

American Milking Devon Cattle Association
Minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting
Tunbridge VT, May 13, 2017

The meeting was called to order by President John Hall at 10:09 AM with 19 people present.

Reports

President: John Hall thanked all the volunteers involved with the association. He reported that the Board is working with Plymouth Plantation and Red Devon USA to celebrate 400 years of Devons in America in 2023. John Hall and John Wheelock reported that this is the 40th annual meeting of the AMDCA.

Minutes: Andrew Van Ord provided the corrected minutes of the May 7, 2016 meeting. A MOTION (Ray Clark/Bruce Farr) to accept the amended minutes passed unanimously.

Treasurer: John Hall presented a written report showing a year- end balance of \$16,057.60 in checking plus \$16,202.75 in CDs. John provided a line-by-line itemization of the years various expenses totaling \$5,606.91. A MOTION (Clayton Randall/Dexter Randall) to accept the Treasurer's report was passed unanimously.

Genetics: Ray Clark reported no new news.

Registration: Bonnie Hall reported that over the past year, 150 females and 61 males have been registered. 41 of those were animals over one year of age. 158 animals have been transferred and 3 lost certificates were issued.

Membership: Bonnie Hall reported that in 2016, the association had 105 members including 2 lifetime, 4 junior, 4 associate and 18 new members.

Communications: Andrew Van Ord reported that 3000 new brochures have been printed and encouraged members to use them. He will mail them to those members who request them. He thanked Lawrence Gilley for developing the fillable pdf versions of the membership and registration applications that can be found on the AMDCA website. Andrew also reported that Milking Devons had been represented at both the Ashville, NC and Seven Springs, PA Mother Earth News fairs in 2016 and recognized the efforts of those volunteers that participated. He reminded the membership that the American Milking Devon Cattle Facebook page was owned by a breeder and was not an official AMDCA page. He recognized that his participation in the page may have created confusion and stated that he had removed himself as an editor of the page. The recent posts on that page attacking members and debating the associations business was discussed. The question was raised if the AMDCA should develop a social media presence including a public page to promote the breed and a closed group to enable discussion amongst the membership.

Website: Lawrence Gilley reported that the milkingdevons.org website received 17,316 visits a month in 2016, up from 11,938 the previous year. 67% of visitors had not previously visited the website. The website consistently shows up at or near the top of search engine results.

Newsletter: Tom Slater reported that he had settled into the position of editor. He encouraged the membership to make suggestions and to make submissions of anything Milking Devon related.

DNA: No proposal was made. Steve Burton and Shannon Rice-Nichols will work together on a proposal including both DNA typing and DNA parental verification. Questions discussed included: What are our goals? What lab will be used? What will it cost? How will it be rolled out? What markers will be tested for? How will the data be used and managed?

2015 Dues policy: It was reported that earlier this year a member took exception to this policy stating that the adopted policy was in conflict with the Association Bylaws. The member notified the directors of their intent to pursue a class action lawsuit against the association. To facilitate the lawsuit, they requested information including meeting minutes and several years of membership lists including personal contact information and financial standing with the association. After consultation with legal counsel and due deliberation, the Board determined that it would be in the best interest of the Association and the breed to withdraw the new membership policy and refund any back dues paid in accordance with this policy. As a result of this decision, the Registrar/Membership Secretary reviewed her records and refunded all dues collected under this policy in early March. Several of the refund checks have been returned to the treasurer with letters of support for the association. Pursuant to Vermont law the member also received meeting minutes and the current membership list with contact information. John Hall reported that legal counsel fees are approximately \$1,700 currently.

Election of Directors: John Hall reported that legal counsel was also sought after the same member requested a list of those members entitled to election ballots including contact information and solicited for a ballot to be provided to another member who did not own any registered Milking Devon Cattle. Since the bylaws state "Voting rights and registration privileges are limited to those members owning registered Milking Devon cattle", a ballot was never sent. Taking the advice of legal counsel the ballots were numbered, and both a raised seal and identification was added to make it more difficult for them to be duplicated. Discussion followed pertaining to ways to provide voters anonymity and still ensure a secure election. Some suggestions included using a third party to collect and count ballots and including a return envelope that carries the security features rather than applying them to the ballot. John Hall appointed Bruce Farr, Jude Burton, and John Wheelock to count the ballots and report the results. Bruce Farr reported the following results: Ray Clark 35 votes, Richard Larson 20 votes, Andrew Van Ord 32 votes, Kendy Sawyer 3 write-in votes, Shannon Bilger 1 write-in vote. Ray Clark and Andrew Van Ord stand elected to the Board for a three-year term.

Conference Call: John Hall reported that earlier this year Richard Larson suggested that a conference call be made available for future annual meetings and so it was presented to the membership to discuss. John Hall also reported the AMDCA's legal counsel indicated that voting over a conference call would not be legal because the association wouldn't be able to ensure who was voting. Concerns over how it would impact on the meeting, how functional it would be, cost, and how technology would be implemented were discussed. It was decided not to pursue the idea at this time.

Fall Gathering: An event at Colonial Williamsburg in November 2017 has been advertised on Facebook and the Red Devon website but the association has not been contacted or made any plans. It is unknown if the event is intended to be the "Fall Gathering" or if it is an event by independent breeders. It was suggested that a fall gathering in conjunction with the 2018 Livestock Conservancy meeting in Indiana could be a good venue. It was also suggested that a recurring ad be included to the newsletter soliciting hosts for future gatherings.

Semen Bank: John Hall reported that the storage facility, North American Breeders, has been bought out by Herbster Angus Farm Inc. The idea of closing out or maintaining the semen bank was revisited.

Members have reported issues purchasing semen from private breeders and it is believed that the availability of semen has been beneficial to the breed. John Hall reported that Swiss Village had been contacted to inquire if they would like to collaborate on drawing more bulls. They declined but did indicate that they have surplus straws from a few bulls and might be willing to trade those straws for straws from new bulls. Ray Clark, Steve Burton, and Shannon Rice-Nichols volunteered to form a committee to identify potential bulls to be collected. Sue Randal suggested that a long term plan be developed. Shannon Rice-Nichols will inquire if Dr. Phillip Sponenberg is interested in developing a plan.

Regional Groups: Jeremy Michaud reported that other national associations have regional groups that elect delegates to represent them. It was suggested to establish regions, under the umbrella of the AMDCA, charged with the responsibility to elect delegates to represent the region at the annual meeting. It was suggested that the association could provide assistance with travel expenses and that regions would take turns hosting the fall gathering. A MOTION (Sue Randal/ Bonnie Hall) to direct the Board of Directors to define regions including the United States and Canada providing equal representation and establish procedures and protocols for those regions to organize and solicit a representative passed.

Mother Earth News Fair: Mother Earth News has added a fair in Essex Junction, Vermont June 10-11. It would be beneficial to be represented. Shannon Rice-Nichols reported that the Kerry Cattle Society had space reserved and would be willing to display AMDCA literature.

Red Devon Collaboration: Ray Clark reported that Jeremy Engh had contacted him and indicated that Red Devon USA was interested in the milk study "Fatty acid composition of milk from pasture-fed and grain-fed American Milking Devon Cows" by Robert Ward, PhD, Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences, Utah State University and want to work with other Devon associations around the world to expand the research. Ray also indicated that there is interest in him to run as Red Devon USA director to help facilitate future collaboration between the two groups.

Jeremy Michaud thanked the association for its support when his home burned last winter.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:48 PM.

Andrew Van Ord, Secretary