

Editor's note: the following article was written by Tracy for part of her Masters Degree in Biology, but her specialty was on conservation genetics. She studied in Brazil for two weeks studying populations, genetics and conservation of the Golden Lion Tamarin Monkeys. All of her projects throughout her 2.5 years of study were in conservation. Her Master Plan was Conservation Genetics of the Clydesdale Horse...studying the benefits and detriments of upcrossing, and generational crosses to become breed certified, etc. A survey in part was organized by Gerald Wismer. It is written here to let the members know the information about the program and is not intended as an endorsement by the Editor one way or another. It is a "for your information only" article. So, read and learn and conclude!

THE USLGE and THE CLYDESDALE BREEDERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

written by Tracy Taft, Springfield, Illinois

What is the USLGE and does it make an impact on me as a Clydesdale breeder? If you, like myself, are a member of the CBUSA, the USLGE impacts you. If you raise or own purebred animals, you should be a part of this organization due to the member benefits. The United States Livestock Genetic Export is a not-for-profit organization that utilizes programs funded through the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Bill. USLGE was incorporated in 1993 out of the need for an umbrella organization by six primary groups that were working independently with the government. To maintain consistency, there was need for an oversight group to monitor funding requests and to follow through with the program goals.

The USDA manages USLGE through the Foreign Agricultural Services (FAS) which was created in 1894. FAS has many responsibilities within the USD. One responsibility is management of the overseas market development programs, with assistance for United States exporters to develop and maintain markets of hundreds of products. The motto of FAS is "Linking Agriculture to the World" (FAS 2018). FAS has many grants including the Market Access Program (MAP) that provides funding for USLGE to share with their members and many other agricultural associations and businesses. The primary goal is to support trade organizations and to provide financial assistance for international marketing and promotional activities to help build export markets for agricultural products. Grants are given based on the potential for export determined by short, medium and long-term goals. Funding is completely determined on allotments provided through the United States Farm Bill. Although the USLGE focus on agriculture, it does not include direct buying, selling, shipping or marketing of any agricultural product; that responsibility is the function of the members. USLGE is specifically for live or frozen genetic organizations and companies.

USLGE's goals are relatively simple and based on export market development. The foundation concept is that the United States is recognized as the "global leader in livestock production, due primarily to superior genetics" (USLGE 2018). The U.S. and its livestock are financially advantaged due to the exportation of their quality genetics, thus creating a superior internationally known brand. This is an advantage passed on to other countries as these high caliber genetics are made available to use as foundation animals creating quality

worldwide. Although the main goal is export, USLGE also provides technology and contacts to help support investment in genetics.

Many benefits of membership surround this genetic marketing export program. The immediate membership reward is financial gain through international trade and sales and potential future sales. These opportunities give international representation of quality United States breeding programs and genetics. Membership also provides international livestock information such as trends, new technological innovations, and emerging health issues.

Activities of USLGE are primarily international outreach. Encouraged opportunities include trade shows and breed events for breed promotion. Attendance and scheduled activities at events such as the Annual National Clydesdale Sale, and the World Clydesdale Show create tremendous opportunities to reach international visitors and are perfect to promote the best of the United State's genetics. Overseas farm visits are another eligible activity for USLGE member associations. The Clydesdale Association has been able to enroll marketing partners in countries such as Scotland, Brazil, South Africa and Columbia. Through these partnerships, many individuals have become active members of the Clydesdale Breeders of the United States. To encourage further relations, the U.S. Association maintains the registration for the Brazilian Clydesdales. Although the U.S. is the lead partner, much collaboration and even reverse trade opportunities can occur to bring overseas breeders to the United States. All of the international opportunities are aided by the use of translation services and potential funding for current and future printed materials aimed at the promotion of the breed and its activities.

USLGE has three main membership types. The largest portion of members are breed registries. Currently there are eight beef cattle breeds, six dairy cattle breeds, nine horse breeds and the National Swine Registry which hold membership. Other associations focused on products instead of species, such as the American Embryo Transfer Association, Livestock Exporters Association of the USA, and National Association of Animal Breeders also participate in USLGE programs. There are individual State Departments of Agriculture memberships, which currently include fourteen U.S. state members coast to coast. The third membership group is for industry partners comprised of individual breeders, exporters and genetic suppliers who wish to have immediate access to any trade leads that are available. Out of all the species groups, the horses create the most export dollars return on the Foreign Agricultural Service investment appropriations due to the price per exported animal.

USLGE has been very good to the Clydesdale Breeders of the United States. Board members, the past executive directory and association members have been on the USLGE sponsored inquiry trips. Some of the activities included were a Scotland farm tour, a visit to the Highland Show, attendance and support of our Canadian neighbors at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, inclusions at the United States trade show booths, as well as various receptions hosted by the United States Clydesdale Breeders. Another opportunity was a trip to Brazil to visit our newly joined association members. Current long term goals include future trips and association support and participation in the 2021 World Show to be held in Manitoba, Canada, as well as the 2022 World Clydesdale Show in Scotland; and providing support for other countries individual Clydesdale registrations, both with and without their own registries, and to give assistance where needed.

Fortunately, the USDA, FAS, and USLGE do not always require or expect immediate return on their investment. They realize that making contacts and finding individuals who are interested, able, and willing to invest in a future herd, potentially establishing foundational genetics of a breed for a country, is a time consuming and daunting endeavor. Therefore, a plan is created through membership activities. Investments in the future are made, and follow through continues with the ultimate goal of United States superior genetics seeing greater use internationally. Let your breeding operation genetics represent the United States by allowing USLGE to help make it possible.

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