

ISBONA Breed Association Exploration

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I. Summary and Recommendations

The ISBONA Executive Committee recommends that ISBONA pursue a registrar contract with Canadian Livestock Records Corporation (CLRC), with ISBONA acting as the breed association registering all US-bred-and-born Icelandic sheep beginning January 1, 2019. Canadian citizens would continue to register their Canadian-bred-and-born Icelandics via the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association (CSBA). Together US and Canadian breeders, despite two different breed associations, form a stronger bilateral organization operating jointly on behalf of purebred Icelandic sheep in North America.

This recommendation fully addresses the mission/purpose of ISBONA to preserve and protect the Icelandic breed across North America, to register eligible purebred sheep and issue certificates, to educate breeders and the public as well as accomplish the goals set forth in the project plan for exploration.

A complete list of proposed ISBONA Registration Rules and Fees is included with this document. Certificate samples and other documents are not yet ready but will be developed over the next month or two and will be shared.

Costs to ISBONA for initial conversion to its own registry at CLRC cannot be fully determined yet, but are likely to be in the range of \$3000-\$6000. This is consistent

with other CLRC conversion efforts, past discussions with CLRC and consistent with rough estimates from other registries. A conversion within CLRC is expected to be on the low end of the range since much of the needed data already exists within CLRC, and we anticipate only minor changes from CSBA rules which are already in place.

On-going, this approach is expected to bring in an additional \$2000-3000 to the ISBONA association annually, affording a return of the initial investment in under 3 years. This additional revenue will enable ISBONA to provide benefits to breeders and members to improve the breeding and business of raising Icelandic sheep.

Changes for US breeders (ISBONA members or not) will be minimal, led by a reduction in Membership Dues from \$60CAD to \$30USD and the institution of random DNA parentage testing. All US registrations, transfers and memberships would be processed by CLRC through the ISBONA breed association rather than the CSBA organization; CLRC would provide introductory materials to familiarize breeders with the rules. Canadian members would continue to register via CSBA, and their ISBONA membership dues would be lowered to reflect the fact that they were required to pay for a CSBA membership.

No significant additional volunteer help is required for operational transaction processing because all of that is handled by CLRC. Some changes will be required in ISBONA support systems (website, financial, membership) to fully integrate this recommendation.

Remaining fact finding with CLRC can be completed within the next 30-60 days as will preparation of all of the materials needed to begin conversion. This would include certificate and forms design, banking arrangements and completing two agreements with CSBA. The first is a data agreement, securing approval from CSBA to utilize Icelandic sheep pedigree and other data (which they own) so that data can be shared across US and Canadian sheep. Second, ISBONA will seek Foreign Registry status with CSBA which will allow easier interchange with Canadian registrations, provide an effective way to stay in synch with CSBA rules and breed standard and will add to the credibility of ISBONA as the recognized breed association in the US. We expect these agreements can be obtained based on prior discussions with CSBA and the compatible design of our registration rules.

CLRC is prepared to assist us, and CSBA representatives have indicated their support of ISBONA's contracting with CLRC.

Upon a resolution from the ISBONA Board of Directors, ISBONA would sign a 5-year contract with CLRC for registrar services to begin in January 2019. This contract is renewable for additional 5-year periods or cancellable with one year notice.

A Comment Period is available until September 20, 2018. All comments will be submitted to the ISBONA Board for its final deliberations and a decision made before the end of September.

II. Benefits

- Establishes an Icelandic sheep breed association to preserve and protect the Icelandic breed of sheep in the US to complement the existing umbrella breed association (CSBA) in Canada

Icelandic sheep are the only major breed of sheep in the US that are not protected by a breed association based in the US. This puts the purity of the breed at risk because certain registry services (eg, DNA parentage verification) are never performed; additionally, no enforcement capability exists to protect buyers or sellers in the US. ISBONA can create a full breed association for US-bred-and-born sheep with minimal investment and risk, using the best practices of CSBA as a guideline.

When a breeder represents his/her sheep as a registered 100% purebred Icelandic sheep, the buyer has an expectation that the sheep possesses characteristics consistent with the breed standard and that the sheep is descended from the parents specified by the breeder on the certificate. Typically, many buyers will pay extra for these reassurances. A breeder may be perfectly confident in his or her own ethics, but no one can definitively speak for the practices of others. We have every reason to believe Icelandic breeders care about their sheep and their own reputations, and would not knowingly defraud. We are not accusing anyone of anything when we talk about the need for breed purity, nor are we saying becoming a breed association will absolutely identify a bad actor if one appeared. We do believe that not having strong breed association protection is potentially damaging to the breed and its breeders in the US.

- Minimizes changes for US breeders today by using CLRC as registrar and reduces costs for all breeders

Past objections to forming an ISBONA registry often focused on not having a suitable registrar. This recommendation retains CLRC registry processing and uses

rules very similar to those in use today. In some instances, ISBONA has been able to solve long standing annoyances for US breeders (eg, dual tagging) which could not be previously resolved within rules created to serve Canada and not the US.

Despite not having the same pricing advantages as CSBA, US breeder fees will be reduced by \$15-45USD per year. Canadian breeders who join ISBONA would also qualify for a lower ISBONA membership fee because they need to pay CSBA to register sheep.

- Provides links to Canadian breed standard and the CSBA organization for guidance, stability and similar rate structure

Recognition as a Foreign Registry will help tie the US and Canadian breed associations together with very similar practices that will keep the two organizations appropriately linked; changes to registration rules, breed standard, etc may be reviewed with CSBA in advance of any action by ISBONA to assure that the changes are based on scientific principles rather than local preference; fees will be stated in US currency, but the rate structure is identical to that of CSBA.

- Offers a renewed relationship with Icelandic breeders in Canada

Our bilateral approach recognizes that there is no dedicated Icelandic sheep breed club in Canada today and provides ISBONA US expertise to Canadian breeders should they need help addressing any Icelandic specific issues that may arise in Canada. In addition, Canadian breeders can receive benefit through a lower ISBONA membership fee, acknowledging the membership payment that is required by CSBA. Foreign Registry status will assist in simplifying any needed re-registrations. Canadian Icelandic breeders are more familiar with some breed association practices that will be new for the US, and they can be valued resources.

- Adds value for breeders and assures a stream of revenue for ISBONA to enable provision of more programs of interest

ISBONA can expand its role to a full breed association, provide more benefits to breeders than they receive today with no increases in member fees by re-routing some revenue to ISBONA from CSBA.

ISBONA will continue to provide a meaningful experience for members who are not currently breeders, but will be able to concentrate resources on breed and business improvement.

III. Risks and Risk Reduction

- CLRC is unable to do what we need to have done

This is seen as a low risk. So far, CLRC has indicated no difficulties in handling our unique situation with two organizations both registering Icelandic sheep. If CLRC cannot handle the challenges of sharing Icelandic pedigree data, it is going to be even harder for another registrar. So there is little reason to choose another registrar initially. There may need to be some concessions, but it seems likely CLRC will always be better able to meet our requirements than another vendor.

- CLRC costs and/or policies take an adverse turn

This is seen as a manageable risk. ISBONA would contract with CLRC at rates determined by CLRC's costs and then set member fees in accordance with those underlying costs. The difference is returned to the breed association as additional revenue. This is how every breed association operates, including CSBA.

US citizens today have no influence over cost increases from CLRC, fees passed along by CSBA and have only limited opportunity to affect policy. They cannot vote nor can they serve on either Board due to Canadian law. US citizens are welcome to attend the Annual General Meeting of each group held in Canada each spring and can be heard there.

CLRC has assured us that they do their very best to keep costs in line and consider all clients when cost increases or major changes are needed. An almost 20-year history with them indicates they do a good job with cost control by improving efficiency as underlying costs rise. US citizens would likely see greater control over member fee increases via a US breed association, but fees will always be driven primarily by CLRC's determination.

As CLRC put it, ISBONA ultimately has the power to "vote with its feet" (ie, leave for another registrar). This is obviously a last resort, but it does exist. Rate increases should be expected and per CLRC these are typically limited to cost of living increases (2-3%) every couple of years. No increases are expected in 2019 but rates will likely rise for 2020. This could cause the fees charged to members to increase as well. There are no guarantees with respect to fee changes or changes in the rate of increase.

- ISBONA fails in its breed association role

This is seen as a low risk. This risk would represent a failure on ISBONA's part to act responsibly in some fashion or another. The arrangement with CLRC operates in such a way that ISBONA itself needs to do very little added work in processes such as managing its bank accounts, setting rates, reviewing rules, making determinations in the case of questions. No actual day-to-day volunteers are needed to process any transactions and in fact, portions of some activities such as Membership, will move from volunteer to paid CLRC work.

If, for any reason, ISBONA should cease operation as a recognized breed association, current CSBA bylaws allow US citizens for eligible breeds (including Icelandics) to be registered with CSBA. Note: such a registration is essentially meaningless with respect to many breed association responsibilities, but certificates can be issued as they are issued today. Keep in mind, however, the value of this paperwork is limited if full breed association responsibilities are not carried out in the US.

IV. Comment Period Prior to Board Resolution

There is no requirement for a membership vote to effect this decision; only a Board resolution is required. From the outset, ISBONA has encouraged breeder involvement through surveys, weekly chat sessions, Q&A, reports, 24/7 email access to all Board members, in depth discussions with members, and Facebook discussions.

Prior to any Board resolution, we are initiating a Comment Period on the materials presented here. All ISBONA members and all breeders of Icelandic sheep in North America are invited and encouraged to comment by September 20, 2018.

Comments will be accepted in the form of written email addressed to admin@isbona.com, written email to any ISBONA Board member or completion of a **Google Form Comment page located [HERE](#)**. Comments made in other venues will not be compiled or addressed. All written comments will be submitted to the ISBONA Board of Directors for consideration prior to a resolution vote, so some materials here, such as Registration Rules and Fees, are subject to change.

V. A Brief History of This Project

Much documentation of this project's history and findings is provided on our website at the [Update Corner](#) and will not be repeated here except in brief. All those interested are encouraged to read through this material, as it describes the evolution of the project that brings us to this recommendation.

In November 2017, at the ISBONA Annual General Meeting (AGM), as part of a series of Bylaws Revisions, the ISBONA Board proposed an expansion in the mission/purpose of ISBONA to include:

- The preservation and protection of the purebred Iceland breed of sheep in North America;
- The registration of purebred Icelandic sheep and maintenance of pedigree information;

Reasons for these additions revolved around years of expressed concerns about ensuring breed purity, improving the breed, providing more assistance to breeders and buyers of Icelandic sheep and making better use of ISBONA resources to add value for its membership. As discussed in the documents available in the archive, this revision represented a significant change from ISBONA's historical educational role, and so ISBONA proposed to undertake a project to explore ways in which it might best move toward a fully functioning breed association. One alternative presented at the meeting was to replace CSBA as the breed association for Icelandic sheep in North America via a direct contract with CLRC and ISBONA-developed registration rules.

The proposal was well received at the AGM with members indicating a desire to better understand it and how it might work.

The mission enhancement and other significant changes to the ISBONA Bylaws were approved by valid membership vote (114-2) and became effective on February 15, 2018. The ISBONA Board appointed the Executive Committee to develop a project to thoroughly explore options for the organization as well as for non-member breeders (those in the US who did not belong to ISBONA but did register sheep through CSBA) and to act while the Board was in recess for lambing, as is its usual custom.

It quickly became clear that changes might be needed in ISBONA's operating model if it were to truly be able to accomplish its new mission to preserve and protect the

Icelandic sheep in North America. The Executive Committee recognized that it might need to put in place a complete breed association presence and could no longer parcel out responsibilities to others in the same way as had been done historically. For example, ISBONA could no longer simply direct members to other organizations such as CSBA and CLRC for purebred registration without more oversight. ISBONA would need to better understand everything meant by “becoming a breed association” and to determine the best way to accomplish that. Ultimately, the Animal Pedigree Act in Canada was the most useful document we found to help organize all of the issues we faced.

VI. Project Goals

In designing an approach to the breed association exploration, we adopted several overall goals for the project:

- We wanted to have an approach in place by Jan 2019 to coincide with our new Jan-Dec membership year. We felt a sense of urgency, but this date was assumed to be about the earliest we could hope to begin.
- We wanted to provide the same level of benefits and services at predictable fees as members/breeders enjoy today, plus add additional services warranted as part of a strong breed association (eg, parentage verification, actions taken against fraudulent sellers).
- We wanted to keep and even grow our Canadian membership as an integral part of the organization assuming this was allowable under Canadian law. While technically this looks allowable, it is our recommendation that Canadian members and breeders stay with CSBA as their breed association for reasons discussed below (see Animal Pedigree Act), but join ISBONA to receive breed specific benefits.
- We wanted to assure an on-going revenue stream for ISBONA so that it could provide more of the same kinds of services provided by breed associations such as CSBA — but specific to the Icelandic sheep and shepherds and not restricted primarily to those who live in Canada.

VII. Possible Outcomes and Assessments

We suggested there might broadly be four possible outcomes ranging from no change (which seemed unlikely), to revising arrangements with CSBA, to directly contracting with a registrar and acting as a full breed association.

A. The Importance of the Animal Pedigree Act

Before discussing the assessment of each of the alternatives, it is important to touch on the Animal Pedigree Act (APA) because it helped to identify a key reason for our recommendation to fully pursue a US breed association. The APA is a remarkable piece of legislation in Canada that has no parallel in US law. It enables organizations like CSBA and other breed associations, provides them with certain governmental protections, set up CLRC as a cost effective central record keeper for breed associations, and describes a number of common sense rules for purebred animal breeding and breed associations.

The position of the APA when it comes to the optimal approach to purebred registration is quite clear and informed a great deal of our exploration (from the Secretary's Manual, Animal Pedigree Act, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada website, Foreign Registry Recognition, p 5):

“...essentially to acknowledge that the registry in the country of birth is the best positioned to apply and enforce its rules of eligibility. For example, the Animal Pedigree Act requires that breed associations make by-laws respecting the inspection of pedigrees and breeding records kept by its members. This becomes impractical to do when animals are in a foreign country, outside its jurisdiction. Likewise, a registry in the United States, for example, may not be able to provide much assurance as to the private breeding records and practices of its members in other countries, including Canada. Primary reasons for this include such things as access difficulties and enforcement difficulties out side a country's borders.”

Basically, US born sheep should be registered by an association in the US and Canadian sheep registered by an association in Canada — at least for their first registration. This allows the full infrastructure of a country's legal system to best support animal registrations. Plus it enables other animal programs (such as the Canadian Sheep Identification Program) to take advantage of existing regulations. Provisions such as parentage verification, buyer protection requirements as well as

the examination of private breeding records highlighted in the example need not be complicated by cross border issues if the animal is registered where it is born. There are no jurisdictional issues involved if we adhere to this provision which has to-date restricted what CSBA can do in the US as a breed association. The registrar function can be located anywhere, but the association that certifies the sheep should be located in the country of birth.

It is arguably the best way to organize a breed association, and we relied on it as well as CSBA to identify and model best practices in our own approach.

B. Assessments of Alternative Outcomes

The following paragraphs describe the overall assessment of the likelihood of each possible outcome in meeting the goals of the project.

1. Alternative 1 - No Change

This alternative is neither feasible nor stable. We cannot be a breed association to operate within our bylaws without providing for and controlling the registration of our sheep.

ISBONA should not delegate this responsibility to CSBA for sheep born in the US because CSBA is unable to enforce provisions of recognition or identification outside of Canada.

We have an added problem of asking US citizens to pay an additional fee to join another organization (CSBA) whose mission is dedicated to Canadian citizens and their sheep industry and whose benefits often cannot be extended to the US.

Also, ancillary processing such as completing DNA profiles required for certain AI sires becomes cumbersome and very expensive when semen samples need to be exported from the US and imported into Canada to use a Canadian lab required by CSBA.

This situation is vastly different for Canadian breeders for whom CSBA is an appropriate and often a necessary breed association.

As the APA indicated, this implies that we need one path for US-born sheep and a second path for Canadian-born sheep if we are to effectively cover North America. This in no way "disinvites" Canadian breeders from ISBONA simply because an

alternative breed association can better serve US sheep. It just says we need to be smarter about how we are organized internally.

ISBONA could consider returning to a non-breed association form of organization by reverting to its original mission — to educate breeders and consumers about Icelandic sheep. However, it is likely that this reversion would effectively eliminate forever the prospect of ISBONA being more than a “fan club” for the sheep, and it perpetrates the relatively dangerous position of no US breed protection.

Remaining a “fan club” is not a sustainable position since there is very little that ISBONA can provide that can contribute to the welfare of the sheep or its breeders based on its current dues rates. Most all of the previous responsibilities of ISBONA are available for free today (eg, via Facebook, internet sites), prompting more than one person to wonder why s/he continued to pay for ISBONA while CSBA membership was considered an essential requirement in order to register sheep. Most ISBONA dues today go to advertising, leaving little for anything else. The organization has already cut back on benefits such as print copy newsletters since costs were too high to sustain them.

ISBONA could revise its budget, but would still have very little money to effectively fund anything. It could raise rates, but that seems almost ludicrous in light of the overall situation. If it is hard to convince people to voluntarily pay a fee for a membership, raising that fee is not going to attract more people and may dissuade some who are currently paying.

This alternative is effectively a dissolution of ISBONA and likely a decision that will assure that no control ever exists over the purity of the Icelandic sheep in the US. Eventually this will destroy the market for purebred Icelandics, probably beginning with damage to individual breeders’ reputations when the sheep do not live up to expectations.

2. Alternative 2 - Revised Relationship with CSBA and ISBONA

We did not get far on this approach because CSBA is not enabled to fully serve groups outside of Canada. What could partly work when ISBONA had no role in preserving, improving and protecting the breed in the US would no longer work if ISBONA needed to assure full breed association capabilities per its mission.

CSBA is formed under the Animal Pedigree Act which sets certain rules and permits certain enforcements - but with no jurisdiction outside of Canada. Important breed

association functions such as conducting parentage verification, taking action when buyers do not receive transfer papers on a timely basis, even arranging for identification alternatives such as dual tagging were difficult or impossible to be done across the border because of CSBA's mission to serve the sheep industry in Canada. CSBA was not truly able to act as the Icelandic breed association for the US. In addition, CSBA rarely acted on in support of one breed or another; they are an umbrella organization to support all breeds.

Meetings with CSBA Board members and General Manager did not lead to any arrangement that could enhance ISBONA's association responsibilities or its financial position. CSBA suggested one possible financial solution that they carry out on behalf of some of their provincial organizations, but ISBONA, as a US organization, would not be eligible. Plus, the suggestion would raise registration and transfer fees by a couple dollars, violating the goal to keep costs the same or less. In short, CSBA has not been able to help directly.

CSBA has re-assured ISBONA and Canadian breeders that Canadian Icelandics can continue to register through CSBA, and this seems to be the absolute right approach. For Canadian-bred-and-born sheep, CSBA can act as a breed association even if their programs cannot support Icelandics specifically. At the same time, US breeders still needed an alternative way to register animals that allowed for the same protection for the sheep, their breeders and their buyers.

CSBA has acknowledged that we are likely to need a US-based breed association. There are two CSBA Board level representatives who also serve on the Board of CLRC. They have expressed their support for ISBONA developing an association relationship with CLRC.

CLRC is also incorporated under the APA but with far more leeway to develop relationship in other countries. Today CLRC serves several other US based breed associations in cattle and horses. They have relationships with US based labs to provide services such as DNA testing without the difficulties or the expense of having to ship samples to Canada. They are equipped to deal with US currency and banks that can minimize the need for currency conversion fees.

3. Alternative 3 - Direct Contract With CLRC

Opinions in the Registrar Services Survey of breeders conducted by ISBONA in Apr/ May 2018 indicated that CLRC came closest to providing the types and qualities of registrar services desired than any other known existing competitor. Respondents

indicated online capabilities were the most important features; costs were less important.

CLRC is a more expensive choice for a breed association than other identified options, but those options do not have the online features for breeders or the reputation of CLRC. Our simulations indicate that while ISBONA will not retain as much money from registrations as CSBA does (due to volume and price setting practices used by CLRC that favor larger Canadian organizations), ISBONA will be able to retain sufficient additional revenue that can be used to support the Icelandic breed through breeder education and other programs.

CLRC expenses and possible increases remain a concern as mentioned above. ISBONA (the association, not breeders) will be charged extra as a non-Canadian entity (mostly to cover mailing costs) and will also see lesser volume discounts than enjoyed today as part of the high volume CSBA arrangement. In addition, ISBONA has no good way today to achieve any voice at the Board level of CLRC, so policies could be set that were damaging, and ISBONA would have limited recourse. None of these concerns are likely enough to offset the benefits of CLRC as the registrar entity.

We are already working with CLRC to ensure that a conversion is as clean and complete as it can be. Given that CLRC is already processing requirements for Icelandic registrations for CSBA, conversion is likely to be simpler than with any other registrar.

CLRC has a well honed approach to dealing with breed associations and has set up their business, reporting, accounting, etc in such a way as to require very little operational effort from any association. No added work is expected for ISBONA volunteers, in fact, some work (eg, membership maintenance) will be moved from volunteers to CLRC. The nature of the ISBONA Board's work will change somewhat with registration rule activity, program development and financial decisions taking more of the Board's time.

The biggest problem to solve in a CLRC arrangement will be how it handles the registry pedigree data so that US breeders and Canadian breeders share information. A second important consideration will be how CLRC can best enroll roughly 200-300 US breeders who already have accounts and identifications under the CSBA breed association. It will be important that breeders be able to see all of their transactions and pedigrees and use the same identifiers (eg flock name, prefix) as they do today. There are other considerations (eg, how to treat ISBONA members paid in advance for future years, what is the best way to handle

Canadians who join ISBONA but register via CSBA, what ISBONA website changes might be needed) yet to be determined.

4. Alternative 4 - Direct contract with another registrar

There are two other registrars who are possible candidates, both of whom have lower cost structures, less history, similar business arrangements and lower charges to associations than does CLRC. The larger of the two has no online solution today, will sign a five year contract with a rate guarantee, handles virtually every other major sheep breed in the US. To get the same online entry and lookup functions such as Virtual Mating that come with CLRC, ISBONA would need to have additional systems built. Systems such as these are not difficult to provide but have their own associated problems of additional expense, delays and errors.

The second vendor is much smaller and while they have a good online entry and reporting system, ISBONA would be their largest customer by far, and their track record is very limited.

Both vendors indicated they have the capability to bring ISBONA aboard by January 2019 at conversion fees comparable to that anticipated with CLRC — excluding the online systems. This assumes we receive data authorization from CSBA and can use automated processes to establish the registry portions of the system.

The data caveats in Alternative 3 apply to Alternative 4 as well.

As stated before, CLRC is more likely to successfully handle our business than another registrar. For that reason, we have not pursued the others aggressively.

VIII. Registration Rules and Fees

Table 1 (sorry for the bad page breaks) shows a comparison of CSBA vs ISBONA registration rules with some notes about differences. Note that ISBONA will propose the first DNA parentage verifications for US bred Icelandic sheep on a random basis and will also permit dual tagging in the US.

Table 2 shows the fees in US currency, rounded to the nearest \$.25, that ISBONA would charge to members for 2019. Fees (USD) are basically equivalent to those paid today to CSBA in Canadian currency with the exception of a lower membership fee of \$30 vs \$60CAD (or \$45USD). For US ISBONA members who today must join

CSBA, this is a savings of about \$45 per year. For US CSBA-only members, the savings is closer to \$15 per year. Those US individuals who did not wish to join ISBONA would register their sheep under the non-member rates which are about twice the member rates, as they are today.

In designing the proposed rules for an ISBONA breed association, numerous concerns expressed from breeders were reviewed:

- DNA/Parentage Testing
- US Lab Processing for DNA testing
- Dual Tagging/RFID tagging vs tattoo
- Importance of correctly understanding/employing breeding intervals
- Protection from individuals who sell sheep as registered then do not complete papers or transfers (timely or at all)
- How far to go re "meeting the standard"; eg, should someone actually verify?
- Should adult photographs be included?
- Development of registry-like files for grade animals?
- Inclusion of performance statistics in registry records?
- Grading up (non purebred Icelandics)?
- Fee scale based on volume (with refund at year end)?

Not all issues were incorporated now (eg, performance statistics, photographs) but may be re-visited. Some items (eg, consideration of grading up) were determined to be unnecessary for Icelandic sheep.

IX. Comments on Previously Expressed Concerns

During the course of the breed association exploration project, we heard from individuals who were both very supportive and those who had serious concerns. Wherever possible, we tried to incorporate answers or failsafes that might address those issues. We knew we were not going to be 100% successful in addressing everything but aimed for a balanced response without endangering the overall goals.

A. The Desire for a Bilateral Organization

A few ISBONA members (usually from Canada, but not always) expressed concern that if ISBONA replaced CSBA by becoming the breed association and issuing registration papers for US Icelandic sheep, that they could no longer feel part of a

international organization; a couple people even suggested that ISBONA change its name because it could not represent all North America.

To be honest, making sense of this objection is not easy to do since it is based on personal feelings more than anything that can be addressed. The development of a US breed association for US Icelandics need not actually change anything at all for Canadian breeders or their sheep when done correctly.

For years, though, despite a sincere desire to maintain a joint North American membership, there has been relatively limited Canadian representation in ISBONA: membership has lagged somewhat, there has not been a Canadian Board member for five years, the border closing precluded much interaction between breeders and flocks. And yet, some of the most experienced breeders of Icelandics are located in Canada and could be knowledgeable resources to a newly launched US based breed association. Historically, Canada has been extremely important to the Icelandic sheep in North America, and all of our sheep's ancestors came here by way of Canada. Having active Canadian membership is important.

ISBONA has never restricted membership or directorships to US citizens and has no intention of doing so. We have some very capable Canadian breeders, some of whom believe they have more they could offer to ISBONA if permitted/encouraged. While it is not clear exactly what stands in the way, the feeling is there and if we meant what we said about keeping and growing Canadian membership, we should address this.

We have proposed that ISBONA recognize the wisdom of the Canadian Animal Pedigree Act to provide for two paths: for US-born sheep, ISBONA would establish the breed association rules and issue registration certificates; for Canadian born sheep, ISBONA would formally delegate to CSBA the registration and identification functions they carry out today. Obviously CSBA would also be registering sheep for Canadians who did not decide to join ISBONA just as ISBONA would be the breed association for non-members in the US.

Each organization would recognize the other as a valid Foreign Registry, would acknowledge and recognize the papers of the other, would be willing to re-issue on its own paper a valid certificate from the other, etc.

By doing this, we allow both US-born Icelandics and Canadian-born Icelandics to have the full benefit of protection under appropriate frameworks. Across North America, the sheep would be protected equally by their respective breed organizations following similar, although not identical rules. The end result is only

slightly different from the original concept of ISBONA: two, rather than one, breed associations in one strong bilateral North American organization.

ISBONA Registration Rules will remain in synch with CSBA's requirements for registration via strict accord with foreign registry requirements; adopting and tying to the identical breed standard; developing similar registration and identification policies that would depart carefully from CSBA requirements where needed (as in parentage verification) or when those requirements became cumbersome. An example of the latter would be dual tagging. ISBONA can permit dual tagging for US born sheep thorough the use of permanent, unique tags without struggling to meet additional Canadian requirements such as use of the same vendor, distinct purchasing locations, different shaped tags, tie in with a Canadian national database of animals, etc.

Assuming delegation to CSBA occurs for Canadian members, ISBONA should recognize that when we ask members to utilize that path, they are required to pay an additional fee. That is, because Canadian breeders must join another organization and pay an additional fee to CSBA in order to register sheep, it seems reasonable that ISBONA would provide a lesser fee for them to maintain an ISBONA membership. For say, \$15USD rather than \$30USD/CAD, a Canadian individual could still join ISBONA, receive benefits such as the newsletter, library privileges, website listing and preferential pricing for future benefits such as education programs. Canadian members already receive preferential currency conversion rates for many ISBONA benefits since the exchange rate has been one sided for many years and Canadians can pay the US stated rate using their own currency.

Most benefits for Canadian breeders are already part of ISBONA's programs and will remain. ISBONA does not design a benefit that is not offered in some form equally to all members regardless of where they live and raise sheep. In a real life example, recognizing that sheep shows are not all open to everyone due to distance or border crossing problems, ISBONA provides premiums for sheep and fiber show winners in the US and separately for Canada. ISBONA would continue to earmark spending for Canadian magazines along with its US based advertising.

ISBONA would have one Board which hopefully would always have both US and Canadian members. As today, both US and Canadian ISBONA members are eligible to serve on the Board or any committee.

However, these kinds of provisions are relatively small compared to what our combined resources could create. Breeders in the US and Canada must work more closely together to assure that being a "bilateral organization" means something

more tangible than both using the same organization in one country to issue certificates. We have already started looking for ways to do this.

B. Distrust in a Local Breed Association

ISBONA recognizes that not all US breeders or even all ISBONA members will celebrate a decision to pursue a breed association for the US. However this step appears to be long overdue: US Icelandics are not protected today and they deserve to be.

A small number of US breeders indicated they would want to be able to remain with CSBA despite the recognition that CSBA is unable to fully provide a breed organization that can act within the US. This is not possible. When ISBONA becomes the CSBA-recognized Foreign Registry for Icelandics in the US, all US registrations must be processed through the ISBONA breed association to assure that the Icelandic flock in the US is treated consistently. For example, a US breeder can not be permitted to avoid the potential of parentage verification in the US by choosing to register via a purebred organization such as CSBA that does not test parentage in the US.

While registration, transfers, etc in the US are required to go through ISBONA, there is no requirement to join ISBONA — this is why non-member status and fees are established by most breed associations.

We acknowledge that a couple people have expressed their concerns that this decision might be premature or that the organization is not stable enough to handle breed association responsibilities. Certainly there are periods of ISBONA's history that were better/worse in terms of effectiveness. However, the need for a vital US breed association is profoundly clear to those of us who have developed this recommendation and to the majority of Icelandic breeders who have expressed opinions.

Aside from evading the decision altogether, there does not appear to be a way to directly address these kinds of issues in advance of actually launching a US breed association. For those who think an ISBONA breed association is a bad idea, it is hard to prove the worst need not happen unless we get started and until something tangible goes wrong. History is probably not much of an indicator for current or future performance since ISBONA is not the same organization it was ten or twenty or even three years ago.

What we can do is be on the lookout: emphasizing the importance to Board members of the need for exemplary behavior; promoting as much transparency as possible; voting in trustworthy representatives; encouraging the strongest people we can find to join the ISBONA Board; welcoming all opinions — pro and con; having a motivated membership that volunteers, participates and makes meaningful improvements to ISBONA.

When it comes to Board ethics, all directors are already expected to challenge one another to ensure the Board is acting in an honest and transparent pursuit of the mission of the organization at all times and nothing else. Ever.

But the membership needs to do its part, too. The most effective way to address the question of stability is through additional motivated volunteers. Often what appears to have been a lack of progress or botched accomplishment is traceable to a lack of resources. With more volunteers and more funding, more things can be addressed.

Our recommendation comes at the end of more than two years of intensive study and discussion on the part of the Executive Committee and the ISBONA Board — beginning with revisions to our Bylaws to enable us to move into the next chapter of our organization. We look forward to your comments.

[CLICK HERE for the Google comment form](#) or feel free to send an email to admin@isbona.com.