

## A Big Prairie Perspective

Mark Meurer, President

I recently had a young livestock producer from southern Indiana stop by the farm. The first thing he said to me was, "Where are all the fences and livestock?" Welcome to Illinois! We have gone from raising livestock to raising livestock feed over the course of two or three generations. Corn and soybeans rule and dominate the countryside. Of course, we still have livestock in Illinois, but not like we used to. If I ever had the desire to go back to college (which I don't!) I would develop research and a thesis on the impact of losing livestock farms and how it affects the rural community and lifestyle. Think of the economic impact a vibrant livestock industry has on a community. Feed stores, equipment stores, veterinarians, farm stores, etc... I believe that our rural communities have suffered over the past 50-75 years because we've lost livestock producers. The numbers have dwindled. Just look up the data. In my father and grandfather's day, every farm had livestock and every farm had family members stay on the farm to care for a diversified farming or ranching operation. Here in the Midwest, when we switched to specialized grain farming and let the livestock go, our equipment got bigger, our fields got bigger and our need for bigger families and farm labor got smaller. In other words, it just doesn't take as many people to grain farm as it does to operate a diversified grain and livestock operation. As young people left the farm or ranch because their labor wasn't needed, our communities got smaller, our schools got smaller and our economies got smaller, too.

Now why am I opining about the loss of livestock operations across our nation for this edition of the APSA Newsletter? Simple...because even with fewer livestock producers in our county, we still feed and cloth the world with fewer and fewer of us. Our commitment to research, development and the use of

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## APSA Board of Directors

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<b>Nicole Jessen</b> 17146 377th Ave Redfield, SD 57469	2025-1   605-460-1932
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### *Big Prairie Cont.*

technology has made us all more efficient. Specifically, we as Polypay breeders have done our part to focus on production traits, genetic testing and improved efficiency. The sheep industry is the smallest it has ever been in our country, but Polypays continue and will continue to contribute to the overall success and profitability of the commercial sheep industry. We are one of the few breeds who has not lost its commitment to the commercial sheep producer.

In closing, please take advantage of the several opportunities to purchase or sell Polypay genetics this summer. The Midwest Stud Ram Sale in Sedalia, MO and the National Polypay Online Sale will be held in June and the NSIP Online Sale and the Center of the Nation NSIP Sale in Spencer, IA will be held in July. Great opportunities to purchase outstanding Polypay genetics.

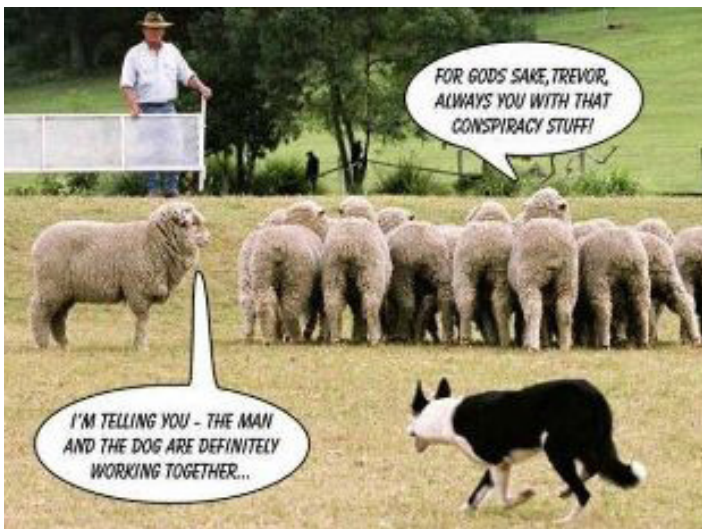
As always, it's an honor to serve as the APSA President and if you ever have questions or just want to chat, please give me a call.

Respectfully,  
Mark Meurer  
APSA President

## **2023 Annual Membership Meeting**

Mark Your Calendars!

The APSA Annual Meeting will be held on July 28th at 7:00 p.m. cdt. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the NSIP Center of the Nation Sale at the Clay County Fairgrounds in Spencer, IA. The meeting will be held in the 4-H Building on the fairgrounds. For those who can't attend, a Zoom link will be provided. Agenda will be sent prior to the meeting. More details will follow.



## **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 Summer newsletter should be sent to [brettpharo@gmail.com](mailto:brettpharo@gmail.com) by July 15.



**Flock Reduction 43 years raising purebred Polypays, 15 with NSIP**  
**15, 1-6year-old Purebred ewes. Private bids taken til June 1<sup>st</sup> for pick-up at farm by June 25.**  
**SEVERAL RAM LAMBS & APPROX 15-20 EWE LAMBS ALSO AVAILABLE**  
**USA Mat 110-119 MWWT .9-2.3 WWT 1-2.8 PWWT 1.6-5.8 NLB -13.6-37.7 NLW 8-36.1**  
**US\$ 122-156. Quad H23013 out of 11 year old is going to the 2023 Young Polypay essay winner**

**Hausser Polypays**  
**Eagle, WI**



## **Polypay Starter Flock**

I want to extend my gratitude to the Polypay Association for giving me the opportunity to invest in the breed. Raising Hampshire and Suffolk show lambs for the last five years has been such an education, but being able to be a part of the Polypay breed has accelerated my learning experience.

With the scholarship, I was able to purchase a Polypay ram from the local area. I was also able to get on the waiting list for three ewe lambs from Glen Jones. The scholarship allowed me to build more relationships in the sheep industry as well.

I was privileged to be able to visit with other Polypay breeders and learn different management styles. I hope to continue building these relationships within the association and expand my horizons even more. Being introduced to the NISP system, that the Polypay lambs use, has opened my eyes to the possibilities of being able to track and record genetic information at a whole new level.

Thank you again for the amazing opportunity to receive such a prestigious scholarship. I do not take the honor lightly. And I will try my hardest to utilize the resources in such a way that will make the Polypay breed flourish.

Sincerely  
Nehemiah Stokes

# Polypay National Sale

In an effort to provide all Association members an opportunity to make breeding stock available both to purebred breeders and shepherds with commercial flocks, the Polypay Sheep Association board has arranged for Willoughby Livestock Sales to have an online sale of young rams and ewes. The online sale will be Tuesday June 27, opening at 7:00 am CDT and running till 7:00 pm CDT. Entries can be made directly to Willoughby Livestock, online to, [becky@wlivestock.com](mailto:becky@wlivestock.com).

This sale is for all registered Polypays by Association members. Any pertinent information such as pedigree, physical description, entry history and origin, and expected breeding values about each entry, along with

## Polypay National Sale Rules June 27, 2023

Entries into Willoughby by June 10

Entry fee (at time entry is submitted, \$5.00 per head) not refundable

Commission rate is 7%

All sheep must have an official interstate certificate of veterinary inspection from state of origin in last 30 days  
Include a B Ovis test within 30 days on all rams over 6 months of age.

All sheep must have at least one scrapie tag in one ear.

All consigned sheep must have a scrapie codon test with at least one R at codon 171.

All breeding soundness guarantees will be between the buyer and seller

All sheep must have or have pending Polypay registration.

Sheep must have been born after 8/15/2021

All ewes over a year of age must be bred or have given birth to and raised a lamb or lambs

Entries will be handled through Willoughby Livestock



# Director Election Time

The APSA Bylaws call for election of members to the board of directors each year for three year terms. This year two directors will be elected.

The terms of Mark Meurer and Mark Van Roekel are up this year. Mark Van Roekel has served two terms and can't serve another term at this time. Nominations were requested in the winter newsletter and APSA members nominated only the two candidates listed below by the March 31 deadline. You can find brief resumes of these candidates on this page.

A ballot form to vote for directors is included in this newsletter with instructions for submitting it. The ballots will be opened at the annual membership meeting in Spencer, IA.



## Meet the Candidates

**Below are brief resumes of the candidates for the APSA Board of Directors**

### Mark Meurer

My name is Mark Meurer and I operate Big Prairie Polypays in Ashton, IL. I have served as an APSA board member for three terms and have served as the APSA President for the past three years. I am running for the board for another term and would appreciate your consideration. Our operation has been rooted in the Polypay breed for nearly twenty years. We currently run about 40 purebred ewes. We focus on naturally-conceived, fall-born genetics and utilize on farm data and NSIP data, as well. We are passionate about Polypays and enjoy raising quality breeding stock for customers across the country. I am proud to be a part of an association that has the commercial sheep industry as its focus. Through our membership's hard work, dedication and commitment to the commercial sheep business, Polypays have become a foundation within the commercial industry. We should all be very proud of our accomplishments! As a returning board member, I think it's paramount that we continue to engage our membership and work to grow our numbers. We need to continue pursuing genetic advancement and keep an unwavering commitment to making sure our sheep are phenotypically correct and structurally sound. As an association, we have begun to reach out to young producers with our APSA Starter Flock grant and we need to continue to grow and expand that initiative. I would like to focus on our marketing efforts, as well. We have so much to offer the commercial sheep industry and we need to make sure everyone is well informed about our genetic progress and success. As a breed, we are in a very good position and I look forward to working with the board and the membership to keep us moving forward. Thank you!

### Scott Wollin

I am expressing my desire to be on the Polypay Board of Directors because I do believe I have something to offer. I have been raising sheep for 49 years and have tried many different breeds, but have always returned to the Polypay breed. The Polypay breed is what I have concentrated on for a number of years now. My goal as a Polypay breeder is to breed for a complete animal, one that is strong across all NSIP categories but still maintain the correct structure that was intended for the Polypay breed, and to conform to the Polypay breeder guidelines as laid out by the APSA. I support new ideas and technologies as long as it benefits the breed. I also believe that some of the old technologies and practices continue to have value. I lived all my life in northwest MN until last fall when I moved to central North Carolina. It is my personal goal to work at establishing a Polypay presence here and expand the knowledge of the breed here and show an example of what the breed has to offer.

# **Ballot for the Board of Directors of the American Polypay Sheep Association 2023**

Mark Meurer (\_\_\_\_\_)

Scott Wollin (\_\_\_\_\_)

You may vote for up to two candidates.

Each active membership that has 2023 dues paid is entitled to one vote.

You may return the ballot in person to an APSA director prior to the annual membership meeting in Spencer, IA, or you may mail your completed ballot, postmarked by June 30, 2023 to Mark Meurer, 1669 Midway Rd., Ashton, IL 61006 . All ballots will be opened and counted at the annual meeting.

Mailed ballots should be returned as follows to assure a secret ballot:

1. Mark your ballot
2. Place ballot in an envelope with the word "Ballot" on the outside
3. Place that envelope inside another envelope addressed to Mark and include your name in the return address section.