

# Sheep producers celebrate 25th anniversary

DENVER, Colo. — Familiar faces, fleeting names, and fond memories were in abundance last weekend in Denver as the American Sheep Producers Council celebrated its 25th anniversary in the annual meeting of ASPC delegates and directors.

Many people reminisced past events as the Council gave tribute to its founders, former presidents, directors and friends.

The two-day meeting was opened with a theme setting

large-screen multi-media presentation which paid tribute to the Council's early years and then moved smoothly into a presentation showing the Council's personnel in action - a look to the future and the impact of its Blueprint Program on the American sheep industry.

Opening session guest speaker, Tim Prior, director of Marketing And Research Counselors, reported the results of the first phase of a multi-stage market research program. The objective of

the research was to pin-point what influences the American consumers' meat and lamb purchasing decision and to help determine ways in which greater consumption of lamb can be promoted among American consumers.

The Council moved into the research program seeking new information about American consumer attitudes toward the usage of meat since most of previous market research results were from research done

to 20 years ago. Much has taken place in the market place since that time, particularly in terms of economic change and consumer knowledge in the areas of nutrition and health.

The United States is considered a special market, not only by American sheep producers but also by New Zealand.

Adam Begg, president of the New Zealand Meat Producers Board, emphasized this fact when he addressed the ASPC audience. "United States is a market to which we send only the very best quality lamb which has been specially prepared for this market," Begg stated.

"This situation will continue," he said, "no matter what happens in other world markets - particularly the Middle East."

Begg pointed out to the audience that New Zealand has spent a lot of effort and money to develop a regular trade in high quality frozen cuts. New Zealand has been exporting lamb for nearly 100 years and they are interested in building up markets, not destroying them.

In his closing remarks, Begg congratulated the Council for its 25 years of leadership and extended the hand of friendship and goodwill.

Luncheon speaker, Robert B. Delano, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, stated that there are some signs that Washington regulators are becoming gun-shy of the more fanatical environmental proposals.

"Even the blowout of Mount St. Helens has a bright side," Delano continued, "we are reminded that Mother Nature herself is the world's greatest 'polluter,' ... and she isn't finished shaping this planet

yet ...tremendous natural forces remain at work."

Delano emphasized the growing network of environmental regulations is no laughing matter. Federal regulatory nonsense means higher cost of production...which means less production and reduced net income. Environmental overkill, and the locking of a large part of the country's land away from state and local tax polls, results in lowered standards of living for everybody.

The American Farm Bureau Federation, at the request of its membership now has six major legal activities in process, most interesting to sheepmen, is the "coyote" case. This recent Farm Bureau suit was filed with mid-September against the Secretaries of Interior, and Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Forest Service on behalf of the American, and Wyoming Farm Bureaus, and individual ranchers.

In this suit, it is noted that 80 percent of the sheep in the United States are raised in the Western states where uncontrolled predation has allowed the coyote population to explode.

When a lamb - or calf - is taken by a federally protected predator - whether that 'protection' is extended by mismanagement or actual law - surely constitutes private property damage. The Farm Bureau suit insists that the farm or ranch owner is entitled to the protection of efficient federal management or 'just compensation' if that management fails.

ASPC Executive Director Richard D. Biglin, addressed the Council's delegation to the opening of its business session. While reminiscing of the major events of the Council's first 25 years, Biglin spoke enthusiastically of the Council's role in the future...and the next 25 years of unlimited potential of the American sheep industry.

One area of development in which Biglin concentrated upon was that of the development of better marketing systems. Producers will be able to gain bargaining leverage for the products they produce. The American sheep

producer must take the initiative to learn new marketing methods and use the marketing tools which are now available in our high technology business world. And the Council will be helping in this vital area - a marketing symposium will be held in March of '81 to help set the stage for a new marketing concept for the American sheep industry.

Even though the Council's past activities with packer and retailers have been considered extensive, Biglin said such activities will be even more intensified in the future in order to provide producers more information on that are the then current market demands.

"We are confronted with many problems," Biglin told his audience, "but, in truth, for the American sheep industry, they are actually new opportunities."

"Take for example, today's emphasis on nutrition. We have a meat that not only has less fat and cholesterol, but can be grown on grass and forage and milk in a totally recyclable process. We have the best animal...the best industry...the best people. With the launching of the second stage of the Blueprint Program, the second 25 years of the American Sheep Producers Council and the American sheep industry should be the most progressive and profitable in America," Biglin said.

The Council's two most prestigious recognition awards - Silver Ram Award - were presented to George K. Hislop, of Yakima, Washington, and Merle R. Light, of Fargo, North Dakota.

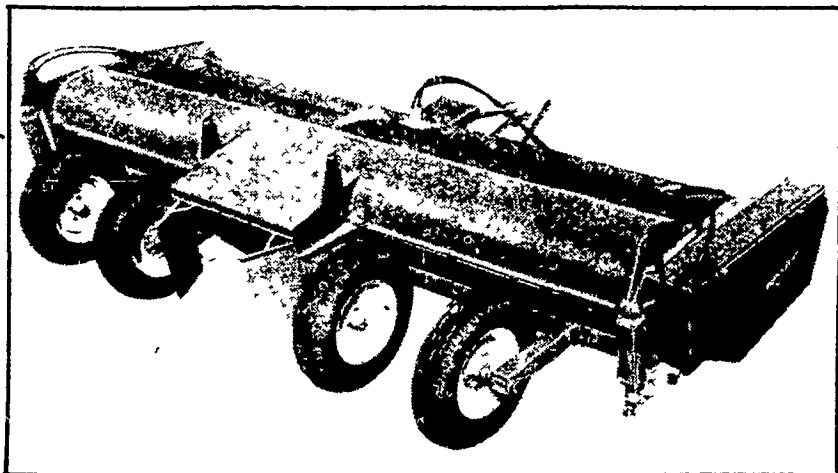
George K. Hislop, a sheep producer, was recognized for his many years of dedication to the American sheep industry, back beyond his days as president of the National Wool Growers Association, and as chairman for many industrywide committees on lamb, and wool, for being a major force behind the Sheep Industry Development Program since its inception in 1967, and for having been re-elected as Chairman of the Lamb Committee of the National Live Stock and Meat Board.

Merle R. Light, Professor of Animal Science at North

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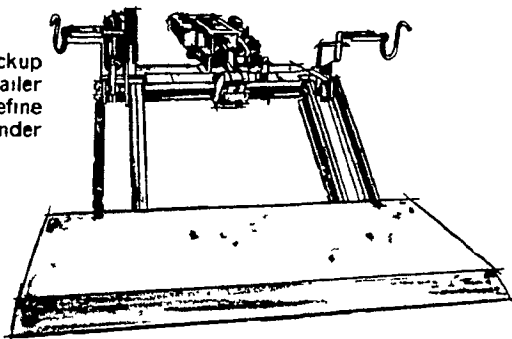
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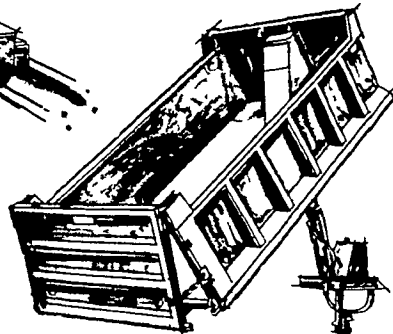
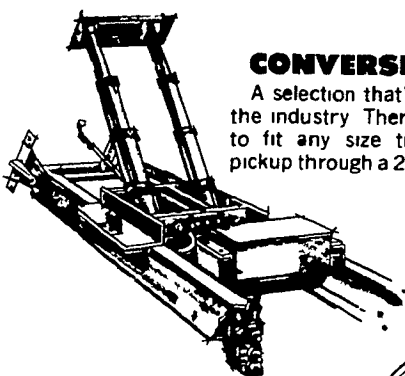
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