



Livestock  
Publications  
Council

*Serving the dynamic livestock communications industry since 1974*

# Vision 2025

2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



2019 BEST OF THE BUNCH  
OVERALL WINNER  
PHOTO BY ERIN WORRELL



# Livestock Publications Council

## Mission

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Livestock Publications Council will drive the livestock communications industry forward through excellence in professional development, networking, and student programs—while preserving the foundation of traditional print publications.

## Vision

### VISION 2025

The livestock publications industry has progressed to become an all-inclusive communications industry. While print publications are still relevant and widely utilized as an information resource, publications are rising to meet the challenge of digital transmission of livestock news with incorporation of various types of media in daily operations. Livestock Publications Council (LPC) will support publications as they continue telling the livestock industry's story via print, social, video, and digital media.

Over the course of the next five years, LPC will advance its book of membership services, including professional development and networking opportunities, while re-shaping its volunteer leadership structure to match the association's culture. Further, LPC will maintain industry relevancy through progressive thought leadership and action on imperative initiatives.

## Strategic Direction

### AREAS OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- Membership Services
- Organizational Culture
- Membership Recruitment and Retention
- Revenue Building
- Future of Industry

## Baseline Metrics

### MEASUREMENT

- Finance
- Membership
- Executive Committee Review of Committees and Structure

# Membership Services

## STRATEGY

Provide resources and services that benefit Livestock Publications Council members' professional and personal growth, including collaboration with industry to ensure value of membership. Over the next five years, LPC will continually evaluate programs the organization needs to develop, enhance or retire and execute action where necessary.

## ACTION

### Immediate

- Evaluate current book of membership services for development, enhancement or retiring of services.
- Facilitate focus group discussions with Board of Directors, LPC committee members, and engaged LPC members on LPC book of membership services.
- Develop new membership services as needed and/or where sponsored.
- Restructure Membership Services committee to more effectively manage book of membership services.

### Long-term

- Task LPC leadership with annually evaluating book of memberships for review of member usage and cost effectiveness.
- Develop new membership services as needed and/or where sponsored.
- Create task forces from Membership Services committee members and other LPC leadership to create new membership services when needed.

## MEASURABLE GOALS

### Goals

- Increase number of engaged LPC members through greater usage of membership services.
- Increase student and recent college graduate membership numbers through execution of successful student development programs.

### Measurement

- Attain year-over-year increase in LPC Awards Contest entries.
- Recruit and retain new members annually as a result of valuable membership services. Growth to match Recruitment and Retention goals.

# Organizational Culture

## STRATEGY

Create and sustain a culture that thrives on inclusion of all members during LPC meetings and events, transparency in volunteer/leadership roles, and excellence in marketing communications and branding.

## ACTION

### Immediate

- Evaluate committee types for needed additions/changes and structure for volunteers. Evaluation to include creation of Engagement Committee and different committees as needed.
- Complete a re-branding of the organization with cultural relevancy.
- Create transparency in volunteer and leadership roles, with added emphasis on process for becoming involved and elected to leadership positions.
- Review nominations process and define requirements.
- Establish shared responsibility with Board of Directors for inclusion of all members.

### Long-term

- Engagement Committee to develop opportunities for members to engage with others in the organization, and greater agricultural communications industry, through educational and networking events.
- Annually review committees and nominations process.

## MEASURABLE GOALS

### Goals

- Increase number of active committee members.
- Establish database of committee members with identification of those seeking leadership roles.
- Diminish “clique” culture through leadership from Board of Directors, committee members and Executive Director.

### Measurement

- See gains on new committee members reach 20 percent annually through transparency and recruitment efforts.
- Support Membership measurable goals through positive organizational culture.

# Recruitment & Retention

## STRATEGY

Develop customer relationship management database for membership that allows organization to better track new and retiring members, providing leadership with information on member recruitment and retention. Create new member recruitment program (e.g. membership drive) and tactics for less engaged/retiring members at risk for non-renewal.

## ACTION

### Immediate

- Move membership renewal period to accommodate members preferred renewal time (April 1-June 1)
- Upgrade membership database and fee/information collection methods
- Establish policy on monetization and distribution of member information

### Long-term

- Create target member lists from past and potential members with communication from board member
- Combat retirement: Recruit new college graduates/entry-level industry members to maintain membership numbers
- Recruit early-career students through engagement with student programs and potential development of partnership between LPC and college departments (educational workshop for student recruitment)
- Develop first-year member recruitment program with potential for reduced rate for first year/sponsored by current member (publication or service); invitations to regional workshops
- Enhance membership types with addition of freelancer membership
- Recognize new members through specialized events (e.g. reception) and identifiers (e.g. nametag ribbon)

## MEASURABLE GOALS

### Goals

- Increase membership numbers through recruitment of new members.
- Maintain existing membership after publication/service member lead leaves company. Recruit more than one engaged representative from each member business/organization.

### Measurement

- Retain 90 percent of membership annually.
- Add 20 new members annually.

# Revenue Building

## STRATEGY

Develop Livestock Publication Council's sponsorship package— with collaboration from each committee, including the Executive Committee— to fund organization's administrative, program and scholarship needs. Current fundraising opportunities will be enhanced and new opportunities will be developed.

## ACTION

### Immediate

- Expand advertising packages to include other livestock species publications (e.g. dairy, equine and pork)
- Develop sponsorship packages for Livestock Publications Council that could include opportunities in digital media, usage of LPC's membership contact information, and in-kind sponsorships for website design and print/mail services.
- Attain sponsorships specific to LPC and not directly related to Ag Media Summit. These sponsorships could be membership service-based sponsorships.

### Long-term

- Compile pool of potential sponsors to approach for annual giving.
- Explore possibilities for fundraising event(s) and execute as deemed beneficial to the organization. Additional emphasis placed on events hosted in conjunction with non-beef, livestock events to balance NCBA Luncheon. Potential fundraising events to include a re-launch of the LPC Gala in accordance with new American Royal opening; World Pork Expo; American Quarter Horse Congress; WRCA Finals; and World Dairy Expo.
- Evaluate membership dues fees for possible increase in fee amount.
- Produce an online auction with items donated by LPC service members and friends of the industry.
- Develop merchandise store to sell apparel, hats, and digital assets (e.g. stock images, graphics, templates.)

## MEASURABLE GOALS

### Goals

- Determine overall dollar amount necessary to be supported by multiple tactics.
- Continue success of beef breeds and state cattlemen's association advertising packages for Association revenue.
- Develop new advertising packages to represent other livestock species industries (e.g. dairy, equine and pork.)
- Create an online auction to raise money for the Association, utilizing service members who do not participate in advertising donation for advertising packages.

### Measurement

- Market and sell beef breeds and state cattlemen's association advertising packages for \$15,000-\$20,000 in annual revenue.
- Acquire \$5,000 each for newly developed advertising packages with advertisements placed in publications from other livestock industries besides beef cattle.
- Raise \$15,000-\$20,000 total, with an in-kind sponsorship from an online auction platform, during an annual online auction.

# Future of Industry

## STRATEGY

Maintain industry relevancy by monitoring direction of livestock communications field and execution of initiatives that drive the organization forward. Research-based information should be utilized (when available) to make educated decisions about Livestock Publications Council programming. Solidify LPC's commitment to the Future of the Industry by recognizing those who have made, or are currently making, positive contributions to the livestock communications field.

## ACTION

### Immediate

- Survey current and potential members annually to monitor industry pulse and attain information on member service needs.
- Review and adapt to trends in agricultural communications and the general agricultural industry, with specific regard to livestock.
- Provide programs and information reflective of the current livestock industry.
- Recognize legacy members who have made significant contribution to LPC and industry's progression. Honors of note: LPC Hall of Fame inductee, Headliner honoree and Distinguished Service Award winner.

### Long-term

- Complete collaborative research study/studies on direction of livestock communications industry, including trends and projected changes.
- Establish awards program, beyond Forrest Bassford Student Award, for others who positively contribute to the future of the industry and LPC. Potential awards including but not limited to: Workhorse Award and Early Career Award.
- Contemplate creation of Advisory Council comprised of seasoned industry members and/or past LPC Board of Directors members to provide peer review on strategic plan progress and assist with attaining sustaining partners for revenue building efforts.

## MEASURABLE GOALS

### Goals

- Remain relevant in changing industry through open communication with membership, research studies, and volunteer-leadership of committee.
- Grow awards program, while upholding prestige of current awards/honors. Utilize marketing efforts in call for award nominations/applicants.
- Monitor chart-a-course of Vision 2025 strategic plan and work with LPC Executive Director for annual review of progress.

### Measurement

- Develop membership service survey with results to serve as baseline data. Response rate at 30 percent or higher.
- Build database of potential award honorees for consideration each year. Monitor livestock communications industry for those making great contributions. Annually, Board of Directors to add potential honorees to database to at least replace those selected for honors.

# SWOT Analysis

## STRENGTHS

1. Networking opportunities
2. Professional development
3. Membership passionate about industry
4. Ag Media Summit

### *Additional Strengths Identified*

High quality members who are innovative and progressive; tradition; support from peers; leadership and staff dedicated to organization; student award program; talented and strong network; diversity of ideas, abilities, and method

## WEAKNESSES

1. Revenue streams
2. Clarity on organization's purpose
3. More need for all types of communicators
4. Cliques and clichés; membership not as active as it could be

### *Additional Weaknesses Identified*

Transparency; board member engagement; book of relevant membership services for changing membership; keeping up with generational changes; communication to membership; print publications diminishing; time availability of volunteers/staff; resistance to change; difficulty in recruiting new members; lack of early career and student member engagement

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. Membership service growth and development
2. Student development
3. Inclusion of freelance/contract employees; growth of freelancer/contractor numbers in industry
4. Student retention post-graduation

### *Additional Opportunities Identified*

Sponsorship/sponsors seeing importance of supporting communicators; thirst for information; technology/rapid change in technology; membership; IFAJ membership; Coffee and Collaboration (opportunity to educate and develop members year-round); educational content for mid-level professionals; digital content innovation; local meetings; increased number of communication methods (e.g. social media and ability to reach larger audience)

## THREATS

1. Budgets
2. Consolidation
3. Activist and/or anti-agriculture groups
4. Government overreach

### *Additional Threats Identified*

Decreasing budgets (as it relates to membership and advertising); external pressures on agriculture industry; mis-information from entities outside the industry by the ill-informed; misinformation of food production; not responding to changing industry; smaller industry reduction in the number of publications/industry shift from publications to contract; consolidation; not evolving with times and technology; generational differences; rapidly changing communication methods, competition from other groups

# Supporting Research

## VISION 2025

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## PRINT PUBLICATIONS TOP SOURCE OF INFORMATION

*Via the Executive Summary of the 2020 Media Channel Study:*

- Owners/operators/managers of farms and ranches (hereafter referred to as "operators") rely on a variety of traditional and digital channels, with **ag magazines/newspapers leading the way.**
- As seen in prior studies, **magazines/newspapers are again the top resource used on a weekly basis by operators.** Even when looking at the data by daily digital user, the story is the same.
- **Magazines/newspapers continue to be the number one driver for prompting operators to visit agricultural websites.**

## AG OPERATORS USE MULTIPLE CHANNELS

*Via the Key Conclusions of the 2020 Media Channel Study:*

- The agricultural market is dynamic yet consistent in many ways, including how farmers and ranchers access information. They use a **wide range of traditional, in-person, and digital channels to get the information needed to help run and manage their operations.**
- While the use of many digital and mobile channels has been increasing steadily over time, traditional media continues to be heavily used by operators. **Ag magazines/newspapers is a top source used on a weekly basis, even when study results are viewed based on those who are heavy digital users.**
- Marketers looking to drive traffic to their websites should rely on many channels to accomplish the goal, but magazines and newspapers are the leading tool.
- In agriculture, the purchase cycle, also called **the purchase funnel, is supported by all media channels:** in print, online, and in person. Marketers may consider a diverse media strategy to plug in to all points of this purchase process.

*The Livestock Publications Council (LPC) expresses its thanks to the Ag Media Council and Connectiv for allowing LPC to reference its research in the Vision 2025 Strategic Plan.*



**Ag Media Council**

Collaboration, Education and  
Research to Support Agriculture



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Vision 2025 strategic planning process facilitated by J.J. Jones, Roots & Legacies Consulting, Inc.  
*Strategic Plan completed by 2019-2020 Livestock Publications Council Board of Directors.*