

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

By Gary Jennings

It seems hard to believe that a year ago we were gathered here at the North American to celebrate our 125th anniversary. There is no doubt that it was a historic gathering of Southdown breeders from across America and an anniversary that we will never forget.

As I ended last year's annual report to the membership, I stated that the 125th anniversary didn't mark the end of our story, but only the beginning of the next chapter.

This chapter for the Association, tells us that even in challenging economic times, those breeds that have stood the test of time and have strong leadership by it's Board of Directors can prosper under any circumstances. You will see this as we look at the report on your table.

The first page on your table is the cash balance sheet for the Association ending the fiscal year September 30th 2008.

You will note the cash balance of the Association on October 1, 2007 was \$95,547.47. The next line shows our operating income for the fiscal year was \$138,869.87 and the third line shows our operating expenses for the year of \$131,442.23. This leaves us with a cash balance as of September 30, 2008 of \$102,975.11.

Our net gain for the year was \$7,427.64

You will see that we have one checking account and five savings accounts at the present time.

As you turn to the next page, which is registrations by state, I am happy to report that registrations are up from last year. This year a total of 5,222 head of Southdowns were registered. The top state in registrations was Illinois with 676, followed by Texas with 547, Oklahoma with 414, Minnesota with 379, and then a tie for fifth and sixth with Ohio and Wisconsin both registering 324 head.

The next page is the top ten recorders for the breed this year. Krystal Repasky is easily the largest recorder with 182 followed by McGuire Farms with 118. Both hail from the state of Minnesota. The top ten is then rounded out with Jeff Oldenburg, Brian Forsee, Brandon Howard, MB Genetics, C.J. Robinson, Drs. John and Bonnie Jones, JML Cape and Cole/Meisenheimer.

The following page in your report is transfers by state. Once again, the Association saw a positive increase in transfers from last year. A total of 2537 sheep were sold by private treaty or consignment sale. The top spot is flipped this time when compared to registrations. Texas is number one with 384 head transferred followed by Illinois with 248. The top five is rounded out with Indiana at 174, and again a tie for fourth and fifth with Minnesota and Ohio with 165 head. There is no doubt that a positive number of registrations and transfers for the breed show the strength of this breed and it's breeders.

The following page is the christened sheep for the year. This is one of my favorite pages for as you look down the page, you can read and just imagine some of the stories that the names represent. Be it describing the weather, the codon, the breeder, or the genetics, all represent the hope and future of our breed. I encourage you to take the time to look over this list and become familiar with the names of these future stud rams and ewes.

Your final page is the Board of Directors of the Association. In accordance with our Constitution and by-laws, there are four regions in the Association with three districts in each region. Also, two at large positions are in region 2 and region 3 where larger numbers of members are present. The Board member representing each district is listed and to the right of the director's name is the year their current term will expire. You will note there are five directors up for reelection this year in 2008.

Having discussed our cash balance, registrations and transfers, let me highlight some of the activities of the Association that continue to fuel our success.

Our youth have been, and will continue to be our greatest resource. Just this past year, we have seen our youth shine in so many ways. Our junior Southdown show here at the North American continues to be the largest junior show of any breed, our numbers at the All-American were outstanding and the National Junior Show held this year in Indiana saw record number of entries. Our Ambassadors were out front in leading our junior Association members over the junior weekend here in Louisville and hosted the second annual youth symposium. Our youth development and educational fund again gave three scholarships to college students who are members of our junior association. This year the scholarships were increased to \$600 each. Finally, our ewe lamb futurity continues to see excellent participation and competition so close that the final outcome is never know until the end of the last class.

The Southdown Journal is still the best breed publication in the sheep industry and continues to meet it's goal of disseminating Association information to the entire membership in a timely fashion. This year the Journal increased to four issues per year with the intent to meet this goal. My sincere thanks to those that chose to support the Journal with their advertising dollars. I believe that it is money well spent.

A totally different project for the Association this year includes, a group of yearling and mature Southdown rams were donated to a large commercial ewe operation in western Iowa. The results are just as we thought, the Southdown rams have been outstanding as they covered ewes in the fall breeding season, far exceeding rams of other breeds. These rams have shown there is a place for Southdown rams in any commercial operation across America. It will be our goal to continue to monitor and gather data as the lambs are born this winter and offspring are taken to market.

Once again, this time tested breed has shown that whether as a youth project or in a commercial setting, whether in the show ring or in the pasture, Southdowns have stood the test of time and will continue to do so.

I wish the very best to you and your family as we continue with this 126th annual meeting.

Thank you for your time.