

# USYAKS

A Science-Based Registry

## NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

### Board of Directors

*The Board of Directors meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm Mountain time.*

***All Association members are welcome to attend these video conference meetings.***

**Each year the Board selects its own officers.**

**Officers elected for 2021 are as follows:**

Tim Hardy, President

Email: [president@usyaks.org](mailto:president@usyaks.org)

Brad Peterson, Vice President

Email: [coalbankcreek@juno.com](mailto:coalbankcreek@juno.com)

Ruth Higdon, Treasurer

Email: [elrutho@aol.com](mailto:elrutho@aol.com)

Caryn DeRochie, Secretary

Email: [secretary@usyaks.org](mailto:secretary@usyaks.org)

**USYAKS Phone: 308-615-9229**

**<https://www.usyaks.org>**

The USYAKS website is in the process of being restructured in an effort to make it easier for members to find information about all things yak - raising yaks, registering yaks, showing yaks, selling yaks. Please be patient!  
:)

Questions about the newsletter?

Contact: [unadtaylor@gmail.com](mailto:unadtaylor@gmail.com)

### This Issue's Feature Photo!



Hugh

Yak Ridge Cabins & Farmstead, South Dakota

If you would like to see your photo here:  
Please send your photos to:  
Amber Hutchinson at: [hutchinbury@gmail.com](mailto:hutchinbury@gmail.com)



### What's in this issue?

#### Important Information!

- ✓ Board of Directors Monthly Meetings
- ✓ Newly Elected Board Officers
- ✓ Additional Board Member Needed: Volunteers?
- ✓ New Registration Fees and Information
  - ✓ Website Makeover

#### Soliciting Member Input!

- ✓ Fiber Study
- ✓ Vision and Values
- ✓ Marketing Strategies
- ✓ Yak Photos Wanted
- ✓ Yak Products Wanted for Website Marketplace

READ ON....



## SOLICITING MEMBER INPUT:

- **BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPENING:** There is an opening available on the Board. We are seeking volunteers. Please let us know if you are interested and willing to serve. Contact: [President@usyaks.org](mailto:President@usyaks.org)
- **VISION AND VALUES:** The Association's statement of Vision and Values has been edited. Please take a look at it. You are invited to offer comments. This document can be found at the end of this newsletter.
- **FIBER STUDY:** Kat Tylee has begun a four-year scientific study to measure the diameter and to obtain a full histogram of the fiber of at least one hundred yaks across the United States. This is the information that is needed if we are to compare yak fiber with the fiber of other fiber-producing species, and it is the fundamental marketing information needed in order to successfully market yak fiber. This article can be found on page five of this newsletter and at: <https://www.usyaks.org/post/yak-fiber-study>
- **MARKETING:** Are you interested in being involved in developing effective marketing strategies for yaks and yak products? Please consider volunteering for this important new committee.
  - We will be preparing universal materials that can be distributed by members at County Fairs, Fiber Fairs, etc.
  - Another marketing strategy we will make available is to have a yak article published in a local trade magazine and follow up with some months of advertising. A copy of an article is available to use as written or to edit if desired.
  - Read Greg Dike's marketing proposal on page four of this newsletter.
- **USYAKS MARKETPLACE:** Did you know that there is a Marketplace on the USYAKS website? Did you know that you

can request to list your yaks and yak products for sale on the Marketplace?

- For Yaks for Sale, visit: <https://www.usyaks.org/yaksforsale>.
- For the Yak Product Marketplace, visit: <https://www.usyaks.org/yakproductsforsale>
- **PHOTOS FOR WEBSITE:** We want your yak and yak product photos! Send photos suitable for display in the slideshow of cover images on each page of the website to Amber Hutchinson at [hutchinbury@gmail.com](mailto:hutchinbury@gmail.com).
- **TRACKING ABNORMAL CALVES:** The Association tracks calves born with defects that could possibly be congenital. This can be reported anonymously via the following link:
- <https://www.usyaks.org/post/tracking-of-births-of-abnormal-calves>

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## NEW REGISTRATION FEES!:

- **Reduced registration fees:** The Board reduced the standard registration fee by \$5, to \$50, for members who register 11-25 yaks at once. The Board also reduced the standard registration fee by \$10, to \$45, for members who register 26 or more yaks at once. The current registration fee schedule is as follows:
- **Standard fee:** \$55 per yak
- **Discounted fees:** Members who register 11-25 yaks at once: \$50 per yak. Members who register 26 or more yaks at once: \$45 per yak.
- **New members fee:** \$45 per yak for a one-year period that begins on the day that the member registers their first yak. This fee is not contingent upon the number of yaks registered at once.

## Selling a Yak?

- If someone buys a registered yak from you, they are entitled to a **free one-year Association Farm/Ranch membership**. Each Farm/Ranch membership allows for additional free affiliate members. We

need your help to make sure that everyone gets their free membership.

- On-line forms will soon be available to automate this process, but in the meantime we ask that you gather the following information from each buyer:
  1. Member's name
  2. Ranch Name for new member
  3. Herd ID for new member
  4. Email address for voting member
  5. Physical Ranch Address for new member
  6. Mailing address for new member, if different from physical address
  7. Phone Number for new member
  8. Affiliate member's names and email addresses
  9. Registration IDs for yaks that were sold

The Association needs this information in order to distribute registration materials, distribute Board agendas, future Newsletters, etc. Personal identifying information will not be made public by the Association. New members will be able to decide how much information they want to share.

Please send this information to:

Ruth Higdon at: [elrutho@aol.com](mailto:elrutho@aol.com)

### **HAVE YOU LOGGED IN YET?**

- Control your personal information
- Upload/change ranch logo/icon
- View your own herd, and transfer ownership to others
- Questions about logging in? Email:
  - [President@usyaks.org](mailto:President@usyaks.org)



Aww... :)

### **Fun Photos!**



Beauty and the Beast



Pest Control...



Little Bo Peep



Tinkerbelle

**READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE**  
<https://www.usyaks.org/>

**USYAKS.org**  
***A Science-based Registry***

## USYAKS Marketing Workgroup

By Greg Dike

One of the great statements in systems theory is: “The system you have gives the results you get.” If you want to change the results, you must change the system. Obvious. And yet, when it comes to selling yaks and yak products how many of us just “try harder” doing the same things that didn’t work before. On the other hand, maybe no USYAKS member has problems selling yaks and yak products but me, but somehow I doubt it. How long has it been since you tried a new marketing method? How long has it been since you “changed the system”?

I am writing this article to see if there are some USYAKS members who would be interested in identifying “the system we have”, what in it does and does not work, and identifying a set of marketing tools which may work better....a “new system”.

For example, one thing is that we all market independently and as such our marketing resources are limited to our time and budget. And, importantly, the entire potential market is limited to the sum of the number of people each of us reaches. More than likely, it is the same people over and over again...or the same venue again and again. What if part of marketing could be done collectively, or by USYAKS as a whole, and directed to an audience far larger than we can individually reach? And, furthermore, what if it was done in such a way that all members would have access to this new potentially larger market?

I am not looking to start a committee that discusses but a working group that works. We need to be able to not only work hard on this, but also be creative and think out of the box. Our goal is not just to figure out a way for us to better sell yaks and yak products, but to link to creative and entrepreneurial potential buyers who will grow the market. The following list includes things which may be part of what we would do as we begin to identify a “better system” or an “adjunct system” that will not only “sell more yaks for a year or two” but will build up the entire yak industry for the future. None of these things are easily done.

Design and implement a survey of USYAKS member ranches to determine the actual issues they are having in their marketing: e.g., selling breeding stock, selling slaughter-ready yaks, fiber, yarn, yak meat etc. The

survey will also gather information on what people are doing that doesn’t seem to be working.

Determine what agricultural magazines and/or journals serve the USYAKS membership area. This would include state-wide publications which are often produced by state cattle associations. These publications will then be contacted to determine if they would accept an article from USYAKS about yaks and their economic potential and also what it costs to advertise in the journal.

Determine the agricultural fairs/events in the USYAKS member region which might attract potential “first time yak buyers”, whether they would allow yaks to participate within the existing show, if they would allow a “yak pen” and information booth, costs and restrictions.

Develop a set of marketing brochures on yaks, yak meat and fiber/fiber arts which would be available to the membership in their marketing as well as at shows/events.

Develop geographical marketing networks within the USYAKS membership (such as the Colorado region, the Wyoming-Nebraska region, the east of the Mississippi region etc.) in which member yak producers would identify regional marketing issues and work to resolve them as a region.

Look at the use of technology in selling yaks/yak products: something like a national virtual yak exhibition and sale.

If you are interested in working with others on these types of things and more as ideas develop within the group to pull together a “new system”, please contact Greg Dike at 606-776-0022 or [nct1108@yahoo.com](mailto:nct1108@yahoo.com) by March 31<sup>st</sup>.



# Fiber Study



by **Kat Tylee**

*Little Hawk Yarns Yak Study*

After having the opportunity to judge yak fiber at the National Western Stock Show in 2020, I went searching for definitive information about yak fiber characteristics. There was little to be found, other than a few articles stating that the yak down fiber runs in the micron count of 15-19 micron and often compares the fiber to cashmere. That was it – no distinction between colors, breeding, gender, environment, nutrition, or animal health. The wool and cashmere industry benefits from research dating back to 1911 or earlier. The lack of information on yak fiber made me realize that someone needed to collect the data, and I decided to be that someone. In order to do that, I need fiber samples.

I am looking for a minimum of one hundred unique fiber samples that I will be able to follow for a year or more. This is why I am soliciting the help of the USYAKS Association'. As Spring 2021 approaches, and you start to comb your yaks for fiber, I am asking you to gather samples from as few or as many yaks as you want, and mail the samples to me. I don't need a lot of fiber from each yak. A two-inch section from the hump/shoulder area put into a snack-sized baggie is about right. It's important for me to see it just as it is combed from the animal. These first samples will be my baseline for the rest of the study.

As the study progresses, more questions will arise, but my initial questions will be: What are the actual microns of the combed yak fiber as it comes off the animal? Do these measurements confirm information in current publications?

After gathering the initial data, my plan is to continue to follow these animals year-to-year, when possible, to see how fiber is affected by a number of different variables, like the ones mentioned above (gender, nutrition, climate, etc.). Consequently, I would prefer samples from yaks not slated for butcher, since it wouldn't be possible to obtain fiber samples from them the following year. However, if you do gather fiber from yaks slated to be butchered, please note that on the information sheet that is submitted with the fiber.

In addition to supporting this study by providing fiber samples, you can help by:

- Spreading the word about the study through social media and word of mouth to other yak owners.
- Supporting the study by paying for shipping and fiber testing on your fiber.

If you would like to participate in the study, please complete the [Yak Fiber Testing Form](#) and send the form with the collected fiber samples to:

- Kat Tylee
- 740 E 8th Street
- Chadron, NE 69337

## **Sample Collection Instruction:**

Collect fiber by combing. Fill a snack-sized baggie with fiber from each yak. Label each bag so the yak can be identified with the correct yak listed on the Fiber Testing Form.

Questions may be directed to Kat Tylee:

Email: [info@littlehawkyarns.com](mailto:info@littlehawkyarns.com)

Call/Text: 308-225-0822

Little Hawk Yarns Website:

[www.littlehawkyarns.com](http://www.littlehawkyarns.com)

# Vision and Values

The USYAKS Association is a community of yak owners committed to:

***Raising awareness about the merits of yak to the public***

***Preserving the diversity and purity of yak through science***

***Providing resources for ensuring the well-being of all yak***

## VISION

USYAKS is an organization that is focused on working to address the needs of yak breeders as defined by yak breeders. It was founded in 2018 on the premise of fostering a community of yak owners whose fundamental core values are underpinned by a member-centric philosophy characterized by a high level of organizational transparency and a strong commitment to building positive working relationships among yak owners on a national, regional and local basis.

## VALUES

### Community

USYAKS is committed to fostering camaraderie and good will among yak owners through the national USYAKS organization as well as through the development of regional and local chapters of USYAKS. These entities will strive to provide a conduit for:

- Developing relationships between yak owners in order to facilitate potential business opportunities, idea sharing, or providing assistance where needed.
- Working to attract new members and increasing diversity as regards farm/ranch sizes, geographic location, years of experience, and male/female representation
- Organizing events such as yak shows and member get-togethers
- Providing a forum through which yak owners may network regarding the marketing of yaks and yak products

### Transparency

Organizational transparency is achieved by providing the membership access to the same information as the organization's leadership.

- All organizational documents are posted to the member website as soon as possible. This includes: meeting notices, agendas, and minutes from the Board of Directors and committees, as well as any reports given to the Board by any admin staff/directors. This includes regular financial documents that may include cash flow statements, bank account statements or other financial documents.
- All Board meetings are open to all members, and members are strongly encouraged to attend.
- USYAKS Board encourages and values member input in the decision-making process.

### Integrity

USYAKS is committed to building an animal registry that is void of bias, personal agendas, and favoritism. It is also committed to the ethical and humane treatment of animals and to thoughtful and respectful treatment for and between its members. USYAKS registry is based on the following:

- A registered animal is required to have the USYAKS-sanctioned genetic test performed.
- The full results of each genetic test will be assigned to each animal and will be fully visible to the public via the association website.
- Each member agrees to abide by that scientific determination of class / category assigned to his/her animal.
- USYAKS expectations include the ethical treatment of animals and strongly endorses Best Breeding Practices to encourage as much genetic diversity as possible and to reduce in-breeding.

Please send your comments to [President@usyaks.org](mailto:President@usyaks.org)