

## **Lamb and Wool Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes May 3, 2011**

The annual Lamb and Wool Program Advisory Committee met on May 3, 2011, starting at 5:30 p.m. at Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Pipestone Campus. Committee members present included: Randy Dombek, Dr. Jeff Held, Gail Boeve, Rob Rule, Dr. Larry Goelz, Bob Koehler, Bill Aeschlimann, Wes Moser, Lila Schmidt, and Dean Risa. Russ Gundermann was unable to attend. Staff members present included: Mike Caskey and Philip Berg. Management Dean Al Brudelic was also present.

Mike 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. Plan to review the program and then have the committee review the Lamb and Wool Program through the S.W.O.T. Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). Mike reviewed the web site changes recommended last year. Lila requested the newsletter be available electronically. Philip will post the newsletters on Sheep Central.

Dr. Goelz asked about producer members' attendance at evening meetings. Philip reviewed member producer statistics including percentage of participation of each program activity.

Mike then reviewed the Lamb and Wool program credits sold and the history of credits sold. Dr. Held indicated the core of the program is the member producer program. Dean Al Brudelic reviewed Minnesota West Community and Technical College's commitment to Management programs and funding.

Philip reviewed the online course offerings and the number of students enrolled. A decreasing trend of online enrollment is developing. The decreasing trend of online enrollment led into the program marketing and advertisement. Philip reviewed the current advertising plan which includes ads placed in 4 national publications (Sheep Industry News, Shepherd, Sheep and Banner) as well as the Minnesota and Iowa Lamb and Wool Association publications. The board suggested placing ads in additional weekly and biweekly publications. Some of the publications mentioned included: Farm Forum, Ag Week, Colorado Ranch, County Living, Small Farmer and Other species magazines. The industry is pushing to expand and improve sheep production so the program needs to focus on items that can be offered to new sheep producers. Wes Moser encouraged instructors to mail out small posters/flyers to businesses (sale barns, vet clinics, lamb buying stations etc.)

Mike reviewed the onsite educational course offerings. Facility Tour was a great success last year. We ended up with two full busses with students attending from 11 different states. The Lambing Time Short course was successful again this year. Individuals really enjoy the on farm tour/demonstrations. The Sheep for Profit School will be offered July 6-9, 2011. Promotional information has been sent out to targeted mailing list and e-mail contacts. Promotional ads have also been sent out.

Bill Aeschlimann asked about University Sheep Education courses. Held and Goelz reported that both schools have large enrollments in Sheep production class because of hands on activities (work with animals).

Philip and Mike reviewed the summary of SWOT analysis conducted at the last evening meeting. Committee reviewed.

Mike asked the committee to identify SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the Lamb and Wool Program. The Advisory committee identified the following:

**Strengths:** These are the things that the Lamb & Wool Program does well.

- Communication skills / relate to producers
- Instructors Leadership
- Knowledge – up to date - current
- Commitment to sheep producers
- One on one instruction
- Core of long term producers/students
- Success of member producers/students
- Variety of delivery methods
- Focus on profit / think like business people
- Have clear program objectives
- Industry contacts / reputation
- Member contribution to change – applying successful ideas
- Innovative programming to sell credits / provide education
- Change with the times / innovation / looking for more efficiency
- Availability of instructors

**Weaknesses:** These are the things that need to improve in the Lamb & Wool Program.

- Lack of man hours
- Ways to promote educational offerings
- Greater college expectation's with shrinking resources
- Tuition cost
  - Rising
  - Assessed on a per person basis not per ewe
- Producers do not have time to attend evening meetings
- Inadequate funding
- Reputation as having a cookie cutter approach to production – inflexible
- Producers from outside the program intimidated by reputation of success.
- Not enough time

**Opportunities:** These are the things you see currently and in the future that, if implemented, would make the program more successful.

- Sheep expansion programming (2+2+2 program)

- Partner with SDSU on 2+2+2 program-- educational component
- Educate the educators
- Work with sheep specialists and specialized sheep veterinarians
- Alternative income (Royalty) – intellectual property
- Continuing education credits (educators/veterinarians)
- Use social media (Face book/Twitter)
- Grants from allied industries

**Threats:** These are the things that could affect the programs future.

- Funding
- 2012 Farm Bill / land use / feed cost
- State and National economy
- Industry infrastructure
- Faculty replacement / transition
- Adequate supply of productive sheep to fuel expansion
- Producer idea that high lamb prices are here to stay
- Risk management with today's input costs and volatility
- Inability to get into the industry
- Market changes
  - Ethnic market
  - Loss of processors
  - Loss of price discovery

Mike thanked everyone for their input and for their willingness to serve on the Lamb and Wool Advisory board. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.