**American Milking Devon Cattle Association**

**2024 Annual Meeting Summary**

President John Hall called to the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on May 11, 2024, with the following attending: Directors John Hall, Mark Winslow, Andrew VanOrd, and Bruce Farr. Also attending: Bonnie Hall (Registrar), Kathy VanOrd, Lily VanOrd, John Madden, Judy Burton, Steve Burton, Howard Daniels and Zack Randolph.

The Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting were reviewed and moved to approve by Mark Winslow, seconded by John Madden. The Motion passed Unanimously.

President’s Report:

The Board has conducted monthly phone meetings to handle Association business with a particular focus this year on the World Devon Congress and our role with that Congress. The Congress was well attended with participants from all across the U.S., Australia, Brazil and England. Each tour stop was well attended with as many as 100 people. Backyard Green Films filmed the entire Tour and a film will follow, along with vignettes of Hosts from the Tour and participants.

The newsletter, created and edited by Tom Slater, has been widely successful but due to Tom’s illness, has not been published recently. Tom and the newsletter are missed, and we are hopeful he will be able to resume publication soon.

Treasurer’s Report:

See attached. We have had a number of checks uncashed for the past two years that were from funds returned to members from the Registration issue. The Motion was made by John Madden, seconded by Andrew VanOrd. Membership considered those checks null and void and voted to return the funds to the Treasury.

Membership Report:

See attached.

Registration Report:

See attached. Bonnie Hall suggested that we remind owners that once an animal is deceased, the Original Registration with the Raised Seal (or copy with date) should be returned to Bonnie so that the Association can have an accurate count of live animals. John Hall noted that we have not attempted to do a complete census since 2004.

Semen Report:

There has been little action this year, but Red Devon members may want some semen for crossbreeding. At the Congress, it was noted that International shipping of semen has different requirements, and the Board should investigate that to ensure we can access that market.

Genetics:

We all miss Ray Clark’s role with this, and the position will be filled after the election.

Registrar:

Bonnie Hall told Members that she continues to have problems with some sellers not going by Policy by sending in the transfer papers for the buyer; instead handing Original Registrations to the buyer and making the buyer submit them. Some sellers are also given paperwork to register animals to the buyer. This results in incomplete, and undocumented paperwork. The Board has instructed the Registrar to only process paperwork that is submitted by the seller and complete. It was suggested to have a Facebook forum for interested persons to ask questions about both the Devon cattle and the process of registration.

Website:

Present Webmaster Lawrence Gilley is continuing to post ads and members until the transition with a new Webmaster is complete. The Board and membership in attendance appreciate Lawrence’s commitment to the Association for many, many years. The Board expects the new person to have the website updated soon and be more interactive.

Newsletter:

See above.

Election Results:

John Hall reported that the Board had been made aware, after the ballots went out, that they were not following the By-laws regarding the election process. The By-laws state:

“Section 4. Nominating Committee: Annually, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three voting members including one Director who is not up for re-election for the purpose of soliciting nominations from both the Board and the membership and nominating a slate of prospective Directors to be placed on the ballot.”

The Board requested an opinion from our lawyer on how to proceed and was informed that the By-laws must be followed so the current election process should be halted, and the process should be now done according to the By-Laws.

After thoroughly discussing this issue, Howard Daniels moved, and John Madden seconded, that the Association suspend the current election process and proceed to hold the 2024 election as described in the By-laws. The Motion passed Unanimously.

The President will appoint a Nominating Committee and they will solicit nominations from the membership in order to prepare a slate of prospective Directors to be placed on a new ballot for the membership. This will happen in the next eight weeks or so.

Scholarship Proposal:

The Ray Clark Award (see attached) was discussed as an appropriate way to honor the many years of work that Ray has done on behalf of the membership. Bruce Farr moved, and Bonnie Hall seconded, a Motion to support the Ray Clark Award beginning in the spring of 2025. The Motion passed Unanimously.

Fall Gathering:

We are supporting the Northeast Regional Show being held during the Seneca County Fair in July in New York and are also looking for a member who is interested in hosting a future Regional Fall Gathering.

Herdbook:

Steve Burton is very interested in genetics and urged the Board to update the Herdbook soon. Bonnie Hall replied it is in progress and should be available this spring. Steve expressed the value of having the Herdbook searchable and the Breedmate program was discussed. The Board has not endorsed the Breedmate program in the past because they felt the information was secure. However, there may be other programs that could meet this need.

Other Business:

Proposed By-law change:

Section 2. Elections: The Directors shall be elected annually by the membership by mail ballot. Each Director shall be elected for a term of three years or until a successor is elected; provided, however, that at the first Annual Meeting and whenever necessary in subsequent years, approximately one third of the Directors shall be elected for one year and one third for two years, as designated by the Board. In the case of a vacancy on the Board, the remaining Directors may appoint a person to fill the vacancy **until the next** **election.** During their terms of office, all Directors shall remain voting members of the Corporation in good standing.” (Bold Faced used to clarify proposal below.)

The Proposal is to delete the **above bold words** and insert the following words instead “for the length of the original term”. The effect of this would maintain the even rotation of the Directors’ term of service to avoid having the possibility of a very large turnover in one year.

Bruce Farr moved to adopt the Proposed Change, seconded by Mark Winslow. The Motion passed Unanimously.

Members in attendance urged the Board to do a full review of the By-laws including Director length of terms; criteria for Board membership; and election process. Bonnie Hall moved to direct the Board to do so, seconded by John Madden. The Motion passed Unanimously.

History of the Devon:

President Hall reviewed the history of the American Devon cattle and the works of the Association over the years. This included:

...In 1624 Devons came to America because the colonists knew they could thrive in the harsh conditions of New England. Devons were chosen because they were far better at this than other breeds of the time.

… Devon cattle helped settle New England and were so common that by the year 1900, one hundred pairs of Devon oxen were shown at the Danbury, CT State Fair. John told the membership to keep in mind that the Devons had to be walked to the Fair as there was no way to transport them. He told those present that this gives an idea how widespread the Devons were at that time.

…In the early 1900’s, the Herdbook was so large it covered bound volumes.

…By the late 1940’s, Devon numbers were in drastic decline due largely to the interest in feedlot beef as opposed to free range cattle. A purpose that was perhaps suited by other breeds.

...In the early 1950’s the American Milking Devon Cattle Association split from the Beef Devons because the Beef Devons were pursuing a single purpose animal.

…In 1973, Sturbridge Village in MA wanted some historically accurate Devons to display. John’s grandfather and father had some cattle for sale, however the Village did not like the price. The Village searched all over New England and found less than 200 American Devon cattle alive. This showed how rare the Breed had become.

…In 1974 the American Milking Devon Cattle Association was created with a handful of members and three Board members.

…The membership started to grow, and the Board expanded to five members.

…In 2003 the Herdbook was closed to new cattle.

…Currently it is estimated that there are around 2,500 American Milking Devon cattle.

…In 2004 John was elected President.

Since that time the following initiatives have been developed:

… The Association oversaw the drawing of bulls and developed a Semen Bank;

…Regional Meetings have been held in Missouri, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania and North Carolina;

**…**Conference Calls for the general membership to discuss both Association and cattle issues were started;

…A Website has been developed as a resource to both members and non-members;

…. A Cattle Grading Workshop at Colonial Williamsburg was filmed by Backyard Green Films and made available on the Website for all to see;

…Regional Shows have been encouraged with the outstanding events in Virginia (thanks to Richard Larson and New York (thanks to Dale Freier and family);

…Youth Ambassador Project was conducted prior to COVID to encourage youth to develop an interest in Devons;

...An outstanding Newsletter, edited by Tom Slater, was made available to over 200 interested parties quarterly;

…A second effort to expand the Semen Bank was accomplished with the addition of several new bulls;

…The Association conducted a Workshop with Dr. Drew Conroy for Youth Cattle Judging, hosted by Steve and Jude Burton in New York;

…Backyard Green Films, a small independent film company, has documented a number of AMDCA Events for the Association and also filmed members and continues to post its films since 2017;

...A joint project with the Red Devon Association and Pilmoth Patuxet Museum in Plymouth, MA celebrated the 400 Anniversary of the arrival of Devon’s to the New World. This was filmed by Backyard Green Films and will be available in spring of 2025. Many thanks to Backyard Green Films and to Mark and Kim Winslow for bringing cattle to demonstrate at this well attended Event. This Event was the culmination of the World Devon Congress.