



## View from the Great Lakes State

Brett Pharo, APSA President

It's been 42 years since Dr. Hulet first coined the term "Polypay" to describe the new composite breed. The goal in development of the Polypay breed was to increase the profitability of commercial flocks. We are at our best when we draw on that historic root goal.

Polypay breeders have been leaders and innovators since the start. We were the first breed to be specifically developed to lamb multiple times per year. We were the first breed to request across-flock EPD's. We remain a leader in the use of NSIP. Polypay breeders conceived and implemented the extremely successful NSIP sale in Spencer, IA, and Polypay breeders are a driving force in the startup of a second NSIP sale in Wooster, OH this year. Polypay breeders have received recognition for implementing the idea of ram consortiums. Polypays are the first wool breed to develop EBV's for parasite resistance. All this is part of reaching for the future while not forgetting our roots.

Our mantra is "Tomorrow's Sheep Today." That's easy to say, but can only be true if we continue moving forward. Yesterday's tomorrow is tomorrow's yesterday. Tomorrow is a moving target, but be assured that whether you're visiting a Polypay flock on a farm or attending a sale in Berrien Springs, Sedalia, Spencer, Wooster, Newell or elsewhere, the Polypay breeders you'll meet are striving to bring you *Tomorrow's Sheep Today*.

## APSA Board of Directors

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<b>Open Seat</b>	2017

# Update on APSA Fecal Egg Count Project

Christopher Schauer

During the summer of 2016, the American Polypay Sheep Association (APSA) was awarded a grant from the American Sheep Industry Association Let's Grow grant program, with the goal of increasing the number of Polypay sheep with fecal egg count (FEC) National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). To accomplish this goal, the APSA is paying for the FEC evaluation of 1,000 lambs per year in 2016-2018 for registered APSA breeders, targeting 100 lambs per breeder per year from at least 10 flocks across the nation. In addition to providing breeders with a free FEC evaluation of their pasture raised lambs, the APSA is asking producers to collect blood cards on all of the sires from the lambs with FEC data collected. The outcome of these goals is an increase in the number of commercial and pure-bred rams with FEC EBVs that can be used in commercial operations across the U.S. If these goals can be met, the Polypay breed can be used as an example to other breeds on ways to decrease their reliance on chemical parasite control, while also addressing the problem of parasite's resistance to conventional wormers.

For the 2016 growing season, the APSA paid for the testing of 767 lambs from 11 producers and 44 contemporary groups, while also collecting sire data and blood cards for potential future genetic research on DNA markers for parasite resistance. While the goal of collecting data on 1,000 lambs in year 1 was not met, we exceeded our goal of 10 producers participating in the program. We are confident that through the success of year 1, we will be able to test over 1,000 lambs in year 2. The result of these efforts in the 1st year is 66 sires and 364 dams with FEC EBVs, resulting in 518 ram lambs and 569 ewe lambs with FEC EBVs. Based on these values, it is estimated that 70% of the 2016 lambs with FEC EBVs are a direct result of the FEC grant program. In other words, a 240% increase over the number of lambs that likely would have been collected without the program! Additionally, there are likely producers not on NSIP that benefited from the collection of FEC data for selection on their own operation, as participating in NSIP is not a requirement for becoming part of the APSA FEC project.

The APSA will be conducting this program again during the 2017 grazing season. An information sheet has been included with this newsletter, with contacting information for the Project Coordinator as well as the rest of the project committee. Deliveries of supplies can occur at the APSA National Sale, the NSIP Sale in Spencer, or by mail. Feel free to contact Christopher Schauer at [chris\\_schauer@yahoo.com](mailto:chris_schauer@yahoo.com) if you have questions.



*Newly weaned lambs being led into field of Teff, a warm-season annual.*

## Membership Dues

You will notice on your address label, in addition to your address, a year designation. This is the year of your last dues paid. If that year is prior to 2017, your membership dues are due.

# ASI Convention Report

Glen Jones

It was my pleasure to represent the Polypay breed on the Seedstock Committee during the American Sheep Industry Convention held in Late January in Denver, CO. The committee, chaired by Dr. Dan Morical of Iowa, and Dr. Rodney Kott of Texas, met on Thursday with three agenda items discussed.

Rusty Burgett gave a report on the genetic progress being made among various breeds. It was nice to see that the Polypay data was chosen to demonstrate the progress being made in maternal sheep for lbs. of lamb weaned per ewe. Other data showed that the terminal sire breeds were making significant progress on growth and carcass traits. I noticed in the discussions that genomics were frequently mentioned. In the past it seems that if I brought up that subject it was brushed off as something that would not be feasible in sheep. I hope that the DNA samples we are now collecting for the parasite resistance project will someday prove valuable in our being a leading breed in genomic predictions.

A second topic was one that is a more serious challenge for the large flocks in the western states than for those of us in the Midwest and East. A producer panel of sheepmen from Wyoming, Montana, and Utah discussed the problems they have in keeping their terminal sires alive and functioning on the range settings that they breed on. One of the gentlemen was purchasing 50 black faced rams each year and could not remember selling any due to old age. Discussion focused on how this issue should be addressed.

The final topic was a report on an experiment carried out on the Mikel Brothers Sheep Ranch in Spring City, Utah. All of you who have marketed sheep using NSIP data have ran across those who are skeptical as to whether those breeding values really come through on the buyers operation. I know that when I first started on NSIP, in the 1990's, I kept a duplicate set of records for a few years before I developed confidence that the EBV's were truly identifying the top animals in my flock. This experiment was a "Let's Grow" project and I had previously read a summary of the findings. I think it was in the Shepherd magazine. In brief, they split their white faced range flock randomly into two groups of 550 ewes each for the breeding season. They turned in 17 Suffolk rams with each group. One group of rams was purchased from respected breeders they had used in past years.

The other group of Suffolk rams were purchased from NSIP breeders and had an average EBV for weaning wt. of +3 lbs. The ewes were handled together during all times except for the breeding season. Lambs were ear tagged with different color ear tags based upon which group their sire was from. At weaning the 1856 lambs that resulted from these matings were sorted by tag color and loaded onto trucks that were weighed. The end result was that the lambs from the sires with a weaning wt. EBV of +3 lbs. weighed 105.02 lbs. on average and those sired by the other group averaged 102.04 lbs.

I enjoyed several other sessions at the convention and had a chance for a short visit with Todd Taylor who represents the Targhee breed on this committee. We shared a banquet table with the Repperts, Polypay breeders from Nebraska, on another day. All together the convention, my first, was a good experience and I would have to say that hearing Temple Grandin, one of the featured speakers, was a highlight. If you have never seen the biographical movie made of her life, you should check it out; you are missing a great entertaining and educational opportunity.

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## ASI Committees

In addition to Glen Jones, who has an article in this newsletter about his year on an ASI Committee, there are other APSA members that are serving the American Sheep Industry on various committees. These are some that I spotted in glancing through a recent list that was mailed out. If I missed you, I apologize.

### **Production, Education, and Research Council**

Charles Reppert  
Dr. Chris Schauer

### **Genetic Stakeholders Committee**

Mark Meurer  
Brett Pharo  
Todd Taylor

### **Lamb Council**

Don Van Nostran



# 2017 National Polypay Sale

The 2017 American Polypay Sheep Association National Sale will be held at the Berrien County Youth Fair Grounds, Berrien Springs, MI, June 16-17, 2017. The schedule of events is as follows. All times are approximate.

Friday 12:00 Sheep need to be numbered

Friday 1:30p Sheep exhibited for determination of sale order.

Friday 6:00p Dinner and annual membership meeting.

Saturday morning: possible education session(s)

Saturday 1:30p APSA National Sale

Dinner will be at:

Cravings Catering

1599 Mall Dr., Benton Harbor

It will be a lamb dinner.

Cost will be \$20 and \$10 for under 12.

APSA has a block of rooms reserved for Thursday and Friday nights at:

Best Western Benton Harbor

1592 Mall Drive, Benton Harbor

269-925-3000

Block of 20 rooms is reserved

Two queen beds or one king

\$136 Thur. & \$150 Fri. + tax

APSA block/rate is good through May 15

There are many other motels in the area, too. Be aware this is a popular area in June, so it may be wise to make reservations early.

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## Annual Membership Meeting

The 2017 annual membership meeting of the APSA will be held immediately following dinner Friday, June 16 at Cravings, 1599 Mall Dr., Benton Harbor, MI.

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## Bylaws Amendment

Enclosed along with this newsletter is a proposed bylaws amendment and a ballot for voting on the amendment.

Due to some problems with the existing bylaws, such as a reference to a non-existent clause among other things, a committee was appointed in 2015 to look at possible improvements in the bylaws. The Bylaws Committee worked for a year and a half, and came to the conclusion that to make the bylaws more usable, it would be best to basically rewrite the entire document, thus making it more concise and coherent.

The committee brought their proposed rewrite to the Board of Directors where it was discussed at length and some changes made. The final rewrite was then sent out to the membership for comment in January, along with the winter newsletter. No comments were received, that I know of. It is now coming to the membership for a vote. A ballot should be enclosed with this newsletter. Note that this ballot, unlike the ballot for director, must be signed.



*Daniel Shapiro, a couple years ago, with his starter flock of Polypays at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.*

# Meet the Candidates

**Below are brief resumes of the candidates for the APSA Board of Directors**

## Director Election Time

The APSA Bylaws call for election of three members to the board of directors each year for three year terms.

The terms of Brett Pharo, Chris Schauer, and the seat left open by the resignation of Lowell Bence are up this June, with Schauer ineligible to run for another term at this time.

Nominations were requested in the winter newsletter and three nominations were received by the March 31 due date. You can find brief resumes of these candidates on this page.

A ballot form to vote for directors is included in this newsletter with instructions for submitting it. The ballots will be opened at the annual meeting in Springfield.

## Mark Van Roekel

I am a livestock producer from Northwest Iowa. My wife Brenda is a retired elementary school teacher. The farm consists of corn, soybeans, feedlot cattle, hog finishing facilities and a sheep flock consisting of commercial and Registered Polypay sheep.

My first sheep were bred Western ewes, purchased in 2006. It quickly became obvious that I needed more lambs born and better milk production. My research showed that Polypays were a logical choice to remedy these needs. Registered Polypay rams were purchased in 2009, followed by pure-bred commercial Polypay ewes in 2010. Registered Polypay ewes were added in 2011. The flock currently has 650 ewes. An expansion is planned during 2017.

The flock is dry-lotted most of the year. Grazing crop aftermath is used to the maximum possible. The highest producing commercial ewes and the registered ewes are bred to Polypay rams. The other ewes are bred to terminal sires.

I believe the Polypay breed was created for production and should be the standard for commercial sheep production—whether it be a Midwestern farm flock or a Western range flock. I believe the improvements made in the Polypay breed have been through good record keeping and selection based upon records.

I would be honored to serve as a member of the American Polypay Sheep Association.

## Glen Jones

My wife and I own Hidden Valley Polypays which consists of about 100 ewes. Our flock was started in 1987 and has been on NSIP since the early days of that program. We regularly consign to the national sale and sometimes to the NSIP sale in Spencer. I am looking forward to consigning to national sale this year and the Wooster NSIP sale. I have previously served on the board of directors. I serve as the Polypay representative to the American Sheep Industry Seed Stock Committee and recently attended the ASI national convention in Denver representing our breed. I believe that the Polypay ewe is the ideal sheep for well managed flocks.

I retired from teaching agriculture in 2013. My wife and I have two adult children and five grandchildren and we are fortunate that they live nearby so we get to see them on a regular basis. We have made many friends through our work with Polypay sheep.

## Brett Pharo

My wife, Deb, and I, along with our daughters are Polypay seedstock producers in northern Michigan. Our flock currently numbers about 125 ewes and is managed almost entirely on grass and hay.

I am currently on the American Polypay Sheep Association board, and have served as its president for the past two and a half years. I am also currently on the board of the Michigan Sheep Producers Association. I also serve on the American Sheep Industry Genetic Stakeholder Committee.

I believe the Polypays have proven themselves in a wide variety of management situations from coast to coast. Polypays have become the foundation breed of choice for commercial sheep producers across the mid-west, and have made good inroads into other sections of the country. The APSA can be proud that we have had a lot of positive attention lately from around the country as we continue to be leaders in the industry. We've made much progress over the years, but we can't rest on our laurels.

# **Ballot for the Board of Directors of the American Polypay Sheep Association 2017**

Mark Van Roekel (\_\_\_\_)   Glen Jones (\_\_\_\_)   Brett Pharo (\_\_\_\_)

You may vote for up to three candidates.

Each active membership that has 2017 dues paid is entitled to one vote.

You may return the ballot in person to an APSA director prior to the annual dinner/meeting in Menton Harbor, MI, or you may mail your completed ballot, postmarked by June 8, 2017, to Brett Pharo, 12266 Cherry Ave., Rapid City, MI 49676. All ballots will be opened and counted at the annual meeting.

Mailed ballots should be returned as follows to assure a secret ballot:

1. Mark your ballot
2. Place ballot in an envelope with the word "Ballot" on the outside
3. Place that envelope inside another envelope addressed to Brett and include your name in the return address section.