Unfortunately, there weren't many sheep in each class and many times it was just one breeder's sheep. I hope this show can expand and draw more attendees as there were a lot of great parts to the show.

From the registry, I have had multiple phone calls this year about sheep bought at auctions. When buying sheep at an auction, please make sure you have the registration forms in hand before leaving. DO NOT BUY if you don't have them. If you find a CBA sheep and you would like to transfer that sheep to ACRA or BCR, just give me a call and we can go over that process. If you would like a 5 generation printout of any of your sheep, please let me know. Hopefully we can get the next grant and be able to go to 10 generations. At some point, it would be nice to be able to utilize our entire database to look as far back as possible with all of our sheep. There are computer programs we could use our new database with to go all the way back. Really exciting stuff is out there! Last but not least, please consider running for the board and help us figure out how to manage our breed.

Have a great fall, Beth

Secretary and Registrar Updates

2025 Totals so far: 47 registrations and 24 transfers

I haven't heard from many this year for registrations. Please send in as soon as possible. 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, S5001 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.

Include this in the cost of selling your sheep.

Midwest Regional Director

We've actually had a break here in OK from the terrible heat, thank goodness! After a low lamb crop this spring, this summer turned into research about how to mitigate the effects of heat on rams. The vet can do a ram test for fertility, however, it involves a low electric shock. With our extreme summer heat, the vet advised against risking this stress on the ram. Nor do I cotton to the idea, since I don't want to lose him.

My sheep are on a grazing lease with no barns or electricity, so I am searching other ways to help the rams deal with heat stress. Cooling herbs came to mind. Probably a long shot, but the research began. Peppermint is known to have a cooling effect on the body. I haven't had time to research as deep as I'd like, but I do have plenty of peppermint growing. I cut branches and soaked them in the water tanks, changing it out each day. On the hottest days, I rearranged the grazing so the boys were down in the lowest shaded area with hay. Cool air falls and hot air rises. The property is on quite a slope, and this particular spot is the coolest spot on the property. I didn't verify with a thermometer, but it feels at least 10 degrees cooler in the grove. Thankfully Oklahoma almost always has a breeze or wind blowing, which also helps.

Oats are also said to have some cooling properties, so they were added to the ram's diet. Salt must always be available as well. We have a scant number of shepherds in Oklahoma who raise wool breeds. A poll of this group nailed down that no one puts rams in to the ewes until October. Some even shear 3 times a year! Consequently, I've moved my fall shearing date up a month to September 13th and will wait until October to put the ram in with the ewes. He'll stay with them until January 1st this year and we'll ultrasound the girls 30 days later. According to my vet, it takes 60-70 days from the time a ram's sperm is formed until it is used. Therefore our August heat could mean his fertility will be effected up to mid-November. Last year we had 100 degree weather up to the 3rd week of October. Hopefully this year will be very different - so far we've been blessed with lower than usual temperatures this September. Once we ultrasound the ewes, we'll find out if any of these things helped Mortimer be fruitful and multiply this year.

Thanks!

Kay Lytle
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Check out this interesting video about our Cotswold Lions....besides this pink nose, it is a fun video!

Annual Meeting and Elections

Watch your email for a zoom link for the annual meeting on November 18th

Each year we have elections for half of the board. Positions are held for 2 years with a max of 3 terms in the same position. Please consider running for office, we have a Member at Large position open and need to fill it which means...we need you! Please let Beth know if you are interested.

| Position | Currently holding office | Nominated for ballet |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Secretary | Beth Ivankovic(2 terms) | Maggie Brand (1st) |
| Registrar | Beth Ivankovic(2 terms) | Beth Ivankovic (3rd Term) |
| Treasurer | Kathy Crow (2 terms) | Kathy Crow (3rd Term) |
| Midwest Director | Kay Lytle (1st term) | Kay Lytle (2nd term) |
| Member at large director | Maggie Brand (1st term) | _____ |

Cotswold Census

Please see link below and take this census!

How many Cotswolds are in the US? We would like to know.

Please fill out the attached survey as best as you can:

<https://forms.gle/SG22YV4iKs6Y6J76A>

If you know someone who has Cotswold sheep, please send the link to them as well.

Currently, the Livestock Conservancy has Cotswolds listed as Threatened. ACRA is registering around 100 sheep each year. We want to make sure we are not in the critical level.

Endangered Categories

Critical: Breeds with fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States and an estimated global population of less than 500. For rabbits, fewer than 50 annual registrations in the U.S., estimated global population less than 500, fewer than 150 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years, and 10 or fewer breeders. For poultry, fewer than 500 birds in the U.S., with five or fewer primary breeding flocks (50 birds or more), and an estimated global population less than 1,000.

Threatened: Breeds with fewer than 1,000 annual registrations in the United States and an estimated global population of less than 5,000. For rabbits, fewer than 100 annual registrations in the U.S., and estimated global population less than 1,000, fewer than 300 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years, and 11-30 breeders. For poultry, fewer than 1,000 breeding birds in the U.S., with seven or fewer primary breeding flocks, and an estimated global population less than 5,000.

Watch: Breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution, with fewer than 2,500 annual registrations in the United States, and an estimated global population less than 10,000. For rabbits, fewer than 200 annual registrations in the U.S., estimated global population less than 2,000, fewer than 500 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years, and 31-60 breeders. For poultry, fewer than 5,000 breeding birds in the U.S., with 10 or fewer primary breeding flocks, and an estimated global population less than 10,000.

Recovering: Breeds once listed in another category, but have exceeded Watch category numbers and still need monitoring. For rabbits, more than 500 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years and more than 60 breeders.

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LAMBING PREP

We had an ask at the Midwest Gathering. Is there a list of what to have on hand during lambing? I asked a few ACRA shepherds to send me their lists and looked at mine. We were all about the same! I did not include antibiotics or medications to help with lambing that would be needed from a vet. I can't emphasize enough developing a good relationship with your vet before lambing.

When I first started lambing, my neighbor who grew up on a sheep farm and is now an OB gave me the following advice, "Sit on your hands." She said the biggest issue she has with new medical residents is they are not patient enough and interventions can cause harm. Same goes with lambing, patience is a really good thing. Be watchful, use the 30-30-30 rule but remember it is a guideline. Keep a stopwatch going once the bag is out but remember some ewes are faster and some are slower. If you think a ewe might need help, give her some more time and then decide. You will learn what a ewe in distress looks like and one that is just taking her time. Read up on what a distressed ewe looks like before lambing and go over how to deliver malpresentations.. I've used this advice and it has worked really well on our farm. Let Mother Nature do her thing but be prepared to step in if necessary.

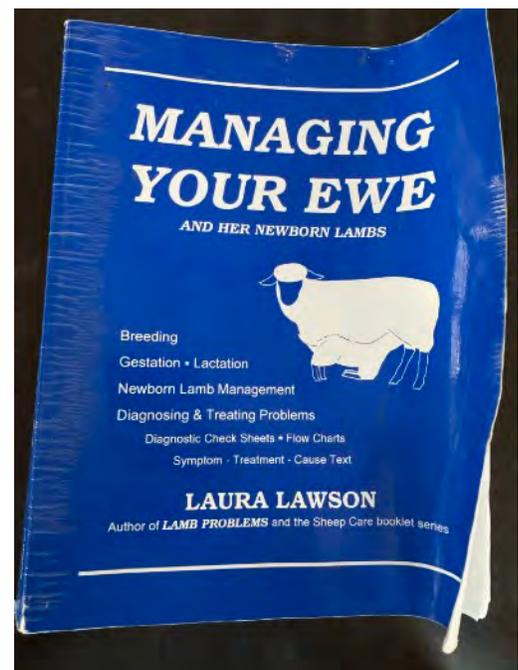
There are a few 30-30-30 principles out there. In the book "Managing your Ewe", they write "after 30 minutes of hard contractions, examine the ewe. After 30 minutes from when the water bag is presented, examine the ewe. If after examining the ewe all is normal, wait 30 min before doing anything. To this we also add another 30. If an unassisted ewe hasn't delivered her second lamb 30 minutes after the preceding lamb, always examine the ewe. "

My mentor taught me a simpler 30-30-30 rule. Thirty minutes after the water bag is out, one should see nose and toes, they should be out within 30 more minutes. Up and nursing within 30 minutes after that. If the first lamb is out, the second should be out in another 30 min. I give 15-30 minutes leeway on these 30 minute intervals unless I see a malpresentation or other concerning signs the ewe is giving me. If you don't see nose and toes, check. If you see toes, check which way they are pointing to see if they are back or front feet.

For your Lambing kit

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- Iodine - always strip, clip and dip
- Bulb syringe
- Nutri-Drench or similar product.
- sharp scissors
- Exam gloves both short and long OB ones.
- Lubricant (Superlube)
- Navel cord clips (bought my 1st year and 7 years later I used my first one!)
- Artificial colostrum and milk replacement.
- Thermometer
- Stomach tube and 60 cc syringe
- Rubber rings for docking. (Don't buy the plastic applicator, buy the all metal one.)
- Ear Tags for lambs. Figure out your number system. Premier has a way to put on your farm scrapie number on the tag.
- Heating pads or Heat lamps. One member wrote in No heat lamps. The risk of fire is an important discussion. Anything plugged in increases the risk of fire. At some point, you will have a lamb(s) who will need to be warmed. Pre-plan a spot and way to do this.
- Vet phone # - give them a call before lambing starts and ask how they like to handle issues with lambing especially in regards to potential need for antibiotics or mom's needing support with lambing.
- CDT - if you vaccinate your pregnant ewes a month before lambing, your lamb is protected until 6 weeks. Lambs will need CDT dosing at 6 and 8 weeks.
- A big stack of clean towels and a clean bucket for water
- Jugs for new moms. After they birth, give them a spot to bond with their lambs for a couple of days. Can also have a stanchion made for reluctant moms.
- Over the counter items to have on hand: injectable B-complex, BoSe, Corid, propylene glycol, molasses for mama's water, electrolytes, glucose
- Lamb bottles with Pritchard teats.
- A sling and scale to weigh the lambs.
- A head snare
- Entropion kit from premier
- Syringes and needles
- Prolapse harness
- Halter
- Leg splints, vet wrap, and padding because there is always one.....
- A clip board, spreadsheets to keep track of all.
- Reference books to have on hand!
- <https://www.sheep101.info/201/lambingprocess.html>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/assisting-ewe-lambing>
- https://ag.purdue.edu/departement/ansc/sheep/docs/dealing_with_difficult_births_at_lambing.pdf



Member- at- Large Director



I was talking with Chris Crossman the other day and she told me this great Cotswold story. This is Ewetopia DK Weight also known as BeepBeep - named by the 2024 Ladies bathroom attendant at Rhinebeck. This ram has one of the mellowest personalities Chris has ever seen. Her daughter Laurel and granddaughter, who was 3 and not quite potty trained, were leading him around letting people meet him when suddenly she couldn't wait. They were close to the bathrooms near the sheep barns. The attendant saw the situation and announced "Beep beep- coming through!" He calmly followed Laurel into the washroom and waited while the emergency was alleviated.

He is currently breeding a major portion of the ewes at Ewetopia Farm and still is a mellow fellow. He had no qualms about Chris getting in the pen with him and his girls to take these pics. She hopes all his lambs will have his disposition. - Maggie Brand

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/>

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ODDS and Ends....

Do you have an idea or wish for an article or information for the newsletter? Please let our secretary know!

If you would like to write an article, share pictures of a show or event, we want to share your news! Send it all in. Let's celebrate your Cotswolds.

Welcome to new members

Nicole Foster , Indiana

Katlyn Weimer, Maryland

Would you like to help out the board? We have lots of small jobs that can be done from helping with the newsletter, writing articles, taking pictures, to marketing Cotswolds! Let us know what you might be interested in doing! Check out the next newsletter for information about running for a board seat!

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.

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!