

## From the President

Mark Meurer, President

Greetings from the big prairie of northern Illinois! My name is Mark Meurer and our family owns and operates Big Prairie Polypays. We have been in the Polypay business for nearly twenty years. I had the honor of being elected the new APSA president during last month's board meeting. To say I am humbled is an understatement. I look forward to working with our amazing group of board members, as we continue to represent our breed and promote Polypay genetics throughout the country. Polypay sheep, as you know, are in demand and we have a bright future ahead of us, as breeders.

I thought I would spend a minute telling you a little about who I am and about my family. I am a fifth-generation farmer and livestock producer. My children are the sixth generation and our new grandson will be the seventh generation to raise and market purebred livestock. It is who we are as a family. I take great pride in our agricultural heritage and our families generational love for good livestock.

I am blessed to be married to the most beautiful, smartest woman on the planet! My wife holds a master's degree in Nurse Education and teaches nurses and nursing students about the profession. She also works as an Emergency Department nurse and loves the adrenalin rush of working emergencies. Our oldest daughter is a physician completing her Gastroenterology Fellowship at Yale Medical College in Connecticut. Her husband is an Emergency Medicine physician and travels throughout the northeast working in various rural hospitals. Our oldest son is a Captain in the United States Marine Corps. He and his wife reside in California. His wife is completing her Education degree and hopes to be teaching school soon. Our second son works for a large Christian ministry in Peoria, Illinois and will be getting married next summer to a wonderful young lady from Georgia. Our youngest daughter

## APSA Board of Directors

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is married and her family lives just down the road from the home farm. She and her husband blessed us with our first grandchild last summer and they will bless us again in January with another grandson. Colt, our oldest grandson, is already making trips with Grandpa to the barn. All our children grew up raising Polypays. Stacking hay, shoveling manure, delivering lambs, and feeding sheep were part of a normal day. I, like you, am so thankful for the opportunities my kids had raising Polypays and learning the lessons of hard work.

I am excited to meet as many Polypay members, as possible. I cannot wait to hear about your families and your history with Polypay genetics. My cell phone is 815-973-5576 and my email address is meurer66@gmail.com if you ever want to give me a call and visit.

As Polypay breeders and enthusiasts, we are a part of the most dynamic breed of sheep in the industry. I have never seen demand for Polypay genetics so high. Polypay sales off the farm and through different online sale venues, have been extremely successful this past year. We are fortunate to have breeders who have taken the commercial sheep business very seriously and have gathered all types of production data and focused on meeting the needs of the commercial sheep producer. I genuinely believe we should start addressing the Polypay breed as “America’s Production Breed”. Our impact on flocks across the country is unprecedented. As a board, we will continue to address the needs of our membership and promote our breed throughout the production sheep industry. On the horizon, we will start taking a serious look at the areas of genomics and genetic testing. Youth development is also the works.

Finally, I could not write this article without saying “Thank You” to Brett Pharo, our outgoing APSA president. Brett has done an amazing job at leading our association for the past several years. His passion for our breed, his expertise and his guidance have been outstanding. Thank you, Brett! You leave me with big shoes to fill! Again, I am so honored to be serving our association and look forward to seeing and meeting all our membership. Please give me a call anytime if you have questions, concerns or just want to visit!

## Polypay Sales Results

Unfortunately, most live sales were either cancelled or taken online this year due to pandemic concerns and restrictions. That meant the cancellation of the Midwest Stud Ram Sale in Sedalia and the Center of the Nation NSIP sale in Spencer. Those were greatly missed, and hopefully will be back next year.

The planned NSIP online sale did take place as planned. It was a three day event, with Polypays having the first day all to ourselves. There were some communication glitches with the sale managers that resulted in a couple rams selling below the minimum price that had been set for the sale, but overall the sale went well and Polypays sold well.

52 Polypay rams sold for an average of \$926.50.  
39 Polypay ewes sold for an average of \$610.53.

The top five selling rams were consigned by:

Refshaw Ranch \$3000

Diamond K Sheep \$2750

Diamond K Sheep \$2500

Meinders Stock Farm \$1900

Refshaw Ranch \$1700

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## CFAP Deadline Extended

The USDA has extended the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) deadline to September 13. Also, they have now included all sheep, rather than just yearlings and lambs as before.





## Annual Membership Meeting

The 2020 annual membership meeting of the APSA was held July 24 via Zoom due to the pandemic restrictions. The meeting was not as well attended as face to face meetings have been for the last few years, but there were many APSA members participating.

Discussion took place on a variety of topics including activities of the APSA, and ideas about youth programs, genomic research, using the Zoom format in conjunction with face to face, and the possibility of an online national sale.

The personal interaction provided by a face to face meeting was missed, but Zoom allowed those that would need to travel long distances to participate. It worked out quite well.



## 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 2020, your membership fees are past due.



## 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 Fall newsletter would need to be sent to [brettpharo@gmail.com](mailto:brettpharo@gmail.com) by October 15.



## Your Newsletter

If you have any articles you want to write, news you want to pass on, or pictures you'd be willing to put in the newsletter, please send them to Mark Meurer at [meurer66@gmail.com](mailto:meurer66@gmail.com). Let us all see and hear what's going on in your corner of the Polypay world.



## View from the Great Lakes State

Brett Pharo

It's just short of six years since the position of APSA president was dropped in my lap. As it had been about twenty years since I had last served on the board, I had some quick education to catch up on. During those six years, I was blessed to work with the best board members a person could hope for. They made my life easy and together we accomplished many things.

There were certainly some disappointments, as well. Chief among those for me would have to be that we were unable to revive a successful national sale. We did greatly increase membership participation in the sale for the two years after moving it from Sedalia, but prices didn't improve enough to warrant continuing it with the other successful sale outlets available to Polypays. There are some ideas floating around that the board will look at that might be more successful.

Another disappointment was not being able to increase our membership out west where we once had a strong presence. It's been disappointing to not have the USSES as members, but we are pleased that they have fully come onboard with NSIP, and are actively buying APSA/NSIP rams.

On the plus side, we reconnected with, and have had some good communication with, the USSES in Dubois, ID. They are actively working on research projects with Polypays. It's good to reconnect with our roots. Also starting some good research with Polypays is the USMARC in Clay Center, NE. It's definitely a positive indicator when both major federal sheep research units are working on Polypay programs.

Another success has been the growth in APSA

membership. In the last six years, membership has increase by more than a third. We are still a small organization, but are growing and attracting progressive producers.

In continued pursuit of our founding goal of increasing profitability of the commercial sheep industry, we have been active in our support of the Industry Road Map. We can hold our heads high that we now have over 75% of sheep being registered with APSA coming from NSIP flocks. That is the envy of many other breeds. It is a result of having progressive breeders and a cooperative board that has put the emphasis back on the commercial sheep industry at large, and our part in it as seedstock producers. The result has been a very high demand for Polypay sheep. After the online sale last month, I was asked by a prominent breeder in another breed why Polypays always sell so well in the sales by comparison. I shared my thoughts with her, but I'm sure you all know reasons.

With strong support from the APSA board, and funding from a Let's Grow grant, Polypays became the first wool breed to develop EBVs for parasite resistance. Part of that grant also involved storing of genetic material for eventual genomic research. At least a couple of us are currently involved in a parasite resistance project being worked on by Rhode Island University. For many commercial producers, parasite resistance has become an important factor in ram selection.

More mundane, and yet important, things the board has done that have not been as obvious to the membership involve corporate issues. Through great work by our treasurers, our books are back in order and we now have balance sheets and income statements that help the board to make informed decisions. We have tracking in place to now know who is, and is not, a paid up member. We got up to date on our corporate filing with the state of Colorado six years ago, and in the last year have gotten things straightened out with the IRS. Your board has been very diligent and worked hard on these issues. Such things as a new agreement with Associated Registry, new webmaster, new registered agent address in Colorado, etc. have also been done.

It's been great to see participation in our annual membership meetings greatly increase over the last four years or so, though it was down a bit this year when it was not in person.

The board has made an excellent choice for the new president. The future is bright, indeed.