Responsibility in Wool
Production Update

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Historical Perspective:

• Movement toward more globally responsible food and clothing production – “Green Movement”
  • More people want to know where their food and fiber comes from and how that production impacts the environment
• Bigger than the “Green Movement” now
  • Statistics show average American is 3 generations are removed from production agriculture
  • Consumers do not automatically trust what we are doing is best for the livestock we raise and the lands we tend
Historical Perspective:

- Animal rights campaigns targeting livestock production
  - Down industry
  - Dairy industry
  - Sheep industry – PETA shearing video

- We need to instill trust and do a better job of telling our story of how we raise and care for our animals to people who are willing to listen
Emphasis in Animal Care:

• Last year, during ASI convention
  • Reviewed of other animal welfare standards
    • TE’s Responsible Wool Standard
  • Discussed options for US sheep producers
  • Established the need for our own Animal Care program

• Increased programming within ASI
New Edition of Sheep Care Guide

• Originally produced in 1996 and first updated in 2006
• Developed to serve as a reference for the sheep producer using a variety of management and production systems
• Support the ethical and humane care of animals
• More detailed section on wool sheep care and shearing
• Available for purchase through ASI office
• Also printable version available online
Animal Care Emphasis:

- Created additional teaching tools to address “Responsible Wool Production” for use with producers, shearers, and wool classers/handlers
Responsibility in Wool Production Initiative:

• Draft a white paper on wool and shearing welfare with the goal of developing a color brochure (3-5 pages in length with color and photos).

• Purpose is two-fold:
  • Brochure/handout available for state and national meetings, producers, textile industry, and apparel groups that explains US wool animal welfare
  • Provide the framework used for future learning modules
Responsibility in Wool Production Initiative:

- Create a learning module addendum to SSQA
  - Self-audit process
  - If needed, third-party audit would be possible
- Self-audit declaration
Sheep Safety & Quality Assurance:

- Developed by ASI and CSU
- Ensures maximum consumer confidence in products generated by the U.S. sheep industry
- Primarily targeted at the food industry and not textile
- Manuals, Levels: 1 Participation, 2 Certification, 3 Verification
- On farm audits available through certified trainers
- Industry self-audit
- Excellent foundation
HOWEVER, it doesn’t specifically address: Sheep management in an around shearing.
Purpose of US RWPI:

- Recognize best practices of sheep and wool producers
- Help textile and apparel groups to identify US wools that are held to US wool responsibility/animal care guidelines
- Create a wool responsibility/animal care benchmark for all sheep and wool producers to attain
- Help provide traceability and assurance for US consumers of wool
Positives of US RWPI

• Better communication between shearer and sheep owners
• Better record keeping required by programs may increase the potential for improved profitability
• Dialogue between consumers and farmers and farmers to consumers helps to keep agriculture relevant
• Preserves the reputation of wool, the farmers, and the brands
Emphasizing Animal Care:

- ASI is taking a very proactive approach to animal care/welfare.
- Being proactive will ensure our customers and textile brands that we are producing wool in the most ethical manner possible.
- Remember low stress = improved animal performance.