**2017 Annual NCERA-214 Meeting Minutes**

**List of Attendees**

Aaron, Debra University of Kentucky

Burke, Joan USDA, ARS, Arkansas

Ehrhardt, Richard Michigan State University

Ely, Don University of Kentucky

Held, Jeff South Dakota State University

Hoffman, Travis North Dakota State University/ University of Minnesota

Knights, Marlon West Virginia University

Kochendoerfer, Niko Cornell University

Lopez Viega, Almudena Michigan State University

Miller, Jim Louisiana State University

Morrical, Dan Iowa State University

Murdoch, Brenda University of Idaho

Posberg, Chris Cornell University

Petersson, Katherine University of Rhode Island

Recktenwald, Erin Michigan State University

Schoenian, Susan University of Maryland

Thomas, Dave University of Wisconsin-Madison

Thonney, Michael Cornell University

Villaba, Juan Utah State University

Waldron, Dan Texas A&M Agrilife at San Angelo

Weber, Jim University of Maine

Whitney, Travis Texas A&M Agrilife at San Angelo

Wildeus, Stephan Virginia State University

**Industry Participants**

Rodgers, Paul ASI

Monday June 12th

The meeting was called to order by NCERA-214 Chair Juan Villaba At 8.00 am at the Kellog Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing, MI. George Smith Director of Michigan State University AgBioResearch and Associate Dean for Research for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources welcomed the group and gave an overview of the state of Michigan and MSU’s investment in agriculture and more specifically in teaching, research and development in related to the sheep industry. Hel also expressed his appreciation to the committee for its role in supporting development of the industry.

On conclusion of the opening address station reports were discussed:

Station Reports Beginning with Objective 1 (Develop and Evaluate Methods to Improve Reproductive Efficiency):

Under objective 1 (Develop and Evaluate Methods to Improve Reproductive Efficiency):

1. Cornell University (C. Posbergh): reported on studies being conducted to identify genes regulating the ability of sheep to breed out of season
2. Michigan State (J. Roberts and A. Veiga\_Lopez): reported on studies conducted to determine the usefulness of pregnancy associated glycoproteins (PAGs) as indicators of feto-placental unit viability.
3. Texas A&M Agrilife Research (Dan Waldron): reported on studies evaluating weaning rates and weaned lamb yield in Rambouillet ewes with or without the FecB allele.
4. Virginia State University (Stephan Wildeus): reported on the use of wool breeds (Dorset) as terminal sires into an accelerated mating system with landrace hair sheep.
5. West Virginia University (Marlon Knights): reported on (1) the effects of pre-breeding nutritional management and weight changes on ewe lamb fertility (2) relationship between the systemic concentration of anti-mullerian hormone (AMH) and fertility in replacement ewe lambs.

Objective 3 (Evaluate Genetic Resources, Nutrient Requirements and Systems for Milk Production):

1. Cornell University (N. Kochendoerfer, T.L. Stanton, D.L. Brown and M.L. Thoney): reported on studies being conducted aimed at
   * 1. Evaluating nutrient requirements, fertility and health of dairy sheep managed under the STAR accelerated lambing system
     2. Comparing milk yield of cross-bred ewes to traditional dairy sheep
     3. Determining the relationship between management systems, nutrition and other environmental factors on milk quality and composition.

Objective 2 (Develop Strategies to Improve and Predict Efficiency of Lean Growth, Carcass Quality and Meat Palatability): began at 1.50 PM

1. University of Idaho: Indicated they are currently developing strategies to utilize molecular markers to be used to improve prediction and selection of growth and carcass quality traits.
2. North Dakota State University (Dr. Brenda Murdoch) reported on research aimed at identifying production decision making factors of producing male lambs and optimum marketing strategies.
3. Texas A&M AgriLife (Travis Whitney) reported on the following studies on
   * + The effects of ground redberry juniper on growth and on serum, rumen microbial and fecal characteristics.
     + The effects of substituting cottonseed hulls for ground woody plants in ration fed to feedlot lambs
     + The effects of using ground woody plans in kid goat feedlot diets on growth performance
4. Virginia State University (Stephan Wildeus) reported on growth rate, fitness and carcass characteristics of purebred and crossbred hair sheep lambs gradually removed from soy hull supplementation before harvest.

Objective 4 (Develop Profitable and Sustainable Production Systems, Including Parasite Control and Other Health Issues):

1. Dale Bumper Small Farms Research Center, USDA, ARS, Booneville, AR. (Joan Burke) reported on
   * + - Estimates of genetic parameters for body weight in Katahdin lambs
       - Relationship between measures of parasite resistance, birth weight and measures of growth
2. University of Maryland (Susan Schoenian): reported on studies evaluating anthelmintic resistance in sheep in Southeastern USA.
3. Michigan State University (Richard Ehrhardt) reported on efforts to develop a dynamic model for profitable sheep production
4. Texas A&M AgriLife (Travis Whitney) reported on the effects of feeding ground redberry juniper (*Juniperus pinchotii*) to gestating ewes on pre-and-post-partum performance, serum metabolites, hormones, milk composition and pre-weaning progeny performance
5. Utah State University (Juan Villaba) discussed
   1. the importance of antioxidants on reducing parasite burdens and the ability of sheep to self-select antioxidants
   2. The relationship between nutritional state and preference for aspen leaves (Populus tremuloides) containing different concentrations of plant secondary compounds

Tuesday 13th:

8.36 am; The Business Meeting was called to order;

***Nominations:***

Stephan Wildeus was nominated as Secretary by Travis Hoffman and seconded by Dan Waldron

Marlon Knights and Debra Aaron was confirmed as Vice Chair and Chair 2018, respectively.

***Resolutions:***

1.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production express thanks to Dr. Richard Ehrhardt, Dr. George Smith, Dr. Janice Swanson, Joe Leszcz, Carla McLachlin, and Erin Recktenwald for their hospitality in organizing and presenting a productive and enjoyable meeting, and wonderful food for the NCERA-214 sheep research and extension committee. (To be sent to Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Ronald Hendrick [hendric6@msu.edu](mailto:hendric6@msu.edu),  and Animal Science Chair, Dr. Janice Swanson[swansoj@msu.edu](mailto:swansoj@msu.edu))

2.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production express their appreciation to the American Sheep Industry Association for the presence of Paul Rodgers at the NCERA-214 meetings. (To be sent to Peter Orwick, Executive Director of ASI and Mike Corn, President of ASI.).

3.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production express their appreciation to Rex and Judy Hannewald for hosting a tour of their feedlot. (To be sent to Rex and Judy Hannewald, 14880 Territorial Rd, Stockbridge, MI  49285).

4.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production express their appreciation to Riley Cronk for hosting a tour of Wolverine Packing Company. (To be sent to Riley Cronk, Wolverine Packing Company, 1340 Winder St, Detroit, MI     48207).

5.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production express their appreciation to Ronnie Berry for hosting a tour of Berry and Sons Halal Meats. (To be sent to Ronnie Berry, Berry and Sons Halal Meats, 10163 Dix Ave, Dearborn, MI 48120).

6.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production express their thanks to ASI’s Let’s Grow Program for providing critical funding for research and extension programs carried out by land grant universities, usually in partnership with state and regional sheep associations.

7.      Be it resolved, the members of the NCERA-214 committee on Increased Efficiency of Sheep Production strongly support the continuation of the USDA ARS sheep research in Dubois, ID. Researchers at this station have been an integral part of our committee and a critical resource for the sheep industry for many years.

Dan Waldron moved that the resolutions be accepted and Joan Burke Seconded the motion.

Host of 2018 Meeting:

1. SDSU (Jeff Held) suggested we avoid scheduling meeting to conflict with the Western section Meeting as some members would like to attend the Western Section and some members of the Western Section would also like to attend NCERA
2. A motion was moved by Jeff Held and Travis Whitney to form a subcommittee to select the location and time of the next meeting and report back to the committee within two (2) weeks.
3. Debra Aaron suggested that the meeting should be scheduled for the first week of June as the Western Section usually schedule their meeting in the third and fourth week of June

Membership

Dan Waldron suggested that efforts be made to increase membership and that all existing members should identify and encourage potential new members.

Mike Thonney suggested that letters be sent to Experiment Stations to encourage participation. It was also suggested that Ernie Minton or another administrator be asked to send these letters.

Debra Aaron Suggested that information be sent to Extension Directors and other persons who might be interested and that an attempt be made to contact Ernie Minton.

NDSU… suggested that ASI’s website can be used to inform, identify and contact sheep specialist who might be interested in NCERA.

New Project Proposal:

Debra Aaron reminded the group that a new proposal is required for 2019 and that we should seek to have a draft prepared by 2018. Discussions were held on whether the new proposal should move away from a heavier focus on extension and education to more of a research committee.

Marlon Knights (WVU) reminded the group that similar discussions were held last year and that we had made little progress since then.

Dan Morrical moved a motion that we should ask someone from Kentucky to be the advisor. No motion was moved on this item

It was suggested that the group contact Katherine—be contacted and that we approach the North Carolina group that recently got a new project approved for assistance in rewriting the project.

Mike Thonney Moved a motion that the new project be written by the 2018 meeting and that Marlon Knights and Travis… take the lead in rewriting the project with assistance from Jeff. The motion was seconded by Dan Morrical and was moved.

Address by the American Sheep Industry –Paul Rogers:

Paul Rogers brought greetings from ASI: He also noted the following:

1. The Federal budget process was creating some uncertainty at ASI and its programs. Further ASI was awaiting the new political appointments to make contact so that they can convey the Industry concerns and policy remedies.
2. Impending closure of the Eastern Regional Wool and Wool Products Center
3. The changes to the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers program can result in labor rates increasing by up to 50% with negative consequences on the industry
4. ASI was supportive of research focusing on domestic sheep-wildlife interactions.
5. ASI was supportive of the proper implementation of livestock mandatory reporting as little information is available on prices of lamb sold on the grid
6. ASI was supportive of the call by the Animal Agriculture Coalition to include $150 million in the Farm Bill to respond to possible outbreaks of foreign diseases in particular FMD.

Retirements

1. Dave Thomas-
2. Dan Morrical also indicated that this would be the last year he will be officially attending the NCERA meeting. Jeff… thanked Dan for his long and outstanding service to the committee and by extension the sheep industry.