

# THE ROMANOV'S ARE HERE!

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After six months in the maximum security quarantine station at Grosse Ile, the Romanov sheep (Sheep Canada Magazine Vol 1 No 3) imported last fall from France were released. They were transferred to an on-farm quarantine at

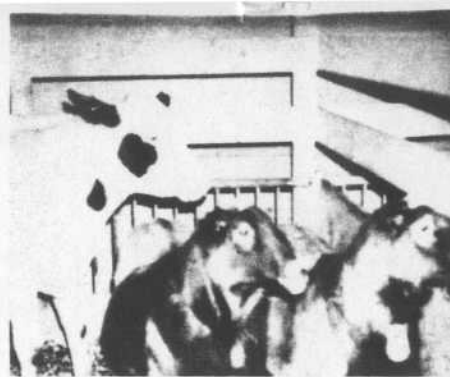
Lennoxville, Quebec. Unfortunately two males and two females had to be slaughtered because they reacted positively to the test of Brucellosis. It is sad to see \$14,000. disappear but it is a risk each importer has to take. However, in return we got completely unexpectedly 12 lambs born during the quarantine which resulted from unscheduled (though welcomed) romances over the



Above are the four imported Romanov ewes which lambed.

high seas during the boat trip. In the matter of fact 13 lambs were born to 4 ewes but one weak lamb died shortly after birth. One ewe lambed 5 lambs ranging in weight from 6½ to 9½ lb, the total weight of the litter was 38 lb. The lambings took the officials at the quarantine by surprise. Nursing equipment including bottles, nipples, formulae etc, had to be flown to Grosse Ile in a hurry. And Dr. Leclerc, in charge of the quarantine, who handles usually animals 1000 lb and over had to feed little lambs by bottle 4 times a day! We can say that he did a fantastic job, the lambs received were healthy, vigorous and "social".

The animals were trucked to Lennoxville after a boat trip which was 10 hours late to arrive. The sheep were housed, in pens in direct contact with calves to test for Foot and Mouth disease. The two species had some hard time getting along together but once they did everything went smoothly. The test was terminated in July and believe it or not, when the calves left, the sheep felt lonely and boycotted food for 2 days in protest. When the lambs reached 70 days of age they were weaned. The average weaning weight was 42 lb. The ewe which produced the 5 lambs weaned 219 lb of



Two Romanov rams with their calf companion.

lambs, not bad for an illegal romance! One ewe was found to have 4 functioning teats. Two lambs also had 4 teats and it will be interesting to find out if we can develop a herd with all animals carrying this trait. Who knows, probably the next step would be a sow-like udder. The sheep are now being prepared to start their scheduled (legal this time) breeding season in early September. What are the plans for this breed? For two years they will simply be left to multiply, while preparations will be



Four-month old lambs born during the quarantine.

made to cross them with at least one native breed, tentatively, the Suffolk. The long-term plan is to incorporate the blood of the Romanov into the DLS sheep presently being developed in Quebec (Sheep Canada Magazine Vol 1 No 1). When can the sheep breeders have access to the extra Romanovs

surplus from the research? Unfortunately not before at least 5 years when the on-farm quarantine terminates and the present regulations and restrictions on disposing of government animals are eased.



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