



The

# National Producer

National Livestock Producers Association

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## NLPA Board Re-elects Philips as Chairman

**Colorado Springs, CO (NLPA)** -- The National Livestock Producers Association (NLPA) re-elected Sam Philips to his fifth term as Chairman at its annual meeting Jan. 12-14 in Kona, Hawaii.

Philips, who represents Producers Livestock Marketing Association in Omaha, Neb., is joined by Jack Hanson of Tri-State Livestock Credit Corporation in his second term as NLPA's Vice Chairman. Other Executive Committee members are as follows: Clyde Rutherford, Empire Livestock, LLC; Fred Isler, United Producers, Inc.; Robert York, National Livestock Credit Corporation; and Darrell Ailshie, Tennessee Livestock Producers.



Sam Philips



Jack Hanson

Doug Hauser also officially joined the NLPA Board on behalf of National Livestock Credit Corporation and Walt Ernesti was named the management representative for Producers Livestock Credit Corporation.

The NLPA Board reviewed a draft identification plan developed by the National Food Animal Identification Task Force, of which NLPA is a member. NLPA has been involved in an effort to design a national identification system for livestock and will continue to focus on representing livestock markets as the animal identification issue develops.

Steve Kay, editor of Cattlebuyers Weekly, NLPA's guest speaker, spoke to board members about issues and opportunities for the U.S. meat and livestock industry. One topic that he reviewed in depth was the country of origin labeling (COOL) requirements outlined in the 2002 Farm Bill. (For more information on NLPA's position on COOL, please refer to page 6). He also

addressed how consolidation, structural changes, equity erosion and capital flight have affected the industry. Kay's discussion ended with the following advice:

- Size doesn't matter - there is a niche market for you
- Work with end users and find out what they want
- The only way to create new wealth in the meat and livestock industry is to improve consumer demand
- Always remember - you are in the food industry.

Chad Savage of the American Clean Water Foundation (ACWF) made a presentation to the Board regarding the On-Farm Assessment and Environmental Review (OFAER). Savage indicated this voluntary program could greatly assist livestock producers in identifying and dealing with potential environmental issues on their operation. He invited NLPA and the members to make information on the program available to livestock producers as it costs them nothing to have a confidential assessment made on their property. NLPA is working with ACWF to become a clearinghouse to help promote the OFAER program to NLPA members and their producer patrons. Please look for more information on this project at [www.nlpa.org](http://www.nlpa.org).

NLPA will hold its next board meeting in Nashville, Tenn. on July 17-19, 2003 and will be co-hosted by Tennessee Livestock Producers.

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# United Producers, Inc., Offers Crop Insurance

**Columbus, OH (United Producers, Inc.)** – United Producers, Inc. has added federal crop insurance to the list of 2003 value-added products and services available for farmer members. This program is through an affiliation with Crop 1 Insurance, a privately owned, Iowa-based crop insurance company. Producer members, in approved states, will have an exclusive opportunity to purchase crop insurance at discounts of up to 10 percent from standard government crop insurance programs through Crop 1's Premium Discount Plan (PDP).

The Premium Discount Plan offers farmers savings that could be equal to adding one-two bushels to a farmers yield per acre, depending on their crop insurance plan. While Crop 1 offers regular crop insurance

in most states, the PDP plan is only offered in Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Dakota.

“We are very excited to be able to offer this to our members,” said Mike Bumgarner, Vice President of Marketing Services, United Producers, Inc. “The benefits to our members are obvious while complementing other risk management programs that are currently being offered through Producers Technologies, Inc. a division of UPI.”

Also available through Crop 1, is a Livestock Risk Protection (LRP). This program offers price protection coverage that protects against unexpected declines in livestock prices and is part of the Federal Crop Insurance

Corporation. Iowa is the only qualified state that LRP for hogs can be offered. The program has been expanded into feeder cattle for the states of Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. LRP has also been approved for fed cattle in the states of Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska.

To purchase crop or livestock insurance, Crop 1 has developed a web-based system that is accessible through our web site, [www.uproducers.com](http://www.uproducers.com).

## NLPA Premiers Updated Booth at NCBA Convention

The National Livestock Producers Association recently updated its trade show booth with black carpeting to make it more adaptable for its members to use. NLPA recently shared the booth with Tennessee Livestock Producers at the National Cattle-men's Beef Association Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show in Nashville, Tenn., Jan. 29 to Feb. 1.

*Kevin Thompson, Tennessee Livestock Producers, visits with trade show attendees at the 2003 NCBA Cattle Industry Trade Show in Nashville.*



### **The National Producer**

*Bimonthly newsletter of the  
National Livestock Producers Association*

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## Kampmeier to Retire from Central Livestock Association

After 35 years of employment at Central Livestock Association, COO Don Kampmeier will retire on April 1, 2003.

"Don's early career gave him excellent exposure and insight as to the grassroots factors, which are key to a livestock marketing cooperative," Doug Wilson, CEO of Cooperative Resources International said.

Kampmeier spent the past 17 years as CLA's manager. Under Kampmeier's leadership, CLA purchased, merged, and launched numerous livestock markets. In an effort to expand and bring new business opportunities to CLA, Kampmeier led the merger into CRI in 1999.

"It was an era of transition in livestock marketing and Don's aggressive style kept CLA profitable for most of his tenure as manager,"

Wilson said. With Kampmeier's guidance, CLA entered the Livestock Feeding Program, launched Internet livestock marketing, and purchased the South St. Paul facility.

"Without question, Don's greatest satisfaction was realized in providing a quality service to the 15,000 members and working closely with their Board of Directors to guide the cooperative," Wilson said.

Kampmeier also gave many years of his time and leadership as a member of the National Livestock Producers Association Board of Directors.

According to Chairman Ken Hove of the CLA Board, Jeff Reed has been named Vice President of Operations for CLA. Reed started the new position on March 1 and will succeed Kampmeier upon his retirement.

Jeff joined CLA in 2000 as the Vice President of the Livestock Feeding

Program. Prior to joining CLA, Jeff held various Farm Credit positions, including Loan Officer, Senior Loan Officer, Branch Manager, Senior Financial Services Executive, and Manager of the Dairy Team Consultants.

Jeff is a University of Wisconsin-River Falls graduate with a degree in Animal Science and a minor in Farm Management. Jeff is very involved in the community serving as Chairman of the Township Planning Commission, a 4-H Leader, County Fair Board Member, and Chair of the Minnesota Extension Service Advisory Committee.

Jeff and his wife Bonnie have three children—Jason who is an electrician, Justin who plays football at the University of Minnesota-Crookston and is majoring in Ag Business, and Jessica who is a sophomore at Hastings High School.

## Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Assn. Welcomes Two New Employees

**Baraboo, WI (ECLSA)**—Recently, Rob Meier and Robin MacLeish joined the work force at Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association in Baraboo, Wis.

Meier has taken on the role as Systems Administrator and is responsible for support and maintenance of the cooperative's network infrastructure from the corporate office throughout all 14-branch locations. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, attaining a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with an emphasis in computer science. Most

recently, he was employed as Network Analyst at All Saints Healthcare System in Racine, Wis.

MacLeish, working through Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association's wholly owned subsidiary—Equity Livestock Credit Corporation, is the Executive Loan Officer and is responsible for meeting with producers and discussing the various livestock programs and farm operating loans available through Equity Livestock Credit Corporation. Additionally, he manages and services established agricultural accounts. MacLeish

brings to Equity Livestock Credit Corporation a true understanding of both sides of the industry. First, he possesses over 30 years of agricultural lending experience, most recently as Vice President at Associated Bank in Portage, Wis., and second, he farms in partnership with his brother, operating a 125 beef cow feedlot and 462 acres. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and is active in the Portage Lions Club and Caledonia Presbyterian Church. MacLeish and wife Susan reside in Portage, Wis. They are the parents of two grown children.

# Vermont Shepherd Champions Sheep's Milk Cheese

By **Ross McSwain**  
**NLPA Correspondent**

After years of experimentation, Cindy and David Major of Westminister West, Vermont, have successfully created a classic, award-winning sheep's-milk cheese, have helped to revitalize a community of farmers and have found a new way to make their farm profitable.

The work has not been easy. In fact, after five years of work to perfect their sheep's-milk cheese, their initial efforts were shattered when America's only cheese expert spit out their sample and told Cindy Major "never to bring him a cheese like that again. I left the store in tears," she recalled later.

The opinion of cheese expert-buyer Steven Jenkins was needed if the cheese the couple were making was to achieve acceptance in the marketplace. Jenkins had previously received the prestigious French designation, "Chevalier du Taste-Formage," and was looked upon as being the best authority on the East Coast. Since that first experience with the Major's sheep's-milk cheese, Jenkins now claims it is one of the country's best. He includes the Major-produced Vermont Shepherd Cheese on his list of 36 favorite cheeses in America.

Before the Majors could market an acceptable cheese, they had to go to France for two weeks of study on the proper and traditional way of cheesemaking in the mountains of the Pyrenees. Within a few months of their return, Vermont Shepherd

Cheese won a national award for Best Farmhouse Cheese in the country.

Today, the Major's are updating, renovating and expanding their sheep's-milk cheese making process through the financial assistance of a loan from the National Livestock Producers Association's Sheep and Goat Fund. The loan is providing funding for an upgrade in milking equipment, cheese processing and handling equipment, and better parking and loading access to the cheese ripening cave. In addition, the loan will provide working capital to support higher operating costs until financial benefits of the expansion are received and refinancing of current debt at a considerably reduced rate.

The Majors have been extremely successful in recent years, receiving numerous awards for their cheese, including the prestigious "Best of Show" award at the 2000 American Cheese Society's competition at Sonoma, Calif., and best U.S. Sheep Cheese at the 2001 U.S. Championship Cheese Contest.

It all started in 1981 when Cindy and David met. He grew up on the Vermont farm where the couple now live and work. She is the daughter of a New York State dairy operator who runs Elmhurst Dairy in Queens, which is one of New York City's major milk suppliers.



*Vermont Shepherd sheep's milk cheese in wheels and sliced and ready for sampling.*

As a youngster growing up, Cindy Schwartz started sampling dairy products and learning about the business.

"My father would send me into the grocery stores to straighten the cartons of milk into nice, neat rows. It was 'introduction to marketing' for a kid," she recalled.

When Cindy and David married and moved to the Major farm property, her father suggested that the couple start milking their ewes and selling the milk for yogurt and feta cheese. In 1984, they bought the U.S. manufacturing rights to a British-patented sheep-milking system and they set up a milking parlor at the farm. The couple continue to make the milking equipment and market it to sheep and goat milk dairies.

During the last 40 years or more, the Major farm has depended on meat and wool, baled hay and the sale of maple syrup as a source of income. The manufacture of cheese has complimented those early years very well, Major notes, because the

farm is located on a hillside, thus the steep slopes make it difficult to till and grow crops. However, with good pastureage, easily drained slopes and timber for protection, sheep do well on the farm. The Majors have about 250 ewes, mostly Dorsets, and use East Friesland rams for breeding and improving milk production.

During an average year, Major said he tries to keep from 250 to 300 sheep year-round, of which he milks about 180 head each day during a period from March to November. He doesn't milk the ewes during the winter, but lets them roam the snow-packed pastures where they are fed hay. The sheep are shorn in late February and when they start lambing in early March, the ewes and lambs are kept in a barn for protection from the elements. Major said the wool is sold to a nearby mill, Green Mountain Spinnery, that makes yarn for homespinnors. Some of the wool is scoured and the clean, fluffy fleece is used for packing the cheeses for shipment.

Patterning their cheese-making operation after that found in

France, the Majors constructed a cheese cave - a large underground storage area - where the cheeses could be kept at a constant temperature and humidity. The cheese requires a six-to-eight month aging period before it is consumed.

The cheese cave also is used by Major's neighbors who also produce sheep's-milk cheese. The nearby farmers - ranging from a maximum of nine to about four - organized into a guild. They use the same cheese recipe, and each shares in some of the work since the loosely organized group also produces cheeses from cow's milk as well. Each farm handles its own marketing program, Major said.

The cave can handle about 40,000 pounds of cheese during a season. Expansion plans will allow additional curing capabilities, Major said. The goal of the farmers is to be producing up to 150,000 pounds of cheese within the next five to 10 years.

The cheese cave is an important link in cheese production. One of the neighboring farmers, Charlie Parant, is cave manager and Vermont Shepherd's official "affineur," French for

cheese ripener. His job is to turn, brush or wash the cheeses on a near daily basis to cultivate natural cheese rinds which help to enhance the cheeses' flavor and give them unique characteristics.

Each year, Vermont Shepherd has several open houses for the cheese cave - one each in August, September and October. The open house programs feature a tour of the cheese cave, the cheese-making room, and provides visitors an opportunity to sample the cheeses and make purchases. The open houses are free and no reservations are required. Dates for the open houses will be posted on the farm's website - [www.vermontshepherd.com](http://www.vermontshepherd.com) - later in the Spring.

Vermont Shepherd cheese is sold by the pound or by the wheel. It also is offered in several varieties of cheese samplers gift packs. Whole wheels weigh from 6 to 8 pounds. The Vermont Shepherd sheep's milk cheese sells for \$18.50 per pound, plus shipping. Other cheeses offered by the farm run from \$14 to \$15.50 per pound, plus shipping. The cheeses can be ordered over their web site at [www.vermontshepherd.com](http://www.vermontshepherd.com).



(Left) Milking the ewes with British-designed milking equipment. (Right) The entrance to the Vermont Shepherd Cheese Cave.

## Country of Origin Labeling to Become Burdensome Reality

During 1998 the livestock industry suffered through one of its worst-ever market years. That same year, meat imports set new records. With the relaxing of import standards and the increasing tonnage of imported beef and pork being introduced on the U.S. domestic market, producers and producer organizations became concerned that consumers were not fully informed of the origin of the meat that they purchased. Furthermore, the display of the USDA grading label may mislead consumers to believing that the meat that they purchased was domestically produced.

Concerned that consumers should be fully informed about the origin of the meat that they purchased, various representatives of the livestock industry brought before Congress a measure that will require country of origin labeling on all meat and meat products.

### Legislation

In May 2002, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 was approved and within that bill was Section 10816, which requires mandatory country of origin labeling for beef, lamb, pork, fish, perishable agricultural commodities and peanuts after a two-year voluntary program. Guidelines for the voluntary program were issued in October 2002 and regulations for the mandatory program must be established by Sept. 30, 2004.

While this law's primary focus is on retailers, it will have a profound affect on the producers, marketers and processors who supply livestock

to the retail industry because the law requires suppliers to provide verifiable proof of the country of origin of their livestock.

The law clearly states that the Secretary is prohibited from establishing a mandatory identification system to verify the country of origin of a covered commodity, however, some method of identification must be used to meet the requirements as they are currently stated in the voluntary guidelines.

Meat packers are already contacting producers about meeting the country of origin labeling requirements, but are vague about their expectations as to how producers are to meet these requirements. Producers are worried they will need to spend money they cannot spare on record-keeping systems and incorporating segregation plans into their operations to meet the requirements of several different packers.

### NLPA's Position / Actions

NLPA does **NOT** support mandatory country of origin labeling, but respects the fact that the law is already established.

In March 2003, NLPA President Scott Stuart and Board Chairman Sam Philips, and Rick Keith, Chairman of NLPA's Legislation and Communication Committee, will meet with several House and Senate Agriculture Committee members and staff, discussing an agenda of issues that includes country-of-origin labeling. NLPA is also drafting comments to submit.

### Recommendations

NLPA would strongly support an appeal of the country of origin labeling requirement in the 2002 Farm Bill, however NLPA understands the difficulty of reversing Farm Bill provisions. Instead, NLPA would further encourage AMS to clarify its guidelines in regard to the data that would need to be collected and verified in a country of origin labeling program. NLPA would also strongly encourage that AMS or another entity conduct consumer research to determine any concrete benefits that may be created by such a program.

NLPA will continue to work with legislators to help create a system that is cost-effective and appropriate with the dynamics of the livestock industry. NLPA will also continue to work with its member organizations to help them and their producer patrons apply this law to their operations.

### Rationale

NLPA recognizes that this law was written in the hopes of creating an opportunity to better market U.S. products and to better track imported products and the sale of imported products. However, at this time the benefits of a mandatory country of origin labeling program are mostly unsubstantiated by consumer research. It is the opinion of NLPA that the program has more potential to damage the livestock industry by reducing efficiency and

*continued on page 7 . . .*

## Livestock Manager Bohlander, 76, Dies

By Christina Chanes Nystrom,  
Correspondent for the  
*Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*

**CHINO, CA**—Arnold William Bohlander was a man of constant habits, described by family as always wearing a cowboy hat and eel-skin boots, holding a cigarette in one hand and, often, a phone in the other.

Bohlander, 76, well-known throughout the Chino Valley for bringing quality livestock auctions to the area, died on Dec. 31st at his Chino home after a five-year battle with cancer.

"He was the kind of man that, even though it was almost the end, he was on the phone working, talking to clients and taking orders," said Wendy Knapp, a granddaughter. "He'll have livestock deliveries that he arranged until March 2003. He truly loved what he did and was very dedicated to those he served."

Bohlander was born in 1926 in Ohio. At the age of 20, came to California straight out of the U.S. Navy in World War II where served as a gunner's mate. At the Union Stockyards in Los Angeles, he began his more than 50-year career with Salt Lake City-based Producers Livestock Marketing Association.

Bohlander started as a yardboy and worked his way up to become a manager. After the Los Angeles yards closed in 1959, he moved to the firm's Artesia and Ontario operations before coming to Chino.

In his career, Bohlander had a hand in buying and selling more than 1

million head of cattle and other livestock.

"Grandpa was the kind of man who was well-liked and so good at what he did. He was a real man – an old-fashioned, hard-working man – a gentleman," said Jeff Bohlander, another of Mr. Bohlander's 11 grandchildren.

Bohlander helped to design and build the "Big Red Barn" at Euclid Stockyard in Chino. The barn was built in one day, like an old-fashioned barn raising, in 1982 with friends, family and colleagues at Bohlander's side.

Bohlander worked there from 1982-1985 as the manager and in 1986 he moved to working as a country buyer.

A favorite saying of Bohlander's resonates with friends and family now: "My clients are my friends and I only do business with my friends." His family says that cattle ranchers all over the country knew that if Arnold Bohlander gave you his word, that word could be taken to the bank.

"He was the kind of man who knew so much," said longtime client and friend Jerry Mendoza. Bohlander lived in the Chino Valley for more than 30 years and is survived by his wife, Gayle, his two sons and 11 grandchildren.

"I will carry on his business and continue to work with his clients to keep his memory and his love of cattle auctions alive," said Gayle Bohlander, his wife of more than 15 years.

### Country of Origin, *continued from page 6...*

unnecessarily raising the cost of doing business at a time when the industry is already losing a substantial number of producers and markets with each year.

NLPA is also concerned that country-of-origin labeling can have a negative effect on marketing domestic meat. When a foreign source produces a product that surpasses quality or otherwise achieves greater consumer preference over the same domestic product, consumers will become motivated to prefer the product with a certain foreign source label. The automobile and electronics industries stand as examples that illustrate this concern.

NLPA believes this measure sends a negative message to trading partners at a time when the United States livestock industry is working to build its export market.

Finally, NLPA believes that the best way to improve the livestock production and marketing industry is through the thoughtful involvement of producers and industry partners. The livestock industry is faced with many difficult challenges, but like any other business, the livestock industry has to meet these challenges with foresight and creativity if it wants to continue doing business in a free, market-driven environment.

## Producers Opens Branch in Belle Fourche, S.D.

On January 1, 2003, Producers Livestock Marketing Association, N. Salt Lake, Utah, opened a branch office in Belle Fourche, S.D., with Marty Snook as Branch Manager.

Snook is responsible for soliciting customers for Producers' feeding and grazing program and for buying and selling cattle. The branch territory covers southeastern Montana, northeastern Wyoming, western South Dakota, and southwestern North Dakota.

Snook said that Belle Fourche is a good location for a branch because the town, with a population of about 5,000, is an agricultural hub for producers within a 125-mile radius.

Snook's first involvement with Producers was as a customer in their feeding grazing program in Greeley, Colo. Snook said he, his wife and five daughters have a ranch in Sundance, Wyo., where they run about 400 cows and 2,500 yearlings.

Snook grew up on a ranch in Hulett, Wyo., that has been in his family since they came to the area as homesteaders at the turn of the century.



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