

Summer 2016

Tomorrow's Sheep Today

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View from the Great Lakes State

Brett Pharo, APSA President

It's October and fall is upon us here in Michigan. Trees are starting to change colors. We just turned in the teaser ram in preparation for November breeding. I'm looking forward to a better 2017 than we've had in 2016 for our farm. We got into a real storm with mineral management when our supplier quit making what we had been using.

We had used the same TM sheep salt for years, but that became unavailable. We reluctantly switched to a more expensive, and supposedly more complete, sheep mineral, though one not specifically formulated for our area. Expecting a good lamb crop, we were diligent to make sure the sheep had mineral in front of the them, but didn't pay enough attention to how much they ate. The sheep liked the new mineral. They liked it too much. In March, about a month before the start of lambing, we had a ewe die suddenly. After a couple more died, we realized they were eating well over the amount considered safe for selenium. We pulled the mineral and took a ewe to MSU for necropsy, but ten of our biggest ewes were dead. They were very quick deaths, about 24 hours from first signs to room temperature. The symptoms and circumstances fit perfectly with Selenium toxicity. Necropsy at MSU confirmed that Selenium levels were very high.

When we turned the sheep out to pasture in May, we quickly lost 15 lambs to coyotes, which almost

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never happens here. We trapped the lead coyote and stopped the killing. Upon turning out, we did resume feeding the mineral, but cut 3:1 with white salt. We saw no more Selenium symptoms.

In July we noticed a few lambs starting to lag behind when moving the flock, looking like they had a heavy parasite load. We haven't needed to deworm lambs throughout the summer for a dozen years or so, and I didn't want to pull samples this early for the grant data. But, it looked like worms so we pulled samples and dewormed. The samples didn't show a heavy load and the deworming cleaned up what there was, but a steady stream of lambs kept deteriorating and dying.

We took one to MSU to look for a cause, but they didn't do the mineral analysis, saying after three weeks that though they could find no haemonchus or worm eggs, they were sure it must be haemonchus because of how the lamb looked. I didn't take that conclusion very gracefully and had to take another lamb down for them to do it right. This time they did the liver mineral analysis and found an extreme Cobalt deficiency. Cobalt is needed to make vitamin B12, which is needed to make red blood cells. Hence the anemia that looked like a worm load.

Thankfully, once we found the problem, we've been able to stop the deaths by giving vitamin B12 and finding a good TM sheep salt made for our area, but between the selenium overdose and cobalt underdose and a side order of coyotes, we are a lot of lambs short this fall.

It was an expensive education, but we learned a bit more about minerals, especially cobalt. How much residual effect there will be as we go into breeding remains to be seen.

Share With Us

Whether your flock is larger or smaller, whether you're a long-time member or a newbie, whether your operation is intensively or extensively managed, you're probably quite proud of your Polypay sheep. You have reason to be. So, if you've got some pictures of your operation, how about sharing with the rest of us? Do you have pictures in the pasture, in the barn, in the feed lot, moving through the chute, on the rail, or anywhere else? We'd love to see them in the newsletter. We always have a few spots to fill in with pictures, and maybe it's your turn. Please send contributions to: brettpharo@gmail.com.

Dave Notter's Retirement Gift from the NSIP Community

Over the years from 2000-2015, Dave Notter worked to keep NSIP productive and with his graduate students added several key new EBVs.

These developments, in no particular order, include the first across flock EBVs for sheep in the USA, the Range Index (signature trait for most Targhee and Range flocks), Lbs Lamb Weaned/Ewe Lambing (signature trait for most Katahdin and Polypay flocks), Carcass Trait EBVs, FEC EBVs, verification of Carcass Plus Index as an excellent index for US Terminal Sires, and the first EBVs for the USA goat industry. He also worked with Australia's Sheep Genetic Program to transfer all the NSIP phenotypic data, breed specific adjustment factors so that NSIP could run data with the LambPlan Program. We could easily fill pages, with all that Dave has done, if we queried all the breed groups and flocks he has individually or impacted as a breed group.

Dave figured out how to do all of this with limited budgets and several shortfalls. For the most part Dave asked NSIP to cover a portion of the salary of one graduate student. There were several times in which NSIP did not have enough, but Dave was able to make it work by extending length of contract or using funds from other sources. Many of us don't see how NSIP would still be in existence without his innovation, expertise, figuring out how to make our budgets work or his devotion to the sheep industry.

Dr Ron Lewis, current chair of NSIP Technical committee, contacted Jan Notter about a retirement gift for her husband, Dave. She said he would really enjoy a gift certificate for a photography trip. Two suggestions include National Geographic or Rocky Mountain School of Photography (RMSP). Ron has suggested that RMSP would work well.

Please send donations to James Morgan, 18235 Wildlife Rd, Fayetteville, AR 72701 by November 15. Checks should be made out to NSIP. Our goal is \$1000. Several donations in the \$25-\$50 range will help us meet our goal. So far we have received gifts from breed groups and individuals.

Thank you!

Note: The APSA won't be making a contribution from the association, but if members wish to contribute, Jim could pool those monies as a donation from APSA /NSIP members.

APSA Board Votes on Registration Changes

The APSA board voted on two proposals on August 30, 2016. These two proposals were brought up due to suggestions by producers. The goal of these two votes was to encourage producers to register more sheep. One proposal was to eliminate the \$5.00 late fee for registrations for one year. The late transfer fee of \$5.00 will stay in place. The second vote was to allow members who use NSIP to use the same unique number assigned by NSIP for each sheep as the registration number for that sheep with APSA. Both proposals passed.

APSA gets most of its funding from registering sheep, so the board considered moves that could encourage producers to register their Polypays when they might otherwise have given up on the practice. It is hoped some producers that have quit registering sheep might get back in the habit if the process is more affordable and perhaps less hassle.

The one year late fee hiatus.

Some producers that fell behind on registering sheep might be encouraged to return to the practice, or if they are new producers that didn't get into the habit, this might encourage them to take the time to register animals and become members of APSA. This window of opportunity runs from November 1, 2016 through October 31, 2017. If you know someone who is riding the fence on registrations, please point out the grace period and urge them to contact the registry with any questions.

Using the unique NSIP ID number as the registration number for APSA

This might sound confusing at first, but for some producers this will make record keeping easier, without impacting anyone else. There will be no change in the cost with the registry as the system Jeff Ebert suggested may make things easier for the office in the end. The reason for this is the information submitted will have already been error checked by NSIP. Errors by producers when submitting data for registrations are common, and office time is needed to correct those errors.

Producers may have several ID numbers to deal with for each sheep. For example state trace-back numbers, registration numbers, genotype tag numbers and NSIP ID numbers. There could be more. For some producers it would be a help to reduce the numbers associated with each animal. This may be especially true for larger producers that are using systems like the Shearwell system. If one ID number is used for APSA, NSIP and any additional flock tracking software it should make life easier on those producers.

The process to use the NSIP number as the registration number requires printing and sending to the APSA office a copy of the NSIP pedigree, or a spreadsheet with that same information. If one or more of the parents of the animal being registered have standard APSA registration numbers, as all will initially, the producer must write in the APSA registration numbers of the sire and/or dam on the pedigree.



Last Call for the 2016 FEC Reimbursement Program

The American Polypay Sheep Association still has spots left for producers to participate in a cost reimbursement program for collecting Fecal Egg Count data. Please confirm by November 1 with Christopher Schauer at chris_schauer@yahoo.com if you plan to participate in 2016. After November 1, individuals that are already participating will be able to request reimbursement for samples beyond the original 100 head limit.

The APSA will conduct this project in 2017 and 2018 as well. If you have questions, feel free to call Chris Schauer at 701-567-3582.

Thanks!



American Polypay Sheep Association



Expanding the Use and Application of Quantitative Genetics in the Polypay Breed

Goals

1. Increase the number of Polypay Sheep with Fecal Egg Count EBVs.
 - Collect 1,000 FEC samples per year for the next three years from 10 or more flocks
2. Increase the DNA database on Polypay sires with FEC EBVs and increase the accuracy.
 - Collect blood cards on the sires of all lambs with FEC data collected
3. Increase the number of commercial rams with FEC EBVs to commercial operations across the U.S.
 - Integrate research results into NSIP to increase the availability of rams with FEC data

Participation

Both NSIP and non-NSIP Polypay breeders are welcome to participate, but you must be a member of the APSA. Producers must have at least 2 cotemporary groups that meet the criteria for a FEC comparison (10 lambs per sire that have been grazing together for at least 45 days). The APSA will pay for up to 100 FEC samples per producer, for 3 years. Enrollment will be on a 1st come – 1st served basis. Blood cards must also be collected on the sires and will be stored by the APSA at the NDSU Hettinger Research Extension Center.

Contact Information for Participation

Additional information will be distributed through the APSA newsletter.

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