



BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEE

Lane Bennett

Calhoun, Georgia

What is the best time and method to reach you with questions about your candidacy? Anytime, cell phone number 770-881-6138

How many Berkshire litters did you record last year? 42

How many years have you been raising Berkshires? 15

In what ways are you actively involved in the Berkshire breed (local, state, national level)?

I have served on the ABA Board of Directors since 2023 and currently serve as President of the ABA. In addition, I have proudly served on the American Berkshire Foundation Board of Directors, further demonstrating my long-term commitment to the breed and its future.

At the local level, I am passionate about giving back and investing in the next generation. I open my farm to the local 4-H livestock judging team, providing hands-on opportunities for students to practice evaluating swine, as well as supplying gilts and boars for their contests. I also actively promote the Berkshire industry in our community by participating in career day at my wife's school, where I share the opportunities and rewards of raising Berkshire hogs with students.

Give a brief narrative of what motivates you to be an ABA Board member and your goals for the board:

Over the past three years, the board has made meaningful progress in strengthening the organization's stability and long-term sustainability. We have successfully maintained our independence while taking strategic steps to improve financial performance and operational efficiency. One of our key accomplishments has been the development of a new independent registry system, allowing us to retain revenue that was previously paid to a third party and reinvest those funds back into the ABA.

We have also relocated our offices and reduced operating costs by 12% through collaboration with CPS, demonstrating our commitment to responsible financial management. At the same time, we have worked to reduce losses associated with hosting shows, with the goal of achieving modest profitability while continuing to provide valuable opportunities for members to showcase their Berkshire hogs.

Additionally, by moving the progeny test to South Dakota State University, we have significantly

improved the financial outlook of this program—transitioning it from a loss to a break-even initiative. These accomplishments reflect a focused effort by the board to enhance efficiency, preserve core programs, and position the association for continued success.

My primary goal as a board member is to ensure the continued independence of the association so it can remain strong and member-driven for the next 150 years. Preserving that independence allows us to make decisions that best serve our breeders and uphold the values that have defined the ABA.

I am also committed to supporting our breeders by expanding opportunities to promote their hogs. This includes continuing to invest in national-level shows, as well as enhancing marketing platforms and sales opportunities that help our members succeed in an increasingly competitive industry. By strengthening these areas, we can ensure the ABA remains a valuable resource and advocate for our breeders now and into the future.

As a member-driven organization, how do you envision increasing member opportunities, in addition to increasing member involvement in current ABA programs?

As a member-driven organization, increasing both opportunities and engagement starts with actively listening to our membership and responding with programs that reflect their needs. I believe we can expand opportunities by continuing to grow national and regional events, creating additional marketing channels for breeders, and exploring new platforms—both in-person and digital—that allow members to showcase and promote their operations more effectively.

Equally important is increasing involvement in our existing programs. This can be achieved through stronger communication, clearer pathways for participation, and intentional outreach to members who may not yet be fully engaged. Encouraging mentorship between experienced breeders and newer members can also help build connections and confidence within the association.

I would also like to see more member feedback integrated into decision-making, whether through surveys, open forums, or committee involvement. When members feel heard and see their input reflected in programs, participation naturally grows. By fostering a culture of inclusion, transparency, and collaboration, we can strengthen engagement while continuing to create meaningful opportunities for all members.

If someone new asked you why they should raise Berkshires, how would you respond?

If someone new asked why they should raise Berkshires, I would tell them it starts with quality and consistency. Berkshires are well known for producing a premium pork product with excellent marbling, flavor, and tenderness—traits that are in high demand with consumers, chefs, and niche markets. That demand creates strong opportunities for breeders who are willing to focus on quality.

Beyond the product itself, Berkshires offer versatility. Whether someone is interested in seedstock production, show pigs, or direct-to-consumer meat sales, the breed provides multiple avenues to build a successful operation. The established market and strong brand recognition behind Berkshires give new breeders a solid foundation to grow from.

What do you think is the biggest challenge the Berkshire breed faces and how do we navigate that challenge?

I believe one of the biggest challenges the Berkshire breed faces is maintaining its reputation for premium quality while remaining competitive and relevant in a rapidly evolving pork industry.

We must do a better job telling our story. There is strong demand for high-quality pork, but we have to consistently promote the Berkshire advantage to packers, retailers, and consumers. By strengthening marketing efforts, expanding outreach, and creating more

opportunities for breeders to connect with buyers, we can reinforce the value of the breed.

What previous leadership experience do you have (church board, school board, pork producers, etc), and how will those experiences make you a good board member?

I currently serve as President of the ABA, where I have the opportunity to work closely with fellow board members and leadership to guide the direction of the association and represent the interests of our membership

In addition to my involvement with the ABA, I own and operate a construction business, where I lead employees on a daily basis. This experience has strengthened my skills in management, problem-solving, budgeting, and communication.

Why should ABA members vote for you?

ABA Board Members should vote for me because over the past three years I have been an active listener to our membership and a strong advocate for our breed and its rich history. I have worked to ensure that member voices are heard and reflected in the decisions we make as a board. If elected, I will continue to prioritize listening to our members, promoting our great breed, and supporting opportunities that help our breeders succeed. I am committed to helping position the ABA for long-term success and ensuring it remains a strong, independent, and viable association for the next 150 years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEE

Alex Fulton

Sykesville, Maryland



What is the best time and method to reach you with questions about your candidacy? Anytime. Call or text: 443-509-0205

Email: Stillpondfarm1@gmail.com

Background information: I am a 28 year old first generation farmer. My wife Megan and I operate Fulton Farm to Table. We sell Berkshire pork, lamb, chicken, turkey and eggs direct to the consumer. Megan attends 3 farmers markets a week during the season. We also farm 100 acres of alfalfa and grass hay. We are a farrow to finish operation that breeds live cover focusing on meat quality genetics. We raise hogs on concrete as well as in a woodland setting when the weather allows. I run a small excavating company with my Father focusing on commercial and residential work around the tri state area.

How many Berkshire litters did you record last year?

We registered 8 litters in 2025

How many years have you been raising Berkshires?

I have been raising Berkshires for 10 years.

In what ways are you actively involved in the Berkshire breed (local, state, national level)?

I am an ABA member and register every litter we raise. I market Berkshire meat and pigs on the east coast. I enjoy spreading the word

about what Berkshires have to offer in the barn and on the plate. I hope to participate in my first ABA Progeny test this year.

Give a brief narrative of what motivates you to be an ABA Board member and your goals for the board:

I would like to be an ABA board member so I can help pass on this great organization. I am young and willing to take on the tasks that need to be done.

The ABA has been a great asset to my growing operation, and I want to help others have the same opportunity across the country. I hope to help grow the ABA into something that can stay strong and be there for years to come. I live in a state that's not known for its pork production, but we have a lot of consumers and I enjoy spreading the word about what Berkshire pork and pigs have to offer.

As a member-driven organization, how do you envision increasing member opportunities, in addition to increasing member involvement in current ABA programs?

I hope to help get more new and small operations to raise registered Berkshire pigs. The more Berks the better. With a strong membership the ABA as an organization has a larger force to overcome challenges that might lie ahead. We need to show value in what the registry has to offer

If someone new asked you why they should raise Berkshires, how would you respond?

I think people should raise Berkshire pigs because of their ability to adapt and succeed in many different environments. Within the ABA there is a Berkshire that will fit your needs. Regardless of whether you raise them indoor or outdoor, dirt or concrete, live cover or AI, show ring or finishing pen there is a Berkshire that will exceed your expectations.

What do you think is the biggest challenge the Berkshire breed faces and how do we navigate that challenge?

The biggest challenge I see for the Berkshire breed is the need to register litters.

The value the registry has to offer greatly outweighs the small fee and

time it takes.

Getting every producer to see that value is a challenge, but with listening to peoples needs and ideas I think we can get more people on board and show them the value the ABA has to offer.

What previous leadership experience do you have (church board, school board, pork producers, etc), and how will those experiences make you a good board member?

I am the President of the Maryland Pork Producers Association where I advocate for pork production and consumption on the state and nation level. With this I attend Maryland sporting and social events to advocate and educate people about pork. This gave me the opportunity to attend the 2026 National Pork Forum and advocate for Maryland producers

and meet other producers from around the nation.

I am a current chair of the Green Spring Valley Hounds Point-to-Point, helping oversee planning, coordination, and execution of a major regional equestrian Steeplechase event, including stakeholder management, operations, horseman, horses, and community engagement that ensures a safe, successful, and well-attended event that reflects the traditions and standards of the sport.

I am also a small business owner where I oversee day-to-day operations of an excavating company servicing commercial and residential customers. Being a small business owner makes you wear many hats and accept what challenges come your way daily and figure out how to solve them while still being

productive and profitable.

I think everything listed above and more would make me a good board member because I am used to handling many situations and dealing with many personalities to make sure the job is completed. I like to make it happen and I enjoy the rush of multiple things going on at once to get it done.

Why should ABA members vote for you?

I am passionate about Berkshire pigs. I am a young motivated individual willing to learn and do what needs to be done to better the ABA. I am willing to engage with all members and represent everyone in all aspects. I want to see the ABA grow and succeed and better everyone involved. I hope to gain your vote in 2026, and I look forward to speaking with you.



**EXPERIENCE THE BEST.
EXPERIENCE REGISTERED
BERKSHIRE PORK.**

**REGISTERED BERKSHIRE PORK
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
A PROUD ABA MEMBER**



Mike Hertzell

Nappanee, IN



What is the best time and method to reach you with questions about your candidacy? Any time during the day.

Background information:

My wife and I are first generation farmers have 4 kids Lizzy 17, Gerorge 15, Caroline 12, Nick 9. In addition to raising Berkshire hogs we also milk Jersey cows and have 100 laying hens. I am a sales consultant for an independent ag retailer. We market all of our Berkshire hogs directly through local meat markets.

How many Berkshire litters did you record last year?

8

How many years have you been raising Berkshires?

24

In what ways are you actively involved in the Berkshire breed (local, state, national level)?

Give a brief narrative of what motivates you to be an ABA Board member and your goals for the board:

I love raising Berkshire hogs and want to help promote the value they bring particularly pertaining to meat quality and carcass traits. Berkshire hogs have given me a lot so I would like to give back to the breed association.

As a member-driven organization, how do you envision increasing member opportunities, in addition to increasing member involvement in current ABA programs?

On the meat quality side I would like to work with producers, packers, and retailers to create more opportunities for Berkshire hogs to realize their full value. Every Berkshire hog should eventually end up in a value added program I'd like to be a part of helping others discover that niche.

If someone new asked you why they should raise Berkshires, how would you respond?

The Berkshire breed offers a unique opportunity to market a value-added pork product that you can build a brand and story around.

What do you think is the biggest challenge the Berkshire breed faces and how do we navigate that challenge?

Maintaining breed integrity, making sure we don't lose our meat quality. The show pig industry is obviously a big part of the Berkshire breed, and an important one. There is a huge divide between the commercial producers and the show pig breeders.

Some how we need to both be able to exist and conduct business within the same organization.

What previous leadership experience do you have (church board, school board, pork producers, etc), and how will those experiences make you a good board member?

Church deacon board, Farm Bureau county board member and State young farmer committee, local pork producers, Sunday school teacher, children's church teacher.

Why should ABA members vote for you?

I have built my own local market for Berkshire hogs in my local area. Each year I sell about 400 hogs through various marketing channels including restaurants, farmers markets, grocery stores along with wholes and halves. I love Berkshire hogs and want to see the demand for Berkshire meat to increase across the country.

Justin Murray

Republic, Missouri



What is the best time and method to reach you with questions about your candidacy?

By text anytime or day, by phone M-F 9-11 a.m., 417-812-3313

Background information:

I grew up on a rural MO farm, started showing market pigs when I was 9, continued showing but also fattening pigs for customers all the way till I was 21. I grew a large customer base doing farm to table focusing solely on carcass quality. Once I was married and started a family, we purchased our current farm in Republic, MO. My wife Christy and our sons Kalem and Logan, started feeding custom market hogs for our personal use and a few family members and past customers. We started raising our own feeder pigs due to lack of local availability. My son started showing market pigs, and we were selling several to local FFA and 4H kids. After a few years and really wanting to improve our carcass quality and consistency, we switched everything to Berkshire and have never looked back.

How many Berkshire litters did you record last year?

11

How many years have you been raising Berkshires?

6

In what ways are you actively involved in the Berkshire breed (local, state, national level)?

I have served on 2 committees, currently on the Breed Improvement committee. We host a booth at the Ozark Empire fair annually with Berkshire pigs on display and breed information for the public and local area Ag programs.

Give a brief narrative of what motivates you to be an ABA Board member and your goals for the board:

I have seen so many improvements and changes to the Berkshire Association over the last several years. The demand to improve the breed quality and preserve the integrity of this Heritage breed is unmatched. I think the Berkshire Association is years if not decades ahead of the other breeds utilizing DNA, carcass scoring, Progeny testing and results. I have ideas to further improve while retaining the integrity of our breed for the future breeders. I did not come from a commercial swine background; I have almost no knowledge of that area. I have created a successful farm to table swine program completely ground farrowed and raised. I have a much different

perspective than most of the swine production arena.

As a member-driven organization, how do you envision increasing member opportunities, in addition to increasing member involvement in current ABA programs?

I believe we need even the smallest breeders to understand the importance of registration, EPDs, and DNA testing. I sell breeding stock to many people over several states that I know will never register or join the ABA. They believe there is no benefit but only cost for a small breeder. I believe getting these breeders to understand the importance of being part of the organization, the benefits to them for marketing and sales greatly outweigh the small cost.

If someone new asked you why they should raise Berkshires, how would you respond?

Carcass Quality that is proven every year by Progeny Testing. The end goal is meat on the table and we have proven time and time again we have the best carcass swine available with the data to prove it.

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Beth Ray

Joes, Colorado



Background information:

My husband, Daniel, and I along with our boys Waylon (11) and Houston (8) operate our farm business Ray Family Farm. We very much live on a first generation farm, we farm a small about of dryland acres, operate a custom hay business and have a Registered Berkshire farrow-to-finish operation, where we work with a small producer group to sell our market hogs to Whole Foods grocery stores in the Rocky Mountain Region.

My background is in agriculture education, I was an Ag Teacher and FFA Advisor for 16 years. I currently work part time for Northeastern Junior College as one of their Adult Agriculture and Business Management instructors, this move has allowed me to focus more on our family, our hog operation, along with helping with our custom hay business in the summer and fall. I grew up on a small dairy farm with registered Jersey cows, so when the opportunity came to raise registered livestock it was an easy transition for me. We started our Berkshire herd in 2014 and started selling to Whole Foods in 2015, we sell about 120 head of registered market hogs each year. In 2024 we developed High Prairie Meats LLC, more of a direct to consumer market

What is the best time and method to reach you with questions about your candidacy? My schedule is very flexible, please reach out at anytime. I can be reached by phone at 970-554-9723 or my email at bethray23@gmail.com

in an effort to grow our sow herd and share delicious Berkshire pork to more people in Eastern, Colorado and along the Front Range of Colorado.

How many Berkshire litters did you record last year?

16

How many years have you been raising Berkshires?

We have been raising Berkshire hogs for a little over 10 years.

In what ways are you actively involved in the Berkshire breed (local, state, national level)?

I have been working with the same producer group for over 10 years, we all have registered stock and sell every pig we raise with their registration papers. Besides using the services of the American Berkshire Association our geographic location has not lended to getting involved on the national board or attending the annual meeting, my first annual meeting will be in June 2026.

Give a brief narrative of what motivates you to be an ABA Board member and your goals for the board:

The American Berkshire Association has allowed my family to operate our

family farm in a financially sustainable way through the registrations and meat quality research and information, this has been pivotal in our operation. I understand the value of these programs first hand and would like to be a part in continuing to develop these programs, which will hopefully help current and future members of the American Berkshire Association. I know in agriculture we sometime have to think outside of the box to make things work and my family has been blessed to raise and sell Berkshire hogs, the ABA's support has been crucial in allowing us to be successful.

As a member-driven organization, how do you envision increasing member opportunities, in addition to increasing member involvement in current ABA programs?

As a member who lives outside of the most concentrated area of purebred hogs being raised in the United States, I think it would be valuable to extend the reach of the ABA by offering regional strategic meetings or meet and greet opportunities alongside the current regional purebred shows.

If someone new asked you why they should raise Berkshires, how would you respond?

Berkshires are a great bred that offer a delicious end product for consumers. They are a hearty bred that can adapt to different climates and environments which makes them well suited for commercial based farms or farmsteads alike. The American Berkshire Association offers support for producers of show stock operations, extending to more meat quality focused operations.

What do you think is the biggest challenge the Berkshire breed faces and how do we navigate that challenge?

I think one of the biggest challenges and still a benefit for the Berkshire breed is that we have breeders focusing on two very different markets, those being the purebred show industry and the meat quality industry. The job of the American Berkshire Association and especially the board of directors is to make sure the needs of every member are met. I think these needs are very different but also, equally important as we continue to grow the breed and the organization.

What previous leadership experience do you have (church board, school board, pork producers, etc), and how will those experiences make you a good board member?

I have served the Colorado Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association as a representative to the Colorado FFA Foundation, and as a Teacher representative to the Colorado FFA Executive Committee. I have serviced the Washington County Fair as the

Sheep Superintendent and also as the Superintendent of the Round Robin. These experiences have allowed me to serve the agricultural community, especially giving youth opportunities in agriculture to ensure a strong future.

I am currently a fellow in the Colorado Agriculture Leadership Program, an intensive two year program that develops leaders in Colorado Agriculture. I think all of these experiences have allowed me to learn to work with different people who have a common goal for the cause of agriculture.

Why should ABA members vote for you?

I think I would make a good member of the American Berkshire Board of Directors because I bring experiences in both the show industry along with the meat quality segment of the industry. I am open minded and try to look at all sides of a problem before making a decision. I would love to connect with other members and hear about their operations and see how the ABA can help them. I have a desire to see the American Berkshire Association thrive and support every member to the best of our ability. It would be a pleasure to serve the members of the American Berkshire Association!

Justin Murray Continued

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