

2021 Mentor Grant

KSWPA Report

August 30, 2021

Amount received: \$1000

The main focus for this year's funds were to increase mentor resources participating in the KY Ag Veterans Ag Program.

Originally, our plan for mentors was two fold:

- 1) Host recruitment events across the state to increase the number of mentors we currently have. We were successful in hosting 2 events, one at a graded sale in Paris, KY and another at a KY Ag Veterans Network Event in July. The event included an educational component which allowed us to recruit and train at the same time.
- 2) Once mentors were recruited, they were contacted by a KSWPA representative and a KY Ag Veterans representative. Both reps worked to make connections between veterans and the mentors. KY Ag Veterans has offered online educational events for mentors all through 2020 and 2021. Mentors also receive a newsletter with mentor encouragement and tips.

KSWPA has continued to recruit volunteers in the same manner as the past two years, as it has been very successful. Efforts are made through email and facebook campaigns.

Here is how the campaign works:

- Each time a new member joins KSWPA, he/she is sent an email instructing them how to become a mentor using a link to an online form, or how to find a mentor from the website
- Once a person registers as a mentor, they are added to the mentor list and sent a confirmation email
- Each time a person registers for SRPS, they receive an email explaining the mentor program and how to find a mentor
- Each month, a post is made on the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development facebook page asking producers to register as mentors.
- Each month, , a post is made on the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development facebook page asking producers to find a mentor.

A monthly email newsletter was created and sent to all mentors to help provide resources regarding nutrition, economics, forages, health management, parasite management, genetics, etc. The newsletter could then be sent by the mentors to their mentees to start discussions on the topics.

To enhance the connection between mentors and mentees, Sharon Koontz, the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office Manager, sends an email to all new members specifically asking about their interest in being connected with a mentor. If the person responds with interest, she follows up to get information necessary to make a quality connection. Then, the mentor makes contact with the mentee. Sharon then keeps tabs with the mentor on how the relationships are going and providing any additional assistance necessary.

All participants were given a form to complete if they wanted to become a mentor and also received an ALB reusable grocery bag upon signing up.

To date, KSWPA has 16 mentors that report spending an average of 5 hours per week, per year mentoring. That is a total of 4,160 hours of mentoring a year! Mentors reported sharing knowledge on parturition, marketing options, and parasite management the most.