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Montana Wool Growers Elect Directors from Brockway and Stanford & Ron Devlin of Terry will serve as MWGA Lobbyist

The Montana Wool Growers Association (MWGA) membership met on Saturday, December 12, for a virtual annual meeting. This was the first-ever virtual annual meeting for MWGA. Online attendees enjoyed pre-recorded video updates, live updates from allied agencies and organizations, as well as reports from MWGA President, Ken McKamey, MWGA Public Affairs Director, Jim Brown, and MWGA Executive Secretary, Leah Johnson. Results of the mail-in voting for directors and policy resolutions sent to MWGA members in November were announced following the reports.

Board of Directors:

Two positions on the MWGA board of directors were chosen by the membership via mail-in voting. Vice President of MWGA, Duane Talcott, announced the winners. John Sampsel of Stanford, MT, was selected to serve in district 2, and Cord Bieber of Brockway, MT, was chosen in district 3. Each will serve a three-year term before re-election. The Association would like to extend a generous thank you to outgoing board members, Mike Green and Mike Hollenbeck, for their service to Montana Wool Growers Association, and their fellow sheep producers.

About the New Directors:

John Sampsel raises Targhee sheep and cattle, with his wife Betty and family, in the foothills of the Little Belt Mountains. The Sampsel family are long-time Montana Ram Sale consignors. John has been attending MWGA Convention for over 30 years, and has been active in Big Horn sheep reintroduction discussions, and predator management issues.

Cord Bieber is a second generation sheep producer, and fourth generation rancher from Brockway, MT. He and his wife, Kristin and family, raise registered and commercial Targhee sheep for seed-stock. Cord serves as the Montana Ewe Sale chairperson, and has been actively involved in policy development with MWGA.

Policy Resolutions:

All proposed policy resolutions for the upcoming legislative session were approved. New policy included a resolution titled "Wild and Scenic", which opposes the Montana Headwater Legacy Act. MWGA also approved policy opposing The National Heritage Area, by the Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, Inc. A total of 5 new resolutions were added to MWGA policy for the 2021 Legislative session.

This annual meeting brought about plenty of change, with MWGA Public Affairs Director Jim Brown, stepping down from his role with MWGA. Jim was elected to the District 3 Public Service Commission, and will take office in January. MWGA would like to wish Jim well in his new role, and thank him for his dedication to MWGA over the past 11 years! This legislative session, Ron Devlin of Terry, will be leading the charge for MWGA at the capitol. MWGA's main focus this legislative session is funding for a new Wool Lab at Montana State University.

For more information and a full list of MWGA policy resolutions, visit www.mtsheap.org or call 406-442-1330.

-LJ