

2020 Mentor Grant

KSWPA Report

September 6, 2020

Amount received: \$1000

The main focus for this year's funds were to increase mentor resources.

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 1 event in January at a graded sale in Paris, KY. The event included an educational component which allowed us to recruit and train at the same time.
- 2) Host 2 face-to-face mentor trainings for all mentors that would make them subject matter specialists throughout the state. However, due to Covid-19, we were unable to do the face-to-face classes. In lieu, we offered online webinars in topic areas chosen by KSWPA members through a survey conducted in the fall of 2019.

Mentor Recruitment Efforts

Over the past 2 years, KSWPA has had success in recruiting mentors through email and facebook campaigns. Therefore, we did those things again this year.

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.

The mentor recruitment event in Paris, KY was a very good model for how the events will be held in other places next year. Producers attended an education program regarding marketing of small ruminants. 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. If a producer was seeking a mentor, we had mentors in attendance and made the initial introductions.

Mentor Training Efforts

Because we could not host the face-to-face trainings for mentors starting early summer, we decided to host online webinars in topic areas that KSWPA members indicated were of high importance to them. The survey was completed the fall of 2019. Areas of interest were marketing, parasites and NSIP. Using this information, the KSWPA board identified speakers for the webinars. Sharon Koontz, KSGDO office manager, then contacted the speakers, scheduled the webinars, and sent out email and facebook campaigns to recruit mentor participation.

The following webinars were hosted:

[How to Find Archived Livestock Market Reports-Starting January 2020](#)

[How to Find Current Livestock Market Reports](#)

[2020 Prime & Choice Lamb and Kid Price Trends- January through March 2020](#)

[KY Worm Talk with Susan](#)

[How to Read a Market Report](#)

[Preventing Contagious Diseases in Small Ruminants](#)

To date, KSWPA has 11 mentors that report spending an average of 5 hours per week, per year mentoring. That is a total of 2,860 hours of mentoring a year! Mentors reported sharing knowledge on parturition, marketing options, and parasite management the most.