Happy New Year everyone!
The dust has settled on 2021 and now it is time to look towards the future.
For the many reasons outlined below, the MAVWA Board has made the difficult but necessary decision
to relocate the Wool Festival to Santa Fe, NM. With that said, we are renaming the festival to the
“Mountain and Valley Wool Festival.”
The website will be moved to mavwawoolfest.org, but it may take a few days for the new name to be
fully processed on the website. Look for the Vendor application and Teaching proposals to be online in
the next few weeks as well.
Please read below and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out! We are looking forward
to a great new beginning in 2022!

Now the full story of why we have decided to move…
The issues and concerns that have been increasing in impact are:

- **Growing shortage of volunteers and helpers in Taos**
  - Every year we struggle to have enough volunteers for the basic needs, including setting
    up signs, show tents, traffic control, monitoring and judging shows, and the many little
    things that happen behind-the-scenes each year
  - For many years now, without Board family members we would not have been able to
    maintain the quality and content of the festival
  - We have supplemented with Hired Hands, but they are also becoming more difficult to
    arrange, manage, or even show up
  - For 2021 we had to drop the GHA and Hand-dyed shows due to lack of volunteers

- **Aging vendor ranks**
  - This exacerbates the volunteer issue as some vendors are less able to help out
  - Many of our long-time vendors need help to set up a booth tent and schlep their booth
    contents across the field

- **The Wool Festival needs some “new” options**
  - We do the same things, in the same location, in the same way every year (volunteers
    permitting)
    - Although we all have loved it, if we don’t continue to grow, we’ll continue to
      shrink
  - The educational aspects of our mission are not as vibrant as we would like them to be
    - There is limited room for animals
    - There is limited classroom space for workshops within manageable distance
      from the festival
    - With our core volunteers and Board Members needed to fill in for the basics,
      they don’t have time or energy to focus on improvements, like enhanced youth
      outreach, new activities, etc.
    - The MAVWA region has a rich fiber tradition that we have not been able to tap
      very well

- **Fewer vendor applicants**
  - It may be because some of our vendors are aging, retired, moved away, or need an
    indoor venue, etc.
  - It may be because there are other options in the region or on-line
  - Without enough vendors to share the cost, we would need to raise booth fees, which
    may further reduce applicants and become a barrier to entry for some new and returning
    vendors

- **Increasing costs and labor for tents, etc.**
The tents we have to rent each year are a significant part of our annual expenses, but we cannot continue the content and quality we enjoy without them
  - They have been going up in cost and we often deal with poor quality and late arrivals (e.g. in 2021 the tent company was about 7 hours late)
  - There are also expenses for trash, potties, security, and more

- Reduced animal and show interest
  - We have been getting fewer and fewer entries for our shows
  - The number of animals available for visitors to enjoy has dwindled, along with the number of growers willing to spend the time and effort to bring them

- Changes in Taos
  - In 2016 the Town of Taos installed the large concert stage
    - We had under two months’ notice of the location of the stage
  - Park changing to concert venue
    - There are plans for further development in the park that the Town of Taos has not been willing to share with us
    - They definitely plan on additional sidewalks/roadways
    - Possibly buildings for concessions
    - Each change has reduced our usable footprint
  - Unreliable Town of Taos staff support/Last-minute changes
    - Each year has brought new changes, always with little or no notice
    - Town of Taos staff is often hard to reach
    - Agreements are sometimes changed last-minute or reneged upon. E.g., last year they changed between the rental and vendor tents requiring water barrels or stakes several times, making changes even during our tent set-up
    - Their last-minute decision to change from our Town of Taos approved COVID safety plan almost forced us to shut down the festival less than a week before hand

The Board considered a few options:
  - Find ways to revitalize the Wool Festival at Taos
    - We have tried a number of things to add elements or to encourage participation over the past several years without success
    - We continue to lose help, vendors, students, contest participants, and attendees
    - The space in the park continues to shrink
  - Explore other venues
    - We have been toying with this option since the stage first appeared
    - A number of long-term vendors suggested a move this year after the struggles we had with the town
      - They reminded us that the festival actually began in Antonito, Colorado