

United Suffolk Sheep Association
September Board of Directors Conference Call
September 14, 2020

Board Member Present: President Jeremy Geske, Vice President Randy Hodges, Treasurer Tom Burke, Secretary, Amanda Everts and the following directors: Greg Ahart, Cynthia Huckins, Blair Summey (later in meeting), Jim Van Dyke, Gary Hoskins, Randy Dombek, Bret Henderson and Brenda Reau. Also in attendance: Junior Coordinator, Nancy Burton and UJSSA Director Creed Harker.
Absent: Carol Heupel.

Approval of the Agenda

President Geske asked for any additions to the agenda, there were none. Randy Hodges moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Tom Burke. Agenda adopted.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Cynthia Huckins moved to approve the August meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Brenda Reau. All were in favor, motion carried.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Everts reported registry work has picked up but is still expected to be down for the fiscal year. She shared the projected registration numbers for the fiscal year. Election and bylaws ballots have been sent out. Other projects include drafting the needs assessment as well as other committee projects. Directors were reminded that the fiscal year end for the association is September 30. The current checking account balance is \$9728. Randy Hodges moved to accept the Secretary's report, the motion was seconded by Randy Dombek. All were in favor, motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Tom Burke reported investment balance is \$253,885. Randy Hodges moved to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Randy Dombek. Motion passed.

Junior Report

Junior Coordinator, Nancy Burton, reported that the juniors are working to finalize the photo contest and calendar. The deadline for the drawing contest is October 1. The juniors would like to host a fall webinar in November. There was a brief discussion on NAILE and junior association events.

Foundation Report

Brenda Reau reported there has not been a lot of activity to report since the last USSA board meeting. Fall fundraising plans are up in the air. The Foundation board will have a meeting later in September.

Committee Reports

By-Laws – Randy Hodges reported the committee discussed ownership rules for juniors and families. After several discussions via email and conference call, the committee feels that the way the bylaws are written now are okay. The language is like other breed associations.

Youth Promotion – No report.

Budget – No report.

Ambassador/Queen – No report.

Breed Improvement – Brenda Reau reported that the committee has worked on some language to update the breed standard. The committee proposed:

Current Language: Introduction: *Suffolk sheep are efficient converters of forage and feed to body dimension and mass. All Suffolk sheep should be structurally and reproductively sound. They should have distinctly black heads, ears, and legs, and produce a white fleece. Rams should appear masculine, muscular, of good size and well proportioned. Ewes should exhibit strong maternal traits, carry and deliver lambs with ease, and have ample milking ability.*

Proposed Language: The Suffolk sheep is a superior producer of lean meat due to rapid early growth, heavy muscling, and efficient conversion of forage and other feedstuffs. Suffolks are striking in breed character and unrivaled in beauty, having jet black, wool-free heads and legs that sharply contrast their clean white fleeces and pink skin. Suffolk genetics are highly-prized by commercial shepherds to improve the weights and carcass quality of their lamb crops, while the Suffolk head is designed to facilitate ease of lambing. All Suffolk sheep should be structurally and reproductively sound. Rams should be robust and masculine, with significant muscling, body volume, and mass as well as ample fertility and libido. Ewes should be feminine yet thickly-muscled, and demonstrate strong capacity for breeding, lambing ease, mothering instinct and milking ability. In both sexes, preference is given to naturally wide-based, deep bodied, easy fleshing animals free of coarseness or over-refinement. As a meat breed, Suffolk breeding rams and ewes should produce fast-growing lambs that yield carcasses with superior composition and conformation, regardless if purebred or commercial crossbreds. While the mature weights of Suffolk sheep may vary considerably, breed character and general proportionality of body should be similar across the breed. Appropriate frame size and growth curve should be chosen to match the specific commercial production environment and target carcass weight.

The USSA exists to define, register, promote, and improve the Suffolk breed for the entire U.S. sheep industry. The commercial sheep industry is diverse in its geography, production systems, products, and markets. Suffolk sheep are useful in a wide variety of commercial applications, from terminal range rams to farm flock ewes, as part of composite breeds and as market lambs. Suffolks are also exhibited in various show classes, from fitted and slick sheared breeding sheep to club lambs and wether sires and dams. Nonetheless, the Suffolk breed standard provides a common identity for all Suffolks and Suffolk breeders. The breed standard serves as the ideal relative to which Suffolk sheep are to be evaluated and improved, in terms of their own phenotype as well as the genetic potential they offer to the industry.

Visual or phenotypic selection has been used for centuries in animal breeding. It establishes breed type and effectively addresses issues of structural correctness, sex character, and aesthetics. Today, there are additional tools available to make measurable genetic improvement for advancement of the sheep industry.

Genomic testing allows accurate evaluation of genotype for important traits when selecting replacements to improve the flock and breed. Testing can also help eliminate recessive genes that cause undesirable characteristics such as spider syndrome, dwarfism, and scrapie susceptibility. The use of performance recording and estimated breeding values (EBVs) allows for measurable genetic improvement over time. Selection for rapid growth, leanness, and superior muscling establishes the Suffolk as the preferred terminal sire breed. Genetic selection pressure can also be applied to other performance traits including reproductive rate, maternal ability, parasite resistance.

The field of animal breeding and genetics will continue to evolve, creating additional genetic selection tools for breed improvement. Significant, measurable progress can be made by combining both phenotypic and genotypic selection. The result can be attractive, sound sheep that demonstrate heritable improvement in economically-important traits.

The following is not apart of the breed standard but is presented above the breed standard on the USSA website.

Current Language: Suffolk Traits: Mature weights for Suffolk rams range from 250 to 350 pounds (113-159 kg), ewe weights vary from 180 to 250 pounds (81-113 kg). Fleece weights from mature ewes are between five and eight pounds (2.25-3.6 kg) with a yield of 50 to 62 percent. The fleeces are considered medium wool type with a fiber diameter of 25.5 to 33.0 microns and a spinning count of 48 to 58. The staple length of Suffolk Fleece ranges from 2 to 3.5 inches (5-6.75 cm).

Proposed Language: The committee recommends removing this section.

There was a lengthy discussion. Randy Hodges made a motion to adopt the proposed language. The motion was seconded by Brenda Reau. There was additional discussion.

Greg Ahart moved to amend the option to remove the last two paragraphs:

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Cythina Huckins seconded the amendment to the motion. A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor. All were in favor were of the amended motion. Motion passed.

Hall of Fame – The Hall of Fame will be postponed until 2021.

Scholarship – No report.

Hospitality – No report.

Online Sale – Jeremy Geske reported that there will be an October Bred Ewe Sale.

GAP – Jim Van Dyke reported there are several large flocks interested in enrolling in GAP but these individuals have concerns with the costs involved. The committee will investigate ways that these flocks can be offered a larger discount. Amanda Everts reported two flocks have registered sheep in GAP since the last meeting.

Strategic Planning Committee – Brenda Reau presented the drafted needs assessment. This assessment would be emailed, posted online and mailed to individuals apart of the association mailing list who do not have emails or emails bounce. There were no additions or corrections from the board for the drafted assessment. Tom Burke made motion to move forward and send the needs assessment as presented. The motion was seconded by Randy Hodges. A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor. Motion passed.

Jeremy Geske reported that he and Amanda discussed possible opportunities with Associated Registries. There is no option to lease the software, registry work would have to leave the Suffolk Office. In general, the program AR has currently is similar to what we have now but they are considering some updates. Costs were not discussed as the board had not asked the committee or Jeremy and Amanda to do that. There's still opportunity with the other software vendor but they have not moved forward with creating their new platform.

Old Business

Suffolk Queen – There was discussion that no money was budgeted for the Suffolk Queen in 2020 and the board will not fill the Queen position for 2020.

New Business

NAILE – There was a lengthy discussion regarding NAILE and the possibility of holding board meetings and the annual meeting in Louisville. Tom Burke moved that the Annual Meeting be held via Zoom on Nov. 9th, 7:30pm. Bret Henderson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed. Greg Ahart moved that the old board meeting be held via Zoom on Nov. 2 and the new board meeting be held via Zoom on Nov. 10. Tom Burke seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Randy Hodges moved to adjourn the meeting. Bret Henderson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.

Minutes approved 10.12.20.