Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School debuts in Oregon Willamette Valley

By Jan Jackson

ALBANY, Ore. – The 31st annual Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School sponsored by the National Lamb Feeders Association will debut March 12-15, 2017, in Albany, Oregon located in the heart of Oregon grass seed country. The school was moved from summer to spring to allow participants to get the most out of seeing the area’s unique grass fed lamb production and marketing systems in operation.

Planned visits within the 70-mile radius of Albany, include a startup sheep dairy in Jefferson, a three-year old on-ranch harvest facility, a fiber mill in Lebanon, vineyard grazing and winery tour in Eugene, plus a unique variety of large and small sheep growing operations. An optional tour to the Oregon Coast that ends up at Portland International Airport is available for those wishing to stay an extra day.

Tom Nichols, past manager for the Sheep Research Center at Oregon State University and current president of the Oregon Sheep Growers Association, is directing the 2017 School.

“Other than the Imperial Valley in Southern California, we are the only place that has this unique grass-fed system,” Nichols said. “It is the perfect place for producers who are trying to develop a grass-fed system to visit and spring is the time to do it. One evening we will spend around the barbeque with the grass seed growers and sheep producers detailing the way they work with each other and on the day we hear about sheep grazing in the vineyards, we’ll be adding a tour of the winery.”
The first Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School, held in Fort Collins, CO, has rotated between Sioux Falls, SD, San Angelo, TX, Greeley, CO, Columbus, OH, Philadelphia, PA and Dixon, CA over the last 30 years. Known for its intensive program balancing classroom time, site tours and one-on-one exchanges, the program also offers participants opportunities to listen to industry leaders, academic experts, as well as make connections with other producers representing different parts of the country.

Cost to the individual participant consists of their transportation to and from the selected school site plus a $200 per person registration fee. NLFA provides meals and lodging for the participants, as well as the cost of the site tours and program supplies. Cost for the optional Oregon Coast Tour will be announced later.

Participants must be 20 years of age to apply. The application process consists of a written essay. A group of approximately 24-26 participants will be selected for the school. Deadline for registration is January 6, 2017.

For more information, contact NLFA or visit www.nlfa-sheep.org