

Fall 2018

Tomorrow's Sheep Today

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View from the Great Lakes State

Brett Pharo, APSA President

What an interesting year it's been! Being a once-a-year lamb crop operation, the middle of October is pretty much when one operational year ends on our place with the last of the feeder lambs gone to market, and the next year begins with the turning in of teaser rams in preparation for breeding. As I write this in the first few days of November, the teasers are in and we are about 7-10 days from turning in the intact rams. I'm very excited about the rams we're using this year, and looking forward to the 2019 lamb crop.

There was a very strong demand for Polypay ewes this last year, and I expect that will continue. I know already of one request for 100 or so for this next year. They want commercial Polypay ewes, but require that they be either on NSIP or out of NSIP rams. Luckily, we have a few producers around the country that can supply that and more. Yes, I think we can look forward to 2019 with some excitement.

We ended last winter with what seemed like an abundance of hay left over. As such, we donated a semi load to those in need out west. Wouldn't you know it, the rain spigots then turned off and we had to

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buy two semi loads. Such is life. Can't feel too bad about helping someone in need, I suppose.

A big challenge for us this year has been coyote predation. We lost our very aggressive guard llama last winter and his replacement is a more normal, less aggressive llama. Within five days of turning our rams out to pasture in the spring, we had three yearling rams killed. The first two were without a guard animal in, but the third was with our guard donkey in the pasture. Two of the three were pre-sold with deposits taken.

We made the decision to buy our first Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGD's). We bought a pair of six-month old Great Pyrenees, Bonnie and Clyde. They ran together with the ewes and lambs until weaning, and even at that young age, they were very effective.

When we weaned, we moved the LGD's with the lambs, thinking them the more vulnerable group. Within days, we had four ewes killed. At about the same time, though running with both a donkey and a llama, we had a ram lamb killed. Again, it was one that was pre-sold, and this one happened to be our very top (most expensive) ram we had for sale. At least the coyotes had good taste.

We knew that, since dogs work best in pairs, two was not going to be enough. We started bringing the rams all the way in to the barnyard every night, but also went out and bought two more LGD's, though they were too young to be on their own. The newer ones, Jasmine and Chloe, are 3/4 Great Pyrenees and 1/4 Anatolian Shepherd, and were born in June.

We ran all four dogs together for a while and continued to drive the rams in and out every day. In October, with the LGD pairs being 10 months and 4 months of age, we split siblings and put one young and one older dog together. One pair went with the ewes and the other pair went with the rams. We weren't sure how it would work out, but it's been fine. We've had no predator losses. (we have taken a few coyotes with traps, too)

LGD's are something totally new to us and they definitely add a new dimension to how we operate. It's more effort, but not losing quality sheep to coyotes is worth the effort it seems. And they are great, personable dogs that are enjoyable to work with. It was quite interesting, to say the least, the first time I went out with our Border Collies to move the flock after the GP's were in with them. Totally opposite instincts and desires for the sheep. They've all worked through that by now, though. The big dogs make it known they could stop things, but then they move with, or even lead, the flock.

Sheep, dogs, and grandkids. That's the view from here in Michigan.



Clyde and Chloe



Bonnie and Jasmine

WATCH FOR SONS OUT OF THESE YOUNG STUDS IN 2019!



MSF 8085 – JCC 437 x UW 16353

NSIP# 6201212018008085

BWT	WWT	PWWT	MILK	NLB	NLW	INDEX
.6	3.4	9.4	1.9	24	35	120.7

Triplet brother sold for \$2000 in Spencer!



UW 18369 – HV 7022 x UW 15437

NSIP# 6200782018018369

BWT	WWT	PWWT	MILK	NLB	NLW	INDEX
.7	3.5	8.0	1.9	22	32	119.3

He & his brother were both used in the UW flock!

MEINDERS STOCK FARMS

MeindersStockFarmPolypays.com

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New APSA Address

Please note that the street address for the APSA registry, Associated Registry, has changed. The new address is 420A Lincoln St., Wamego, KS 66547



Advertise

Advertising in the APSA newsletter is available. Rates are

- Full Page: \$85
7.5"w x 10"h
- Half Page: \$45
7.5"w x 5"h
- Quarter Page: \$25
7.5"w x 2.5"h
3.75"w x 5"h

Ads you would like put in the Winter newsletter would need to be sent to brettpharo@gmail.com by January 1.

Update on APSA Fecal Egg Count Project

Christopher S. 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 purebred 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 parasites resistance to conventional wormers.

To date, the APSA has paid for the testing on over 1,800 lambs from 15 different producers, while also collecting sire data and blood cards for potential future genetic research on DNA markers for parasite resistance. In the 1st year alone, we observed that close to 70% of the lambs with FEC EBV's were part of this 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. If you are still interested in participating in this program, we have room yet this fall to test some more lambs, or reimburse you for lambs you have already tested. Additionally, if you participated in the program this fall and tested more than 100 lambs, and would like to be reimbursed for the additional lambs beyond the initial 100 head, we are willing to extend the offer to you as well.

Feel free to contact Christopher Schauer at chris_schauer@yahoo.com if you have questions.



Polypay Reigns Supreme

Daniel Shapiro won Supreme Sheep with his Polypay sheep in both meat and wool + white hand spinning, and of course the junior breeding sheep show-4 judges. He is also the proud owner of the Paul Swisher Premier Exhibitor trophy, which is a traveling trophy in the open shows to the breeder who has won the most over the last five years-Daniel won it in four. Congratulations, Daniel. Well done.

USSES Trip Report

Brett Pharo



In August, the United States Sheep Experiment Station in Idaho, birthplace of the Polypay breed, paid to have me come out so that we could have a discussion on Polypay sheep - where we are now at APSA, where they are now with their foundation flock, where the mid-western and eastern commercial flocks are now, where the western range flocks are now, what research projects have been done, what projects could be done, and how we can work together effectively.

It was a great couple days of sit down talks and a lot of talking while driving around the range and while walking around the facilities. Bret Taylor was a good host and is very interested in working with the various breeds. Bret told me there are three things he's been trying to get producers out there to do for some time: 1. Setting up a vaccination regimen. 2. Breeding ewe lambs. 3. Getting Polypay blood in their flocks. He hasn't yet been too successful in those areas, but is hopeful that may change.

One research project they recently completed utilizing Polypays studied the effect on pounds of lamb weaned based on number born/raised, and also the effect on rebreeding and effect on percent of ewe lambs that breed as lambs. There were singles, twins, trips with one removed, and trips with all left on. The results (simplified) on their range operation pretty much mirrored what I see in my grass based operation. The most pounds weaned came from twins. Singles were the worst. His conclusion is that for western range operations, a birth rate of about 2.1-2.2 is optimum. By far the lowest percent that bred as lambs was the trips, with the singles being the highest. As for dying prior

to weaning, there was not a lot of difference between singles and twins, but trips that were raised as twins were almost twice as likely to die as those born and raised twins. Those triplets that were left on the mom were almost double that again. Some interesting data. Different than many mid-west flocks that are more confined.

They are set to start a study, because of requests to do so, on the profitability of raising orphan lambs using various techniques.

A future project we talked about was to look at the effect on profitability using various percentages of Polypays in western range flocks. Hopefully it would involve at least 1/4 Poly, 1/2 Poly, and a control. They would also like to compare Polypay percentages with Romanov percentages.

They are currently working on transferring Polypay data into NSIP, and hope to have that done by next spring. They have completed the process for a couple other breeds.

Another thing we talked about was getting their sheep registered. We will have more discussion about how to do that, probably in conference calls with our entire board.



Well managed USSES grazing vs. poorly managed continuous grazing of neighbor.

Add to Your Newsletter

The APSA puts out a small newsletter four times a year. If you would like to contribute an article promoting Polypays, the sheep industry in general, or of interest to Polypay breeders, we would very much like to include it. Also, if you have pictures of your operation, we can always use them. Sometimes more, sometimes less, depending on how the layout goes. You can send to brettpharo@gmail.com.



Part of the hundreds of thousands of acres burned in Idaho



Good grazing in Ohio



Newborn future guard llama



Great environment, if you're a coyote