

## Sheep farmers join in search for Huntington's disease cure

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

Mike and Heather Ludlam have raised sheep on their farm in [Hopkins](#) since 1993, carefully selecting stock to expand their purebred heritage Shetland and Targhee breeds.

These days, the Ludlams are carefully selecting for a different breed of sheep with a different goal in mind — testing and selecting lambs that bear a recessive gene for a devastating sheep disease.

Although the disease would prevent them from ever reaching adulthood, the lambs are extremely valuable store of a substance researchers need as they formulate new treatments for Huntington's disease and similar neurological disorders in humans.

When Mike saw a little one-paragraph blurb about sheep with a certain genetic trait could be used to study Huntington's, his interest was piqued.

Heather, a veterinarian, began to see similar notices in other trade publications. The Ludlams visited Dr. Larry Holler, the veterinarian in South Dakota who had researched the sheep disease, GM1 gangliosidosis, for his PhD project.

They learned that while all mammals produce the substance GM1 ganglioside, sheep with this genetic flaw produce levels 40 times higher than healthy cows or sheep. It's that substance, harvested from the brain, spinal column and organs of the lambs, that researchers are using to create a treatment for human illness.

**Read full, original post:** [Farmers raising genetically flawed sheep seek a cure for Huntington's disease](#)