

# Virginia Sheep Industry Board Annual Report 2017-2018

## I. NARRATIVE

### A. Creation of the Board

The Virginia Sheep Industry Board was brought about by producers seeking more funds for predator control. Members of the General Assembly were asked to appropriate additional funding for predator control above the level of \$35,000.00 annually. Legislators advised producers that if they could show some means of self-funding, the General Assembly may look more favorably upon their request. Predator problems have been one of the greatest causes of declining sheep numbers in Virginia. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) surveyed livestock producers and estimated 4,100 sheep were killed by coyotes in 1990. A similar survey estimated coyotes killed 700 calves in 1991. The value of sheep and calves reported killed by coyotes in these two surveys was estimated to be \$366,500.00. The Virginia Cooperative Coyote Damage Control Program administered by USDA-Animal Damage Control was started in 1990.

In 1995, members of the Virginia Sheep Federation petitioned legislators and the Virginia Sheep Industry Board Act was passed. The Act called for a 50 cents head check-off on all lambs and sheep sold beginning July 1, 1996 (also the current 2015-2016 excise rate). The Act provided for a Sheep Industry Referendum for producers to vote on the Act. This was completed on October 31, 1995 and 54% of eligible ballots favored "additional market development, predator control, research, education and promotion of the Virginia sheep industry, the creation of the Virginia Sheep Industry Board, and the levy of an assessment of fifty cents per head, with the Board retaining the authority to increase the assessment no more than ten cents per year, up to a maximum assessment of one dollar per head, for all sheep and lambs sold within the Commonwealth of Virginia."

The twelve member board includes nine sheep producers and three other appointees; one represents the packing/processing/retail segment of the industry, one represents the Virginia Livestock Markets Association, and one represents the purebred segment of the industry. In addition, the extension sheep specialist from Virginia Tech and the Commissioner of VDACS or his designee serves as a nonvoting member. The Board held its organizational meeting on August 28, 1996 and the first business meeting December 2, 1996.

### B. Production Information:

The most recent inventory showed sheep and lamb numbers in Virginia totaled 80,000 head. Ewes one year old and older totaled 50,000 head, with the majority of production lying on the western side of the state.

## II. Budget and Finances

### FY 2016-2017 Budget

Meeting Expenses	\$ 1,102.87
Admin Fees	\$ 101.47
Sponsorships / Contests, etc.	<u>\$11,437.93</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,642.27</b>

### III. Board Funding Projects:

1. \$7,499.99 to USDA Wildlife Services to aid sheep producers in predator control efforts to reduce losses due to coyotes, dogs, and vultures.
2. \$707.94 to help sponsor the Shepherd's Symposium.
3. \$430.00 to sponsor the Augusta County Market Animal Show Carcass Contest
4. \$500.00 to help cover Virginia State 4-H Livestock judging travel expenses
5. \$1,000.00 to help support Virginia State Fair Lamb Show Carcass Contest
6. \$250.00 to support Lamb Marketing & Promotion
7. \$550.00 to sponsor Virginia FFA Sheep Proficiency Award
8. \$500.00 to sponsor the Virginia Make It With Wool Contest

### IV. Year End Funding Level

	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
1 Cash Balance, June 30, 2017	\$40,737.36
2 Assessment Receipts 7/1/17 – 6/30/18 (+) (Amount of taxes collected)	\$ 12,443.31
3 Interest Receipts 7/1/17 – 6/30/18 (not included in formula)	\$554.63
4 Total Balance & Receipts (1+2) (=)	<hr/> \$53,180.67
5 Deduct Total Act. Expenditures from VDACS Fin. Analysis (-)	\$12,642.27
6 Cash Balance, June 30, 2018 (=)	\$40,538.40

## V. Board Meetings & Attendance Roster

Members	1/12/18 (Verona)
Mandy Fletcher	Yes
Clinton Bell	Yes
Matthew Miller	Yes
Mac Swortzel	Yes
Dan Hadacek	Yes
James Hilleary	Yes
Pete Martens III	Yes
Sue Platts	Yes
Larry Weeks	Yes
Lawson Roberts	Yes
Rosalea Potter	Yes
Alvin Thomas	Yes

## VI. Summary

Sheep producers have been active in securing more State and Federal funding for predator control. In FY 2016, the State has allocated \$192,525 (which was matched by USDA Wildlife Services). These funds provide USDA personnel who assist livestock producers with predator problems. Twenty-two educational programs were conducted by Wildlife Services in the FY 2015 along 208 Virginia livestock producers receiving direct control services.

Originally, nine of the Board members were the Presidents of the wool pools in Virginia. With a shrinking industry, one wool pool has dissolved. The legislation was changed by the General Assembly to have all members appointed by the Governor.

With fewer numbers of sheep and changes in marketing patterns (more sheep sold out of state) Board income has been greatly reduced. The past year's income was \$12,443.31 compared to \$26,000 twelve years ago. The Board is addressing the issue to capture more income.

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Rosalea Potter  
Chairman

