

the Tunis Shepherd

Official Publication of the National Tunis Sheep Registry

New feature:
Sheep & Stuff for
sale

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Home

History

Member Sites

News

Youth

Calendar

Directors

Forms

Results

Recipes

Links

A TUNIS INTERVIEW WITH KENNETH MAYES - Louise Darling


My interviews in the next several issues will feature the NTSRI officers and board of directors. We, as members, need to know more about them as breeders of Tunis sheep and as the people who guide the club, so let's start with Kenneth & Darlene Mayes of Shelbina, Missouri.

KENNETH THE SHEEPMAN... "Twenty years ago some Tunis were shown at Bethel, MO World Sheep and Craft Festival they came from Indiana I liked what I saw and still do!" And after these 20 years of breeding, culling and sorting, Kenneth says "I have 100 brood ewes that I like as to breed type, size, color, etc. with an additional 40 ewe lambs and 25 rams."

Kenneth and his wife, Darlene have raised 4 children--Kenneth Lee, Donald Joe, Bill and Julie Ridge--at the sheep farm in Shelbina. When discussing the farm, Kenneth tells... "I read an article once that said, sheep don't need much and I believed it because our facilities are limited." The Tunis sheep are currently the only breed on the farm but in the past, the Mayes' have raised registered Dorsets, Montadales and Suffolks and were actively involved with an accelerated lambing program with cross breeds also.

Even after 20 years, Kenneth continues to strive to raise the best Tunis available and to encourage young people to raise and show in 4-H and FFA. He does admit that he should have been more selective in purchasing breeding stock and probably has wasted a lot of time and money (sounds like something we all would admit to at one time or the other.) So Kenneth's advice to someone just starting out with Tunis? "Buy the very best animals available."

Even after being involved with the Tunis for 20 years, Kenneth will tell you that "...those breeders that have weathered the years--Leona Fitzpatrick, the Hillis', Virginia Britch (Illinois), Bob Callahan and many more; are the people who have been the most help to him with the Tunis. Those people who have invested many, many years of work into the breed." And that comment fits very closely with Kenneth's final piece of wisdom to Tunis

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email the editor at
pbrashea@icx.net

sheep people... “Raise the best sheep you can---show them to everyone that will look and be proud of your success! ...because someone showed the Tunis out in Missouri...20 years ago.”

When asked, what one perfect answer do you still need concerning your Tunis, Kenneth wrote, “The perfect answer is to have a strong Registry with everyone pulling in the same direction. We are very close...everyone’s help is needed.”

So let’s learn more about Kenneth the President!

KENNETH THE PRESIDENT OF NTSRI...Kenneth has served in a variety of offices but currently is the President of the NTSRI Board of Directors. Kenneth writes that he adds experience and vision to the board. When asked about what he would like to give to the club members that would make the organization better, he writes, “Have a super strong National organization with regional clubs.” Kenneth doesn’t suggest any major changes... “just try to make it better for all the sheep owners--especially the small and younger breeders.” And as the breed grows slowly with people that start with just a small flock of Tunis, how can we get these people with 4 Tunis to join the NTSRI? Kenneth suggests that we use these selling points for memberships.... “remember small breeders also need additional market outlets. New bloodlines. They can draw on the knowledge and experience of other breeders...no one alone can do so much. Just being a part of a large organization offers many benefits!” Let’s make Kenneth “Membership Chairman”!

Thanks for your time and effort, Kenneth...the Darling Farm appreciates your efforts!

Getting the Word Out - Bruce Murray, South Carolina

In an effort to get the word out about Tunis, my daughter Heather and I showed a flock of Tunis at the Georgia national, South Carolina State Fair, North Carolina State Fair and the Jacksonville, Florida Open Sheep Show this fall.

Competition was very stiff since the Tunis had to compete in the other meat breeds with everything from Cheviot to Montadales.

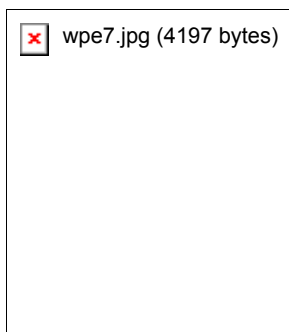
The thing I found discouraging at one show was in the ram division the Judge did not even know what they were. He kept referring to the little red faced sheep. At the break between ram and ewe classes I spoke to the Judge to inform him of the breed and gave him a copy of the Tunis pamphlet. It must have helped because the rest of the time they were referred to as Tunis--he even gave the audience a little information on the breed--and our yearling ewe placed third in a class of twelve.

I felt that if the people going through the barn could have had a vote, the “red heads” would have been in top contention as they were the favorites for adults and children alike.

We don’t have Tunis classes in the Southeast because of the small number of flocks, but I can really say that

from Florida up to North Carolina, the fair going public had been educated on the Tunis due to the Murray's crusade!

Great job Bruce and family, we all should join your crusade!



NAILE FLEECE SHOW RESULTS

There were only 4 Tunis fleeces shown in this year's NAILE fleece Show, down significantly from years past. The results were: Ram Fleece, first to George Harrell of Barboursville, IN; Tunis Ewe Fleeces, first to George Harrell, second to Patti Brashears of Lenoir City, TN, and third to George Harrell

Membership Fees are Due!

I have enclosed as an insert to this newsletter a membership application for the year 2000. Everyone is required to return this application to Judy Harris by January 31st. Don't wait until you register your lambs, it will be too late - your name will be removed from the membership list and you won't be able to vote in upcoming elections. Your name will also be removed from the newsletter list - and you wouldn't want to miss out on a single issue!

So while its fresh on your mind - mail it in along with the \$10.00 fee. Judy's address is noted on the front of the newsletter.

Regional Elections in First Quarter - AnnaRae Hodgins

Just a quick reminder that Regions 4 and 8 will be electing new directors this quarter. Dan Swartz (4) and Kenneth Mayes (8) are not eligible to run again. The current alternates are Colleen Knapp (4) and Roy Davis (8). Both of these can run if they choose. I will be calling for nominations after January 1, 2000.

Only those paid members will be eligible to vote - so get those dues in early!

Persons wishing to email their nominations may do so by sending the name of the nominee, address, and phone number to me at ahodgin@rtmc.net. Please include your name with your email address, as I will check to see that nominees come from the membership of the region. You can nominate yourself if you are wanting to fill one of these positions. Please support the Registry by participating in electing or running for one of these open positions - you'll make new friends and learn a lot about the breed!