



# *South Dakota Sheep Growers Association 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention*

The South Dakota Sheep Growers Association's 88th Annual Convention is at the AmericInn and Event Center (formerly the Ramkota) in Watertown, SD on Friday, September 26th and Saturday, September 27th, 2025. The convention continues to provide an excellent opportunity for sheep producers from across the state of SD and surrounding states to gather the latest information on topics relating to sheep and the sheep industry. Our 2-day convention will be full of information, networking and of course, a lot of fun.

This year's theme is "Driving for Diversity". We will start by looking at the diversity of agriculture in the Watertown area on Friday, September 27th. We will take a bus to County Line Dairy where we will tour a state-of-the-art dairy facility and learn of the expansion of the dairy industry in and around the Watertown area. We will, next, travel to Van Well Farms for a tour and lamb/sheep sorting equipment demonstration. The Van Well family have graciously agreed to continue to host us for Friday evening's events which will include a welcome mixer and corn hole fun. We will have lamb samples and other appetizers. The bus will be available to shuttle participants back to the hotel, starting at 6:30.

Our main convention day is Saturday, September 27th at the Watertown Event Center in Watertown and is packed with topics emphasizing "diversity". We will begin the morning session with a welcome from Jon Beastrom, SDSGA President. Jon will share with us the association happenings. Drs Jaeger and Cassady will give us an update from SDSU. They will have a new update on the hiring of a new Extension Small Ruminant Specialist. We will hear a key update from the American Lamb Board. Next, we will have an interesting discussion of "Reproductive Assisted Technologies lead by Dr. Brady Myers. Brady will then chair a panel discussion focused on repro, health, and biosecurity. One of our featured speakers will come from Abdullah Hussaini from Equity Livestock. He will share with us "Non-Traditional marketing and adding diversity to your marketing opportunities". Marketing is one of the most influential decisions for the profitability of your operation. Our next keynote presentation will come from Dr. Richard Ehrhardt of Michigan State University. Dr. Ehrhardt is an significant regional sheep specialist with applied research that focuses on increasing production efficiency and improving flock management. His topic will discuss how accelerated lambing can improve production efficiency and build markets. The luncheon will feature the Master Lamb Producer awards where select SD lamb & wool producers are recognized for excellence in their area of the industry. After our amazing lamb lunch, we will hear from Lynn Fahrmeier and Peter Orwick with ASI. Our industry is being greatly impacted by government policy and trade and it's so important to shed some light on the major issues we face. We are pleased to be working with Dr. Larry Goelz with Windy River Vet Clinic of Pipestone, MN and he will share necessary information on "Health protocols and addressing abortive diseases in sheep". We will hear an update on the Young and Emerging Producer's program and some of the educational events with the artificial lambing dummy. Lastly, we will hear from Philip Berg of MN West College. Phil will share information on the very successful "Pipestone Production Program". The SDSGA membership meeting will start mid-afternoon. Sponsors/vendors will have booths and you will want to be sure to visit them during our convention breaks. We are so grateful to our sponsors! What a full and educational day we will have! Saturday evening will culminate with the annual auction and lamb banquet. The coveted "Trapper of the Year" and "Shepherd's Award" will be presented followed by the SD finals of the "Make It with Wool" contest. It will be a lovely meal featuring American Loin Chops kindly supplied by Superior Farms. Don't forget about our live and silent auction...there are always unique items up for bids.

It's a busy weekend ~ and we encourage you to make your hotel reservations as soon as possible, as the block of rooms releases Aug. 29th. If you have any questions, or would like further information about the convention, please contact any of the organizers listed below. To pre-register contact Lisa Surber.

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