

# 2021 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Special Order of Business

## Preservation and Support of the American Sheep Industry

**Whereas:** the American sheep industry has a long history and deep roots in the history of American Agriculture. It is an industry that has a long history globally with it being one of the few multi-purpose animals that is raised both for meat and wool production, and

**Whereas:** the U.S. sheep industry has declined from record high numbers in the 1940's of over 40 million to less than 5 million breeding animals today, however sheep operations and sheep producers are still a vital component of our rural communities and particularly our three member states of Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. The recent pandemic and loss of one of the most significant meat processors for American lamb in the U.S.A has added to the potential decline of the industry, and

**Whereas:** the American Sheep Industry is facing significant challenges including:

- Importation of foreign lamb decreasing the market price for American produced lamb.
- Reduced access to processing due to concentration in the meat packing industries
- Lack of price discovery and reporting on a national level
- Lack of ability to adequately differentiate our American product
- Environmental groups delivering pressure to remove livestock from the Public Lands
- Reduced labor supply and dependency on foreign labor and a difficult H2A program.

**Therefore, be it Resolved:** Rocky Mountain Farmers Union members urge our National Congress, USDA and our State governments and agencies to identify funding and resources to help stabilize the industry by addressing the preceding challenges and instituting the following measures:

- Incentives or disincentives, including tariffs to limit the importation of foreign lamb
- Reduce concentration in the meat packing
- Improve transparency in the reporting of livestock prices and markets by USDA and marketing channels
- Reinstate COOL so we can identify and differentiate our American product.
- Increase public awareness of American Lamb through advertising, etc.
- Increase and encourage support of multiple use of our public lands and limit intervention from environmental groups in livestock management on public lands.
- Keep working on improvement of the H2A program.