

NSIP Meeting

Thursday – July 16, 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, Ron Lewis, Brenda Reau, Mark Roembke, Bill Shultz, Lisa Surber, Todd Taylor, Jake Thorne, Lisa Weeks

Agenda:

- Secretary Report
 - Cody Hiemke moved to accept minutes as written, seconded by Brenda Reau. Motion passed.
- Treasurer Report
 - Presented by Bill Shultz (report attached)
 - Financials going into 2021 are stable with 108 renewed memberships at the end of the third quarter.
 - Rusty stated that data from the Western Range Flocks are being to be received. The timing is similar to previous years.
 - Matt Benz motioned that a list of unpaid flocks be provided to the breed directors, both member and data, periodically through the year. John Carlson seconded and motion passed. Rusty will begin providing this information to each breed director.
- Program Director Report
 - Presented by Rusty Burgett (report attached)
 - The Let's Grow grant projects are being wrapped up including the Searchable Database and the percentile reports.
 - Rusty is working on a short-course option to offer the membership. The course would include bi-monthly lectures watched independently followed by a recitation class via zoom with an assignment. The course would last approximately 6 months and would detail genetic selection principles and genetic analysis/evaluation. More details to come.
- Technical Committee
 - Presented by Ron Lewis (report attached)
 - Better approach to orphan lambs
 - Working with Sheep Genetics to develop a better approach for including data on bottle-raised lambs in PM submissions.
 - Utilize a foster dam ID so real dam doesn't get credit for raising it. This approach will roll out for the 2021 lambing season. Rusty and Ron will schedule some zoom meetings this fall for education on how to use.
 - Collaborative research with the Animal Genetics and Breeding Group
 - Focused on two research projects:
 - Understanding Parasite Resistance in Organic Livestock Systems
 - Establishing Strategies to Incorporate Crossbred Data
 - Funding support from UDSA-ARS
- Old Business

- Recap on Sales
 - Matt Benz said he was generally satisfied though the entry process needed some refinement and the sale catalog wasn't very organized (i.e., by breed).
 - The NSIP data entry needs to be standardized across breeds and within breeds.
 - Rusty spent too much time on the sale. The work needs to be distributed to a committee and not one person.
 - Rams sold fairly well.
 - Pictures and content descriptions need to be standardized and the consignors educated on the standard.
 - Standardizing the entire process will help streamline future sales.
 - Brenda Reau stated that transportation didn't seem to be an obstacle though it might have been a perceived barrier for some bidders.
- New Business
 - For the September meeting Rusty would like to discuss potential themes, topics, and format for the Annual Meeting in Denver.
 - The Nominations Committee will need to be appointed/confirmed at the September meeting.
- Next meeting will be September 17 at 7 p.m. CST.
- John Carlson moved to adjourn, seconded by Cody Hiemke.

3rd Quarter 2020 NSIP Treasures Report

Bill Shultz 7-16-2020

June 30th ended our third quarter for fiscal year 2020. Also attached is our balance sheet and P&L ending June 30th.

We are ending our 3rd quarter with 108 renewed memberships for a total about \$28,000 income or \$263 per member and that compares to 99 renewals, \$23,000 income, \$237 per member for this time last year.

Through the first 8 months of data billings, we have paid Lamb Plan \$28,725 representing 9,579 records processed. Collection of data fees from our members is more current than in past years.

We have recently received confirmation from the Sheep Center that the balance of our grant (\$30,000) is being processed and we believe should be remitted shortly. Those funds will allow us some cushion moving into fiscal year 2021. We also have almost depleted our funding through the Let's Grow grants. There is approximately \$5,000 in that funding which must be used by the end of this fiscal year.

I hope to have our 2021 budget prepared and ready for your review and comments by our next scheduled board meeting.

NSIP Program Director's Report
July 2020

It has been an exciting and busy few weeks since our last meeting. I will let the sale committee comment on the sales in detail but given the very short transition time to the online-only platform, I think overall the sales went well. As soon as I receive a sale report from Willoughby, I will distribute that to the group so we can have more details on the sales.

We continue to get new members signing up and we also have had several newer members submitting data for the first time in the past few months. In June, we had data submitted on 2,919 billable animals, 3,566 in May and 1,072 in April. Total data submissions for calendar year 2020 through June is 9,392 billable animals.

To add to Bill's treasurer's report: The A/R balance is currently \$23,606.60 with \$7,605.00 being from month of June. We are down to only \$5,043.20 being over 1 year old. We currently have 74 accounts that are outstanding, however, 38 of those accounts were just invoiced within the past 30 days, 18 are from 30-60 days ago and only 13 are older than 1 year. This is a great improvement over where we were 6 months ago. I just mailed in a deposit today of \$7,805.10, with mostly current data fees and 1 outstanding A/R account.

The updates to the online searchable database are just about wrapped up. All updates have been finished except the automated calculation of percentile reports. I have a meeting with the developers scheduled for Monday evening to discuss the details of the percentile reports so we can finish up that process. I will request that they make the other updates live now and then we can roll out the new percentile reports once they are finished. Completing this project will finish up the last of our ASI Let's Grow grant projects.

I have had a 3 presentation requests for late-summer/fall and those are still currently scheduled. However, with the health situation, those may be transitioned online or possibly cancelled.

Recently, I have been refining an idea for a detailed short-course that NSIP could potentially offer to the membership. This could be an approximately 6-month in-depth short course on genetic selection principles and the details of genetic analysis/evaluation. If anyone would like to hear the details on this plan and offer input/suggestions, I think forming a committee could help move the process along.

NSIP Technical Advisory Committee Report

July 2020

Orphaned (bottle-raised) lambs

Working with the team at Sheep Genetics, we have developed a better approach for including data on orphaned (bottle-raised) lambs in Pedigree Master submissions. Currently, if an orphaned lamb is retained in a flock as a replacement animal, its rearing type must be entered as “1” for its own post-birth data to be considered. Its contemporary group is recorded as distinct from its littermates. With that approach, however, its own (genetic) dam is credited for rearing the lamb despite it being orphaned.

The new approach rectifies this situation. For such lambs—orphans retained as replacements—a ‘phantom’ foster dam ID, distinct from that of any actual dam in the flock, will need to be entered. The same phantom foster dam ID can be used for all orphaned lambs in a flock. These retained bottle-raised lambs will still need to be assigned a rearing type of “1” and a distinct contemporary group.

Rusty Burgett and the Technical Committee are revising a document to communicate this change to NSIP members. This will include advice on conventions for choosing a phantom foster dam ID. Since the current production year is far along, the plan is to introduce this change for the 2021 lambing season. Beyond written materials, other techniques will be used to connect with the NSIP membership about this change (e.g., Zoom meeting).

Collaborative research with the Animal Genetics and Breeding Group

Although the study program of Napo Vargas Jurado and Ron Lewis with the Animal Genetics and Breeding (AGBU) in Armidale, Australia, was substantially shortened because of the coronavirus pandemic, the collaboration continues. That on-going effort is supported through a weekly teleconference with Daniel Brown, a Principal Scientist at AGBU.

Our focus is on two research projects, supported through funding by USDA-ARS. In brief, in ‘Understanding Parasite Resistance in Organic Livestock Systems’:

- We combined on-farm and NSIP data on the Katahdin flocks participating in the project, which will allow a full investigation of the consequences of internal parasites on production and fitness traits.
- We identified nearly 5,000 NSIP Katahdin sheep for genotyping with the GeneSeek Genomic Profiler Ovine 50K Infinium array; 3,849 genotypes are completed with the remainder underway.
- We established a genomic pipeline to incorporate these genotypes into the genetic evaluation of Katahdins, which will allow the first commercial application of this technology in a U.S. sheep breed.

In ‘Establishing Strategies to Incorporate Crossbred Data’:

- We compiled birth, weaning, and post-weaning weights on terminal sire, maternal wool, and western range breeds, and their crosses, available from the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station.
- We estimated the effects of breed, and direct and maternal hybrid vigor, on these traits.
- We established a process for incorporating crossbred information into the NSIP database, which will allow us to test the value of utilizing such information in routine genetic evaluation.

Importantly, these two projects reflect examples where data unique to NSIP has been leveraged as part of external grants in R&D that will directly benefit the U.S. sheep industry.

Ron Lewis
NSIP Technical Committee Chair
July 16, 2020