

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHEEP PRODUCERS USE GENETIC TOOLS TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

— *National sale based on expected progeny differences (EPDs) produces results* —

SPENCER (Iowa), Oct. 22, 2007 — Sheep producers seeking more return on their labor and rising feed costs are turning to proven genetic tools, like the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) to get the job done. And in return, those producers investing in animals backed by NSIP data are often earning a greater return on their sheep operations, as those sheep produce more prolific, productive offspring in less time on feed.

For the second consecutive year, the Center of the Nation NSIP Seminar and Sale held in Spencer, Iowa, grew substantially in attendees and prices commanded by slick-shorn performance-tested animals. In all, 103 and two-thirds sheep sold on August 4, 2007 and averaged \$511 per head.

Limited exclusively to sheep featuring NSIP expected progeny differences (EPDs) providing accurate predictions of an animal's ability to produce offspring with certain genetic traits, the sale continues to attract satisfied buyers across the country. NSIP EPDs help predict a variety of essential traits from a ewe's ability to milk, a ram's ability to sire offspring that reach weaning and market weights more quickly, and to the ability to produce uniform fleeces in wool breeds.

"The beauty of this sale is it's not simply a beauty contest where animals are sold on the basis of one person's opinion on one day like traditional shows and sales," said event chairman Mike Park of Woodhill Farm of Woodbine, Iowa. "Instead, every single animal sold is backed by objective data backed up by EPDs. And every animal is sold slick-shorn, so the buyer can truly see the animal's true confirmation."

The combination of slick-shearing and EPDs has proven very popular with buyers and consignors.

Buyers from nine states made purchases in the 2007 sale. And, they appreciated the "one-stop shopping" approach to being able to purchase registered maternal and terminal sire breeds including Polypays, Suffolks, Dorsets, Hampshires and Targhees in a single setting.

"Many of our buyers purchased white-faced ewes and black-faced rams and the sale appeals to both commercial and purebred seed stock producers as a result," Park said. "And the great thing about NSIP EPDs is it allows buyers and consignors to accurately compare performance across flocks, rather than simply within a flock or simply with the eye."

Spirited bidding highlighted the 2007 sale as each breed featured quality consignments commanding excellent prices. Among the sale highlights:

Polypays

Twenty-and-two-thirds Polypays averaged \$804. WoodHill Farm, Woodbine, Iowa, consigned the top ram, born December 23 of 2006, selling two-thirds interest and full possession to Elm Creek Polypays of Truman, Minn. for \$3,200. Goat Hill Polypays of Sioux Rapids sold a January ram lamb to Steve and Sherri Harris of Orfordville, Wisc. for \$1,200. An Elm Creek Polypays February ram lamb sold to Brett Pharo of Rapid City, Mich. for \$1,000, and Williams Superior Polypays, Rod Williams, of Dundee, Minn., bought a January ram lamb for \$900 from Uncompahgre Polypay of Delta, and an Elm Creek ram lamb for \$800. Mark Loustch of LeMars, Iowa, took home a

\$750 Uncompaghre consignment, and the Iowa State University's McNay Research Farm spent \$700 on a J&S Polypays entry from Steve and Janet Spessard of Worthington, Minn.

Twenty-one Polypay ewes averaged \$312. Polypay ewes were sold from the pens in groups, rather than individually crossing the auction block. Five Uncompaghre ewe lambs sold to Country View Acres of Curlew, Iowa for \$450 each. Woodhill Farm consigned a group of ewe lambs sold to Rattlesnake Polypays of Macksville, Kan. for \$425 a head.

Suffolks

Twenty-three Suffolk rams averaged \$614. Michigan State University of East Lansing, Mich., purchased a Buckeye Acres of Ohio yearling ram for \$2050. Laurie Seefeldt of Seville, S.D., bought a Michigan State yearling buck for \$1,000. A yearling consignment from Krafka Harkema Suffolks of Montezuma, Iowa, commanded \$1,000 from Tim B. Van Donge of Rock Valley, Iowa, and Scott and Charles Zoss of Letcher, S.D., took home an Eness Suffolks yearling and ram lamb from Dayton, Iowa, for \$1,000 each. Culham & Stevens Suffolks of Webberville, Mich., sold a yearling ram for \$900 to Allison Ramsbottom of Buffalo, Wyo. The Meinberg family of Hampton, Iowa, bought a Krafka Harkema ram lamb for \$900, outbidding Laurie Seefeldt who took home another Krafka Harkema entry for \$600. Mint Gold Ranch of Depere, Wisc., sold a ram lamb to Jimmy Calvert of Guthrie Center, Iowa for \$750. Nicole Dittbrenner of Cumberland, Wisc., took home a Michigan State ram lamb for \$600.

Twenty-six Suffolk ewes averaged \$359. Former Michigan State University Shepherd George Good, now of Ranchester, Wyo., added five Michigan State University yearling ewes to the George and Bonnie Good Trust for \$600 each and a ram lamb for \$700. Nicole Dittbrenner picked up a Culham & Stevens ewe lamb for \$500 and another for \$400. Cal Klarenbreck, of Hull, Iowa, bought a \$375 ewe lamb from Rich Krafka Family Suffolks of Dysart, Iowa, and a Krafka Harkema entry for \$350. Robert Murphy paid \$350 for an Eness Suffolks ewe lamb.

Hampshires

Eight Hamp rams averaged \$684. Helming Hampshires of Greely, Colo., put down \$2,700 for an Iowa State University's (ISU) Hampshire ram lamb, with Larry Luitjens of Ashton, Iowa, taking another ISU entry for \$1,100. The University of Wisconsin-Madison yearling Hamp ram sold to ISU for \$300.

Dorsets

Three Dorset rams averaged \$500. Culham & Stevens sold a ram lamb to Jimmy Calvert for \$750. Michigan State sold the top Dorset ram lamb for \$450 to the Dale Dobberpuhl Family of Mint Gold Ranch for \$450.

Targhees

Two Targhee rams averaged \$475. P.M. Ranch, Bob Padula/PPP Inc. of Montevideo, Minn. sold High Point Targhee, Vernon & Juanita Bundt of Glidden, Iowa, for \$550, and Tim Meyer of Clear Lake, Iowa picked up a University of Wisconsin-Madison entry for \$400.

About the event

Members of NSIP volunteer to direct the sale, managed by Conover Auction Service of Baxter, Iowa, with Col. Al Conover serving as auctioneer.

Dennis Dewitt of Spencer, Iowa, of Iowa State University's Extension Service, coordinates the educational component of the event, designed to provide sheep producers with the latest in technology and research to enhance their flock's performance and profitability.

"If you'd like to get more out of your sheep investment, plan to invest in your next stud ram and your replacement females at the 2008 Center of the Nation NSIP Sale August 2 in Spencer, Iowa," Park encouraged.

For more information

NSIP members seeking information on consigning to the 2008 sale, set for August 2 at the Clay County Fairgrounds in Spencer, Iowa, should contact Conover Auction Service at P.O. Box 9, Baxter, IA 50028 or call 641-227-3537.

For information on joining and enrolling your sheep flock in the National Sheep Improvement Program, http://www.nsip.org/breed_groups.htm.

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