

Small Ruminant Committee Report

2013 NIAA Annual Conference

Tuesday, April 16, 2013



The Small Ruminant Committee met on Tuesday, April 16, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. during the 2013 NIAA Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky with about 12 people present. Ms. Eileen Kuhlmann and Dr. Gregory S. Lewis served as Co-Chairs.

The committee session focused on OPP resistance in sheep using genetics, Goat Herd Improvement Program and informing undergraduates, producers and the public. The following speakers presented relevant information pertaining to the above topics:

Dr. Michael Heaton, *Animal Health, USDA/ARS*, presented “Reducing Ovine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP) by Selecting for TMEM154 Haplotypes in Sheep.”

TMEM154 gene has been found to be the factor for resistance and susceptibility to OPPv. Haplotypes 2&3 being highly susceptible. Haplotype 1 being resistant. These 3 haplotypes are the most common found in the sheep population. However there are other haplotypes that have been found. At this time removing haplotype 2 & 3 and retaining the homozygous haplotype 1 genetics have been suggested as a way to decrease the prevalence of OPP in the flock. Haplotype 4 and 6, which occur in certain breeds should also be retained. Dr. Heaton gave an excellent example of a cell being a house with many doors and TMEM154 being door handles. The haplotypes 4 and 6 are considered doors without handles. Haplotype 1 is door handle that OPP virus slips on and has a difficult time opening the door. A commercial genetic test is now available to screen sheep for the haplotypes.

Debra K. Aaron, Ph.D., Professor, Statistics; Beef Cattle Genetics, *Dept. of Animal and Food Sciences, University of Kentucky*, presented “How Do You Talk to Livestock Producers About Genetics?”

Dr. Aaron spoke about presenting genetics to undergraduates and producers. The majority of incoming undergraduates of animal science in Kentucky are urban, pre-veterinary medicine students, whose interests are in companion animals. To get these students interested and active depends on a point system to obtaining a good grade and hands on experience to retain their interest. Producers and producer groups request certain topics and participation, illustration and demonstration are the way to educate. Discussions of genomics are of little interest to producers at this time.

Kenneth M. Andries, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, *Kentucky State University*, presented “Goat Herd Improvement Program as Conducted Through KSU.”

Dr. Andries presented his “new” herd improvement program, which he started in 2005. Other species have had herd improvement programs for 60 years. At first goat associations tried to get data for EPDs, Dr. Andries realized that you had to start with the basics. His GHIP is based on Cattle Herd Improvement Plan (CHIP). Gathering basic herd data type of birth/rearing, birth and weaning weight, sex and age of dam will assist producers in basic herd improvement. He has started encouraging commercial producers to ask producers for data. At this time there are 52 herds from 24 states and 3 Canadian provinces are using his GHIP. There are 2 other goat herd plans, one in AL and one in TN.

Ms. Madeline McCurry-Schmidt, Scientific Communications Associate, *American Society of Animal Science*, presented “Communicating with the Public.”

Gave a wonderful presentation with a VERY easy message to remember about communicating to the public.

1. Pick an audience. (Urban children, college students, etc.)
2. Make it Personal (not the staff photo –but one of you with your animals)
3. Be a Resource
 - a. If receiving a call take 15 minutes to check out the reporter and the communication
 - b. Invite them to meet with you.
 - c. Explain statistics
 - d. Do not use highly technical language or if you have to assist the writer in spelling words.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- 2012 Resolutions were left as is. There were no revisions, amendments or removals
- No Action Items are requested.
- Consensus Points for NIAA White Paper Development : None

General Discussion: None

Committee Session adjourned at 12:10 pm.