

How The Alliance Came To Be

Hello and Greetings!

It was almost 30 years ago, in 1985, when I took over a registry for Karakul sheep from Karen Koch of Ohio. It was called the Empire Karakul Registry, for which the prior Registrar had been Ted Stultz of New York State. I purchased Karen's flock of elegant, long-eared, fine-boned, mostly black Karakuls and had them shipped from Ohio to Eastern Washington State. Also included were many ewes from Ted Stultz's flock. After some research, I found that there had also been a registry called the Bay State Registry, and there had been a few others over the years, but none of them were active.

However, I did start finding folks all over the country, who had small to large flocks of Karakuls, and who were eager to know of each other. I incorporated the few breeders from Karen's project, and pretty much started over with a new organization we called the American Karakul Sheep Registry. It was well received. Many flocks that we located had been isolated so long that it seemed logical to designate them as 'separate bloodlines.' As we began to learn of the origin of each flock, sometimes this was true. But after our two national 'Gatherings' (in 1993 and 1997), the subsequent sheep trading began to blend these lines together. The registering of individual Karakuls helped to distinguish some of the bloodlines and or the breeders' preferences. And it gave the breeders who liked to do competition, the required paperwork for entry. Fourteen years later, in 2000, the project was still a work in progress and we were putting together an Advisory Board due to the growth of the Registry. We had over 50 active breeders/owners and regular interest in the breed from 'new' folks on a regular basis. We had a 'registered population' of over 2000 and yet hundreds more Karakuls in flocks that were isolated or not-yet-discovered. Our obvious next step was to include a Flock Registry concept into our system.

This journey was very rewarding and yet in some ways exhausting. In 2000, for personal reasons, it was necessary that I transfer this whole project to someone else. With great hopes, I assumed that the 'gathering of the Karakuls' into the fold would be continued. Over the subsequent 14 years, this was not accomplished. Apparently the new caretakers prematurely closed the registry to 'new' animals and in doing so lost many Karakuls that did indeed belong. And currently for some reason, the number of active breeder/owners is very few, many actually having quit raising the breed at all. Due to requests, discussions and prodding during the last 4-5 years, from former and current breeders, I have been encouraged to pick up the pieces and proceed to regroup. It is almost, but not quite, like starting over again! Luckily, this time, it has become a group effort. What we have come up with so far I attempt to describe in the following summary:

