



# FROM THE *flock*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CANADIAN SHEEP INDUSTRY

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## Welcome Back

Welcome back to the Canadian sheep industry's newsletter, From the Flock!

From the Flock has been on hiatus for nearly a year now as the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) worked its way through a number of transitions. Despite the changes in the organization and the absence of the publication, the CSF has continued to work diligently in the interest of Canadian sheep producers. Now that the dust has settled, it is time to reinstate From the Flock to share the organization's work and the industry's successes. From the Flock will now be published bi-monthly and in addition to regular program updates, will feature reflections from our provincial members and updates from industry organizations beyond the CSF.

## A word from our Chairman

"Hello fellow Sheep producers I hope you are having a pleasant winter and your ewes are giving you or going to give you lots of lambs. It is encouraging to see the price of lambs climbing and maybe we can once again have profitable farms. We at the Canadian Sheep Federation are continuing to advocate on your behalf to have more drugs and dewormers approved for sheep in Canada as well as working on a variety of other important issues. Please remember if you are using an off label drug you need to have Veterinarians script to do so. I hope you all have great spring and happy lambing!"

Phil Kolodychuk



# What's New at the Canadian Sheep Federation

## Staff

The Canadian Sheep Federation has seen a number of organizational changes over the past year. The CSF reluctantly accepted the resignation of long-time Executive Director, Jennifer MacTavish in March of 2013. Jennifer served as ED for the CSF for nearly a decade, leaving to assume the role of General Manager for the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency. Jennifer is deeply missed but has been incredibly supportive to the national organization and newly appointed staff alike since her departure, and the CSF remains grateful for her hard work and dedication to the industry. An extensive search for Jennifer's replacement led to the appointment of Corlena Patterson as the CSF's new Executive Director in June, 2013. Corlena has been a member of the CSF team since May of 2011, serving as Project Manager to the National TSE Eradication Plan. She has an extensive background in Canadian agriculture and agri-business including a five year tenure as adjunct lecturer in the Agriculture and Equine Departments of the University of Guelph, Kemptville Campus.

## Board of Directors

Through the CSF's renewal process, the organization re-structured its representation and the 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM) saw the election of Directors and Executive under the new structure. The CSF Board of Directors includes an independent Chairman and one Director from each member province. With a few additional Director changes since the AGM, the 2013-2014 CSF Board of Directors consists of Phil Kolodychuk (Chairman), Rob Scott (Vice-Chair, Ontario), Cathy Gallivan (Secretary, New Brunswick), Barbara Johnstone Grimmer (Treasurer, British Columbia), Bill Gibson (Alberta), Herman Bouw (Manitoba), Arlette Seib (Saskatchewan), Beth Densmore (Nova Scotia), Harry Elsinga (Prince Edward Island) and Wilson Reid (Newfoundland and Labrador).

## Sheep Industry Promotions and Research Agency

Over the course of the past 2 years, there was a lot of discussion around the idea of creating structure in the Canadian lamb market. In the end, it became clear that there is no national appetite for managing the market and producers prefer to create their own marketing strategies... understandably so. At the same time, there was quite a bit of thought given to how the Canadian sheep industry could gain fiscal autonomy and work past being tied to outside funding sources to support industry-based projects to being able to drive its own funding. As a result of the discussions held through the renewal process, the CSF Board of Directors, at the urging of its members, voted not to continue work on marketing sheep and lamb products at this time. Instead, the Board has agreed to investigate the creation of a Promotions and Research Agency (PRA) for the Canadian sheep industry under the Farm Products Agencies Act. A PRA does not dictate how products are marketed around the country and those decisions would remain with producers. The PRA would, however, facilitate the establishment of an import levy that would allow the Canadian sheep industry to leverage the vast volume of imports to support the promotion of sheep and lamb consumption in Canada and to fund research needed to support medication and anthelmintic (dewormer) approval in Canada.

## Markets

The Canadian Sheep Federation has been working with Canadian exporters, the Market Access Secretariat and the Canadian Trade Commissioner in Mexico City to help open access to the Mexican mutton market. The work was sparked by the interest of importers in Mexico wishing to source mutton products from Canada. The expectation is that opening this market will generate \$12.5M annually in mutton sales to Mexico and mean improved prices to Canadian producers.



## An Update on Canada's Scrapie Eradication Efforts

The Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has been working on the National TSE Eradication Plan since 2010, conducting a scrapie prevalence study, administering the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP) for producers and developing a comprehensive industry-level plan that will guide the Canadian sheep and goat industries to scrapie eradication.

In the small ruminant industry's continued support of scrapie eradication, a 25 member steering committee made up of producers, industry groups, academia and government agencies has been created and tasked with the development of a strategic scrapie eradication plan. The steering committee has had the opportunity to convene a number of times over the past year to craft an industry driven scrapie eradication plan that ensures continued viability of the Canadian sheep and goat industries taking into consideration sustainability, profitability and market access. This plan will comprehensively include both the science and staging required to unfold a national eradication strategy that is flexible enough to respond to changes in circumstances and political considerations as they arise.

The steering committee has focused on the science of the disease, the prevalence of scrapie in Canada today and programs and initiatives currently in place in Canada. With that information, the Scrapie Eradication Strategic Plan outlines the steps required to steer the country to scrapie eradication focusing efforts on scrapie surveillance, communications, education and risk mitigation efforts and programs.

The Scrapie Eradication Strategic Plan is in its final draft stages and will be released in the spring of 2014.

## Traceability for the Canadian Sheep Industry

In November 2013, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) launched consultations on options for livestock identification and traceability regulations. This consultation is the preamble to changes of the Health of Animals Act that will bring into effect mandatory national traceability for many livestock species.

The CFIA has proposed options in 7 basic traceability program elements and through the consultation process is collecting feedback from stakeholders. The traceability elements under consideration include:

- Proposed scope of the program (species to be included in the regulations)
- Animal identification requirements
- Maintaining history
- Application and activation of indicators (i.e. when tags are applied and when they are activated in a database)
- Domestic Movement reporting requirements
- Geographical precision of trace investigations (i.e. Premises Identification)
- Tools to support compliance for movement reporting (i.e. animal movement records)

The CFIA met with the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) and the Sheep Value Chain Round Table (ShVCRT) in November to present the consultation documents. The CSF has had an opportunity to provide initial input to the consultation process and provided a number of alternatives to the options provided. Consultations will continue until the fall and the CSF will actively advocate on behalf of producers to ensure that the end product is a feasible, sustainable traceability system that works for the Canadian sheep industry. Once the consultation period is complete, the CFIA will draft proposed regulatory changes and post them for public comment. Through the comment period, stakeholders are encouraged to review the proposed regulations and provide comments. Continue to follow From the Flock for updates on the progress towards traceability.

## Food safety training available for Canadian sheep producers

Increasingly, producers recognize their responsibility for identifying on-farm food safety hazards and work to minimize food safety risks to produce a safe and high-quality product. In supporting Canadian sheep producers in this role the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF), with the help of producers, industry and government representatives developed the Food Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) Program.

The FSFP Program provides training on how to identify food safety risks during production and provides a means for implementing control measures to reduce those risks, based on an internationally recognized Agriculture and Agri-food industry HACCP approach. In the FSFP Program, producers learn to:

- identify food safety concerns on farm including physical (i.e. broken needles), biological (i.e. E. coli, salmonella) and chemical (i.e. antibiotic residues) hazards
- develop troubleshooting techniques to reduce risks associated with these hazards
- implement good production practices (GPP) to prevent, eliminate or reduce hazards to an acceptable level

For example, a critical control point almost every producer will encounter is following drug withdrawal times on animal health products and medicated feeds to ensure animals are shipped to slaughter with no harmful residues from such products. The FSFP Program outlines GPP for managing this risk and record keeping systems to help document appropriate protocols.

As the program's first steps, producers can participate in FSFP Program training session either in-person or on-line. Live training sessions are held periodically in various provinces, conducted by trained program trainers, and on-line training is available free of charge through the Canadian Sheep Federation by registering at: <http://fsfp.cansheep.ca/>. Hard copies of the FSFP Program producer manuals are also available free of charge by contacting the CSF at 888-684-7739.

With completion of the training session, participants will receive a FSFP Program training certificate.

Producers wishing to continue in the Food Safe Farm Practices program will have to adapt the FSFP material on-farm, put into practice the good production practices and record keeping systems and train themselves and farm workers about food safety. After a year of following the program and keeping the necessary records, producers can apply for a program audit that will, provided program requirements are met, allow for full certification in the FSFP Program. On-farm audits will then be required every third year with self-audits and file audits conducted in the interim.

The Food Safe Farm Practices Producer Manual has been reviewed and accepted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) as a credible, national on-farm food safety program for the sheep industry. In November 2012, the Canadian Sheep Federation completed the last review of the Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food Safe Farm Practices Program, maintaining achievement of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's On-Farm Food Safety Recognition Program, Technical Review Part I. The CSF is currently working with the CFIA to complete Technical Review Part II of the FSFP Program, seeking full CFIA recognition of the program.

For more information about the Canadian Sheep Federation's Food Safe Farm Practices Program, contact the CSF by calling 1-888-684-7739 or via email at [info@cansheep.ca](mailto:info@cansheep.ca).

# Premise Identification

## A valuable tool for disease control and a key pillar of traceability

Premises ID is an essential part of a full traceability system. The objective of premises identification is to help emergency preparedness offices prevent, prepare and respond to an animal health or food safety issue.

A premise identification (frequently referred to as a PID), is a number assigned to a parcel of land where animals are kept assembled or disposed of, defined by a legal land description or, in its absence, by georeferenced coordinates. In addition to location information, contact information, type(s) of agriculture and agri-food operation(s) and livestock species kept on the premises in question are the other data elements captured through the premises identification and characterization process.

A PID provides emergency responders with essential contact information and the location of agricultural operations and animals at risk. In the event of an animal health, food safety or sanitary issue, the faster a suspect animal or food product can be identified, the better. The use of premises ID may help reduce response times and allow for a quick containment of suspect animals. Premises information allows us to quickly define which areas of our country are, and are not, affected by a disease outbreak or other animal health event.

In 2006, the livestock traceability Industry-Government Advisory Committee (IGAC) tasked provinces and territories with identifying and characterizing agricultural and food premises based on nationally agreed upon standards in support of traceability. Because provinces and territories have control over land titles and legal land description information, they are best positioned to validate premises locations. Provincial and territorial authorities have used various instruments to meet this policy (e.g., regulations, cross-compliance and voluntary identification) and have been assigned the authority to assign premises identifications.

PIDs are mandatory in some provinces and voluntary in others, but they are free to producers in every province. In its commitment to a fully functional traceability system for the sheep industry, the Canadian Sheep Federation urges producers to contact their local provincial authority to receive their unique PID.

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency's Canadian Livestock Tracking System (CLTS) Resource Centre has created a comprehensive list of Premise Identification Registrars that can be accessed at <http://support.canadaid.ca/?p=1949>. For more information on how to request a PID, contact your provincial government office or the CSF at 1-888-684-7739.