

NSIP Meeting

Thursday – March 12, 2020

7 p.m. CST

Minutes submitted by Lisa Paris Weeks

Attendees: Matt Benz, Vance Broadbent, Rusty Burgett, Brady Campbell, John Carlson, Lynn Fahrmeier, Cody Hiemke, Tom Hodgman, Ben Lehfeldt, Jim Morgan, Brenda Reau, Reid Redden, Mark Roembke, Bill Shultz, Todd Taylor, Jake Thorne, Lisa Weeks

Agenda:

- Secretary Report (November meeting)
 - Ben Lehfeldt moved to accept minutes as written, seconded by Jim Morgan. Motion passed.
 - A change requested for Annual Membership Minutes on January 23, 2020 to add Vance Broadbent as attending.

- Treasurer Report
 - Presented by Bill Shultz
 - The finances will be reported to the Board quarterly to align with ASI financial structure.
 - MLA and Lambplan are involved in a restructuring effort. Invoices for data fees will change from quarterly payments to monthly payments from NSIP. The fund transfer fee of \$50 will change from 4/yr to 12/yr.
 - Accounts Receivable older than 365 days has stayed stable.
 - Bill will circulate a comprehensive report around the first week in April.

- Executive Report
 - Continuing to address outstanding AR.
 - Request Board action to determine whether to turn on FEC EBV for all breeds.

- Program Director Report
 - Presented by Rusty Burgett (report attached)
 - We have ~\$21000 in Account Receivable <365 days past due. Invoices for these were mailed electronically and it is suspected that spam filters caused them to be missed. Rusty will implement a change for 2020 as follows for invoicing:
 - Initial invoices will continue to be mailed electronically
 - Invoices >30 days past due will be mailed via USPS.
 - Additionally, any member with outstanding fees older than 30 days past due will not receive updated EBV's until invoices are paid.
 - Membership renewal forms will be mailed to the active membership via USPS in the November/December time frame for the following years membership dues.
 - New Service contract with MLA is being re-negotiated.
 - Agreement has been circulated to the Board for their input.
 - Lynn and Rusty will negotiate the terms including the addition of a forecasted cost for genomic EBVs and sign the final document.
 - Rusty plans to have bi-monthly meetings with Guy Rose of LambPlan to review any concerns.
 - Several programming patches have been applied to the online searchable database so we should be seeing some new features soon.

- Rusty will be working with Michelle Canfield and the website committee to revamp the NSIP website and make it more user friendly with current content.
- Status of NSIP sales in 2020
 - Eastern Sale – the future vision for this sale is to have an online presence that is geared toward small sales with specific needs. For example, FEC rams, Out of Season rams, Growth rams, etc.
 - Matt Benz made a motion to not have a physical sale in 2020, seconded by Cody Hiemke. The motion passed.
 - Jim Morgan moved to use Willoughby Sales for an online sale in the July 7/8 timeframe, seconded by Jake Thorne. This would allow animals to be transferred at either the Center of the Nation or the Katahdin Expo sales. Cody Hiemke suggested the sale be a single day and not on a weekend. Rusty suggested the consignments be limited to 2 per consignor. Motion passed.
 - Center of the Nation Sale – Reid Redden suggested appointing a Sale Committee Chair for this sale. Brenda Reau nominated Matt Benz. Jake Thorne motioned for Matt Benz and the Center of the Nation Sale Committee negotiate a contract for managing the sale, seconded by Cody Hiemke. Willoughby Sales and Heartland Sales have been requested to submit bids. Motion passed.
- Technical Committee
 - Ron Lewis is currently in Australia working with Sheep Genetics on the scope of genomic EBVs. (Ron's report attached)
- New Business
 - The FEC EBV is currently only available for the Maternal Breeds and PolyPay and Katahdin are the only breeds submitting data. There is interest from other breeds, specifically Suffolk (Brenda Reau), to have this feature available. The group discussed the pro's and con's of turning on an EBV that doesn't yet have statistical evidence to support it within that breed type. Jim Morgan offered providing guidance of when and how to collect fecals will be important to convey to these groups impacted from making this EBV available. Reid Redden offered concern about turning this EBV on for all breeds and suggested only turning on a breed type at a time and set a timeline until all types are receiving the feature. The NSIP members must understand it will take time for the data to reach a comfortable level of accuracy within each breed type. Sharing rams (Jim Morgan) is a pathway to speed up this process.
 - Cody Hiemke motioned to turn on the FEC EBV for all breeds but allow the Technical Committee to determine when and how, seconded by Ben Lehfeltdt. Motion passed.
- Next meeting will be May 14 at 7 p.m. CST.
- Reid Redden motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jake Thorne.

NSIP Program Director's Report
March 12, 2020

Membership renewals and new membership forms keep coming in on a regular basis. As members start thinking about submitting data, they are getting their memberships renewed. We've received less than 100 membership renewals and several long-term members are on the list of those that have yet to renew. It's become evident that relying only on electronic communications is not an effective manner to get pertinent information to the membership. Therefore, with the guidance of the Executive committee we've decided on a new invoicing policy. From now on, I will invoice all members for data fees electronically, then, any invoices that have not been paid within 30 days, I will print and mail a hard copy. If that hard-copy invoice has not been paid within 30 days, those members will be removed from the valid to run list and will not be able to submit any more data for analysis until their account is settled. This policy will allow those who would like to pay via credit card the opportunity but will also address the situation of people not seeing/overlooking the electronic invoice. Also, at the end of the year, I will mail out a membership renewal form to all members, which will hopefully encourage sending those forms in within the first 60 days of the calendar year. The increase in postage and printing supplies will cost NSIP around \$200 per year but I expect it to drastically reduce the \$20k plus of accounts receivables we carry in any given month.

Recently, MLA has asked that we transition from paying invoices to Australia from quarterly to paying monthly. With this transition, cash flow throughout the year must improve for NSIP as we will have a much shorter window to collect those fees from our members before having to pay MLA. Additionally, the international wire transfer fee is about \$50 per transaction so our wire transfer expense will go up by about \$400 for the year. This is potentially negotiable and I will continue to work with SheepGenetics on this topic.

I will be working with the website committee to re-vamp the NSIP website. I've received several comments how content is difficult to find and the page is cumbersome to navigate. As I generate more educational content and resources, it is getting rather cumbersome so I've reached out to Michelle Canfield, the website committee chair on guidance for how to go about this process.

I've spent several hours over the past few months re-organizing the Quickbooks of NSIP. I've gone through all open accounts and mailed out hard-copy invoices to all members who have unpaid invoices. Unfortunately, there wasn't an automated way to do this so it involved going through one account at a time to get everything caught up. However, it should be much easier to stay on top of now that old accounts have been removed and everything is now current. Now that this process is completed, I will update the membership lists and the maps on the NSIP website with the current information.

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The developers have fixed several bugs in the online searchable database, built a new updated upload tool for me to use and re-organized the physical structure of the database. Now, they will begin the process of the upgrades we've requested which are: including accuracy values, more in-depth query tools, automated percentile reports and including the certification program.

I have spoken to Willoughby Sales about hosting online sales. They are willing to work with us on a fee structure and they have proposed we can charge a \$25 consignment fee, which would come to NSIP and Willoughby, would operate on a commission basis charging a 10% base commission. As sale proceeds go up, commission withheld decreases. Additionally, they will be providing me with a quote to for them to manage the Center of the Nation sale. I have a call scheduled with Dan Willoughby Thursday afternoon so I will present that quote to the board during our meeting. I also am awaiting a response from the Heartland Sales group and I have a meeting next week with the owners of the Spencer sale barn to see if they would be interested in working the CNS.

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NSIP Technical Advisory Committee Report

March 2020

Updates on genomics

There are several projects underway that begin to allow (encourage) the incorporation of genomic information into the genetic evaluations provided through the partnership of NSIP with Sheep Genetics.

Much of the focus involves use of a new genotyping platform recently released by Neogen GeneSeek. The GeneSeek Genomic Profiler (GGP) Ovine 50K Infinium array is a moderately dense genotyping platform with 50,000 genetic markers (also known to as single nucleotide polymorphisms or SNP). It was designed in part with U.S. breed-types in mind. Sixty-four DNA samples from each of Rambouillet, Suffolk and Katahdin sheep, primarily rams, collected in NSIP flocks were used to help tailor the platform to our breed-types.

The GGP Ovine 50K array includes genetic markers useful for verifying an animal's sex and parentage, as well as genotypes on several genetic conditions. By complementing the pedigree and performance information we already collect with that available at the genomic level, with this platform we also have the opportunity estimate breeding values—so called genomic-enhanced EBV—more accurately. Perhaps it is worth reiterating that this genomic information adds to but certainly does not replace the phenotypic data collected on-farm. On-farm recording in fact becomes even more important when incorporating genomics into genetic evaluations.

- *Western Range.* The National Sheep Industry Improvement Center funded a project that will allow us to genotype 610 Rambouillet sheep from NSIP flocks in the Fine Wool Consortium using the GGP Ovine 50K array. As a collaborative project of the NSIP Technical Committee, we are in the process of identifying the subset of samples from our DNA repository on Rambouillet sheep to genotype. These samples were collected with support of a Let's Grow project grant.
- *Terminal sire.* As part of a collaboration with National Animal Germplasm Program (NAGP), with funding from the USDA-ARS Innovation fund, DNA samples on 180 Suffolk sheep recorded in NSIP were recently genotyped using the Illumina OvineHD Beadchip, which has about 600,000 genetic markers. These will be added to genotypes we collected earlier using this same platform, and will contribute to Mrs. Carrie Wilson, a NAGP scientist and PhD student at Colorado State University, doctoral research project. Like with the Rambouillet samples, these Suffolk samples were collected with Let's Grow project funding.
- *Hair sheep.* In a project led by Dr. Joan Burke (Understanding Parasite Resistance in Organic Livestock and Using a Systems Approach for Control), funded through the USDA Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative, we have genotyped 1,168 Katahdin lambs using the GGP 50K array, with another 1,388 samples being submitted shortly. Once those combined sets of genotypes become available, we will be able to run a genomic evaluation in Katahdin as our first test-case for obtaining genomic enhanced EBV in a U.S. sheep breed. Although it will be premature to release those results commercially quite yet (approximately 5,000 genotypes will be available by end of the project), we will have the opportunity to compare EBV, and as importantly their accuracies, with and without genomic information to gain a sense of the opportunities that lay ahead.

Collaborative research with the Animal Genetics and Breeding Group

As a collaboration with the Animal Genetics and Breeding Group (AGBU), Drs. Napo Vargas Jurado, a post-doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Ron Lewis are working alongside Dr. Daniel Brown and his colleagues in Armidale, Australia, from January to May 2020. They are focusing their efforts on two projects, both with funding from the USDA:

- Understanding Parasite Resistance in Organic Livestock and Using a Systems Approach for Control; and,
- Establishing Innovative Strategies to Incorporate Crossbred Data into Genetic Evaluation of Sheep in the United States.

Further details about the objectives of these two projects are provided in the Appendix. Air travel to Armidale was funded by a Let's Grow project awarded to NSIP.

Ron Lewis
NSIP Technical Committee Chair
March 10, 2020