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,

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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!

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**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.
NSIP Influenced Online
Replacement Ewe Sales

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’s 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).
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.