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Contact: Christa Rochford
American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)
Email: info@sheepusa.org
Website: sheepusa.org

American Sheep Industry Names Mike Michener as Executive Director

DENVER, CO (March 31, 2026) - The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mike Michener as its new Executive Director. Michener brings more than 35 years of leadership across agriculture, food systems, and public policy, with a proven track record of strengthening markets, advancing industry priorities, and leading complex organizations.

“We are excited to announce the hiring of Mike Michener as our new executive director,” said ASI President Ben Lehfeldt. “Peter Orwick helped guide our organization for many years and left us in a great place financially to really build on our organization’s commitment to our producers. We are grateful for all the staff and executive board members that helped during this transition, and we are thrilled to move to this next chapter with Mike at the lead.”

Michener most recently served as Principal Consultant at Michener Strategic Advisory, advising multilateral institutions, international organizations, and U.S.-based initiatives on strategy, governance, and stakeholder engagement across agri-food systems.

His previous leadership roles include serving as Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), where he oversaw major initiatives in agriculture, nutrition, and global food security, including Feed the Future, as well as Minister Counselor to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations Agencies in Rome, representing U.S. interests in global food and agriculture policy.

Earlier in his career, Michener served as Administrator of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, where he led a significant organizational turnaround and strengthened U.S. agricultural trade and global market engagement. He also held senior roles with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Homeland Security, and served in the U.S. Army.

A native Iowan, Michener recently returned to the state after working in Ukraine and maintains close ties to agriculture through his family’s multigenerational farm. He holds a Master of Public Administration from Bowie State University and a Bachelor of Arts in East European Studies from the University of Maryland University College. He is fluent in Romanian and has proficiency in several other languages.

“I’m honored to join the American Sheep Industry Association and to work on behalf of sheep producers across the country,” said Michener. “The industry has a strong foundation, and I look forward to working with ASI’s leadership, members, and partners to expand market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness, and advance priorities that support producers and rural communities.”

Michener’s experience across government, international institutions, and industry organizations positions him well to lead ASI into its next chapter.



9785 MAROON CIRCLE, SUITE 360
ENGLEWOOD, COLORADO 80112
303.771.3500
info@sheepusa.org

About the American Sheep Industry Association

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is the national organization representing the interests of U.S. sheep producers, advancing the sheep industry through targeted work in policy, animal health, market development, education, and producer-driven leadership.

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