

A Big Prairie Perspective

Mark Meurer, President

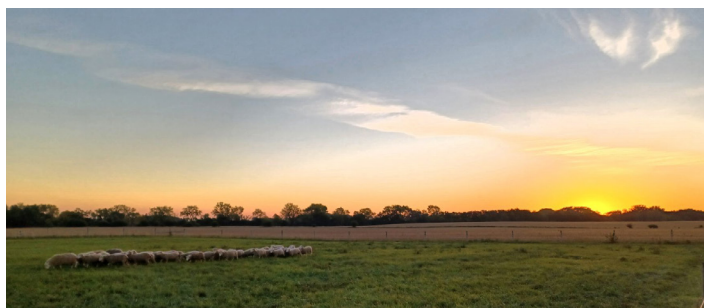
It's that time of the season, again. Fall lambing is underway and I'm always excited to see a new crop of lambs fill the barn. It's also the time of the year that I dread most. Its Hallmark Christmas movie season and we're not even out of October, yet. I love the Christmas Season more than any other time of the year, however, corny, predictable Hallmark movies get a lot of air time in the Meurer household. I always tell my wife, "I can tell you the plot of this movie and the ending even before the opening credits fade into fake snow falling on Hallmark town." I'm always right. My wife will tell me, "I know how every televised rodeo will go. Bareback riding to bull riding." She's always right, too. I must confess that I make her watch a lot of rodeos. Payback is Hallmark time. My wife and I don't always see eye to eye on what we watch on television, but at the end of the day, we understand each other and we work well as a team. I suffer through a few Hallmark movies and she endures a few rodeos.

My goal for the American Polypay Sheep Association is strangely enough, the same. I don't want you to suffer through bad movies or endure lengthy rodeos, but our goal as an association should be to understand that we all have different approaches to raising breeding stock. In other words, we're all on the same team, even if we approach raising Polypays in different ways. Some may collect on-farm data, some collect NSIP data and some focus heavily on phenotypic attributes. Some, like in our operation at Big Prairie Polypays, utilize all three selection criteria. Guess what, none of those aspects of raising Polypays are wrong! The Polypay breed is not a homogenous breed where we all select our genetics based on the same criteria. That's a good thing. We need to keep diversity in our breed and continue to focus on the big picture,

continued on p.2

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Perspective continued

which is making phenotypically correct sheep that have production data backing them up. Because we are all committed to these common goals, our breed continues to be sought after by commercial producers across the country. I don't know about you, but the opportunity to sell breeding stock is the best I've ever witnessed. Strong lamb prices look to continue and the future of our industry looks as bright as the Christmas star!

So, my Christmas wish this year is for all Polypay breeders to respect each other and continue to work together to advance our breed. Just like my wife and I can agree on Hallmark movies and rodeos, we as Polypay breeders should work together as a team to continue making our breed the most sought after genetics in the sheep industry. We are proudly, "The Production Breed"!

From the Meurer household to yours, we wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas! Please take time to enjoy friends and family this holiday season and always remember "The Reason for the Season". If you ever want to chat, please contact me at any time!

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 2021, your membership dues are due.



View from the Great Lakes State

Brett Pharo

What a year it's been! With lamb prices holding as high, or higher, than most of us have seen, the demand for Polypay breeding stock has been strong, as well. Honestly, I was a bit concerned early on, as this was the first year in quite a while that we weren't sold out of ewe lambs before they were born. That didn't last long, though, and we could have sold many more than what we had available. And those lambs that didn't make our cut for being top quality for selling as breeding stock sold at the high feeder prices. We even found that we've underestimated the number we needed to keep for direct meat sales. Too much demand is a great problem to have.

I'm quite excited to see all that is happening in the United States Sheep industry in the realm of genetics. After all, as seedstock producers, genetics is what we sell. Our buyers of rams and ewes don't take home our management, feed supply/system, or environment. What they take home is a set of genetics which will affect their flocks far into the future. The more accurately we can predict what those genetics are, the more focused the industry can be in reaching for improvement goals.

The possibility of Genomic Enhanced Estimated Breeding Values is a very positive move in that arena. NSIP was able to roll out GEBVs for the Katahdin breed October 1 because they were able to attain grant money early on. Dr. Lewis has been successful in getting his grant proposal approved to partially fund genomic reference bases for Polypays, Suffolks, and Ramboulet. It is likely that Polypays will be the next breed to be able to roll out GEBVs. Using the 50,000

continued on p.4



**National
Sheep
Improvement
Program**

America's
GENETIC FOUNDATION
FOR A **PROFITABLE**
SHEEP INDUSTRY



**January 26
Willoughby Sales**

- Open to all ewes, open or bred, that are sired by rams that are in NSIP.
- The owner shall supply the NSIP numbers of the ram(s) the ewes are sired by.
- Ewes from multiple sire breeding groups are accepted.
- Crossbred ewes are accepted.
- Bred ewes must be exposed to NSIP rams.
- Group size is a minimum of 10 ewes.
- All delivery arrangements are between the buyer and seller.
- All ewes are guaranteed by the consignor to breed by 18 months of age, as long as acceptable management practices are followed.
- If ewes are advertised as registered, papers will be transferred at the consignor's expense.
- Entry fee is \$100 per lot. This will be refunded if the ewes sell in the sale. Submit payment to NSIP before the sale start. Box 1258 Ames, IA 50014
- The sale floor is \$250 per head, consignors may contact the sale host with their own floor bid as long as it is higher than \$250.
- A commission of no more than 5.5% will be deducted from payment.

For more information on consigning check out the NSIP webpage or check with Jerry Sorenson (712-579-1511) for Polypay, Matt Benz (701-870-4135) for Range, Alan Culham(517-896-7378) for hair or Rusty (515-708-8850).

Great Lakes continued

SNP genetic info, in conjunction with pedigree info and phenotype data collected for NSIP, will enhance the accuracy even more. NSIP has been an awesome tool (still just one tool in the toolbox), but this can take it to the next level.

Another development has been the rollout of Sheep Genetics USA. Launching in January, the vision statement of SGUSA is, "Sheep Genetics USA is a proactive and collaborative initiative focused on improving genetic tools to enhance profitability through measurable goals leading to long-term success." SGUSA is an effort to bring together all segments of the industry, from seedstock producers to consumers, to cooperate on genetic projects. In mid-November, the SGUSA board and action team leaders, myself included, will meet in Kansas City and begin to prioritize areas for research and development. We shall see how this effort comes together moving forward.

The prospects going forward are very exciting, but there are also many obstacles to overcome. But, as sheep producers, we are experienced in facing obstacles and seeing the goals beyond. Stay tuned.

Note that the APSA board is planning an online Polypay sale in the spring. Details are being worked out and will be available by next newsletter.



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 meurer66@gmail.com by October 15.

