

Small Ruminant Committee Report

2011 NIAA Annual Conference

Tuesday, April 12, 2011



The Small Ruminant Committee met on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm during the 2011 NIAA Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas with 14 people present. Ms. Eileen Kuhlmann, served as the Chair, and Ms. Linda Campbell served as the Vice Chair.

The committee session focused on consumer preferences and consumers perceptions of food safety. The following speakers presented relevant information pertaining to marketing lamb to a rapid paced consumer market and information on how consumers understand food safety. We also received an update on the National Scrapie Eradication Program.

Dr. Kirk Braden, Assistant Professor, Angelo State University, presented "The Current Lamb Industry: Adapting to a rapid-paced consumer market." Dr. Braden's presentation reviewed the consumer's constant need to spend wisely; however, Dr. Braden also introduced the consumer's boredom with the same choices. With today's Food TV and other information, consumers are willing to try something new as long as the information is available to them in an easily obtainable manner, either on the label or scanning a barcode to a website for a recipe (not flyers that can be misplaced). He presented the study Angelo State is planning to conduct with regard to ready-to-eat lamb and items that they have at their meat sales room of value-added products, neck riblets, lamb bacon, etc.

Dr. Loree Branham, Assistant Professor, Angelo State University, presented "Food Safety: Do consumers understand their role?" Dr. Branham followed Dr. Braden's presentation on food safety aspects and how everyone from producers, packers, United States Department of Agriculture, and consumers are responsible for the safety of food. Food-borne illnesses cost the industry billions of dollars; this figure includes lawsuits, recalls, lost sales, etc. The last food-borne-illnesses from lamb happened in 1993 & 1987; that doesn't mean it wouldn't happen again. Dr. Branham showed a slide with levels of different bacteria after harvest and noted proper cooking would destroy the bacteria. Seventy-seven percent of the food-borne illnesses are from food service and 20% from homes. Education is necessary. Washing hands before handling and preparing food, and not cross-contaminating are the two basic points. Education has to start with children in elementary, middle and high school!

Dr. Joe Garrett, ASDA/APHIS/VS, presented "Scrapie Update." The National Scrapie Eradication program is sampling sheep and goats for RSSS surveillance. States are being given numbers to achieve.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Three existing resolutions were amended or revised.
 - Funding for Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database (FARAD)
 - Scrapie Eradication
 - Official Sheep and Goat Identification
- One resolution was reaffirmed.
 - Producing Wholesome and Safe Sheep Products

General Discussion: NSEP funding is critical at this time of the program. The committee feels very strongly that this funding needs to be dedicated and at a level necessary to eradicate the disease (\$18 million).

Committee Session adjourned at 12:41 pm.