

Final Minutes
Virginia Sheep Industry Board
January 6, 2023 - 1:00 PM
Mrs. Rowe's Family Restaurant
Staunton, VA

Presiding: Rosalea Potter

Roll Call:

Members Present

Jason Shiflet
Mandy Fletcher
James Hilleary
Larry Weeks
Clinton Bell
Tim Mize
Mac Swortzel
Rosalea Potter
Lee Wright
Alvin Thomas

Members Absent

James Mumaw
Lawson Roberts

Staff Present

Matthew Sponaugle, Program Manager, VDACS, Harrisonburg

Others Presents

Kyle Waters, USDA Wildlife Serv.	John Benner, VCE Augusta Co.
Scott Greiner, Virginia Tech	Loretta Bell
Jennifer McClellan, NRV Sheep & Goat Club	Gary Hornbaker
Jason Geesman	Tom Stanley

This meeting was held in conjunction with the Virginia Sheep Producer Association Board Meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 7, 2022 meeting were approved as written.

Annual Report

The Annual Report for the FY21-22 was reviewed and approved by the board as presented.

Financial Report

Matthew Sponaugle reviewed the FY 21-22 report, which showed an ending balance of \$43,453. Income for the FY 21-22 was \$15,777.03 up \$2,468 from the FY 20-21 and up \$3,481 from the FY 19-20. Total expenditures for the FY 21-22 were \$19,346.35. Expenditures were up due to things returning to normal after COVID years as well as an increased budget from the Board in FY 21-22.

OLD BUSINESS

Program Reports:

USDA Wildlife Services Report – Kyle Waters

Kyle reported that demand for USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) was steady this year. Their seven employee team allowed them to cover all Virginia counties. WS resumed education programs during FY2022 to educate livestock producers and the public about predator ecology and wildlife damage management after cutting back on in person programs in previous COVID years. WS presented at 13 educational programs in FY2022, attended by 348 people. WS provided direct control services to 134 livestock farms in federal fiscal year (FY) 2022. During FY2022, 207 sheep, 10 calves, and 25 goats were reported and verified killed by coyotes. Additionally, 22 sheep, 23 cattle/calves, and 7 goats were reported and verified killed by black vultures. In FY2022, the average number of sheep killed per farm by coyotes was 3.5. Preventative control was conducted on 63 livestock farms with historic coyote predation. WS removed coyotes on these farms before livestock depredation occurred, and these farms had no losses in FY2022. Corrective control was conducted on 71 livestock farms to remove coyotes killing livestock. In FY2022, WS removed 103 coyotes on farms to stop or prevent coyote predation on livestock. The program received 109 requests for assistance to reduce black bear predation to livestock. Black Bear predation was recorded in 13 counties including 20 sheep, 2 cattle/calves, and 4 goats. Recently, WS has purchased 14 wireless game cameras to assist with producers checking traps. This new program has been very successful and WS wishes to add to its hardware, expanding the capabilities to other producers.

Though funding for USDA Wildlife Services was budgeted for the FY 20-21 at the amount of \$7,500, payment was not made. The board doubled the USDA WS funding amount to \$15,000 for the FY 21-22 and set it to \$10,000 for the FY22-23.

Virginia State Fair Lamb Carcass Contest Report

Scott Greiner provided a report on the VA State Fair Lamb Carcass Contest, in which nearly 3,700 lambs have been evaluated through the program since its inception in 1999. In the 24th year of the program, the program continues to provide feedback to lamb exhibitors and breeders relative to the impact of their genetics and management on carcass performance. Unfortunately for participants, lamb prices in 2022 plummeted paying less than half the 2021 prices. In general, Greiner stated that carcasses were continuing to get bigger and fatter, while not maintaining square loin eye size at the same rate.

Carcass Educational Support

The Augusta Market Animal Show ultra-sounded 108 lambs in May 2022 and the Rockingham County Fair ultra-sounded 49 lambs in August 2022. All information was put into an excel sheet, ranked, and distributed to the showmen and families at their annual awards banquet along with the recognition of the winners. The carcass contest allows exhibitors to receive carcass data on their live show animals, giving them an indication of how they would rank from a commercial standpoint.

4-H/FFA Youth Development Sponsorship

John Benner gave a report on the Augusta County 4-H Meats Judging Team who competed at the 2022 American Royal after winning the VA State Meats Judging Contest. Representing Virginia,

the team placed 7th out of 14 teams and a total of 52 contestants. The team included Elyse Dyson, Blake Caricofe, Wyatt Marshall, and Emily Klein.

Virginia FFA Foundation

Tanner Wise of Buckingham, VA won the 2022 Virginia FFA State Proficiency Award for Sheep Production.

NRV Sheep & Goat Club – GOAT Festival

Jennifer McClellan provided a short presentation on the New River Valley Sheep & Goat Club's G.O.A.T (Greatest of All Time) Festival held in Draper, VA. The festival took place in September 2022 and drew over 2,000 spectators for the 2nd year in a row. McClellan showed a video featuring many of the different festival events as part of her presentation. Events included multiple different sheep breed displays, lamb products for sale, and lamb samples to festival goers. Over 150 volunteers played a role in making the festival a success. The Club plans to move to the New River Valley Fair Grounds in 2023 to offer more room.

Social Media

The VSIB started a social media campaign in the FY 20-21 by hiring Ionic Interactive Media of Lexington, VA to create and maintain a Facebook page. Ionic provided three post a week to the FB page as well as any original content that was provided to her from the VSPA or VSIB. Many post pertaining to all things sheep were made throughout the year including both local and national content. As of January 2023, the page had 217 likes and 239 followers.

NEW BUSINESS:

Action on Spending Requests

VSPA Website

Larry Weeks presented a request for \$1400 on behalf of the Virginia Sheep Producers Association to redesign and host a new website. Weeks feels that a new website will add value to Virginia's sheep producers by offering a more professional look as well as allowing more content to be included. It is expected to cost \$800 to design the website with up to 10 pages and \$50 per month to host the website. The Board voted to provide \$1,100 in FY22-23 for design and 3 month hosting and \$600 in FY23-24 for 12 months hosting. The VSIB wishes that the VSPA include a page for the VSIB where information such as minuets, grant opportunities, and reports can be shared.

New River Valley Sheep & Goat Club – Jennifer McClellan

Jennifer McClellan requested support of the 2023 NRV Sheep & Goat Club's G.O.A.T Festival to be held in September 2023. The 2022 festival cost over \$16,000 to put on. The festival is expected to continue to grow and is a good way to promote sheep and lamb products to a large crowd of both present and potential consumers.

VA 4-H All Star Livestock Judging Team

The Board budgeted \$1,000 for the Virginia State winning 4-H Livestock Judging team to practice and travel to competitions.

Carcass Educational Support

The carcass educational support line item was added to the FY 20-21 budget to help support local clubs and organizations looking to promote lamb carcass education, most often through ultra-sounding county fair lambs and using the data to organize a carcass contest. The board voted to continue funding proposed projects at the rate of \$5 per animal with a maximum of 100 animals. In order to receive funding, local clubs need to submit a request letter along with an invoice to the VSPA program manager and chairperson. The board up the FY22-23 line item from \$1,000 to \$1,500 to cover shows as well as \$1,500 for the FY23-24.

4-H / FFA Youth Development Sponsorship

The board designated a line item titled “4-H / FFA Youth Development Sponsorship” and funded it at \$1,000 for both the FY 22-23 and FY 23-24. These funds are intended to support Virginia youth who win state level competitions (related to the sheep industry) and receive invitation to travel to upper level competition as a result. These funds are designed for teams outside of the VA 4-H All Star Livestock Judging team. Grants submissions should be turned into VSPA program manager and chairperson for approval.

Other items

The Rockingham County Fair Association and the Rockingham County 4-H Extension office requested funding to help purchase a scale intended for weighing 4-H and FFA project lambs. The scale would be utilized for weigh in at the county fair, offered for other lamb shows/events in the area, as well as made available to youth to track weight of gain and productivity. The Board voted to budget \$1,000 for the project.

A motion was made by Tim Mize, seconded by Mandy Fletcher, to approve the FY2022-2023 and FY 2023-2024 Budget with the following project spending categories.

FY 2022-2023

Meeting Expense	\$2,000.00
Agency Service Charge	\$ 175.00
Lamb Board Promotional Items	\$1,000.00
State Fair Lamb Carcass Contest	\$1,500.00
USDA Wildlife Services	\$10,000.00
Virginia FFA Foundation	\$ 500.00
VA 4-H All Star Livestock Judging team	\$ 1,000.00
Carcass Educational Support	\$ 1,500.00
4-H/FFA Youth Development Sponsorship	\$ 1,000.00
NRV Sheep & Goat Club (Goat Festival)	\$2,000.00
VSPA (Website project)	\$1,100.00
Rockingham Co. Fair / Extension	\$1,000.00

FY2023-2024

Meeting Expenses	\$2,000.00
Agency Service Charge	\$ 175.00
Lamb Board Promotional Items	\$1,000.00
State Fair Lamb Carcass Contest	\$1,500.00
USDA Wildlife Services	\$10,000.00
Virginia FFA Foundation	\$ 500.00
VA 4-H All Star Livestock Judging Team	\$1,000.00
Carcass Educational Support	\$1,500.00
4-H/FFA Youth Development Sponsorship	\$1,000.00
NRV Sheep & Goat Club (Goat Festival)	\$2,000.00
VSPA (website project)	\$ 600.00

The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

The Board slated the following to serve as officers:

Chairman – Mac Swortzel

Vice Chairman – Lee Wright

Public Comment: None

Future Meeting Date

There was no decision made on future meetings at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Sponaugle, Secretary