

VIRGINIA SHEEP INDUSTRY BOARD

Policies and Procedures

The Virginia Sheep Industry Board was brought about by producers seeking more funds for predator control. Members of the General Assembly were asked to appropriate additional funding for predator control above the level of \$35,000.00 annually. Legislators advised producers that if they could show some means of self-funding, the General Assembly may look more favorably upon their request. Predator problems have been one of the greatest causes of declining sheep numbers in Virginia. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) surveyed livestock producers and estimated 4,100 sheep were killed by coyotes in 1990. A similar survey estimated coyotes killed 700 calves in 1991. The value of sheep and calves reported killed by coyotes in these two surveys was estimated to be \$366,500.00. The Virginia Cooperative Coyote Damage Control Program administered by USDA-Animal Damage Control was started in 1990.

In 1995, members of the Virginia Sheep Federation petitioned legislators and the Virginia Sheep Industry Board Act was passed. (Refer to Section 3.1-1065 through 3.1-1080 of the Code of Virginia.) The Act called for a 50 cents per head check-off on all lambs and sheep sold beginning July 1, 1995. The Act provided for a Sheep Industry Referendum for producers to vote on the Act. This was completed on October 31, 1995 and 54% of eligible ballots favored "additional market development, predator control, research, education and promotion of the Virginia sheep industry, the creation of the Virginia Sheep Industry Board, and the levy of an assessment of fifty cents per head, with the Board retaining the authority to increase the assessment no more than ten cents per year, up to a maximum assessment of one dollar per head, for all sheep and lambs sold within the Commonwealth of Virginia." Funds are collected by the Virginia Department of Taxation and sent to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Finance Office.

The twelve member board includes nine sheep producers, from four specific production areas defined in the Code of Virginia, and three other appointees; one represents the packing/processing/retail segment of the industry, one represents the Virginia Livestock Markets Association, and one represents the purebred segment of the industry. Terms of membership are for three years and members can serve for two consecutive terms. In addition, the extension sheep specialist from Virginia Tech and the Commissioner of VDACS or his designee serves as nonvoting members. The Board held its organizational meeting on August 28, 1996 and the first business meeting December 2, 1996.

In carrying out its programs, the Board contracts with USDA Wildlife Services for predator control. Other projects support programs, festivals, and events that promote lamb or the sheep industry. Educational and promotional information is secured from the American Sheep Industry Association and the American Lamb Board.

The Board normally has one meeting each year held in conjunction with the Virginia-North Carolina Shepherds Symposium.

The Secretary/Program Manager provides the Board with all administrative support necessary for the Board to carry out its programs.

Administrative Procedures

A. Board Meetings

1. Coordinate meeting date and time with the Virginia Tech Sheep Extension Specialist, so it may be included in the program for the Virginia-North Carolina Shepherds Symposium.
2. Advertise Board meeting in the Virginia Register. A special form must be completed for notices to be published in the Virginia Register. See minute book for example. Send the completed form to the designated "Board Liaison" within the Div. of Marketing for submission. When setting meeting dates, be aware that VDACS policy requires notices to be published on the Commonwealth Calendar for 30 days prior to the meeting date.
3. Notify the interested parties of the meeting date in order that project funding proposals from project leaders can be prepared for presentation at the meeting. Request that the project proposals be sent to the program director at least a week prior to the meeting date for distribution to Board members so they may have time to review and study the proposals prior to the meeting. Also, request that written progress reports for currently funded projects be presented and reviewed at the meeting. It is left to the discretion of the Director as to whether he wishes to present the proposals and reports or to have the project leaders present to do so.
4. Send meeting notices to Board members and other interested parties at least a month prior to the meeting and earlier if possible. See minute book for example. Send project proposals to Board members one week prior to meeting date.
5. If meeting meals will be required, prepare an Official Business Meals Authorization Form and send to the Board Liaison to obtain authorizations and approvals from the VDACS finance office.
6. Prepare a meeting agenda to include presentation of project proposals, project progress reports, financial statement, and other items needing the Board's attention. See minute book for example of agenda.
7. Prepare a financial statement based on project files maintained in the office and the detailed financial analysis for the Board which is provided by the Finance Office, VDACS, on a monthly basis. See minute book for example of financial statement.
8. Prepare a meeting folder for each member to include agenda, financial statement, travel voucher to be completed by member and any other written information, etc. that will require the Board's attention.

9. During the meeting, after the reading and approval of the previous meeting's minutes, make sure the Chairman signs the minutes indicating they were approved. Note: E-mail the final minutes to the Board Liaison within three business days of the meeting for posting on the Commonwealth Calendar.
10. The Secretary/Program Director is responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting. See minute book for example.
11. After the minutes have been prepared in final form, they should be mailed to the individual Board members. These draft minutes should also be e-mailed to the Board Liaison within ten days of the meeting for posting on the Commonwealth Calendar.
12. Prepare and submit travel vouchers for Board members for reimbursement of travel expenses.
13. In anyone requesting funds for a project proposal is not present at the meeting, notify them of the Board's action regarding their request.
14. Prepare any other correspondence, etc. that is necessary due to the actions of the Board at its meeting.
15. Maintain files for approved projects which would include a copy of the project proposal and the authorization from the Board. During the course of the year, the file would include copies of payment vouchers, progress reports and any correspondence, etc. relating to the project.

B. Handle all correspondence, requests for information, etc. and take appropriate action.

C. Maintain records of minutes and supporting documentation. After the completion of the fiscal year, transfer minutes and supporting documentation from the meeting file to the Board minutes book. Minutes must be maintained forever and are kept in the office of the Secretary/Program Director.

D. Prepare the Board's Annual Report after completion of the fiscal year and prior to November 1. See example in annual report file. Once the report has been prepared and signed by the Chairman, it should be sent to the Board Liaison for submission to the Commissioners Office. Copies should also be mailed to Board Members.

E. Board Nominations – Two months prior to expiration of Board Member Terms, consult with the Virginia Tech Sheep Extension Specialist to develop a list of nominees. Contact nominees and have them fill out the “Application for Gubernatorial Appointment”. Collect all applications and forward them to assigned contact person in the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Office. Fill out “Nomination for Gubernatorial Appointment” for each nominee, forward to Virginia Sheep Producers Association contact person who will send the nominations to the Secretary. (See files for examples.)

