



The ACRA Newsletter

Fall 2026

Annual Meeting will be November 10th

7 pm CST/8 pm EST over zoom

All are welcome to join the meeting. Voting and zoom links will be sent to all current members. Watch for emails around the beginning of November!

Fall elections results will be shared at the annual meeting!

Please consider joining the board. This year we have the following positions up for re-election:

President
Vice President
East Regional Director
Member-at-large Director ("B")

Other non-board positions:

Newsletter coordinator- spring and fall editions
Social Media Coordinator
Marketing Coordinator
Educational Outreach coordinator
Website Coordinator

If you would like to run for a position, please send your intent to info@cotswoldacra.com in the next 2 weeks!



Above at the Wisconsin Northern State Fair, Aubrey Wilkom showing a Cotswold Ewe. This is the first time in many years, a Cotswold has been shown! The judge told the family he really appreciated seeing a wool type breed like this at the youth 4H show. Aubrey won Showmanship for the Intermediate Age group. Great Job!!



Left: Reserve Champion Wool Ewe, Maryland State Fair

This is Bella Ortega's 3rd year running of winning Grand champion Wool Showmanship and Grand Champion wool ewe! Congratulations, Bella!

Below: The Crossman Fleeces won big at the Big E! Way to go, Chris!



A few thoughts from our President

One of several conundrums Facing the Cotswold Breed

For centuries, the Cotswold sheep has been woven into the agricultural history of England and America. Known for its impressive size, distinctive long curly wool, strong stature and valuable contribution to the development of other sheep breeds, the Cotswold represents far more than a sheep breed—it represents a piece of our agricultural heritage.

Today, that history is facing giant challenges. The ACRA board has diligently worked and has made some great strides in educating the public on the importance of the Cotswold and that heritage. However, as we move ahead our breeding numbers continue to fall, and with fewer animals being actively bred, maintaining genetic diversity and a viable population becomes increasingly challenging. I can count on less than one hand the amount of new flocks across the country and of animals sold, many either are never bred or are bred to non-registered animals. Ultimately falling out of our registry and away from the opportunity to keep the genetic details available. Earlier this year, the Cotswold was moved from Threatened to Critical with the Livestock Conservancy meaning there are less than 2000 registered animals existing across the world.

I challenge others to consider broadening their breeding programs, to seek out assistance in gaining better genetic diversity and to promote the registration of the animals we sell. The board can work with owners to help find animals that may be breeding candidates to help widen our genetic lines. ACRA has available educational material to help others promote the breed. We welcome an open discussion to help find possible solutions and promote more interest so we can work collectively to preserve this extraordinary heritage breed. We ask that you consider breeding your animals and give extra attention to the opportunity that sits within each of our flocks.

All the best, Kathy Crow, President

Vice President update about Kline Creek Farm

Late summer is oat threshing time at Kline Creek Farm. Before the invention of the combine harvester, grain harvest was a two-step process. Farmers first had to cut the crop with a reaper-binder. Then the seed was removed from the plant in a process called threshing. According to agricultural census and ledger records, oats were the largest grain crop produced on this farm in the late nineteenth century. Today at Kline Creek Farm, the oats feed our Cotswold sheep and Heritage Shorthorn cattle throughout the year.

Cyrus McCormick and William Deering were leaders in harvesting equipment innovation in the late nineteenth century. McCormick invented the mechanical reaper in the 1830s, though it would be decades later and after building a factory in Chicago that the reapers took off. Deering was McCormick's biggest rival after Deering added an automatic twine tying feature to the reaper, thus creating the reaper-binder. In 1902, McCormick Harvesting Machine Company and Deering Harvester Company (along with other implement manufacturers including Champion) merged to form International Harvester.

Our thresher is a 1905 Champion No. 1 thresher. It was originally powered by a horse treadmill. In the 1890s, most oats were threshed by traveling threshing crews using steam engines and much larger threshing machines. Our Champion thresher is small and the original advertisement touts the benefits of being able to handle your own threshing with your own equipment. One of the benefits, according to the advertisement was to avoid having to feed a 12-15 person threshing crew!

Our power source is a 1920 McCormick Deering (International Harvester) stationary engine. This engine was manufactured at International Harvester's Deering Works right here in Chicago! Though gasoline engines were around in the 1890s, they don't become common on farms until the 1910s and 20s. The 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog does list a gas engine for sale. The catalog highlights some of the benefits of a gasoline engine including: "No fire; no boiler; no engineer; no danger... No expense until started." In other words, gas engines are safer than a steam engine and don't need to be fed when not working like a horse. It would take a few decades for the internal combustion engine to replace the horse, but you can see the thought process transitioning in the 1890s.

For this year's threshing day, we included a new program called the "Thresher's Dinner." Participants preregistered to enjoy a noon meal cooked on our wood-burning stoves. Historically, the thresher's dinner was a big deal, and families felt they had a reputation to uphold. In the Victorian era, ice cream was a rare treat for special occasions like weddings, or, in some cases, the threshers' dinner. If you treated the threshing crew well, they would be sure to prioritize your farm on their schedule the following year. The 2026 Kline Creek Farm Thresher's Dinner menu included: roast Cotswold mutton, Cotswold shepherd's pie, heritage chicken pie, heritage pork and beans, cornbread, pickled beets, roasted carrots, cucumber salad, cake, and hand-churned ice cream.

Participants sat together outside on benches at a simple table on sawhorses and enjoyed the bounty of a homecooked 1890s meal.



Have a great fall and winter! Lisa Carpenter, Vice President

ACRA's 2026 Board of Directors

President Kathy Crow

Vice President Lisa Carpenter

Secretary Maggie Brand

Registrar Beth Ivankovic

Eastern Regional Director - Nicholas Tsimekles

Midwestern Regional Director Kay Lytle

Member-at-Large Director Bob Viewrow

Member-at-Large Director "B"- open

MIDWEST REGIONAL DIRECTOR UPDATE

July in Oklahoma was brutally hot, and the triple digits have continued into August. All of the sheep spend nights in pens surrounded with electric fencing for protection and are turned out for the daytime to access lots of natural shade. Even so, it will probably be a very late lambing season next spring due to this heat. We have been in an extreme drought this year, so the sheep have been on hay even into July. Thankfully there was enough grazing to turn everyone out by the time the triple digits hit. It's all burned up now from the drought and heat, but turn out continues for the much needed shade. Natural shade under trees is cooler than sheds and man-made shelters. Their pastures are on slopes, which also gives the relief of a degree or two lower temperature in the dips and low places.

Most of the lambs were weaned in March this year. With the exception of a few, they've grown so well they're hard to tell from the adults. The ewe lambs have been left with their dams; one or two ewes are still allowing nursing! Since I don't have enough coats of the right size to go around, they've gone without coats so far. I also decided to do a year of full fleece, meaning instead of shearing in both spring and fall we'll skip shearing next month. Requests for lamb meat continue to come. Maybe next year will be a bumper crop of ram lambs so I can finally start offering the rare treat of Cotswold meat.

Thanks,

Kay Lytle
Open Door Farm



Selling to Live Meat Buyers

Who is our target market for live animal meat sales?

The answer is sale barns that draw buyers for packers and feedlots. This field is nuanced, but worth learning because it can add to your bottom line for flock income. Another plus is it's a pretty quick avenue to move animals, so makes a good plan B or C.:

Certain times of the year are better than others for selling live animals at the sales (live on the hoof). The buyers are packers and middlemen in the commodity market. Usually the lower weight classes offer the best \$ per pound, however, the age of the lamb also comes into play. They're looking for 3-6 month old lambs. Older lambs will bring less \$. Some sale barns in TX penalize wool breeds by paying less supposedly because of the wool. Yet the Kalona Sale in IA, actually pays more for the wool breeds. So it's worth checking around to find the best sale barn you can get to.

A sample market report from Kalona can be found on the next page, for those who haven't seen one before. Prices are based on live, hundred weight (cwt). So the price of \$465.00 cwt = \$4.65/lb live weight. September is a better time for sales, i.e. higher prices. February sales usually fetch the highest prices of the year, at least in the midwest. # 1 lambs are the higher quality/higher grade lambs with more fat and a higher carcass yield. # 2 lambs are leaner, the good quality grassfed lambs would fall into this category, and they'll receive the lower price. It may be a good idea to use a terminal sire if you want to move a large number of lambs through this avenue on a regular basis.

There are a few options/markets looking for lamb at various times around the year that tap into ethnic markets and of course the Easter market. Each sale period can have very different specs for the type of lamb they want. Talking to your local sale barns is a good way to find out what kind of lamb sells best at the various sales around the year. It would be a good idea to be armed with specific sale dates or holidays/markets to ask about when you call.

- Kay



KALONA SHEEP, GOAT, HOG MARKET REPORT

DATE:	<u>9/9/2026</u>	TOTAL RECEIPTS:	<u>2,008</u>
SHEEP RECEIPTS:	<u>1,813</u>	GOAT RECEIPTS:	<u>724</u>
CONSIGNERS FROM:	<u>IA,IL,MN,WI</u>	SWINE RECEIPTS:	<u>129</u>

WOOL & HAIR LAMBS #1 & #2 :

# 40 - 49	<u>310.00</u>	-	<u>485.00</u> CWT
# 50 - 59	<u>310.00</u>	-	<u>415.00</u> CWT
# 60 - 69	<u>280.00</u>	-	<u>410.00</u> CWT
# 70 - 79	<u>285.00</u>	-	<u>370.00</u> CWT
# 80 - 89	<u>250.00</u>	-	<u>330.00</u> CWT
# 90 - 99	<u>250.00</u>	-	<u>310.00</u> CWT
# 100 - 110	<u>245.00</u>	-	<u>290.00</u> CWT
# 111 - 119	<u>247.00</u>	-	<u>280.00</u> CWT
# 120 - 129	<u>250.00</u>	-	<u>275.00</u> CWT
# 130 - 160	<u>265.00</u>	-	<u>287.00</u> CWT

EWES:

# 80 - 148	<u>90.00</u>	-	<u>200.00</u> CWT
# 150 - 275	<u>85.00</u>	-	<u>205.00</u> CWT
REPLACEMENT		-	<u> </u> HD

RAMS:

# 100 - 198	<u>140.00</u>	-	<u>250.00</u> CWT
# 200 - 280	<u>110.00</u>	-	<u>175.00</u> CWT
REPLACEMENT		-	<u> </u> HD

PIGS:

# 32 - 51	<u>35.00</u>	-	<u>45.00</u> HD
# 70 - 100		-	<u> </u> HD

COWS:

# 200-399	<u>37.00</u>	-	<u>49.00</u> CWT
# 400 +	<u>41.00</u>	-	<u>50.00</u> CWT

KIDS MEAT & DAIRY #1 & #2:

# 40 - 49	<u>275.00</u>	-	<u>450.00</u> CWT
# 50 - 59	<u>300.00</u>	-	<u>440.00</u> CWT
# 60 - 69	<u>270.00</u>	-	<u>430.00</u> CWT
# 70 - 79	<u>235.00</u>	-	<u>400.00</u> CWT
# 80 - 89	<u>250.00</u>	-	<u>420.00</u> CWT
# 90 - 99	<u>400.00</u>	-	<u>415.00</u> CWT
# 100 - 130 WTHR	<u>380.00</u>	-	<u>410.00</u> CWT
# 130 + WTHR		-	<u>380.00</u> CWT

NANNIES:

# 70 - 129	<u>150.00</u>	-	<u>270.00</u> CWT
# 130 - 210	<u>125.00</u>	-	<u>250.00</u> CWT
REPLACEMENT		-	<u> </u> HD

BILLIES:

# 100 - 175	<u>195.00</u>	-	<u>230.00</u> CWT
# 180 - 250	<u>200.00</u>	-	<u>235.00</u> CWT
REPLACEMENT		-	<u> </u> HD

HOGS:

# 101-199	<u>40.00</u>	-	<u>85.00</u> CWT
# 200-299	<u>54.00</u>	-	<u>78.00</u> CWT
# 300+	<u>57.00</u>	-	<u>72.00</u> CWT

Registrar Update

2026 totals: 51 Registrations for the year and 22 transfers

As always, thank you for payment of your yearly dues and registrations. Memberships expire a year from the last payment unless you have a 5 year membership. Please let me know if you have any questions with registrations or transfers. Our goal is 100 registrations per year and we are half way there! Registering sheep is the best way to help a rare breed.

Priory Farms has had a busy summer. I cannot believe we are into October!

Our flock did really well over the summer even with the drought. By August we were feeding hay out on the pasture which is never in my summer grazing plans. After a bit of rain, the cool season grasses took off and everyone seems happy again. We are hoping we can graze for a few more weeks.

I'm excited about the work the board has been doing. Kay has been working on ideas for marketing Cotswold sheep. One link she shared with the board is: <https://fromthefarm.org> Make sure to check this website out. It has a free platform which is really terrific. They have options for how to sell your sheep from "on the hoof" to specific cuts of lamb. They also have links for what to do to ensure you meet your states requirements for selling meat to others.

Lisa Carpenter has applied for another grant through the Livestock Conservancy. ACRA wasn't awarded a grant last year but has in the past. The Livestock Conservancy helped us with our website with one grant and another was used to start inputting our paper registry into a spreadsheet. This past year the board voted to continue hiring Sue Benjamin to input more data into the registry spreadsheet. She is working on the 80-90's currently! This information will be so helpful and we can't do "the next part" without a spreadsheet.

"The next part", I've been looking into computer registry programs. Our current registry is all volunteered human input. If you have used registry programs from other breeds and liked their offerings, can you please send me which breed, your thoughts and wishes? I would like each of our registrations to come with at least a 5 generation background which will help with figuring out Coefficients of Inbreeding (COI). This year, I have had multiple requests for 5 generation reports on sheep. This makes me so happy! Please know these do take time, so the more time you can give me the better. The more data we have, the more informed decisions we can make for our flocks and the future of the Cotswold sheep.

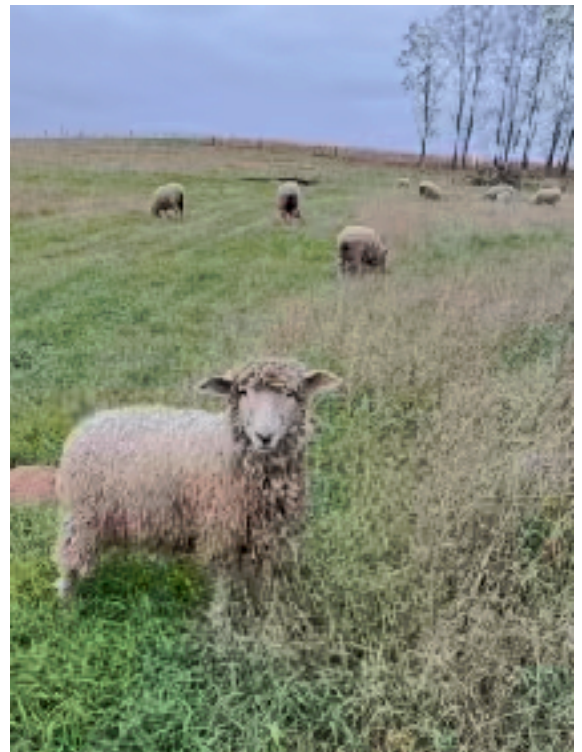
Breeding for conservation can be hard work!

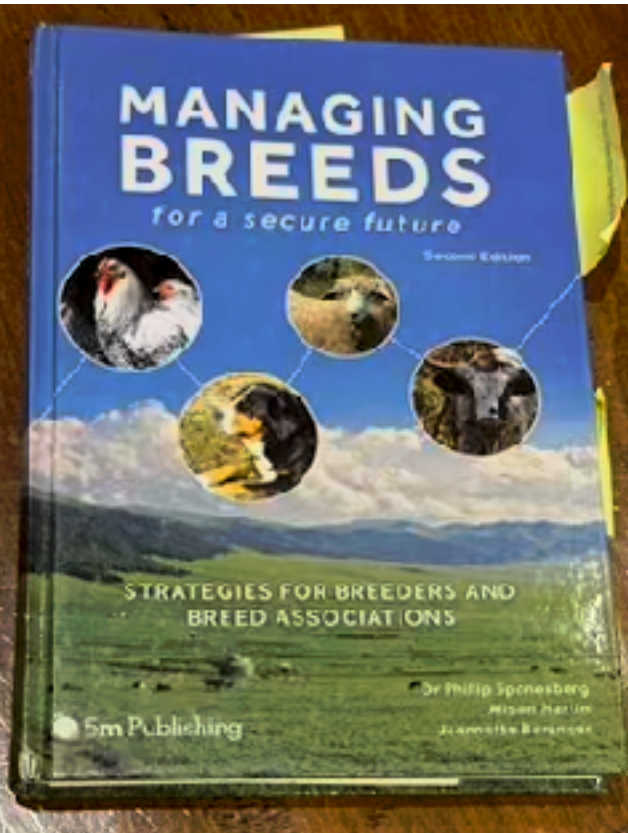
As we all know, finding new rams with different genetics can be difficult. If we have diverse ACRA genetics on our farms, how can we use those genetics in the most thoughtful way? This summer I've dug into conservation breeding and a few new practices for our farm.

I find it helpful to see the big picture. The first practice was recommended to me by the Livestock Conservancy. I bought different colored 3x5 cards and each sheep has their own card. Each color represents a different ewe family line, each card lists a bit of their genealogy and notes about the sheep. All of my rams have a blue card. I use these cards as a visual to see my breeding groups. This may sound simplistic but this visual practice has really shown me which sheep lines I should concentrate on breeding. It also helps with organizing breeding groups for new breeders especially if they would like a ram to go along with their group. This simple practice has showed me which lines I really like and tend to hold back selling sheep from those line. Is that an issue? I'm not sure but I sure do love those ewes!

Next, I've needed a way to see COI data quickly. I put together an Excel spreadsheet. The ewes are listed along the left column and all rams listed across the top, highlighting them to match their 3 x 5 cards. I then calculated COI's to 5 generations for potential pairings. Yes, that took awhile but has it been really helpful especially when working on my new conservation breeding plan...next paragraph.

I'm re-working my overall conservation breeding plan for the next 5-10 years at Priory Farms. The Livestock Conservancy just had a wonderful presentation on conservation breeding (see link below) make sure to listen to it. When it was over, I pulled out my copy of "Managing Breeds for a Secure future" rereading multiple sections I had highlighted when I first started breeding Cotswolds. As I've brought in new genetics as well as increased my number of breeding groups, breeding has gotten more complicated. I've needed a new overall model to help me with breeding on my farm. I've added a few pictures below and links other breed associations have recommended for conservation breeding. Whether you have 3 sheep or 60, taking a step back to plan for the future is crucial for our breed as we all have special genetics on our farms.





All of these pictures have been taken from “Managing Breeds for a Secure Future”. I highly recommend reading through it every couple of years. I should have pulled it out before I bred last fall and not this past summer! It can be purchased through the Livestock Conservancy Webpage: <https://livestockconservancy.org/resources/online-store/>

Also buy “A Conservation Breeding Handbook”

These are different plans for breeding. Ewes are kept within the “letter” and rams are used to breed the letter where the arrow points. The book also explains how to manage smaller numbers.

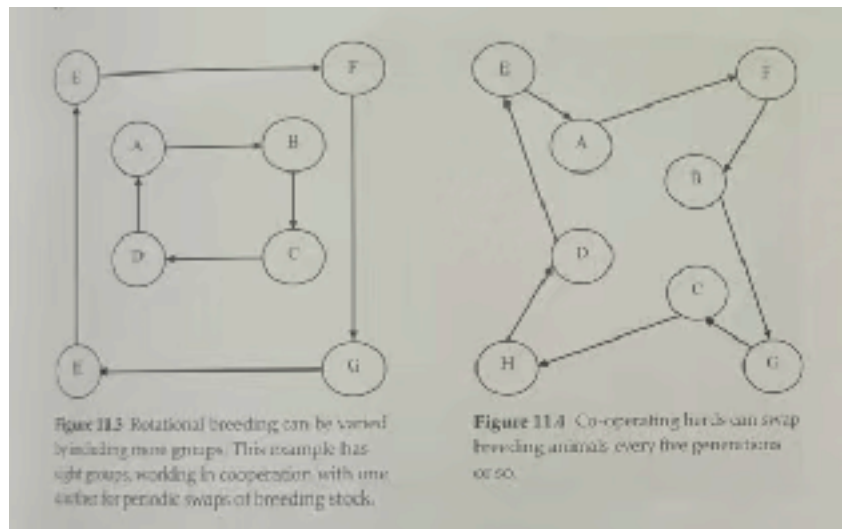
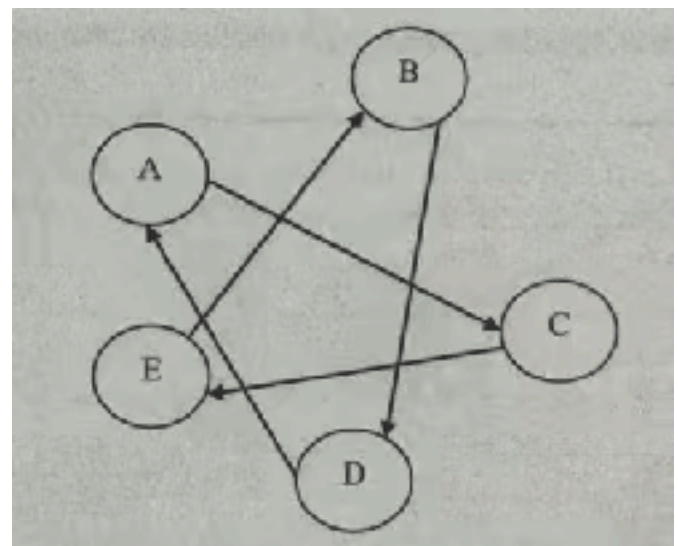


Table 11.4 Tracking the percentage bloodlines in a rotational breeding plan can be daunting if pursued over several generations. This table shows the results of the mating of animals, both of which come from the stated generation. If animals of different generation are mated, the results vary from these. This table therefore reflects the “maximally mixed” situation, which is the “worst case” result. Even though the genetic material becomes mixed, this strategy can work over several generations, especially when combined with effective selection for productivity and viability.

generation	A	B	C	D
1	100% A	100% B	100% C	100% D
2	50% A 50% D	50% B 50% A	50% C 50% D	50% C 50% A
3	25% A 0% B 25% C 50% D	25% B 0% C 25% D 50% A	25% A 50% B 25% C 0% D	25% A 50% B 50% C 25% D
4	12.5% A 12.5% B 37.5% C 37.5% D	12.5% A 12.5% B 12.5% C 37.5% D	12.5% A 37.5% B 12.5% C 12.5% D	12.5% A 37.5% B 37.5% C 12.5% D
5	12.5% A 25% B 37.5% C 25% D	25% A 12.5% B 25% C 12.5% D	37.5% A 25% B 12.5% C 25% D	25% A 37.5% B 25% C 12.5% D
6	18.75% A 31.25% B 31.25% C 18.75% D	18.75% A 18.75% B 31.25% C 31.25% D	31.25% A 18.75% B 18.75% C 31.25% D	31.25% A 31.25% B 18.75% C 18.75% D
7	25% A 31.25% B 25% C 18.75% D	18.75% A 25% B 31.25% C 25% D	25% A 18.75% B 25% C 31.25% D	31.25% A 25% B 18.75% C 25% D



Livestock Conservancy Webinar on Conservation breeding:

https://livestockconservancy.org/understanding-conservation-breeding/?blm_aid=141438977

A strategy from the St. Croix Sheep organization:

<https://stcroixsheep.org/what-is-conservation-breeding-part-3/>

Have a great fall and “see” you on zoom in November! Beth Ivankovic-registrar



Lost tag on a registered sheep? What to do:

1. Ensure you know who is who!
2. Purchase blank tags from your farm store or Premier, write the tag number on it, re-tag.
3. Do you use a combined scrapie/farm tag and that is lost? All sheep need a scrapie tag, ensure you retag with one. Add a second blank tag with the original farm number that is on the Certificate of Registry. Have a different idea? Give the registrar a call.

Larger flock of sheep? Use a 2 tag method for your sheep to ensure you know who is who.

ODDS and Ends....

Welcome to new members!

Piper Konsul
Veronika Mitrakova
Anika Starnes
Wesley Howe

Do you have a plan for your sheep
if illness or injury occurs?

Make sure your farm needs has a plan besides
you! Someone who can step in for chores and
someone who knows to call ACRA if you have to
move/sell sheep quickly.

Don't forget to:

USE THE WEBSITE!

All members can post animals
and other sheep related goods
for sale on the website!

The Beauty of a Transferred Sheep:

Who should request a transfer?

The seller! You are raising rare sheep. As a seller, you have planned breeding, bred, lambd and are now selling a registered offspring. Your work and future offspring needs to be registered. This helps a rare breed! When you sell a registered animal, include the transfer in your cost. It is only \$5. The Registrar will send an informative letter about becoming a member of ACRA with the Certificate of Registry to the new owner as well as include the new owner in ACRA emails. This is a way to grow membership and most importantly, keep future offspring registered!