



## View from the Great Lakes State

Brett Pharo, APSA President

2019 has come and gone. The APSA had a good year in 2019 as we continue to focus on our stated goals of “the promotion, advancement and continued improvement of the Polypay breed of sheep.” Demand for Polypay sheep remained strong, as Polypays have become the backbone of commercial operations in the upper midwest, and increasingly in the eastern US. They retain an important presence in the West, as well.

The US Meat Animal Research Center, in Clay Center, NE, is investing in some much needed genetic research with the Polypay breed. In conjunction with the ramp up of Polypay research at the US Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, ID, we can look forward to some good, useful data ahead.

The APSA picked up several new members this last year. With the many new members the last couple years and the growing recognition of the value of EBVs in the American sheep industry, it seems like a good time to review EBVs. First, EBVs, and their derivative EPDs, have been in use since shortly after the development of the BLUP statistical method in the 1950's, and for almost three decades in in the Polypay

*Cont. on p. 2*

## APSA Board of Directors

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breed. It's proven technology, and a useful tool.

It seems, though, that there are folks that underestimate the usefulness of EBVs, and at the same time there are folks that over-estimate their usefulness.

There are many things that EBVs can do for us, and many things they can't do. EBVs are the best tool we have available to predict performance of progeny in certain important traits. However, EBVs alone *can't* tell us which is the best sheep. There are so many more traits that are important that we don't currently have EBVs for, such as conformation, longevity, and out of season breeding. Traits like wool and loin eye measurement could be available if more people submitted the needed data, but we aren't currently producing EBVs for these traits in Polypays.

Most people that keep and use good enough records to make NSIP useful, can have a pretty good idea which are their best and worst sheep without EBVs. That's because the sheep are all raised in a similar environment. But what about the commercial producer looking for rams to meet his goals? When he's comparing rams from different management environments, most of the differences in performance will be the result of environmental/management differences, rather than genetic differences. Yet when he buys the rams, what he's buying is a set of genetics. So how can he compare the genetics of rams from different environments, while excluding management and environmental effects? That's what EBVs do. That's why they're such a useful tool in the tool box.

Rather than using only data from the individual in question, the BLUP statistical method incorporates comparison data from all relatives of that individual that are in flocks from different locations and with differing management systems. This enables the computer to separate the genetic factors from the environmental factors, and report a predicted genetic merit for the trait in question, which can then be compared directly across flocks that use different management systems. It's a probability, so individual animal performance may be a bit above or below the predicted result, but it's been demonstrated that the predictions are statistically pretty sound.

All EBVs (Estimated Breeding Values) are a comparison, not a direct measurement. i.e., a lamb with a higher growth EBV is expected to gain more than it's penmate with a lower EBV regardless of whether they are on a high energy ration, forage only, or anything in between. The three principal factors to making useful EBVs are contemporary groups within the flock, con-

nectivity between flocks, and good data.

Let's look first at contemporary groups, as these are the foundation for making accurate comparisons between individual sheep. A contemporary group can be basically defined as a group of about the same age, managed in the same way. Because EBVs are all about comparison, it's vital that the comparison be apples to apples. The computer will make the necessary adjustments/separations for dates, ages, sex, etc that are entered with data, but there are many things the computer can't know, such as if they were all fed alike, raised artificially, injured, etc. For instance, a lamb that gets its leg broken cannot fairly be compared to it's classmates, so I'd suggest a separate grouping for injured/sick lambs.

A bit of a conundrum comes up if you feed ewes raising triplets differently than those raising twins or singles. As they are being fed differently, they are really different contemporary groups and should be entered as such. Yes, one raised three while the other raised two, but she didn't do it on the same diet. But as a separate group, ewes raising triplets do not show any comparative advantage, since the "average" ewe in that group raised triplets. To get a fair comparison, all in a contemporary group need to be fed the same.

If you only use one ram, you can't get any comparative data for the ram. You can still get data comparisons for the ewes, but if possible, use two or more breeding groups so rams can also be compared.

Connectivity between flocks is the critical element for separating genetic merit from environment. The more siblings, parents, offspring, cousins, etc. there are in other flocks (the more flocks the merrier), the more accurate the EBVs, because more data comparisons can be made.

The third critical factor is good data. Weights, like 60 day wts, should be taken on the same day for the group. Otherwise, the computer will not make them one contemporary group for comparison. It's also important that data be submitted for all lambs. For example, if you only submit data on your top 50%, the EBVs will be skewed, as the computer will see your 75th percentile lamb as being 50th percentile, and anything less than that as below average.

EBV's are increasingly being recognized as important to the sheep industry, and what is important to the industry is important to our breed. In 2019, 77% of Polypay registrations were from NSIP participating flocks. You are to be commended for your willingness to make this effort.

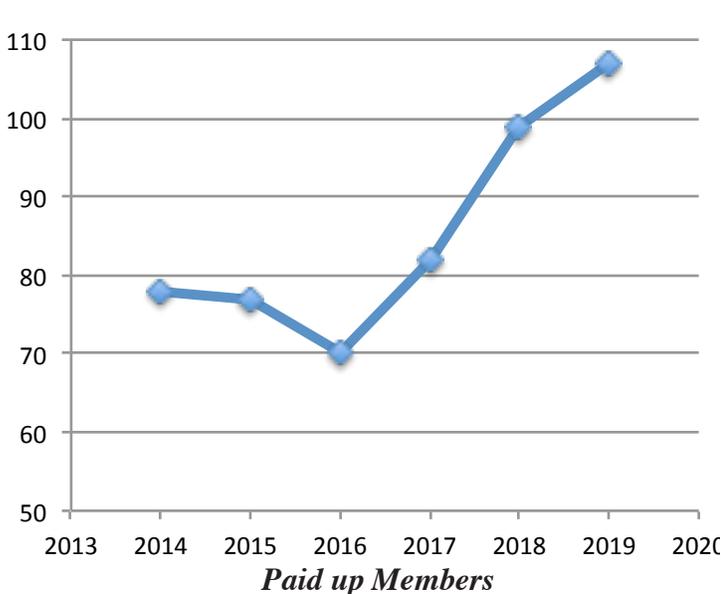
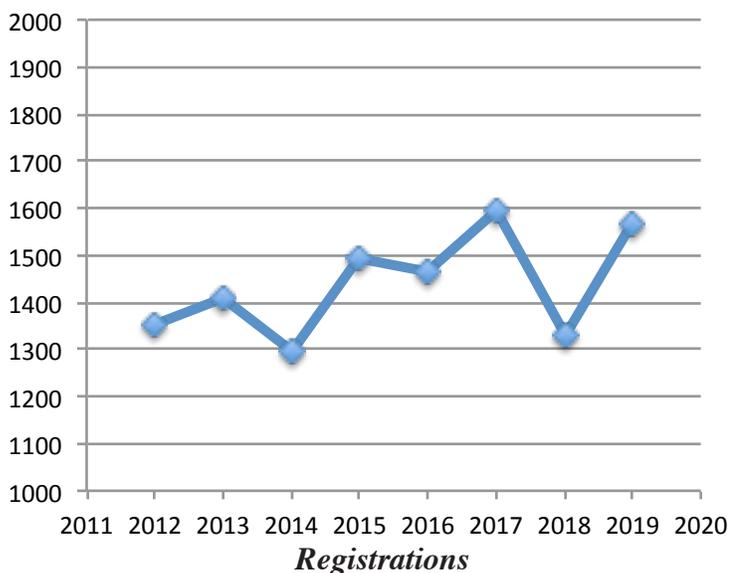
## Registrations/Memberships

Registration numbers fluctuate up and down depending on when members submit them to the registry, but as you can see in the graph below, they were up again in 2019.

Membership numbers, though low by comparison to some breeds, continue to grow. The graph below shows fewer years than the registrations graph does because for some years prior to 2014 we didn't have a handle on who was paid up.

The states with the highest number of registrations, constituting 43% of registrations, were WI with 387 and MN with 293. OH and MI followed with 158 and 113 respectively.

There's lots of room for improvement in our numbers of members and registrations. Let's promote.



## Financial Position

The APSA again ended the calendar year 2019 in excellent financial condition.

Bank Balance	\$30,442.57
Accts Rec. from members	\$ 1,961.93
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$32,404.50</b>

The association has the following liabilities:

Accts Pay. to Assoc. Registries	\$ 1,012.14
Accts. Pay. to members	\$ 542.51
Director Credits	\$ 2,599.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 4,153.65</b>

<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>\$28,250.85</b>
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<b>Net Worth Change</b>	<b>\$ 3,972.51</b>
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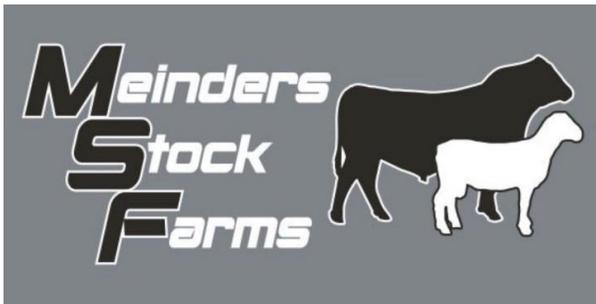
## 2020 Annual Membership Meeting

The 2020 APSA Annual Membership Meeting is expected to be held July 24 at the Clay County Fairgrounds in Spencer, IA. This venue has been a good venue the last couple years for getting attendance by the membership. Last year we were treated to a presentation by Dr. Bret Taylor from the USSES. We don't for sure yet who we might have this year, but possibly Tom Murphy from the USMARC. Both of these research stations are re-energizing their research with Polypay sheep. Mark your calendars, and come meet together with your fellow Polypay producers.

## Director Nominations

In this newsletter is a nomination form for the APSA Board of Directors. Consider whether you might be willing to serve and help guide the future of the American Polypay Sheep Association, or if you know someone that you feel would serve well. We need your input.

Candidates need to be nominated by three members and the form returned by March 31 along with a short resume to Brett Pharo, 12266 Cherry Ave., Rapid City, MI 49676



# BORN TO PERFORM

Online Polypay Sale, Vol. II

July 6, 2020 – [Wlivestock.com](http://Wlivestock.com)

\*\*\*Our 2nd annual online sale will feature Yearling & Fall Born Rams as well as an elite group of Fall Ewe Lambs!\*\*\*



8133

## Sale Features

6201212019009132

Triplet, 2.1 Mwwt, 9.4 Pwwt, 118 Index, 8.7 JSI!

6201212019009110

Twin, 1.9 Mwwt, 6.1 Pwwt, 119 Index, 8.1 JSI!

6201212019009044

Twin, 1.9 Mwwt, 9.5 Pwwt, 121 Index, 9.3 JSI!



8125

MSF 8133 – High selling MSF ram in 2019 going to Big Prairie Polypays. A maternal brother will sell in 2020!

MSF 8125 – Sold at the CNS in 2019. Maternal brother to MSF 9132 who will likely be Lot 1 on this Sale!

[MeindersStockFarmPolypays.com](http://MeindersStockFarmPolypays.com)

Zach: 515-320-3835 [Meinders2@hotmail.com](mailto:Meinders2@hotmail.com) | Buffalo Center, IA | Jake: 515-320-3738 [Meinders5253@hotmail.com](mailto:Meinders5253@hotmail.com)



Lambs are dropped in this insulated building 50 ewe capacity. No supplemental heat but insulation & ventilation are sufficient for lambing in sub 0 weather without the water freezing.

From the jugs lambs are grouped here for a few days.



### Facilities at Hidden Valley Polypays Glen and Chris Jones



As the lambs mature the use of this barn changes. In this picture the pen at the lower right has the last of the ewes still nursing lambs with a creep feeder. Middle right are recently weaned lambs on a grower ration. Top right empty at this time - usually hay storage. Left side Lambs 90 days or older on a finishing ration in a self feeder. Weaned ewes go out on pasture until about Christmas time.



Bummer lambs are fed cold milk for 35 days in this part of the insulated barn.

Lambs are hauled to a hoop barn where they are penned in 1 of 5 pens based on the number of lambs being nursed.



# 2020 Polypay Breeders Directory

This membership directory includes members whose dues are paid up as of 1/1/20.

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[UPFDelta@aol.com](mailto:UPFDelta@aol.com)  
[www.polypays4u.com](http://www.polypays4u.com)

### **David & Cindy Napier Black Sheep Farm Hudson**

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## 2020 Sales of Interest

June 22-27 **Midwest Stud Ram Sale,**  
Sedalia, MO [www.midwestsale.com](http://www.midwestsale.com)

July 26-27 **Center of the Nation NSIP Sale,**  
Spencer, IA [www.nsip.org](http://www.nsip.org)

Watch for online sales featuring Polypays, as well.

## 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](mailto:brettpharo@gmail.com).

## 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 Spring newsletter would need to be sent to [brettpharo@gmail.com](mailto:brettpharo@gmail.com) by April 1.

## Promotional Apparel

The APSA is working with Thiesen Designs to offer promotional apparel, such as hats, shirts, sweat-shirts, etc. for purchase with an APSA logo. These are for your promotion of the Polypay breed. As such, the board has decided to not add any price markup that would go to the association. We do not plan to carry an inventory of items, but the items will be purchased at cost directly from Thiesen Designs.

Some details are still being worked out, but the website to order is: <https://apsaapparel.itemorder.com>  
A link will be put up on our website, as well.



*Lambing is underway in Minnesota.  
Lambs are looking good.*



## Polypay Breeders Score Big

*by Glen Jones*

In the last newsletter I wrote about five Polypay breeders who were taking part in a project with Dr. Lewis, from the University of Nebraska, where teams of two were challenged in a sheep breeding simulation game. The project is completed and the results demonstrate the value of experience in the daunting task of improving genetic merit and making a profit while eliminating a recessive abnormality (spider syndrome) from the assigned flock.

The simulation matched 50 pairs of college students enrolled in his animal breeding class and 7 pairs of breeders involved in the seedstock production industry. In the end, the industry teams had significantly higher scores compared to the college students, so I am thinking that those gray hairs, some of us have, may show that experience can be an advantage. Along the way those of us on industry teams had the opportunity to discuss the project with the classes via internet technology and to hopefully impart some ideas to help those new to the breeding concepts. After the 4 week cycle, the team of Dr. John Carlson and Mark VanRoekel were the top team in earnings and the team of Jerry Sorensen and Glen Jones had the flock with the highest breeding value for growth. All those who I have communicated with thought it was a fun and educational activity and I would encourage any of you to give it a try next year as Dr. Lewis plans to continue using the simulation in his subsequent classes.

# Calling All Polypay Breeders (again)

Holly Neaton, DVM

Have you ever had Polypay lambs born with a deformed neck or spine? Lambs born with these signs have been reported over the past 10 years or so. Often called “rhino” lambs, they have varying degrees of a short, downward curved neck (cervical vertebrae), often a curvature of the spine and sometimes short, stubby ears. In a mild case the lambs are able to stand but unable to nurse due to the inability to lift their head. In a severe presentation the lamb is unable to stand and the skull is domed. They are usually born alive. **(Example pictures below)**

A genetic connection to these “rhino” lambs may be possible. A similar condition has been seen in Suffolk sheep – Spider Lamb Syndrome - for which a blood test can be used to screen animals for carriers.

If we collect enough samples of good quality and history to match we may find a geneticist to help find an answer. This project would be driven by the breed association if we wish to investigate.

If you have any of these lambs born this winter the success of identifying any genetic connection depends on the quality of the samples collected and recording of the data. We also must define the deformity so the following steps must be followed:

Take several pictures, record dam and sire, birth date and gender of lamb and send a copy of this to me at [hjneaton@gmail.com](mailto:hjneaton@gmail.com). IF the deformity qualifies as a subject (this may include an onsite veterinarian’s opinion) the steps for collecting samples will probably be as follows:

1. Cut off 1” of the affected lamb’s tail and place it in a freezer baggie with ¼ cup of salt. Label the bag well with “Rhino Lamb”, date, gender, dam and sire numbers. Record if the tail was frozen prior to collection.
2. At the same time 1” of tail should also be taken from an unaffected lamb in the following order of preference and kept in a separate “Normal Lamb” bag with the same information. (NOTE: you may wait until you dock the tail of the surviving lambs. Collect the tail sample after banding or hot-docking)
  - a. An unaffected full sibling (fraternal twin or triplet) of same gender from same dam and sire. Both siblings if triplets present.
  - b. An unaffected full sibling (fraternal twin or triplet) of same gender from same dam and multiple sires if used. Both siblings if triplets present.
  - c. An unaffected full sibling (fraternal twin or triplet) of different gender from same dam and sire AND another lamb of same age and gender born from the same ram.
  - d. If no littermate is available please find another lamb the same age and same gender born from the same ram.

Ruling out phenotype based on the sex of the lamb is important so collecting sample from an unaffected lamb of the same gender is desirable.

You may put both well labeled bags of samples into one larger bag to keep together while storing in the freezer. It is crucial to keep the samples together for the study.

It would be desirable to also collect a sample of whole blood in a plastic purple-topped EDTA tube from each lamb along with the tail samples. These labeled tubes can be kept in the freezer along with the tail samples.

**Please contact Holly Neaton DVM 952-240-2192 [hjneaton@gmail.com](mailto:hjneaton@gmail.com) with any questions or comments.** Once we collect a group of these samples, I will coordinate the project.



# APSA Director Nomination Form

We, the undersigned members of the American Polypay Sheep Association,

nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
to serve as a Director on the Board of Directors of the American Polypay Sheep Association.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Three separate voting active memberships must sign this form for it to be accepted as official.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, desire to, and will, serve to the best of my ability on the Board of Directors of the American Polypay Sheep Association, for a three-year term if elected. Attached is my resume (not to exceed 200 words), which may be mailed to all APSA members so that they may judge as to my qualifications to serve on the Board of Directors of the APSA.

**I certify that I am a breeder of purebred Polypay sheep registered with the American Polypay Sheep Association, and I pledge myself to support and obey the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of this association, and the Breeder's Guidelines as contained therein, and to advance the production objectives of the Polypay breed.**

Nominee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Return completed nomination form and accompanying resume by March 31, 2020 to:

Brett Pharo, APSA President  
12266 Cherry Ave.  
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