

## **General Membership Meeting Saturday Nov 2, 2024**

### **Zoom**

President Josh Krenz called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. He welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. This is his last AGM as president and he has been honored to serve. He explained the proof of meeting notice was mailed with ballots and also meeting invites posted in blasts, on the website and in *The Bagpipe*.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Josh Krenz asked if there were any additions, corrections or omissions to the preliminary agenda; there were none. John McLaughlin moved: Adopt the agenda as presented. Second by Mark Schulz. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Josh Krenz asked if there were any additions, corrections or omissions to last year's meeting minutes which are available on the website; there were none. Jan Larson moved: Approve the minutes from the November 4, 2023 general membership meeting. Second by Dick LeClar. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Josh Krenz asked that all introduce themselves so each can be recognized. He asked three times with no public comment given.

### **Operations Manager's Report**

Ginnah Moses said AHCA is a member driven organization which is member "owned". When you pay dues, register and transfer cattle, become a QHB member, etc. you are buying into the business. We are 2000+ members strong. The membership makes AHCA what it is along with 100+ volunteers including the board, committees and those who host events.

Along with all of you, there are 4 staff members: Lindsey Slate, Amber Ruppel, Brandy Geiger and Ginnah Moses. A big shout out to my outstanding co-workers, they work hard and have AHCA's best interest in mind. Things we do:

- Cross train; cover for each other and we are small enough that we take turns answering the phone and email.
- Myth busters; if you hear something that doesn't seem quite right, please give us a call. Many times we can help with the facts.
- Turn around time; it is generally 2 weeks for membership, registrations that don't need DNA or have issues, transfers with no issues and DNA kits. If it has been longer than that and you haven't received an email from us needing further information, please call or email. Keep in mind that the DNA lab can have samples for 4-6 weeks for processing.

For those interested in entering the National Show, remember the deadline is Nov 10 and there are no late entries. This year there is no host hotel but rather there is a link on AHCA's website to several hotels NWSS has contracted with. Be sure to ask for the National Western rate. Also there are several Airbnbs in the area. Trailer parking is still at Dick's Sporting Goods Park but it is the NWSS lot and they charge \$50 for your entire stay. New this year, we are having a Highland Hangout with a bar and snacks along with fun give aways!

### **Treasurer's Report & AHCA Outlook**

The 5/24 Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss were reviewed. They reflect 12 months or 100% of the fiscal year (June 1-May 31). On both please note last year is included as a comparison. On the Balance Sheet, the total checking and savings balance was \$433,756.65 which is similar to last fiscal year. That is made up of a savings account, two CDs, NS&S checking and the US Bank checking that is used regularly. AHCA is covered by FDIC but we may become involved with an additional bank in the future. Under fixed assets we have added our copyrights/trademarks. Deferred revenue is always rolled into the following year, in June, the start of the new fiscal year. Deferred revenue is up slightly for magazine ads and subscriptions, with a good jump of approximately \$7,000 for dues. Total liabilities is down due to no gathering in 2024 and with our new payroll system, taxes are paid immediately. Total liabilities and equity is \$483,686.58. AHCA is at a financial point where we can spend more to service the membership.

On the Profit and Loss, membership dues did well at \$134,790. The other primary income sources are registrations and transfers with bull registrations \$49,155, cow registrations \$63,620 and transfers \$80,730. There was good growth in all four categories which speaks volumes for the growth of AHCA and the breed. The organization is 2x the size that it was 5 years ago. We track 5 enterprises and it is important to follow those. Under expenses are our 2 major ones: office and payroll. Payroll wasn't kept up to the workload for the last few years but it has finally caught up with growth. The board approved \$45,000 for a new website, after the budget was approved. It will be amortized about \$8,000/yr for 5 years. We are also returning more services to members through breed promotion, member relations and programs. Total expense is up to \$376,545.45, an increase from \$305,243.81. It's been another good year with a net profit/loss of \$17,224.55. The P&L is a reflection of operations, where the tire meets the road.

The 990-tax return was filed with the IRS by AHCA's accountant. Randi Johnson is on the Finance Committee and has a lot of working knowledge with budgets and using assumptions as a tool to make better projections and evaluation of the finances. The committee is working on this which is an ongoing project. Treasurer's report approved unanimously by consensus.

### **Board of Directors' Report**

Josh Krenz reported that in 2024, the AHCA Board of Directors conducted the following items of business.

- Restructured the AHCA committees, including the break-up of BP&P into two committees: Breed Protection and Highland Promotion. We also put Gathering and Highland Beef Marketing into subcommittees, rather than standing committees.
- As mentioned earlier, approved a \$45,000 budget for the creation of a new AHCA website.
- Implemented by-law changes that create rotation of the executive board so they do not roll on and off at the same time.
- Met four times over the course of 2024.

- The Executive Committee met every other week, except for a few dates when meetings were not needed.
- Encouraged the Genomics Committee to research the emergence of nt821.

## **Standing Committee Reports**

### Governance

Pat White reported that the Governance Committee has continued its activities the past year which include:

- Review of director attendance at Board of Director meetings. The past year has revealed no directors out of compliance with attendance requirements.
- Annual selection and recruitment of a slate of members to form the Nominations Committee.
- Review of all the members selected by the Nominations Committee as possible directors, with comments concerning selections given back to the Nominations Committee for consideration in the committee's final selections. Governance has voice but no vote or veto power in selection of possible directors.
- Worked extensively on a review of the AHCA By-laws throughout the year and that work continues.
- Updated the Code of Conduct General for AHCA directors and committee members. There is ongoing consideration to suggested changes made to that code by members.
- Developed a Code of Conduct Media. There is ongoing consideration to suggested changes and concerns voiced by members.

### Breed Protection & Promotion

Mark Johnson reported the committee members: Jacquelyn Chotkowski, Anne Proctor, Paige Proctor, Laura McDowell-May, Bruce Schmitz, Jill Ramsey, Deborah Nelson, Emily Young, Seth King, Tom McConnell, Jan Larson, Mark Johnson. BP&P is made up of 8 subcommittees: Pedigree, Bagpipe, Juniors, Social Media, Website, App, Education, National Sale. Most of the work in BP&P is done in the subcommittees.

Pedigree (Jacquelyn Chotkowski):

Pedigree is working on reviewing and updating the section of Rules and Regulations that pertains to registering animals in the herdbook. It has also been providing members with information on the myostatin nt821 issue as well as helping members sort out pedigree issues.

Bagpipe (Anne Proctor):

*The Bagpipe* had a successful year publishing many informative articles and providing coverage of AHCA events, as well as regional shows. The magazine continued with the special summer edition this year with a very informative Herd Health Issue which covered many important topics for Highland breeders and it covered the nt821 (double muscling issue) with accurate information and perspective. It is a valuable resource for AHCA members.

Juniors (Paige Proctor):

Juniors had a successful 2024 NWSS which included participation gifts for all youth, belt buckle awards and embroidered vests to wear in the sale arena. The Junior Committee

presented the Allegiance Award to Maryn Cowell; congratulations to her. They are now preparing for the 2025 NWSS.

Social Media (Tom McConnell):

Tom has been reporting Social Media is “steady as she goes”. As of this morning, the AHCA Facebook page has 6,514 followers and the Instagram page has 1,522 followers.

Website (Bruce Schmitz):

Website has spent the year seeking and evaluating proposals from different vendors to build the new website. Recently, they narrowed the selection down to two companies, then selected a proposal from a company called Iceberg Web Design and requested a \$45,000 budget to accomplish the task. The request was passed by BP&P and the Board of Directors and work should begin soon.

App (Bruce Schmitz):

App is paused, waiting on website developments.

Education (Tom McConnell):

The Coo Cattlemen podcast began the year hosted by Seth and Kimber King. It is aired on Spotify and YouTube. The podcast consists of interviews with select members and is both an entertaining and educational production. The Education Subcommittee with Jennifer Lewis taking the lead, brought the issue of a standard before BP&P and came up with a Breed Standard which was presented as a motion and passed by BP&P and the Board; the Board made small changes. AHCA now has a Breed Standard, something that many have long wanted. An article introducing it will be published in an upcoming issue of the magazine and posted on the website.

Standing committee changes:

As was mentioned earlier in the meeting, the Board has passed changes to the standing committee structure. This will split BP&P into two standing committees: Breed Protection and Highland Promotion.

### Show

Heather Bailey said the Show Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis. This year there are 6 shows that hosted or will host super point status and 13 regular point status. ROE points will be calculated following the National Western Stock Show and yearly winners will be announced at the banquet. With the growth of the breed and the popularity of showing, the Show Committee will begin a thorough review of ROE rules and regulations. We would welcome any ideas for changes to the structure of the program. As we head into 2025, we will also need any new shows that would like to have ROE status submitted no later than February 1<sup>st</sup>. Please email the potential show information to AHCA. The NWSS will close the 2024 show season. We are looking forward to tremendous participation at Nationals. There has been a flood of inquiries and we are excited about the 36<sup>th</sup> annual show. Entries are due by November 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Highland Beef Marketing

Josh Krenz said Jim Lindauer stepped down as the chair in June so he is serving as the interim chair. We appreciate all the work Jim did heading up the committee. Happenings of the committee this year:

- Wrote and contributed articles to *The Bagpipe*.

- Recruited new members to revamp the committee.
- Came up with a list of 2024-25 tactical ideas including
  - Online education seminar
  - Survey of AHCA members
  - Article by Angus Mackay

### Gathering

Tom McConnell explained that this is the first full year of the committee since it was formed after the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gathering.

- There will be no AHCA Gathering scheduled for 2025 due to the World Congress and Gathering being held in Oban Scotland.
- As approved by the AHCA Board of Directors, the 2026 AHCA Gathering will be held at Sheppard Farm on Apple Hill in Hanover, PA. This Gathering will be hosted by Heather Sheppard Lunn & Peter H. Sheppard of Sheppard Farm on Apple Hill along with Mid-Atlantic Highland Association.
- Earlier in the year the board approved a motion to have annual gatherings every other year due to lack of interest from host groups. That motion was reversed in July by the Board, to now have Gatherings every year unless there is no interest from a host group. Then those years would be skipped.
- This committee accepted a proposal for the 2027 Gathering that will be hosted by the North Central Highland Cattle Association and tentatively planned to be held in the Ames/Des Moines IA area. Motion was sent to the AHCA Board of Directors for approval at the October meeting.
- This committee will begin working on a list of duties and responsibilities to help Gathering hosts use this committee as a resource for their planning.
- As always, we welcome proposals for future Gatherings from individuals and or regional associations to be hosts in upcoming years. The farther out they can be planned the better the plan can be brought to fruition.

### Ethics

John Chotkowski said during the past year the Ethics Committee has dealt with all ethics issues by reviewing the presenting complaint, gathering additional information if necessary and submitting said materials and a recommendation to the Board for final Board action. At present there are no issues before the committee.

### **Unfinished Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Regional Association Reports**

#### Mid-Atlantic

Jim Lindauer stated 2024 has been a good year in the Mid-Atlantic even though we had extreme drought in some areas and terrible floods in others. We had three Highland shows, Mid-Atlantic Spring Classic, York State Fair and KILE. Our members also attended numerous county and state fairs. In June we had our online auction which brought value to our members. It was a farm to farm sale reducing cost and stress on

cattle. We will hold our education event and annual meeting at Penn State Bull Evaluation Center on November 16th. MAHA formalized a new junior program and will elect a director for the program at our annual meeting. MAHA is looking forward to 2025 with a schedule of shows and educational events and hopefully a trip to Scotland.

#### Midwest

Pat White gave a quick report since their regional director, Richard Muntz, couldn't attend. It's been a busy year with two major shows in their area; Yooper Classic at the UP State Fair, Escanaba, MI and MASH at the MI State Fair, Novi, MI. Both had tremendous junior shows. Their board meets every month so it is always busy with much to do.

#### Mountain States

No report

#### North Central

Jan Larson stated they have approximately 200 members with a large increase in IA members. Fifty members attended the Feb 2024 annual meeting in Northwood, IA. Educational panel discussions covered handling, calving, training, etc. The guest speaker presented Grass Fed Direct to Consumer Marketing. There have been two successful online sales. Todd and Ginny Green with Mid-Lakes Highlands hosted a member picnic at their farm near Mindoro, WI. Highlands and the NCHCA have been represented at the MN State Fair, St Paul, MN in September by Flatland Farm and WI Farm Technology Days, Cadott, WI by Hidden Ridge in July. The Wisconsin Beef Council recently selected 10 individuals to participate in the second class of the Wisconsin Beef Leadership Institute including our own Dennis Brenneman of Hidden Ridge. The three area shows are the NCHCA Regional, Austin, MN; World Beef Expo, West Allis, WI (this year is the last) and the MJSC, also in Austin. The 2024 calendars sold well and the 2025 version is out; order from NCHCA.org. Future events are the annual meeting on Feb 8, 2025 at Cranberry Country Lodge, Tomah, WI and the NCHCA sponsored AHCA Annual Gathering in 2027.

#### Northeast

John Chotkowski stated that the NEHCA Spring Show in Springfield, MA was again a huge success with entry numbers sufficient to maintain our super point status. The two additional NEHCA dominant shows, the Boonville Fair in July and the New York State Fair in August, were again well attended and enjoyed by all. Our final NEHCA activity was the Annual Membership Meeting in September, put on by Kathy and Conrad Mandsager at their Mandico Cattle Co. in Nottingham, NH. The 40 attendees enjoyed a beautiful sunny day while learning from our three speakers about the availability of USDA grants, the intricacies of gathering and working with embryos, and the world of training and driving oxen (including live demo). As an organization, NEHCA is on stable financial footing and membership has remained solid for several years. That said, as the popularity of Highlands increases, we continue to reach out for new members to maintain our ability to support the breed in the Northeast.

### Northwest

Jennifer Lewis said our second annual Production Sale was a success this spring and we've announced our 3rd annual sale for the last Saturday in April of 2025. Our spring meeting was well attended and hosted by Dalkena Highlands. We had speakers on the topic of identifying your ideal beef customer, finding them on social media and then getting them off social media to your storefront to place an order. They were very engaging speakers with a proven track record of marketing beef direct to consumers. We conducted a survey to better understand member educational needs and will continue presenting educational topics via zoom this winter targeted to those results. Our topics from last winter were well received. We've had growth in our membership and are trying out some 'mixer' events for people to get together and network this winter. Showing and fair attendance continues to present challenges.

### South Central

Dax West reported the South Central Highland Cattle Association has continued to grow each year. The member numbers dropped a little after the inaugural year but it has been on a steady incline ever since. In April 2024, the Association hosted its second Highland show with the addition of a junior show. The open show had 49 entries to pass through the ring. The number was 1 entry shy of landing a super point show in 2025! Plans have already been made for 2025. SCHCA hosted its third gathering of members this fall with a McPeak Show Clinic for members and juniors. The junior program has found new life under the direction of Christi Brown of Arkansas. The region is starting to see growth and continued interest in the show ring. There have been multiple people/members show interest in hosting other shows throughout the region. The future of SCHCA is looking promising!

### Southern

Evan White gave the first ever report from their new region and said he is happy to report they are official! They are using word of mouth and AHCA's breeder list to solicit membership to their region. The first objective is to have a show at Clemson University. It will be held March 2, 2025 at the T. Ed Garrison Arena and they are shooting to make it an annual ROE show. We will have more information on shows and other events as we grow and add to the calendar. Volunteers have been sharing their interest in hosting various events.

### **National Sale**

The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual National Sale on January 25<sup>th</sup> is ramping up to be an incredible event. We have received international entries, excellent live female lots, creative and enticing genetic packages and the promise of some excellent bull candidates if they meet the qualifications for the sale. The commission structure was lowered to 8% due to the financial stability that the event has provided yearly. We have commissioned Hilary Barker's gorgeous painting for the cover of the catalog; sadly this will be the last due to her passing. Benchmark Graphics will be producing our catalog. Entries are due November 10<sup>th</sup> with sale photos and videos due November 15<sup>th</sup>. The catalog is scheduled to be shipped on December 18<sup>th</sup>. It is essential that all photos and videos be submitted on time to guarantee the timely completion of our catalog. Jesse Silva is joining our committee as the transportation coordinator. He will assist buyers with transportation of purchases, ensure that these animals have shipping documents and there is a smooth transition from sale ring to trailer. His information is located within the sale blasts for all who need to contact him in advance of the event. We will be using

Sheridan Auction Services this year in conjunction with the online by CCI.live. We are so excited to host this annual event and look forward to watching the massive networking between AHCA members, as well as the beautiful cattle that will be presented. Please do not hesitate to contact Heather Bailey, Collin Demuth, Jan Larson or Jesse Silva with questions.

### **Highland Cattle Foundation**

Mark Schulz, President of HCF, gave the update. In 2002, the Highland Cattle Foundation was established as a Section 501(c)(3) corporation. The need for the Foundation arose so potential benefactors wishing to donate funds to support the Highland breed would have the full benefit of a charitable deduction for federal tax purposes.

The goals of the Foundation are:

- Providing scholarships to junior AHCA members.
- Preserving Highland genetics by providing semen to the National Animal Germplasm Program (NAGP) and making semen/embryos available for purchase.
- Supporting educational projects, including the *AHCA Highland Breeder's Guide*.
- Making select research grants.

The Highland Cattle Foundation Board of Directors is composed of: Mark Schulz, Bill Roberts, Wally Congdon, Cindy Weideman, Ginnah Moses. This year we awarded eight \$1500 scholarships to AHCA Juniors. Generated money by auctioning off donated semen and embryos and had some generous donations from members and folks' estates. Current balance of our account is \$117,830.16

### **Election of Directors**

Josh Krenz said the Teller Committee is comprised of AHCA office staff and a total of 578 counted votes came through the office. The list of nominees was read: Kristin Carmack, Pleasureville, KY; Virginia "Ginny" Green, Mindoro, WI; Tom McConnell, Balaton, MN. All have signed and returned the Expectations of AHCA Directors. Attendees were reminded that all voted by mail and needed to have their ballot postmarked on time. Congratulations to the director nominees elected: Kristin Carmack, Ginny Green, Tom McConnell. Terms run from Jan 1-Dec 31. For new directors, the first meeting is in January in Denver. Thank you to all the exceptional nominees who ran on the ballot. Keep in mind, the nomination form is in two issues of the magazine during the year. If you have a good candidate who is willing and able to serve and they have leadership qualities with committee work as a bonus, please nominate them.

### **Highland Member of the Year & Hall of Fame Announcement**

The Nominations Committee was unanimous in their selection of the recipients of AHCA's two highest honors. These are awards that should be celebrated in person so both recipients/families are invited to the National Show & Sale banquet in Denver this Jan. We hope they will be able to attend to receive their beautiful bronzes. Full bios and photos will be in the winter issue of the magazine.



Dick LeClair presented the Highland Hall of Fame Award:

The year was 1978, a young Vermont man took a job as a farm manager and the rest as they say is history. Today after decades of dedication to the Highland breed and association, we induct Greg Markwell into the 2024 American Highland Cattle Association Hall of Fame.

Greg was introduced to Highland cattle in 1978 by Theodore (Ted) and Caroline Robbins of Trafalgar Square Farm where he took that role as farm manager. He spent his youth as a dairy farmer with his grandfather but upon arrival at Trafalgar Square Farm, he quickly took to the Grande Old Breed. In 1981 as young newlyweds, he and his wife Linda moved to a home on the farm where they raised two boys.

Perhaps without intention, back in '78 Ted and Caroline with the help of Greg began a journey to becoming a recognized premier breeder of Highland cattle. Trafalgar's breeding program has put a stamp on breeding programs across North America and around the globe with champions of descendants as far away as Scotland and Australia.

Greg has had a show career like none other having started showing with Trafalgar at the first NEHCA show in 1981. His National Show career started in 1989 when they traveled to Denver for the very first show at National Western. Back then the show was held down in the Yards and the animals weren't even haltered. Trafalgar hasn't missed a National Western Stock Show in the 35 years since. With a whopping twenty-two National Grand or Reserve Champions, and more grand and reserve champions at regional shows than would be possible to count, Greg's eye for the cattle and passion for the breed speak for themselves.

While Greg's greatest impact has been on the breed, he has also been an active participant in the success of the AHCA. Over the years Greg has actively served on numerous boards and committees at both national and regional level. Nationally he served on the board and was active on the junior committee for many years. At the regional level he has served on the NEHCA Board and chaired the NEHCA show for nearly twenty years. He and Linda have been strong supporters of the junior association, having sponsored many awards over the years and encouraging their own sons to show.

Greg's life is Highland cattle and farming. A passion and a lifestyle that is shared by his family. So much so that his son Chris has worked at Trafalgar Square Farm with him since 2007 and he now shares his passion for Highland cattle with his own family, particularly his 9-year-old son Caden, Greg's grandson, who can often be found working with the cows on the weekends or after school.

Trafalgar Square Farm is synonymous with Highland cattle, and this year's inductee to the American Highland Cattle Association's Hall of Fame, Greg Markwell of Trafalgar Square Farm, has been at the forefront of the Highland breed for forty-six years. An unquestionable legacy with the association and the breed that will be carried on for generations to come.

Heather Bailey presented the Highland Member of the Year Award:

Collin Demuth's journey with the Highland breed began in 1987 when his family purchased their first cows and bull from Doug and Frani Hogate of Remer, MN. This purchase ignited a passion for the breed that has continued to grow with his wife Natalie

and family at Husker Show Cattle of York, NE. Collin has attended the National Western Stock Show every year since 1988, marking his dedication to the breed.

Collin inherited many qualities from his father, Doc Demuth, and has become a prominent figure in the Highland community. He has served multiple terms on the AHCA Board of Directors, the South Central Highland Cattle Association board and co-chairs the National Sale in Denver. He is also the founder and organizer of the Dr. David Demuth Memorial Cornhusker State Classic, a highly regarded event. He recently became the superintendent of the new Highland show at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island.

Collin is known for his genuine character and extensive knowledge of the breed. His expertise in genetic performance and the show ring is evident in the quality of cattle he raises. He is also a strong supporter of the junior program, always contributing to the future of the breed.

The AHCA membership is extremely fortunate to have Collin as a part of their association, recognizing his contributions and dedication to the Highland breed. Please join in congratulating Collin Demuth as the 2024 AHCA Member of the Year!

Josh Krenz congratulated the awardees, thanked everyone for attending and said he appreciated all the support received during his term as president. Josh Krenz asked if there was any other business; there was none. John McLaughlin moved: Adjourn meeting. Second by Mark Schulz. Motion passed unanimously by consensus. Meeting adjourned.