

## 2012 ISBA Shepherd's Clinic Speaker Bios

**(Keynote) Dr. Mike Thonney** grew up on a farm in the Palouse Hills of Washington where he had a small flock of Hampshire sheep. He graduated in animal science from Washington State University and received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in nutrition at the University of Minnesota. Mike joined the Cornell Animal Science faculty in 1975 where he conducts research in growth, nutrition, and management of cattle and sheep and also teaches Animal Science 380 (Sheep) and 360 (Beef). In 1998 he began directing the Cornell Sheep Program.

**Sandi Bombard** of Goldenrod Web Design enjoys working with clients and giving them exposure on the web from her home office. As a small town farm woman, she can relate to the need of most businesses and non-profits to keep the expenses down but still present a professional website that is easy to navigate and pleasant to look at.

**Ron Cole** currently works as the Wool Education Consultant for the American Sheep Industry and, since his retirement from the USDA, has formed a sheep and wool consulting firm which produces a weekly newsletter with issues relating to sheep and wool from market information and trends to government programs and insurance rates. For 37 years, Ron worked with the USDA, primarily with the Meat Grading and Market News Branches and has traveled to many of the major sheep producing countries in the world including Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Uruguay and China.

**Bob Leder** is a large animal veterinarian, practicing in east central WI. He and his wife have and 80 acre farm and a flock of 90 crossbred prolific ewes with the Booroola F+ gene that they established in the late 1980's. They lamb in April and turn them out to pasture shortly after lambing. Bob has served on the Wisconsin Scrapie board, WSBC board, and the WVMA executive board.

**Dr. Justin Luther** and his family have been raising Suffolk sheep and selling market lambs for youth projects since 1975 in central Wisconsin. Justin earned his B.S. in Agricultural Education from UW-River Falls and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Sheep Reproduction from North Dakota State University. For three years, Justin served as the State Sheep Extension Specialist in North Dakota, where his research and outreach efforts focused on reproductive management. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Reproductive Physiology in the Department of Animal & Food Science at UW-River Falls where he teaches courses in animal science, serves as the advisor to the Block & Bridle Club, and coaches the livestock evaluation team. Justin also owns and operates a small-scale semen collection and artificial insemination business for small ruminant producers throughout the Midwest.

**Claire Mikolayunas** serves as the UW-Extension Small Ruminant Specialist. She earned her M.S. and Ph.D. from UW-Madison, where her research focused on nutrition of grazing dairy ewes. Claire has practical experience in small ruminant production through work on commercial sheep farms, owning a small dairy flock, and

working on a dairy goat farm. She lives in southwestern Wisconsin, where she owns a small farm and flock of sheep with her family.

**David L. Thomas** is Professor of Animal Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where, along with teaching, his research deals with the genetic improvement of performance traits in sheep, sheep management, and sheep dairying. Dr. Thomas leads the only sheep dairy research program in North America. Dr. Thomas received both the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Animal Breeding from Oklahoma State University and has received numerous awards for his research achievements.

**Pearse Ward** currently serves as the President of the Wisconsin Working Stockdog Association and is on the Board of Directors of the American Border Collie Association and the United States Border Collie Handler's Association. Born in Ireland with his childhood in Canada, Pearse moved to Minnesota in 1995 to do graduate studies at the U of MN. After acquiring his first dog, Riel, nine years ago, Pearse has worked with the late Chuck O'Reilly of Red Wing and has kept a small flock of sheep.