

April 17, 2016

This past weekend, the USSA Board of Directors participated in a strategic planning retreat in Omaha. Ten Directors and the Executive Secretary were present. Dr. Jim Gibb of Neogen Corporation served as facilitator.

The retreat began with a review of the 3 previous strategic outcomes determined at the last board retreat in 2013. Those outcomes, and progress made toward them, are as follows:

1. ***Maintain an economically viable office.*** The USSA continues to maintain a low overhead office, and has remained in the black despite a continued decrease in registrations. Strategies implemented since 2013 that have increased revenue include sale of email blasts and newsletter advertising, and an increase in transfer fees.
2. ***Promote a more user-friendly Suffolk sheep.*** The Board of Directors evaluated and passed revisions to the percentage registry program. This board action failed to pass a membership vote.
3. ***Reestablish an Association connection to the commercial industry.*** This outcome led to the formation of the USSA Performance Committee. The committee proposed and was recently awarded a \$16,500 Let's Grow grant award from ASI, which will increase USSA participation in NSIP, build strategic alliances, and increase the commercial relevance of the breed. The USSA has also increased its advertising presence in commercial sheep industry publications.

The Board determined that work toward of these outcomes is ongoing, and that components of each would be included in the 2016 Strategic Plan. The group first revisited the Association's Mission and Vision Statements. The Mission Statement was abridged and the Vision Statement was created, as follows:

#### **USSA Mission Statement**

"To define, register, promote and improve the Suffolk breed to provide leadership for the advancement and future of the entire U.S. Sheep Industry"

#### **USSA Vision Statement**

"To be the most innovative, value adding, member-driven sheep breed organization for an evolving U.S. Sheep Industry"

The board then outlined a new strategic plan. The discussion was impassioned, productive, and included feedback solicited from the membership prior to the retreat. The entire plan can be encapsulated by the general theme of "Increasing Registered Suffolk Market Share." The strategic outcomes can be arranged within 4 goal areas, as follows:

## Strategic Outcomes

1. **Breed Improvement** a) Expand production database, b) Create and disseminate educational materials for Suffolk stakeholders, c) Sponsor programs and competitions that reward functionality and genotypes, and d) Establish and enhance industry partnerships .
2. **Promotion** a) Improve internal communications, and b) Enhance outreach.
3. **Financial viability** a) Explore providing registration services for other sheep breeds, b) Implement timely budgeting, c) Increase membership, d) Assess member needs, e) Recognize members' longevity, f) Identify new member prospects, and g) Create benefits for supporters and commercial buyers.
4. **Youth Development** a) Review current programs, b) Add youth section to USSA Newsletter c) Increase Suffolk breed involvement at livestock judging contests, and d) Encourage participation in NSIP youth program.

To ensure implementation of the plan and communication of progress to the entire membership, a report on each goal area will be included in all future Board meetings. These reports will be reflected in the minutes that will be made available on the USSA web site. The Board is committed to the hard work these outcomes will require, and to being a member-driven Association. Please contact a Director in your District with question or concerns.