



BOARD MINUTES

August 2, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Greg, Urs, Melissa, Robert, Eric, Ruth, Peter, Kat, Scott and guest speaker Dr. Les Anderson. Brad and Caryn were absent.

Meeting called to order at 8:09pm

Greg introduced Dr. Les Anderson who is working at the University of Kentucky as a beef extension and reproductive specialist. He works with Dr. Jeff L. as well.

The product they are introducing to the yak world is Farm Forever Stocket which is a three-prong program designed to connect users with information. He took over the shared screen to show us from his computer a basic overview of what this program looks like.

Instead of just being a record keeping system only it connects users to information, to others in their industry, and to science.

It has been designed as a simple ag tool with navigation. Its goal is it's easy to navigate, easy to use, saves time and increases profit potential.

With it you can learn from other people in the yak industry, connect with your peers to get help, offer help, learn from each other and you can manage your farm's yak data all in one program. As well access the data or upload, while out in the field, in seconds.

It works on iPhone, Android and websites. While it has been designed for beef, it is very adaptable to yaks and they are building out an entire yak library, which we as members can contribute to. What information are we seeking, what do we want researched, what do we want shared. Easy access to create and print reports on info you need.

Know when looking at it that it's all a work in progress. They have 725 users so far and a big update to the system happening in the next few weeks.

This program is currently FREE to USYAKS members, go to Stocket.us.com with the code YAK23 to sign up. Choose UK for University of KY, as other colleges are not the host of this program or updating it.

There are videos on YouTube on this program on how to set it up, and how to get it working for you. It has over 3,000 pieces of industry related research and news. If you are in the program and need help you can reach him at les.anderson@uky.edu or reach out to Dr. Jeff L email (which we have on info from him prior)



Asked for a couple of USYAKS members to be designated auditors of information to be submitted as content to build out the yak side of this program. These members would be required to participate in USYAKS meetings and hold the best interest in our organization as a first priority when deciding to approve or deny information that is submitted. The designated members would have access to upload to the site verses leaving it open for anything to be posted.

Peter H. stated that we have a lot of the necessary information already on our USYAKS website. (Essentially saying) we have a concern that we don't want to direct people away from our website.

Dr. Les Anderson reply was that USYAKS is the website for the entire world to familiarize themselves with yak. What is a yak, what can you do with a yak, why have a yak, where to find yak events. It's there to capture people's interest in hopefully owning yak.

Further he stated that this Stocket.us site is only for members. Its internal information yak owners share with other yak owners, what they are vaccinating with, what is working for x,y,z scenarios, birth weights, adult weights, production records and it's a closed group not open to the world.

Greg stated that let's let everyone here check it out. Come back to the next meeting with a better idea of what it offers, have your questions or suggestions ready. We thanked Dr. Less for attending and demonstrating the program.

FIBER. Samples needed to be postmarked by Friday August 4th to Susan. Susan will take it, turn it into an anonymous sample to forward to Kat for judging. Caryn sent out an email reminder with attachments on fiber instructions to everyone. Results on fiber evaluations in November.

We need to decide if we want to do the NWSS (had sent out their reply for our review before the meeting, essentially stating they are not interested in reducing our \$3000 fee to attend) OR other event venues, if so where & why.

We need to decide quickly (we did not have a quorum to vote today) if we are staying with the NWSS, then its all-hands-on deck moving forward with that coming up. If not, then what do we want to do instead?

Group discussion on different locations, possibilities, how to get people from the east and west, north and south all to one place. Or to have it be by region?

Concerns with NWSS costs, doesn't leave us much left for anything.

Ruth suggested we don't have enough interest in NWSS from people outside of Colorado to make it worth it. Why don't we take a year off, regroup for 2025 instead. Spend money in other areas to grow our association, work on the website, work on membership drive,



look at smaller events, do things with the money that make our association grow.

Kat: we all need to ask then, what is a reasonable distance that we would be willing to travel to a yak show and that we think other people would travel to a yak show.

Greg: How about Durango CO County Fair next year if we need an event? Also have members have yaks at county fairs around the U.S., even if just a stall or booth exhibiting yak products, friendly yaks, get people interested in yaks. Even if yaks are not showing at the show, you have livestock people there, get them into yaks.

Ideally would-be regional yak shows, where potential buyers would be already at livestock fairs. This would be a great start. We need people to come up with a list of places to consider.

Board is to review the list of sites that Tina compiled and sent out previously. Everyone look through that and see if there are some you are interested in representing yaks at.

Discussion on if someone gets a booth or stalls, USYAKS board approved member, represents yaks, has flyers out etc., would the board like to set aside funds to reimburse them for hosting a yak booth, stalls, getting the public interested in yaks. Maybe \$500 to \$1,000 depending on the show, how big of a display, how much is spent? Something to think about, discuss at next meeting. Eric suggested (agreed) someone needs to quantify the event, quality of the event, size of the event, how many yaks are brought in, what is done with them (i.e., petting, rides, costume, leading around, fiber demonstration etc.). Eric asked what is in the till and what can we afford to reimburse?

Other option is the virtual show again. It worked well across livestock market during covid. Maybe we have classes for spring calves, yak bulls. Expense was maybe \$500 to do the virtual show, judge was maybe \$100. Option to participate no matter who we are, even if a person is not a member of either organization.

Greg stated second big question for the night is Melissa's event coming up, if there are any last-minute details, questions, information.

Discussions amongst Melissa, Robert, Shannon and Greg on finer details of the event. USYAKS booklets will be at the event, on a table and handed out.

Urs was wondering if someone is assigned to take photos and (short) video clips of the event so that we can use for the website and social media? Melissa said she will be and others agreed they would try to get some too, especially of the yak area and the yak trekking by the lake. Melissa added you can bring yak costumes, that it will be fun to show them off if you want.

Kat would like to have a grading system in yak fiber much like sheep wool. She hopes to set up a session to ask people and listen to what is it that they are looking for in yak fiber. What helps, what does not matter to them, what is their interest in fiber, how involved do



they want to be in the process, and how find fiber mills and fiber guilds.

Discussions moved on to brief overview of the October 28th event in Kentucky hosted by Dr. Jeff L and his team on yaks.

The Match A Yak system will be set up for people to enter in their yak info and see what details it gives them. This is to help with less inbreeding coefficient and finding suitable outcrosses.

Dr. Les Anderson will be there with his Stocket system

Lunch is yak meat

Greg suggested we all gather for dinner together. There is a brewery in town with music if people want to gather there after the dinner or go off in other directions.

Wrap up, next meeting key things to think about beforehand and have feedback on:

Look at the sites Tina had previously sent out to all members, recently, with options for fairgrounds to host events at.

Think the virtual show through

USYAKS soul search of what do we want to focus on, put money into verses NWSS, and what improves our association?

Ruth motioned to adjourn.

