



BOARD MINUTES

October 4, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Greg, Brad, Urs, Melissa, Carlice, Robert, Eric, Kat, and Susan.

Absent: Ruth, Caryn

- September's board meeting minutes were approved.
- The first thing that was discussed is that the making of this new association/registry presents us with the opportunity to have a new beginning - which is built on what we have learned to date as USYAKS and IYAK. There is the old saying: "If I knew back then what I know now, I would have done things differently." Well, we have all learned things that didn't turn out the way we had hoped.
- One of topics brought up has to do with membership. We have all learned that having people pay dues and register yaks does not create active involvement. A large part of our time together was spent on the question of what should be expected of members if they are going to be part of a yak association that is committed to the development of the yak industry - yak husbandry, genetics, economics (meat and fiber and breeding stock) etc.
- The second item discussed was the fact that Beef associations require members to turn in annual records on their animals each year: breeding pairs, birth information, weights, losses, weaning weights etc. - information that can be used to begin to identify superior bulls and cows, good and bad breeding pair combinations etc... even the indication that a recessive gene may be present. The data could even contain weights, hip heights, slaughter weights, fiber information etc. This is the information which will be needed when we start collecting if we are going to make both genetic improvements and husbandry improvement to improve our outcomes. It is also critical in identifying potential harmful recessive genes.
- Another thing talked about was what if every member had to take a short (one or two hour) on line class about do's and don'ts in raising yaks. This would be like the Beef Quality Assurance Program that is offered by Cooperative Extension programs to cattle breeders. It covers things like how to handle the animals, giving vaccinations, basic health care issues, designing a handling system etc.: The basic foundational things everyone should know and implement in their yak operation.
- The next item talked about was the idea of introducing continuing education as a requirement. This association's members were going to be a "Learning

www.usyaks.org
Secretary@USYAKS.org

USYAKS

Community” - these could be topics on health care, pasture management and improvement, pasture forage and hay analysis, all the steps involved in fiber production from harvesting to washing, carding etc...and marketing. Both USYAKS and IYAK had education as a goal/objective, making continuing education a part of being in this association is a way to build a better yak industry. Think of all the different jobs and organizations that require on going continuing education. Should the yak industry require less?

- So, these are the types of things I (Greg) would ask you to think about.... What should the requirements of being a member of this "new association" be? And becoming a new association gives us the opportunity to set the ground rules. We know paying dues doesn't get involvement or build a better association...Please write your ideas down. Let your mind dream some on this.
- Another discussion that happened during the meeting was a brief discussion about a new name. Nothing was decided but in the conversation the name North American Yak Association came up. Susan pointed out that the word NAYA is of Indian (India) origin and means "Renewal"...."that it is a way of celebrating the gift of life and a brand-new chapter in it." which everyone thought was interestingly appropriate for what we were talking about.
- Greg asked the board to please think about the whole issue of what it should mean to be a member of a yak breeder association and registry.

