

**Minnesota West Community & Technical College  
Lamb and Wool Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 7, 2013**

The annual Lamb and Wool Program Advisory Committee met on May 7, 2013, starting at 5:30 p.m. at Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Pipestone Campus. Committee members present included: Randy Dombek, Dr. Jeff Held, Karla Gundermann, Rob Rule, Dr. Larry Goelz, Chad Benda, Russ Gundermann, Wes Moser, Lila Schmidt, and Dean Risa. Staff members present included: Mike Caskey and Philip Berg. Management Dean Brad Schloesser was also present. Steve Schreier was absent.

Mike provided a welcome and thanked the committee members for their commitment to the program. Committee members provided a short introduction. There are multiple new members of this committee along with a new Management Dean. The instructors value the committees input into the program and their commitment to the success of the sheep industry. Minutes from the 2012 advisory committee meeting were mailed out and Mike reviewed the highlights of the 2012 meeting.

Mike pointed out that this was the 40<sup>th</sup> year for the Pipestone Lamb and Wool Program and challenged Advisory members to critically review current delivery methods. Input on educational delivery methods will be discussed later in the meeting. Instructors emphasized the value of onsite educational programs as a recruitment tool. There continues to be tremendous retention of all program members except for the small flock option. The small flock option was designed for entry level sheep producers hoping to foster expansion. A percentage of the small flock producers expand and enroll in intermediate or full member option, some remain constant or decrease ewe numbers (less than 100 ewes) and some exit the sheep industry. Annual tuition cost is difficult for many small flock producers to continue enrollment.

Dinner was served at 6:42 p.m.

Mike then reviewed the Lamb and Wool Program credits sold and the history of credits sold. The Lamb and Wool program had record enrollment for the 2012/2013 program year. Unrealistic to assume this same level of interest in the future and would expect enrollment to fall back to the pre-record high lamb and wool market enrollment.

Philip reviewed the online course offerings and the number of students enrolled. Berg indicated the online courses are being converted over to a more self-paced educational course. There are no current plans to develop an additional online course. Educational webinars are going to be the focus of future distance delivered courses.

Philip reviewed the onsite educational course offerings. Another successful Sheep Facility Tour was conducted on June 4, 2012.. A record high enrollment of 108 individuals filled two coach buses for the tour. Several individuals were turned away because buses were at capacity. Philip showed committee members a copy of the facility

tour program. This tour is held once every two years. The Lambing Time Short Course and Bus tour was very successful and also had a larger enrollment.

Philip reviewed and asked for input on the format of the USDA market prices emailed out to program members. The format of the email was changed and the instructors plan to use a similar format for future program promotion. Committee members liked the new format and encouraged the continuation of the USDA market price email.

Philip also presented a sheep for profit school promotional video. The Minnesota West marketing department developed the video with assistance from the Lamb and Wool instructors. Similar promotional videos have been used to promote other educational program offerings.

Based on previous advisory committee suggestions, the program offered a farm focus group session which included components of a farm visit and an evening meeting. Philip handed out a Farm Focus Group producer survey. One hundred percent of the 43 producer members who completed the survey supported continuing this type of delivery methods. The advisory committee encouraged the instructors to foster this type of delivery and offer an additional farm focus group session to replace the July/August farm visits. The advisory committee provided the following discussion and input.

- Poll each group and have the group drive the discussion topics
- July/August time period easier for people to get away and attend
- Have in place of a farm visit and/or evening meeting
- Small group is important
- Excellent way to share ideas
- Encouraged instructors to have more meetings on farms
- Builds producer networking – establishes common connection.
- Foster and maintain similar groups
- Excellent way to meet needs of new and experienced producers.
- Suggested a 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. session in the summer – cooler weather to be handling sheep and days are longer.

Dr. Goetz asked questions about sheep enterprise analysis that stimulated the following items:

- Currently instructors are having difficulty collecting enough records to generate an enterprise analysis summary.
- The instructors developed a strategy to collect more information for the 2012/2013 year that was unsuccessful. To be successful, instructors would need to devote more individual time to each producer.
- Could the instructors walk a group of producers to minimize time commitment of instructors? Committee members thought this was a good idea but were concerned about the level of participation.
- Sheep producers need to value the records and it generally is a 5 year process to see the benefits.

- Need an additional instructor to successfully accomplish a sound enterprise analysis. Previously, when there were 3 Lamb and Wool instructors, the program was able to compile a sound sheep enterprise analysis summary. Committee members suggested industry resources to help support additional staff. Funding from Lets Grow, Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture were suggested.

Dean Schloesser supported the advisory committee's comments and would explore the possibilities of funding sources.

Mike discussed the Fall Kick-off event that recognizes outstanding accomplishments of program members. Mike asked the committee if there is a need to have a guest speaker at this event. Because there is no money available to pay travel costs for a guest speaker, the speaker spoke to the group remotely with marginal success. The committee thought that the awards recognition and a short presentation from recipients was enough. Mike also recognized the meal sponsor for the Kick off meeting and indicated that the meal would not be possible without the sponsorship.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 10:02 p.m.