

Minutes
Sustainable Sheep and Fiber Community
April 17, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 by Chairman, Alethea Kenney
In attendance were: Kathy Belt, Kelly Bellefy, Robin Bellefy, Dennis Engebretson, Trudy Delich, Sheena Black, Margo Hanson, Cherish Duerst, James Crook and Stacy Dresow..

Secretary's Report

The minutes had been distributed through Email and copies were made for those who attended in person. A motion was made to pass the Minutes, with the exception of correction of the spelling of Kelly and Robin's last name. Kelly motioned to accept the Minutes as provided, Stacy seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurers Report:

Beginning Checkbook Balance \$3,184.60

Income:

Memberships - New and Renewals \$160.00
TOTAL INCOME \$160.00

Expenses:

Forum Communications \$63.00
Polk Co. 4-H 25.00
TOTAL EXPENSES \$88.00

Ending Checkbook Balance \$3,256.60

Report for the Sheep Event (in February)

Income: \$775.00

Expenses: \$272.60

Donations: \$420.00

Robin motioned to accept the minutes, Trudy seconded, motion passed.

Members Introduction:

Because we had several new members added to the Board, it was decided that each person give a brief introduction.

Margo: Our Treasurer, has an Etsy Store where she sells, among other things, "curly locks." James asked for a definition of "curly locks." She has Wensleydale and Border Leicester and crosses.

James Crook: lives near Menahga and has corridale and cross. He sells the meat. He

just recently had his flock sheared and asked for information on what to do with the fleece.

Stacy: She lives in the southern part of the state and handles our Instagram account. She as Cormo and crosses. She sells the wool including some she has naturally dyed. She is looking to sell all her Finn sheep

Alethea: Is the Chairman of this Board. She lives outside Shevlin. She has had llamas and Icelandic sheep, but now has crosses with Black Welsh Mountain sheep. She currently has many sheep but is not doing lambing this year. She also has dogs she raises for fiber. She uses no chemicals on her farm. She developed a line of minerals for sheep and goats called "Back in Balance", which she sells along with a lot of fiber and encourages teaching by example.

Sheena: has Black Row Farm She raises Finns, Jacobs and crosses. This year has been difficult where she lost lambs and had to bottle feed 18. She also has cattle, goats and rabbits. See Adendum below

Trudy: lives in Bemidji but spends a lot of time at the farm in the southern part of the State. Her son raises Lester Long wool and Wensleydale Her son-in-law shows and in 2019 had a fleece voted The Grand Champion Fleece at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival.

Dennis: lives in Clearbrook on a Century Farm. Laura uses sheep/goat/and beef tallow to make soap. He has Polypay, beef and elk. He helped create a yarn with the elk hair included. He also has Fjord horses. This year he had 200% lambs with only 6 in the house.

Kelly: lives near Bagley with a herd of dairy goats. Several years ago he lost his entire herd of sheep and is in a position to replace it this year with Cattadin which are hair sheep,

Robin: is Kelly's wife and spends a lot of time helping. She enjoys gardening and works the unwanted fibers from their animals into the soil.

Kathy: the Secretary - is the only one who does not have animals but has worked with the fiber of over 45 different kinds of animals. She spins, knits, crochets, tats, and about 30 other techniques.

Cherish: lives near Bemidji and has Finn sheep with lambs. She enjoys the multipurpose sheep and as well as milking them, makes lotions to sell. As soon as her yarn is returned from the Mill, it will be available at a local yarn shop, Fiddlesticks in Bemidji.

Voting in Officers:

James motioned that we pass a White Slate, Kelly seconded. All officers retained their positions for another year.

Old Business:

Stacy asked for contact information for all members. She wants us to be more active on Instagram and wants members' input.

The "Please Renew" letter was read as a recap for the February event. It was noted that we need to be able to provide a way for "soft" speakers to be heard by everyone. Kelly has a microphone he will bring to all future events.

New Business:

June 29th is the event Breakfast at the Farm held at the Beltrami Fairgrounds. Several of us will be there to show the processing of fleece. Sheena, James, Stacy, and Cherish, as well as Alethea and Kathy offered fleeces in various stages of preparation.

Farm to Fiber Festival:

This year it will be September 6 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. It will be held in conjunction with the Farmers Market in Park Rapids. The cost per booth is \$25 per SSFC member and \$35 for non-members. We will have a fashion show and raffle as in years past.

Coordination with Back to Basics held in Pine River in February.

In 2026, there will be no conflict, however, this is something we need to follow up on every year.

NWRF&Produce is encouraging "Shop Local" tours. Dawn Wanneo (Dawn Wann's Gardens) is having a tour of her green house and farm on either the 16th or 17th of May. Date to be determined. Anyone who wants to be a vendor can do so for free. Contact Alethea for more information

The Klischs (the Farmers Market speakers at the February event) will also have a tour and pot luck later in the summer.

Some time was spent discussing speakers for next year's February event. Suggested roster is: Cherish speaking about milking sheep and using their milk; Alethea talking about the mineral requirements for sheep and goats in this part of Minnesota; an invitation will be given to Fiddlesticks owner; and a panel on the "Worst thing to happen on the Farm". Maybe a half hour panel.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35. Kathy motioned, Trudy seconded, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Belt, Secretary

Addendum

From Sheena

If my count is correct I've lost 24 lambs and 2 kids.

5 of the dead being lost to pneumonia and 1 to joint ill, the rest were found dead.

I have had 17 bottle babies live, 13 being lambs, 4 being kids.

I have 18 lambs and no kids being dam raised.

I have 13 ewes left to lamb and 5 goats to kid if all actually got bred.

Of the lambs lost all the ones found dead were finn or finn x.

The Jacobs have all been found live and only lost 4 who've gotten pneumonia during our week or so of extreme weather changes with rain, wind and snow.