

Lamb and Wool Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes April 23rd, 2020

The annual Lamb and Wool Program Advisory Committee met on April 23rd, 2020, starting at 7:00 p.m. Virtual meeting was held due to the safety restriction of Covid 19. Committee members present included: Dr. Jeff Held, Karla Gundermann, Randy Dombek, Rob Rule, Dr. Larry Goelz, Kevin Goeken, Jeremy Geske, Russ Gundermann, Wes Moser, Steve Schreier and Lila Schmidt. Staff members present included: Philip Berg and Mike Caskey (temporary instructor to complete year for Laurie Johnson who resigned). Management Dean Paul Lanoue was also present.

Philip provided a welcome and thanked the committee members for their commitment to the program. The instructors value the committees input into the program and their commitment to the success of the sheep industry.

Many Committee members provide leadership at the national level and provided Industry Updates.

- Wes Moser ASI Genetic Stakeholders and Lets Grow committees
- Jeremy Geske – National Sheep Industry Improvement Center
- Steve Schreier – National Lamb Feeders
- Rob Rule – American Lamb Board and Lets Grow committee
- Kevin Goeken – ASI American Lamb Council

Dr. Held provided an update on sheep specialist positions in South Dakota

Minutes from the 2020 advisory committee meeting were sent out and Philip reviewed changes made based on comments from the 2019 meeting. Philip discussed the following item identified by the committee last year.

- Recommended to explore other meeting times (eat and learn). Conducted Shearwell webinars in the evening as well as during the day around noon with similar attendance.
- Guest Speakers excellent way to attract people. Conducted several webinars with guest speakers.
- Importance of recorded webinar presentations. Several meetings were recorded and shared with program members.

Philip reviewed the Lamb and Wool activities and credit sales for the 2019/2020 year. A program booklet was sent to each member. Philip highlighted that enrollment for the member producer program was record high, however outreach programs (Lambing time short course, Facility Tour and online courses) did not see the same enrollment increase. 16 new program members were added and only 7 program member did not reenroll. Philip indicated that over the past 3 years the program has added 39 new members with 35 remaining in the 2019/2020 program year. The average age of program members remained at 47-48 years old with a fairly even age distribution from 23 to 75 years old. Program had similar outreach and online credits.

Program member credit sales percentage has been trending higher with a steady to lower outreach credits percentage.

Trends in the Producer program member options was presented by Philip. Minnesota full members were steady, Intermediate members decreased while outstate full members, small flock and long distance members have been steadily increasing over the past 3 years. Sheep Central Consulting students has been steady but increased for the 2019/2020 program year.

Educational program meetings (in person onsite and online)

- 12 meetings conducted
- 5 meetings with over 50 individuals attending.
- When offered online and onsite biggest attendance online
- Similar attendance for all onsite locations except milk replacer pickup meeting when not offered online.
- Hit a home run with 4 guest speakers (high attendance)
- 10-12 percent attend most or did not attend any meetings.

Farmworks (Shearwell Data) Webinars successful

- Tried both noon and evening meetings with similar attendance.
- Tried producer sharing with great success
- Approximately 20 out the 33 producers invited (60%) participated

Program Delivery Methods Discussion:

- Newer member retention – 1st year members tried to visit extra time, like farm focus meeting and the networking with other program members. Jeremy encouraged mentoring. Kevin thinks the farm focus and other face to face meetings are forming mentoring within the program.

Virtual/Phone Farm Visits

- Keys to a successful virtual visit: Be prepared – have a list of questions.
- Keys to a successful virtual visit: Email pictures
- Keys to a successful virtual visit: Connect to zoom and use camera for virtual tour or can have pictures on computer to view
- Difficult to see what is happening on the farm.
- Students want instructors on farm
- Challenging with newer members.

Suggested program changes for the future.

- Lila suggested recognizing individuals for measured improvements (lamb crop marketed, rate of gain, feed efficiency etc.)

Agriculture and Business Dean, Paul Lanoue thanked the committee and their commitment to the Pipestone Lamb and Wool program. Dean Lanoue indicated Covid 19 changing way Minnesota West is delivering program. College has been using online instruction for many years which helped in some of the transition. Still very difficult for hands on learners. Currently, there is a

Lamb and Wool instructor vacancy and the college is committed to filling the position for a second instructor. Goal is to have instructor in place by July 1. Dean Lanoue indicated that there was a 3 % tuition increase. He also indicated that management students would receive money back from the college in the form of a check (CARES funds).

Philip thanked the committee members for their input and contribution to the Lamb and Wool program.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.