

District 8 Members:

First, thank you for taking the time to read this and please cast a vote in the coming election. Regardless of how you vote, ADGA is your organization, and your input is vital. Everyone has a lot on their plate and burnout is real, but accountability starts in small ways and part of that is by voting.

I will try to briefly share my perspective, experience, and goals below.

Breeding goats, milking goats, showing goats and all the things we do with our dairy goats is a big investment, physically, emotionally, and financially. I have the deepest respect for that and it shapes how I see the role of ADGA. Ideally as an organization ADGA should help us improve our animals adding value to the animals themselves and to the community and industry surrounding them. I want an organization that is accessible for all and provides reliable valued services at reasonable costs.

I have bred, owned, and worked with dairy goats for all my adult life and most of my youth, over 25 years in total. Like many I started in 4H showing at the county fair and state fair and soon regularly attended Nationals. I was fortunate to show against many historic herds from an early age and had many breeders that actively supported my enthusiasm in dairy goats. Sheila Nixon appraised my herd the first time my goats were scored. I only knew Sheila from her famous herd name, as a foundation breeder of Alpines, but that afternoon LA session had a profound impact on me. Sheila was a teacher by profession and conveyed her decades of dairy goat knowledge with ease. Sheila's unwavering commitment to learning, to improving dairy goats, and to welcoming seasoned breeders, youth, and international visitors alike to be a part of ADGA is something we can all strive towards.

Over the last 15 years, I have served on various ADGA committees and currently sit on the National Sales and Type committees. I am especially focused on supporting linear appraisal and DHI testing and honing our use of genetic data and technologies to breed dairy goats that fit our goals. I am an ADGA licensed judge and have previously worked as a linear appraiser. I have managed two large commercial herds previously and my current full-time job is as the manager of the UC Davis Goat Teaching and Research Facility.

In terms of goals, I see the highest priority is to ensure basic services are accessible and reliable while maintaining financial solvency. The most basic services include registration and the publication of performance records (DHI, LA, DNA, and show). ADGA Genetics is a vital tool and the more timely, accurate, and complete data that breeders can access there, the better for all. In the current economy everything costs more and that may mean some changes are necessary to secure these core services. We need to work extra hard to be as prudent as possible with member dollars and be extra conscious to not repeat past errors.

District 8 pioneers such as Sheila, Ray Vieira, and Steve Considine inspired me and gave me opportunities to grow and flourish. As a director I hope to create similar opportunities for current members and the next generation. ADGA has a diverse membership that I would be honored to represent and help ensure all herds, new and old, large and small, loud and quiet, may carry on.

Email, text, or call me anytime at barupchis@ucdavis.edu or 434-327-8226.

*Thank you for your time and please vote **Ben Rupchis!***