

To Members of the Valais Blacknose Sheep Society:

As we begin to see our first purebred lambs born in the US it is indeed exciting! These first few animals, born from imported embryos, will advance and stabilize the ongoing upgrading program that the Society and its members have undertaken.

And just as some members needed guidance to understand the process for entering their upgraded sheep into the Society database when they began, we now see that being repeated with our purebred submissions. It is imperative that members intending to submit applications for registration of purebred animals that have resulted from the use of imported purebred embryos be aware of what is required in advance of purchasing or using these embryos.

In the past, Q and A documents have proven most helpful and keeping that in mind we have created one that we hope will clarify how embryos are created, how they are tracked and verified as they move thru the hands of embryologists, importers, our governmental agencies, resellers, and finally, what is needed by our Registrar to enter these new animals into our database with confidence that all is in order.

This Q and A will be uploaded to the Society's website and files for this group shortly but is also available directly from our Registrar.

As we continue to evolve, this is subject to revision and change.

Joy Dally, President.



VBSS Imported Embryos Q and A.

What is required, according to USDA import rules and foreign country export rules, to import embryos into the United States?

1. Any sheep in a foreign country, we will focus on just New Zealand here, that are being considered as candidates for embryo collection must meet several requirements set by both the exporting county and more importantly, the importing country. This is all defined in detail in their mutually negotiated Health Certificates. This involves health testing and inspections by veterinarians beforehand as well as the fulfillment of specific criteria regarding documentation of the entire process.
2. Each collection is carefully documented under the oversight of licensed officials. The embryos are packed into straws much like those we use for semen and each straw is issued a specific ID number unique to the mating that produced it. The attending embryologist team documents all this on an individual forms called a "Schedule of Embryos for Export" for each straw. These are often called the freeze/thaw sheets. They validate the contents of *each* straw and are signed and dated by the attending veterinarian/embryologist. They also validate the circumstances under which the embryos were created, harvested, and frozen for export. *These sheets contain vital information that is required for tracking the validity of the embryos.*
3. All straws containing embryos that are slated for export are stored and inventoried in their own sealed tank. When the time comes for requesting permission to export from New Zealand, each straw is carefully listed on the permit with its own unique ID number. The corresponding USDA Import Permit must also list each straw with its unique ID number. The Import document also defines who the Importer is and should also identify who is the legal owner of the embryos being imported. *This document contains vital information that is required for tracking the validity of the embryos and the right of an individual to own and transfer that ownership interest to another.*

In looking over all the above process and validating points, it is important to note that there is a system of checks and balances in place within the system that validate and confirm the legitimacy of the frozen embryos that are imported into the USA as well as their ownership rights. By requiring and providing documentation throughout the process, we can all be assured that the animals being registered as purebreds within our database are indeed valid, legally transferred and legitimately owned.

It is up to the importer or the person owning/marketing the embryos or live animals to procure and provide the import documentation necessary for registration within the VBS Society.

Ultimately however, it falls to the purchaser of the embryo or of the resulting animal to be sure that all the paperwork is in order and can be provided beforehand as paper trails can run cold as time passes and money changes hands.

We strongly encourage VBSS members to do due diligence prior to the purchase of embryos or live animals.

Why is this information important to the VBSS and to its members?

The Society must protect its database and its reputation as a trustworthy and reputable registry and keeping this in mind, two avenues of oversight must be fulfilled before issuing registration papers:

- Verifying the validity of the animals being presented for registration.
- Verifying the legal ownership rights of the registrant of the resulting animal.

For the most part, the 2021 purebred lamb crop being presented for registration with the VBSS originates from only one or two importations of embryos from New Zealand in 2020. This will not be the case in 2021 and 2022. It is vitally important that we implement documentation systems that can be followed in the future when there will be multiple importations originating from multiple sources as well as the production of domestic embryos. The documentation requirements for these first purebred submissions will be assessed on a **case by case** basis as this first year of dealing with imported embryo progeny is a learning process for both the members and the management of the Society's database.

What will the VBS Society require for registration of purebreds resulting from imported frozen embryos?

This is where the words "documentation of sale and importation documents" with the VBSS Rules of Registry becomes important. Each of those embryos with their unique ID will be listed on those documents and can be traced back to their origin, forward thru the importer, and on to the purchaser. Both the legitimacy of the straw's contents and the legal transfer of ownership is achieved by producing these documents:

1. Documentation of Import Permit.

A copy of the issued import permit with the inventory contents that have been approved for importation. The unique straw identification codes for the embryos that have been used to create the animal being presented for registration need to be provided within that document.

2. Documentation of Ownership of the Imported Embryos Listed on the Import Permit.

This should be a Bill of Sale from the seller of the embryos in the country of origin. It can also be the packing list included with the import document but if this is used as documentation it must clearly indicate who has legal ownership of the embryos being imported.

3. Documentation of the "Schedule of Embryos for Export" (Freeze/Thaw sheets)

Each straw containing the embryo(s) used to create the animal being presented for registration have had one of these Schedules generated at the time of their harvest and freezing in the country of origin. These sheets provide third party verification that the straw identification number and its contents have been packed and frozen under the oversight of a licensed official in the country of origin.

4. Documentation of Donor Pedigrees.

VBSS Policy documents require imported semen sires to provide *a three-generation pedigree and proof of registration in the country of origin*. This will be required for the donor dam and sire of imported embryos as well to ensure that the Society is validating verifiable purebreds and to provide complete lineage in the issued pedigrees.

5. Documentation of Transfer of Ownership.

According to the VBSS Rules of Registry, if embryos are purchased, ownership must be transferred from the seller to the purchaser, just as in the sale and transfer of a live sheep. Go to the VBSS website for the “Embryo Ownership Transfer Form” that should be used for the transfer of ownership of embryos. Proof of legal transfer of ownership from the listed importer/owner of the embryo is required. animal. All embryos purchased must be included. Even those that do not succeed. We need to track and verify the transfer of all embryos. The legible signatures of all parties involved are required. *Each time legal ownership of the embryo is transferred to another person or entity, proof of this transfer needs to be provided.* This establishes a clear and unbroken path of ownership and validates the applicant’s right to own and register the resulting animal. animal.

6. Documentation of Service Provider.

When the embryos are thawed and implanted into recipient ewes the technician/embryologist should provide signed proof of services rendered. The VBSS has not required a set form for this as each service provider generally has their own form that they have adopted and routinely use in their practice. The IETS (International Embryo Technology Society) provides online templates and forms that can be downloaded and used by professionals and laypersons if needed. Any form provided by the service provider should include at a minimum the date of service, a description of services rendered and by whom, individual straw identification numbers for the embryos being thawed and implanted, the recipient identification numbers, the owner of the recipient, the owner of the embryo(s), the name and address of the service provider, and the service provider’s signature.

7. Documentation of VBSS Certificate of Service Form.

The VBSS has provided a form called the “Certificate of Service” that should be completed and submitted with all applications for registration. All embryos implanted must be included on the Certificate of Service. We need to track and verify the eventuality of all embryos. Some of the required information will have already been provided by the service provider on their service form however the Certificate of Service requires the owner of the ewes to attest to and define the arrangements that the parties involved are operating under. The legible signatures of all parties involved are required.

8. Documentation of Transfer of Ownership of a Bred Recipient Ewe.

In the instance of a sale and/or purchase of a bred recipient ewe carrying embryo(s), documentation must be provided proving a legal transfer of ownership of the ewe. This can be achieved by a bill of sale and the signed and completed Certificate of Service provided by the VBSS. The legible signatures of all parties involved are required.

9. Documentation of DNA testing results.

All animals entering the Registered Stock category of the VBSS database must submit DNA samples for testing and provide the lab’s official test results along with their Application for Registration packet. This data will be used to verify sire and dam parentage. To verify sire and dam parentage, donor sires and dams must also have DNA results in the VBSS database. Go to the VBSS website for guidance on VBSS approved labs. The use of Flock 54 is strongly advised as trait testing and codon 171 testing are included in the package.

10. Documentation of VBSS Application for Registration Form.

All animals resulting from imported frozen embryos should be listed on the completed VBSS Application for Registration. The legible signatures of all parties involved are required.

So how do I submit my documents for registration of lambs born via embryo transfer?

- First, use the above Q and A as a handy checklist and gather all your required documentation into ONE submission packet.
- All purebred applications must be submitted in HARD COPY form. They must be in ONE COMPLETE packet. If not received in this form you will be notified that it is incomplete and to resubmit. Your resubmission will have to be AGAIN, ONE COMPLETE packet in hard copy form. Not just bits and pieces here and there. The registry will not accept emailed paperwork for purebred registrations.
- It is understood that official documents relating to importation as well as registration certificates from the country of origin will be copies however, all completed VBSS forms should be submitted as originals.
- DNA testing results must be provided via the original documentation from the VBSS approved lab. **KEEP A COPY OF YOUR ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

To facilitate the process and reduce our Registrar's workload we are asking that all registration packets be initially submitted to Board member **Emily Aune** at:

**12760 S. Park Ave. #1025
Riverton, UT 84065.**

Emily has volunteered to liaison and assist individual members with their questions and submission packets for 2021. Once registration packets are reviewed and found to be in order, they will be forwarded onto the VBSS Registrar for processing. The registry will not accept emailed packets for purebred registrations.

Have Questions or Need Assistance?

Write to: **valaisblacknosesheepsociety@gmail.com**

The Board of the Valais Blacknose Sheep Society is committed to supporting the establishment of a sustainable breeding population in North America. We wish all our members continued success as we work to achieve this goal together. We thank you for your cooperation.