

Sheep Sense

Official Newsletter of the
Manitoba Sheep Association
www.mbsheep.ca info@mbsheep.ca

Volume 5 Number 3 October 2009

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**There are vacancies
in the following
regions:
Eastman
Southwest
West**

**Please consider serving
on the board of directors**

Note:

Chairman Lucien Lesage's
New Email Address -

lmlesaged@gmail.com

District Meetings

North—November 7—Canway Inn,
Dauphin, 1 p.m.

Interlake—November 7—Eriksdale
Community Hall, Eriksdale, 7 p.m.

Eastman— November 10, Superstore
Community Room, Steinbach, 7:30 p.m.
Vacancy

Southwest—November 16, Chicken
Chef, Souris, 6:30 p.m.
Vacancy

West—November 17, Miniota Hall,
Minota, 7:30 p.m. Vacancy

Central—November 19, Golden Age
Club, Notre Dame, 7:30 p.m.

Positions Vacant

*Director at large
CSBA Representative
(see attached nomination forms)
Deadline for nominations—*

November 20

Defining “natural” is a tricky proposition

There has been a remarkable growth in “natural” claims in the last couple of years. With a public suffering from chemical paranoia, there is a growing consumer demand for more “natural” products. With growing doubts about the meaning of organic and the spotty regulatory efforts to limit the amount of misleading labelling relating to organic, it was a natural step for the food industry to press the envelope for “natural” claims. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on where you stand, “natural” law is yet another area of deep regulatory confusion that is only going to get worse. The standard and longstanding guidance is contained at subsection 4.7 of the *Guide to Food Labelling*: “**Nature**,” “**natural**,” “**Mother Nature**,” “**Nature’s Way**” are terms often misused on labels and in advertisements.

Advertisements should not convey the impression that “Nature” has, by some miraculous process, made some foods nutritionally superior to others or has engineered some foods specially to take care of human needs. Some consumers may consider foods described as “natural” of greater worth than foods not so described.

Foods or ingredients of foods submitted to processes that have significantly altered their original physical, chemical or biological state should not be described as “natural.” This includes such changes as the removal of caffeine.

A natural food or ingredient of a food is not expected to contain, or to ever have contained, an **added** vitamin, mineral nutrient, artificial flavouring agent or food additive. A natural food or ingredient of a food does not have any constituent or fraction thereof **removed** or significantly changed, except the removal of water.

Following the above a table sets out processes considered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to cause minimum

changes to the food or food ingredient and a second table that describes processes considered to cause maximum change. Foods that are only subject to the former are more likely to be considered natural, those subjected to the latter less likely.

The *Guide* also accepts that if the food additives, vitamins and mineral nutrients are derived from natural sources then they may still be natural ingredients and the acceptable claim would be that the food “contains natural ingredients.”

In spite of this guidance, there is still a great deal of regulatory ambiguity. The processes that are listed in the tables are not defined and are therefore subject to varying interpretations. The guidance is not law. Ironically, many natural health products would not meet the food guidance.

It is not clear how far back you have to trace in the processing of an ingredient: if a maximum process were applied to an enzyme that was used to create an ingredient of an ingredient, would the “natural” claim be lost?

I have already experienced enforcement threats. The situation is no better in other countries. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been working on the issue since 1988 with still no more clarity. It has gone back for more consultation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to study the matter. Interestingly, Codex set out to define the term in 1990 and gave up in 1994.

Seeing the marketing potential, and what competitors are doing, “natural” claims will proliferate. Indirect or implied “natural” claims are everywhere already. The industry will continue to get bolder, especially with off-label promotions. Truly “natural” food manufacturers will complain to the CFIA. Uneven regional enforcement will emerge. Regulatory uncertainty will abound. Sound familiar?

Ronald L. Doering, BA, LL.B, MA, LL.D, is a past president of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. He practices food law in the Ottawa offices of Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP, and can be reached at:

Ronald.doering@gowlings.com

“Deveronvale Perfection”

The World’s Most

Expensive Lamb

A sheep named Deveronvale Perfection, is believed to have become the world most expensive after selling for £231,000. Deveronvale Perfection which is bred in Banffshire, Scotland, was bought by a fellow local sheep farmer at a sale in Lanark.

This 8-month old lamb owned by Graham Morrison will be used for breeding in the hope of more than recouping the purchase price. It is Jimmy Douglas, the brave guy. Deveronvale Perfection’s high price has been put down to the lamb’s strong physical attributes.

The previous UK’s most expensive sheep, Tophill Joe, was bought for £128,000 six years ago. He died recently after fathering lambs worth more than £1m.

Seller Mr. Morrison said the price was beyond his "wildest dreams". However, he said the sheep lived up to his name and was indeed "perfection". New owner, Mr. Douglas said the Texel sheep was as good as he had seen, with a “great body and strong loin”. He said “Deveronvale Perfection was the best lamb he had ever seen, with great strength and an incredibly chunky stature”.

"It comes down to genetics," said British Texel Sheep Society Chief Executive, John Yates, on the society’s website. Breeders are looking at the decades of sheep that this blood line can produce."

The price achieved at the Scottish National Texel Sale at Lanark market on Thursday surprised onlookers, "but when breeders see the ‘Perfect’ Ram, they will stop at nothing," Yates said.



Next Issue
December 2009

**Please forward your
adverts, info, show re-
sults and pictures by
November 27 for
inclusion in the next
Issue**

Send to:
Gerry Oliver
gerry@spiritsands.ca
or call
204-834-2261



Food Safety Program

Posted and live at:

<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/programs/index.php?name=aaa20s00>

Includes: Application Form

Terms and Conditions

Premise ID Application Guidelines

Contact: *Peter Veldhuis*

On-Farm Food Safety Specialist

CVO/FSKC

545 University Cres.

Winnipeg, MB

R3T 5S6

Personality types may contribute to genetic success of big-horn sheep

by Brian Murphy

August 19, 2009 - (Edmonton) There must be times when University of Alberta researcher David Coltman wishes his study on animal personalities focused on something small, like a house cat. Coltman would classify cats that bring home dead mice as "bold" personalities and tabbies that stick close to their food bowls and the couch would be ranked as "shy."

No such luck for Coltman. He and his colleagues are trying to find out what makes a bighorn mountain sheep tick. They do that by trekking deep into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains to a place called Ram Mountain. They trap mountain sheep in a plywood box with walls five-metres high. And they just don't watch the animal; they go into the box with it.

In addition to weighing and measuring the animal, the researchers gauge its personality by how much of a fight it puts up. Coltman and the research team are trying to figure out if personality type has anything to do with how long a mountain sheep lives or how many offspring it produces. With the male mountain sheep, a typical bold personality will try and steal away a ewe from the older dominant ram. Coltman equates that to a "live fast, die young," mentality seen regularly in the human world.

It's a trade-off in lifestyles or as Coltman calls it, "life history strategies." "Patient, less aggressive males bank on living long enough to become the dominant ram and produce lots of offspring," he said, adding the "bad boy" personalities of the bighorn mountain sheep world are the young rams that want it all, right now.

"We just dreaded when one ram we nicknamed 'Psycho' turned up in a trap," said Coltman. "Year-in and year-out Psycho's reaction was the same." "He tried to kill us."

Psycho was a difficult and dangerous subject, but Coltman says the ram provided a prime example of a strong personality. "Psycho showed repeatable aggressive behaviour-it's an aspect of his temperament that never wavered." It took two researchers to handle an aggressive mountain sheep. The average ram weighs 125 kilograms

The ram called Psycho scored high on the scale of aggressive behaviour, and he got points for another measure of personality, boldness. The trap was set with a salt lick as bait. Bold animals were captured many times over the years because their desire for salt overcame their fear of the enclosure. Coltman says that while some captured rams and even ewes will put up a fight, others are complete pussycats.

"With some ewes you just put your hand on their head," said Coltman. "They just sit back on their bums and you can measure and weigh them, it's easy." Coltman is co-author of a recent paper on animal personality research published in *The Journal of Evolutionary Biology*

The Ram Mountain trap and release study has been going on for close to 40 years so researchers have recorded lots of repeatable behaviour on individual mountain sheep and can see the same trends in their offspring.

"Mothers who are bold tend to have offspring who are bold," said Coltman. "But we want to dig deeper. We want to find out if there are certain genes or receptors in the sheep's brain that are responsible for different personality types. We don't know that yet."

Coltman says research into the personalities of wildlife is a growing field and one day the information could be of use to livestock producers and even pet owners. "Domestic breeders might want to focus on animals less prone to stress for the benefit of the animals and the people around them."

Links:

David Coltman's U of A website:

http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/faculty/david_coltman/

U of A Department of Biological Sciences:

<http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/>

CSF RFID Pilot Project is now looking for producer co-operators

In response to BSE and the ripple-effect damages to the Canadian livestock industry, a federal and provincial task team is working with livestock industry to build a national [agriculture and food traceability system](#).

A traceability system is made up of: premise identification – where were the animals born; animal identification – unique identifiers (usually eartags) for each animal; and animal or product movement tracking.

Around the world, in particular in the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia, pilot projects and trials are underway trying to work out the logistics of tracking animals from farm to plate.

Here in Canada a pilot project is starting this fall. Goals for the pilot are:

To identify and provide solutions to the challenges that the industry faces in implementing RFID systems

To demonstrate the benefits of linking producers and processors (carcass feedback)

To improve supply chain management (focus on a target market and its criteria for lamb)

To use new technology on-farm to determine if it is practical and if there are management benefits to balance the costs (in dollars, training, time).

To provide an analysis of the costs/benefits of implementing RFID systems

To determine the capacity of RFID systems to aid in the industry's ability to meet the animal identification and movement standards

We are looking for co-operating producers who are keenly interested in working together to learn about new technology. To participate effectively producer co-operators must:

Have sheep flock and be either stable or in a growth phase of production

Attend training and producer sessions

Maintain records of time spent on project related items

Provide financial records of transactions and expenditures on farm

Be willing to share financial details relating to the project (for cost/benefit analysis)

Attend meetings with project staff (may be conference calls or face to face meetings)

Cont'd on page 6

Be available and open to holding producer 'field days' to demonstrate and discuss the systems installed on your farm – both during and for a period following the completion of the project

Have access to high speed internet (non-specific - Air cards, wireless, cable or satellite)

Be willing to share information and experience with the project team

Have a reasonable level of computer knowledge and/or experience

Be willing and able to cover up to 50% of certain expenses as not all equipment can be fully funded

Benefits of participating as a producer co-operator include:

Testing new technology: producer co-operators will learn, test, and evaluate RF ID equipment and will have the option of retaining the equipment after the project ends. Equipment may include:

RFID ear tags (ewe flock, market lambs, rams)

RFID handheld tag reader

Flock management software

IT support to get the RFID system working

Management assistance and analysis through group activities

Experience working with cutting edge sheep management tools, systems and producers.

If you would like to become involved in the RFID Traceability Pilot Project and think you may meet the criteria described above, please contact:

Sean McKenzie, National ID and Traceability Coordinator at 888.684.7739 or email at sean@cansheep.ca

as soon as possible, but definitely before November 13th

Jennifer MacTavish

Executive Director

(T) 519.824. 6018

Canadian Sheep Federation

(F) 866.909.5360

130 Malcolm Road

www.cansheep.ca

Guelph, ON

Upcoming Events

Manure Compost Info Day—

November 4, 10—3:30 p.m., MAFRI Office, 1129 Queens Ave, Brandon. Register by Oct. 30. Call 204-945-1716

Sheep and Goat AI Information Seminar

Saturday, November 21, Garden Gate Grill, Portage la Prairie, MB 1—4 p.m.

Interested in accelerating the genetic potential of your flock or herd? Come join us for an afternoon seminar on the ins and outs of artificial insemination in small ruminants presented by Dr. Neil Verseval, a Manitoba veterinarian and sheep producer. Topics to be covered include: reproductive physiology of the ewe and doe; manipulation of the reproductive cycle for AI; available techniques and procedures; logistics and cost; overview of embryo transfer, semen collection and the guidelines. For more info, contact Pam Heath (Rare Breeds Canada) 824-2386 or Dr. Neil Verseval 467-2083

2009 Manitoba Grazing School

Mark your calendar for this year's Grazing School.

"On the Cutting Edge"
December 1st and 2nd, 2009

New Location! It will now be held at the Victoria Inn, Brandon, MB.

[Register online](#) now with your credit card or call Dauphin MAFRI with your credit card (204) 622-2006

Using Animal Behaviour to Improve Production and Landscape Health

A Workshop with Fred Provenza

November 3 - 5, 2009

Brandon Research Center, Grand Valley Rd

Brandon, MB

This is the hyperlink that has all the information on the workshop

<http://www.mbforagecouncil.mb.ca/upcomingevents/2009/default.aspx?item=101&year=2009>

This hyperlink has the online registration form

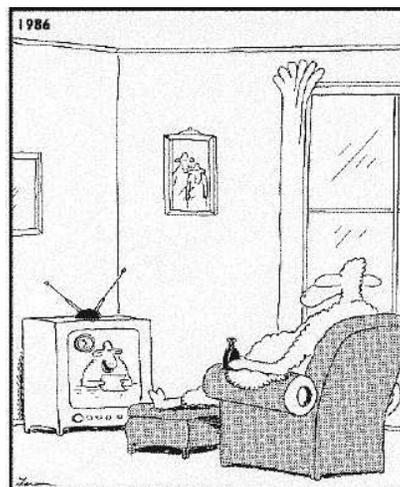
<http://www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=219&EID=5379>

or producers can call me to register:

Linda Ryckman

linda.ryckman@gov.mb.ca

(204) 483-2153



"And this report just in. . . Apparently, the grass is greener on the other side."

Sheep Manure Management

Manure management requirements for sheep are dictated by the type of overall management employed on the farm. In Manitoba, sheep are raised both extensively (on pasture the year round) and more intensively (confined to a yard or shed for at least part of the year).

For the more extensive operations, manure management is not a big issue and in fact is a very sustainable process environmentally, economically and socially. The more intensive or confined operations generally use a straw-based manure management system.

Sheep manure can contain different amounts of nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, sulfur and micro-nutrients necessary for plant growth. Manure is considered a viable source of organic matter pertinent to improve soil stability, decrease soil density, and increase water retention. Not all manure is composed of the same amount of nutrient level. The diversity in manure nutrients and the variety of crops are challenges producers are faced with today. By testing the soil and manure for nutrient content, the proper amount of manure based on the crop nutrient requirements can be determined and employed.

The application of inappropriate levels of manure can cause pollution if it reaches surface water such as streams, rivers and lakes, or leaches past the root zone of crops and into shallow ground water. Therefore, providing proper manure and compost manure management techniques can be beneficial to the environment, as well as increase on-farm profitability.

Manure management guidelines for Manitoba suggest appropriate storage and application systems for livestock manure including those from sheep enterprises.

Contact:

Mamoon Rashid

Business Development Specialist - Sheep/Goat
Livestock Knowledge Centre
545 University Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 5S6
Phone: 204-945-7557
Fax: 204-945-4327

Classified Adverts

FOR SALE - 20 Polypay X Ewe lambs. Phone Brian Greaves 204-567-3509

FOR SALE - 1 Texel yearling ram - \$300; 1 White Cotswold yearling and 1 coloured Cotswold yearling—\$300 each. Phone Gerry Oliver –204-834-2261

DORPERS FOR SALE: Crossbred Dorper Ewe lambs born Feb 2009: \$200.00 each. 5 FullBlood Registered Black Dorper Ewes: various ages & prices. Black Dorper Rams born 2005 & 007: \$500 each Full Blood Registered. White Dorper Rams born Feb 2009: \$500 each FullBlood Registered. Black Dorper Semen: 10 straws of semen valued at \$50.00 each from Ram: Zorro WDI for \$500 We will have CBCA Registered Border Collie Pups from working & competing parents available December 1st. 204-664-2027 www.wall2wallsheep.com wall2wall-sheep@yahoo.ca

FOR SALE: NCC and Dorset yearling rams for sale. Truck box, to fit a newer model GMC. Call Clifford Flynn, 204-733-2410

PUREBRED CLUN FOREST RAMS FOR SALE

British bloodlines with strong maternal instinct and well known for their ease of lambing and vigorous lambs. Most of my rams sell to repeat customers. Don't be fooled, these lambs grow well and have a good carcass. (The Angus of the sheep industry!) \$300. Please give me a call at 1-204-466-2904. Martin Penfold.

Manitoba Stock Dog Association
Promoting stress free handling of livestock and stock dogs.

New website:

www.manitobastockdog.com

Check the website for trial results and upcoming events

Bluetongue Survey

The Canadian Sheep Federation is currently reviewing its Bluetongue Insurance Program. We are encouraging those in the sheep industry to let us know what they think.

You can participating in the survey by visiting the CSF website or by clicking on the link - http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=IENRIOJ2AHugZVTkKXclA_3d_3d

Alternatively, you can answer the following questions and email the answers to jennifer@cansheep.ca or fax them to 866-909-5360

Are you aware that Bluetongue insurance is available to Canadian Sheep Producers?

If you weren't aware of the Bluetongue Insurance program, would you be interested in learning more?

Where did you hear about the Bluetongue Insurance program?

Provincial newsletter

From the Flock

Magazine article

Points of View

Magazine advertisements

Producer meeting

Did you buy Bluetongue Insurance?

Other

If no – is there anything we can do to make it more attractive?

Is production insurance something that interests you?

If so, what additional risks are you concerned about?

Do you have any additional questions and/or comments?

Contact

Jennifer MacTavish

T) 519.824. 6018

Executive Director

(F) 866.909.5360

Canadian Sheep Federation

www.cansheep.ca

130 Malcolm Road

www.freshcanadianlamb.ca

Guelph, ON

N1K 1B1

Lamb producers seek new recruits

To all those cattlemen and hog farmers who have bled money in past years, Canada's lamb growers have a proposition: Come join the shepherds.

Riding a demographic wave that has increased demand for their product and kept prices high, Canadian sheep producers have set out on a campaign to woo farmers into their fold.

At a time when pork producers reported a \$1-billion loss last year, and the Canadian cattle herd has shrunk to a size not seen since 1994, sheep farmers are actively working to make larger an industry so small it supplies less than half of Canada's lamb diet.

"There is plenty of current and future market for everyone," said Margaret Cook, the executive director of the Alberta Lamb Producers, in a statement Monday. "There is greater risk in continuing to force retailers and consumers to buy import lamb than in having higher production levels of lamb from more local producers."

Lamb producers are working up a campaign that includes direct mail, training brochures, advertising and government lobbying to help raise the profile of an industry that has quietly maintained healthy margins in recent years.

"It is probably the only livestock right now where there is profit," said Norine Moore, a 25-year shepherd from Stavely, a small Alberta town 115 kilometres south of Calgary.

Canada's flock numbers 1.1 million, with the largest sheep numbers in Ontario and Quebec. Alberta is third, with about 100,000 ewes.

The industry was hit hard by the mad-cow or BSE scare, which swept sheep producers into its wake when the U.S. closed its border to imports of all Canadian ruminants. Though they are susceptible to similar diseases, sheep don't contract mad-cow disease. Nevertheless, the border closure dropped the price per pound to 40 cents from \$1.30. Some producers left the industry.

But prices quickly regained strength, and Canadian lamb, which sells at a premium to imports from New Zealand and Australia, now fetches about \$1.20 per pound. Prices have been stable for four years.

Judging by the size of the industry, however, few have noticed. According to Statistics Canada, lamb production has declined from 2005, and the industry has remained static in size over the past two years.

Some lamb farmers have also been reticent to urge others to join their ranks because, like all livestock, prices are cyclical and there is no guarantee the current strength will last. And while shepherds say sheep provide a faster payback than cattle, they are more labour-intensive and are as vulnerable to wolves, coyotes and bears as they were in biblical times. The Canadian Sheep Federation has publicized the fate of one shepherd who lost 150 sheep worth \$30,000 to predators.

Still, part of the reason Canadian sheep producers are working to grow their numbers is that they hope to sell to big grocers, who have guaranteed supply requirements they currently cannot meet.

And they point to Canada's import statistics to demonstrate the size of the opportunity. In 2008, Canada imported about 22 million tonnes of lamb. Its domestic production barely hit 15 million.

Add to that the appetite for lamb among new immigrants from countries where it is a meat staple, and farmers say there is abundant room for new producers to enter the market. One report suggested lamb demand will grow by over 40 per cent between 2003 and 2020.

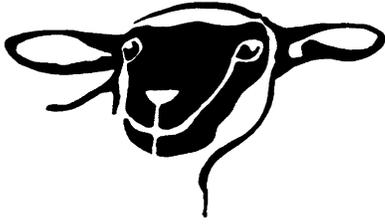
"As the population continues to increase, the market is going to increase," Ms. Moore said. "I don't think in our lifetime we could ever flood the market, because we will just be replacing the imported meat that's coming in now."

Canadian lamb does, however, depend on fetching a premium price. New Zealand producers benefit from economies of scale and more temperate weather, which allows them to pasture-feed sheep year-round, minimizing their feed costs. As a result, they can ship lamb to Canada for cheaper than domestic farmers can produce it. Canadian shepherds say their meat is better, and deserves a premium.

And, they say, they are beginning to see flickers of interest in their industry.

"There is definitely a change," said John Haarman, who has 200 ewes near Lethbridge. "Two or three years ago, it was all grey-haired guys who had sheep. But now we're getting some new young blood in there."

By Nathan Vanderklippe, Calgary — Published in the Globe and Mail on Monday, Oct. 26, 2009 8:00PM EDT



Nominations
For Manitoba's
Canadian Sheep Breeders Association
Representative

Until 2007 , the CSBA elections were done at the MSA Annual General Meeting. With MSA's fiscal year being changed to match the calendar year, elections at the AGM are no longer practical.

If you're interested in serving the MSA as the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association representative, Please print and sign your name. Get another CSBA member to sign your nomination form.

You must be a CSBA member residing in Manitoba to qualify.

Nominee _____ (print) _____ (sign)

Nominator _____ (print) _____ (sign)

Return to the MSA :

C/o Lucien Lesage

Box 91

Notre Dame de Lourdes, Manitoba R0G 1M0

By December 5th, 2008

For more info, please contact your present CSBA Rep.
Henry Nelson at 204-896-3759 or hlnelson@shaw.ca



MANITOBA SHEEP ASSOCIATION INC.

Director at Large Nominations

As of January 1st, 2009 there will be 1 opening for MSA Director at Large. If interested in serving your Sheep Industry, get this nomination form signed by 2 MSA members and returned to MSA Box 91 Notre Dame de Lourdes by November 15th 2008.

To be a MSA Director

- One must be a member of the Association.
- One must be a resident of Manitoba.
- One must be 18 years or older.

_____ is nominated for a 2 year term to the position of MSA Director at Large commencing January 1st, 2009.

Nominated by

Seconded by

Print _____

Print _____

Sign _____

Sign _____

Date: _____

Date: _____