Celebrating a Century!

Despite living through one of the most challenging years due to a global pandemic, we are excited to be celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the National Livestock Producers Association.

As we celebrate this achievement, we are reminded of the fact that the livestock industry has weathered many such challenges over the years. From disease threats to range wars, to packer concentration, to export challenges, the industry’s resilience is always amazing.

During 2020 we saw a severe shortage of processing plant workers due to COVID which led to plant closures and cattle backing up in the feedyards. We saw significant shortages in supermarkets and delays in the transportation of product. On the other end of the chain, we experienced some of the strongest demand for meat from consumers as they regained an appreciation for cooking at home and how to enjoy beef, pork, and lamb in new and creative ways.

Although this was a relatively short-lived situation due to the packing industry being deemed an essential business by the government, there were still those producers who suffered, especially in the pork and dairy industries, from the loss of income due to euthanizing of animals and dumping of product since it was not able to be processed.

Surprisingly, the industry has rebounded well and with demand strong, both at home and abroad, and supplies less onerous, the outlook for prices is better than many of us expected.

As for the NLPA members, their challenges were no less troubling. Learning how to operate with unprecedented health restrictions, employees concerned with staying healthy, and reduced volumes due to packer shutdowns, and transportation bottlenecks was very taxing. However, as is usually the case in the livestock business, they persevered. With some assistance from the government in the form of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), disruptions from the Coronavirus pandemic were eased somewhat. Looking ahead there will be some lingering effects of what we have been through, though I am confident the American farmers, ranchers, and cooperative livestock markets will succeed.

In celebrating this important milestone, it is truly a celebration of the countless number of NLPA leaders who have come before us. In the early days of NLPA it took courage to come together to stand against powerful packing and transportation businesses, however they stepped up and led the way to creating more competitive and fair markets. When there was so much work to be done at home, these leaders made the time to represent their fellow cooperative producers locally, regionally, and nationally.

It is no less important today for us to stand firm and tall in representing our way of life and our way of doing business. With ever-increasing costs and market volatility that can test the mettle of the most efficient producers, it is imperative that we remain together cooperatively in order to succeed.

I thank my fellow NLPA Directors for their dedication to the organization and their support. As we say goodbye to those who have become almost family, we also welcome our newer directors and look forward to their ideas and enthusiasm. I also thank our Sheep & Goat Innovation Fund Committee Members for their incredible work in assisting the sheep and goat industries in the U.S.

In closing let me say that it is a rare pleasure to serve you as the Chairman of the National Livestock Producers Association. The fine people I get to work with bring much pleasure and those that I serve bring much accountability. In the words of Winston Churchill, “we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Sincerely,

Doug Hauser,
Chairman of the Board
National Livestock Producers Association
The livestock industry has played an important role in America’s economic development. The history of American livestock begins with the European exploration of the New World, but the place and date usually accepted for the start of an organized effort to maintain herds is the establishment of Jamestown in 1607. “In colonial times, livestock was dependent on free grazing. Animals were allowed to roam, and forage in the forest. Despite the presence of predators, the domestic animals thrived; only sheep needed constant care.”

After the American Revolution, the free range evolved into a more stable farming environment, and science and technology began to change agriculture.

As the frontier moved west, so did the livestock industry. Not everyone succeeded: the industry was reliant on the environment and weather. A bad corn harvest meant less food for swine, resulting in earlier butchering and lower prices. Diseases such as hog cholera or tick fever in cattle could decimate entire herds. Events such as the California gold rush also created boom-bust cycles. Mining towns sprang up and created a demand for livestock, but many of the towns dried up just as fast.

The slaughtering, butchering, and packing aspects of the livestock industry developed along the same lines. Besides slaughtering on an as-needed basis, people slaughtered excess animals every winter, usually animals they could not support through the winter. People used hooves, tallow, and hides for trade items and made jerky from some of the meat, but a good deal of the animal went to waste.
The livestock industry began to change after the Civil War due to the differences between farming and ranching and also because of technological advances. Most of the myths and lore of the West are rooted in the image of the ranch and the cattle drive. Ranchers, sometimes called cattle barons, held huge tracts of land and animals. Among the technological advances of the late 1800s were barbed wire, the gas tractor, silage, and improved veterinary medicine.

As the demand for beef increased, a distribution system developed to move beef east. Some attempted to take advantage of the railways, which had expanded at a rapid pace, and the new types of refrigerated cars.

It was at this point in history the need for producer representation was at its peak. With concentrated markets and a stranglehold by just a few packers, livestock producers were at the mercy of the whims and fancies of the controlled markets.

With an eye toward securing fair representation for livestock producers, several regional cooperatives, formed under the newly passed Capper-Volstead Act.

But even though the cooperatives were a step in the right direction, effort was disjointed and largely ineffective as the packers still held an immense amount of power over the producers.

The need for a nationally-scoped organization, comprised of these many cooperatives, was sorely needed.
“Being an ‘organization of organizations,’ NLPA has always been dependent on individuals who have been willing to step up and provide the needed leadership to ensure that NLPA is serving its mission to ‘provide a strong voice to protect a positive business environment and fair, competitive markets on behalf of its members through financial services, communications, and advocacy.

So what is it that has kept NLPA cohesive and relevant as a national organization? The flexibility and ability to adapt to new technologies, changing member needs, and the changing social environment.

Beyond NLPA’s national leaders, those individuals closer to the livestock producers and work with them to market their livestock also are integral to the success of NLPA.

Throughout its history, NLPA has adapted to the changing times and the changing needs of its members. Early in its existence its subsidiary, the National Livestock Publishing Company, created the first of its kind tabloid magazine, “The National Livestock Producer,” aimed at informing livestock producers on innovation in the industry as well as vital market prices from around the country. In the 1970s this magazine was sold to the Farm Journal which is still providing information to farmers and ranchers.

In 1968, NLPA saw the need to represent their members in the evolving commodity futures markets. With the introduction of cattle and hog futures contracts on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, NLPA formed a subsidiary, The National Producers Service Company, to act as an agent to allow NLPA members to provide price risk management services to their producers. At that time, a CME membership was also purchased and was held for several decades.

As NLPA moves into its future years, the foundation that had been laid by its founders and leaders over this past century will serve it well as changes in the industry, technology, and future producers are realized.

100 years is a long time! When you look at the rich history of NLPA, the one constant that stands out is the dedication, and hard work by the leaders of the organization.
NLPA SHEEP & GOAT FUND

In 2000, the National Livestock Producers Association Sheep & Goat Fund Committee made its first loan to the industry. Currently the Fund has 23 loans to 15 entities in 13 states. The Fund began with $14 million and has since revolved more than $54 million into sheep and goat related projects. The Fund can be used many ways, including: purchasing land or equipment, renovations, implementing weed control, fire protection, predator control, and breeding and genetics programs. The Fund can also be a valuable tool in restructuring your current financial package to help secure longer term, fixed rate loans that may otherwise be unavailable.

NLPA and its members lend the program extensive credit experience with a focus on agriculture and the ability to service loans nationwide, often using local lenders. NLPA works closely with industry leaders who possess an in-depth understanding of the sheep and goat industries and their credit and operational challenges. The Fund is delivered through either direct loans or loan guarantees—grants are not available through this program. Funds are available to qualified applicants at a competitive interest rate.

LIVESTOCK MARKETED BY NLPA MEMBERS

from January to December 2020

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<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th># CATTLE</th>
<th># SWINE</th>
<th># SHEEP/GOATS</th>
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<td>75,815</td>
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NLPA SHEEP & GOAT FUND

The Sheep & Goat
INNOVATION FUND
AN INDUSTRY LENDING PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

The Sheep & Goat Innovation Fund members

Walt Ernesti, Chairman
Pierce Miller, Vice Chairman
Darrell Ailshie, Secretary-Treasurer
James Gillmor
Dave Johnson
Dan Lippert
Rick O’Brien
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Mr. Dave Lamb  
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Mr. Rick O’Brien  
Producers Livestock Marketing Assn.  
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Mr. Eric Chapman  
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Oklahoma City, OK

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Managing Director

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Director of Member Services

Polly Welden  
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Julie James  
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MISSION

To be the national livestock organization that provides a strong voice to protect a positive business environment and fair, competitive markets on behalf of its members through financial services, communication and advocacy.

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