



FROM THE *flock*

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1-2 Canadian Sheep Identification Program
- 3 Sponsor Thank You
- 4 Sheep Traceability
- 5 On-Farm Food Safety
- 6 2011 Census of Agriculture
- 7-9 Scrapie Canada

RECOGNITION

Funding for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program and the Canadian Sheep Federation's Food Safe Farm Practices Program, has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative under Growing Forward.

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Opinions expressed in this document are those of the Canadian Sheep Federation and not necessarily those of AAFC.

The Canadian Sheep Identification Program and the Health of Animals Regulations

By Barbara Caswell

The requirements of the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) are legislated under the federal Health of Animals Act and Regulations. More specifically, the regulations around animal identification are found in Part XV of the Health of Animals Regulations. Part XV ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION details the requirements of all those involved in animal identification for a variety of species. More specifically, it outlines the requirements of tag manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, the program administrator, transporters, auction marts and producers – any and all individuals that could be involved in the identification of an animal.

While the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) provides a number of information pieces on the Canadian Sheep Identification Program, commonly referred to as the 'CSIP' program, from From the Flock articles like this one, to our website material at www.cansheep.ca, to brochures and Frequently Asked Questions, all of the requirements of the CSIP program are detailed in PART XV ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION. It is broken out into various sections, including:

- Electric or gas heated docker;
- Approval, Issuance and Revocation of Tags;
- Reporting requirement;
- Identification requirement;
- Record-Keeping requirement;
- Prohibitions;
- Loss of an approved tag or application of a new approved tag;
- Animal death or slaughter; and,
- Export and import.

Each of these sections details the various responsibilities of all involved. For example, it is important to note that auction marts cannot accept sheep and lambs which are not tagged with approved tags before the animal leaves the farm of origin. This has created some confusion, as there are 'licensed tagging stations' for beef under the regulations which allow the auction mart to apply the tag. While my history in beef and sheep is not as seasoned as most producers, from the various questions I have asked, this seems to stem from an understanding when the regulations were created that producers may not have the necessary facilities to apply a tag to a mature bull or overly rambunctious steer.



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Sheep Identification continued

Sheep, however, were not seen to pose the same risk. While I'm sure there are many out there who would argue either side of that point, what is important is that the Regulations are in place and producers can put themselves and their transporter and auction market at risk if they do not make an effort to ensure all animals are shipped with approved tags. The fines for not complying with the Regulations are found under a separate act and were recently increased to \$1300 per infraction. Producers who ship without approved tags, or transporters and auction marts who accept sheep and lambs without tags could potentially receive a monetary penalty. **There is allowance within the regulations for a lost tag to be replaced. In the event of a tag being lost, there tends to be evidence to support the lost tag, such as a hole in the ear where the tag was. Only in the case of a lost tag is an auction market able to apply a tag to a sheep or lamb.**

The current regulations deal strictly with animal identification. However, government has committed to begin phasing in the necessary infrastructure for mandatory traceability in 2011, with traceability encompassing the three pillars of animal identification, premise identification and movement reporting. While our industry has animal identification in place, we need to ensure the technology that we have gives industry the ability to implement the rest of traceability – most notably movement reporting. Provincial governments have been given the task of premise identification and many are progressing. Movement is a tough subject, and one many of the national organizations continue to discuss with the federal government. Pork is the first industry to draft traceability regulations, which are going through the approval processes and are expected to be in place by the end of 2011.

Beef and sheep continue to work with government on policy papers which are the beginning of discussions on what 'traceability' will look like for our industries. While both government and industry have needs, what is important to us as a national organization is that we represent your interests – keep the comments coming. We gathered some information from the National RFID Pilot Project on implementing and using RFID technology, and hope to continue to do so with a second year of the pilot. Also, as we move forward with RFID tagging, auction marts will have the tagged sheep and lambs they need in order to facilitate their ability to implement and use RFID technologies and comply with any new traceability requirements.

If you have further interest in the regulations which outline the requirements for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program, please see the CSF website, or if you are looking for a more technical read on a Sunday afternoon, the full regulations can be found on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's website at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/reg/rege.shtml>

NOTICE TO PRODUCERS

January 20, 2011: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is reminding sheep owners that all animals must be identified with an approved tag before they leave their farm of origin. The CFIA administers and enforces national identification requirements for sheep under the authority of the Health of Animals Regulations. Violations may result in warning letters, fines or, in some cases, prosecution. The ability to identify animals and their origins is important because it allows governments to respond more quickly and effectively to animal health or food safety issues. This has a direct impact on industry as issues can affect consumer confidence and market access. For more information on the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP), please visit www.inspection.gc.ca. For information on the measures to protect animal health, visit www.inspection.gc.ca/biosecurity. For information: Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Media relations: 613-773-6600

Source: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/trac/20110120inde.shtml>

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AAFC Continues Support of to Enhance Traceability for Sheep Industry

News of the latest federal government investment for the sheep and goat industries of over \$487 000 is a demonstration of government's continued commitment to enhancing traceability for the two commodities. The announcement was made Parliamentary Secretary Pierre Lemieux on January 31, 2011.

The funding is a continuation of the investment made by government last February to help the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) and the Canadian National Goat Federation (CNGF) foster education within the industry on identification and traceability of goats and sheep. It will also be used to further the development of both the Canadian Sheep Federation's Canadian Sheep Identification Program and the Identification program for goats.

"In recent years there has been a continual increase in the demand for sheep and lamb products, which represents significant opportunity for growth and long-term stability of the industry if capitalized upon within the next few years," said Andrew Gordanier, CSF Chairman.

"A critical success factor for capitalizing upon this opportunity is the industry's ability to address the increasing demand for traceability – providing feedback and information to the consumer about where their food and other products are coming from. We are pleased to be working with the Government of Canada to provide the tools and resources necessary for the Canadian sheep producer to address traceability."

The funding was made available under the Canadian Industry Traceability Infrastructure Program (CITIP), and will help the sheep industry address the federal government's initiative for mandatory traceability as one of the four priority species (Hogs, Cattle, Sheep and Poultry) identified by government.

"We appreciate the Federal Governments commitment to the traceability program and applaud the announcement for more funding to continue the program," said CSF Vice-chairman Trent Larson. "We look forward to working together with Agriculture Canada in bringing full traceability to the National Sheep Flock."

As the industry prepares to move to RFID tagging, which has been identified as the most feasible method of data capture that could both satisfy traceability requirements and not impede the speed of commerce for the industry, this funding will help support communications to producers to keep them up-to-date on changes to requirements, while ensuring producers have valuable input through the Canadian Sheep Federation into further developing a traceability system.

The Canadian Sheep Federation is a national, non-profit organization that represents all Canadian sheep producers. Its mission is further the viability, expansion and prosperity of the Canadian sheep and wool industry. For more information contact the Canadian Sheep Federation at 1-888-684-7739 or info@cansheep.ca

OFFS Project Update

By Niki Petrie

Allow me to introduce myself – my name is Niki Petrie and I work for a company called AgraPoint located here in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia. I will be picking up some of the OFFS files until Barb Caswell returns to the position in September.

I have been in the Food Safety business for around 15 years now having worked at both the primary producer, manufacturing and distribution levels along the way. I have always enjoyed the projects that have allowed me work more closely with the producers and so I was very excited when this opportunity came along.

I am a current member of the NS Institute of Agrology, graduate from the NS Agricultural College with my B.Sc, an auditor for the Guelph Food Technology Centre, and the Director of Quality and Food Safety for AgraPoint. And now, most importantly I am going to assist with your on-going development and implementation of the CSF Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food Safe Farm Practices Program!

Our company also provides extension services to the ag sector in NS and so the transfer of knowledge and helping producers create new value and innovation is one of our core values. Our sheep specialist, Jonathon Wort will be a resource to me as I venture into this position. Jonathon has been involved with the sheep industry for many years, including sitting currently on CSF's On-Farm Food Safety Working Group.

Having been introduced to this just before Christmas I must say I was very impressed with how organized everything seems to be. Barb and Jennifer have left things in great order and Barb is always close by to ensure things are staying on track.

I am headed to Saskatchewan this week to help deliver producer training sessions for the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board in Saskatoon and Regina. I am looking very forward to meeting the group there and to getting to know some of the nuances of the program and the industry through these two workshops.

Barb is working away on making the necessary changes to the OFFS program in response to the CFIA Technical Review. Once these changes have been completed and approved by the Working Group they will be disseminated to all of the producers who have participated in a training session for the program to date. For those wanting a copy of the program please contact your provincial sheep association or the CSF office.

As with any other living document, the Food Safe Farm Practices Program continues to grow and change and we will need to continue to respond to that in a manner that supports the sheep industry.

I look forward to working with you all in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact me at n.petrie@agrapoint.ca

The 2011 Census of Agriculture and Canada's sheep farmers

By Erik Dorff, Census of Agriculture

When farm operators complete their 2011 Census of Agriculture questionnaire on May 10, 2011, they will be updating Canada's definitive national agricultural profile.

The 2006 Census of Agriculture saw a break in the trend to more sheep on more farms that started in 1991 and continued through 2001. The sheep industry reported decreases in both the number of farms and flock size in the 2006 Census of Agriculture. Farmers reported 1.1 million sheep in 2006, down 9% from five years earlier. Farms reporting sheep declined 17%, to 11,031 in 2006.

Slightly more than 27% of sheep were on Ontario farms. Quebec surpassed Alberta in 2006 for the country's second-ranked spot with 306,808 head, or 27% of the country's animals.

Today, sheep production is driven by the meat rather than the wool market. The consumption of mutton and lamb has been slowly increasing in the last 10 years, with much of the demand generated by an increasingly diverse population. However, much of that demand is met by competitively-priced imports from New Zealand and Australia.

While much had been made about the impact of the BSE crisis on the cattle sector, less public attention was directed at other affected groups. After many borders slammed shut to Canadian sheep in the aftermath of the BSE crisis, domestic market demand proved to be a valuable outlet to cope with the drop in the export market. Some argue that the combination of increased domestic slaughter capacity and improved marketing within the country will see the sheep sector emerge from this crisis with much greater resilience.

Information with which to make informed decisions is an important tool for producers, their agencies and the government in trying to stay competitive in an increasingly uncertain world. The ability to understand where we are now — and indeed where we have come from — allows us better informed approaches to face tomorrow's challenges. Participation by producers in the 2011 Census of Agriculture will also allow them to give a local as well as national voice to their present situation, informing Canadians of the crucial role the diverse agricultural sector plays in shaping our national picture.

The Census of Agriculture, the backbone of Canada's agricultural statistics program, identifies trends and helps to illustrate issues, opportunities and challenges within the agricultural community. Questions cover topics such as land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, machinery and equipment, farm finances and land management practices. The depth of coverage allows the census to be the definitive source of information on the agricultural sector, giving voice to farmers' situations.

On May 10, 2011, add your voice to those of Canada's sheep farmers by counting yourself in on the Census of Agriculture. Fill out your questionnaire on paper and mail it back in the prepaid envelope or take advantage of the internet application which automatically adds totals and skips you through the parts of the questionnaire that you indicate don't apply to your operation.

For more information on the 2011 Census of Agriculture visit the website at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2011/index-eng.htm> or contact Erik Dorff by telephone at 613-951-2818 or by e-mail at erik.dorff@statcan.gc.ca



Scrapie Canada Update

By Courtney Denard, National Scrapie Coordinator

Each year, Scrapie Canada is audited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The point of this audit is to evaluate the National Scrapie Project Coordinator's compliance when it comes to processing producer files for the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP).

During the annual audit, the CFIA is looking to ensure that all producer files are being processed in line with the rules laid out in the VSFCP's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) - a document that details the roles and responsibilities of the Scrapie Project Coordinator and participating producers.

The VSFCP SOP was developed by the CFIA in coordination with industry through the Scrapie Working Group- a committee developed to oversee Scrapie Canada's projects and programs. The Scrapie Working Group is made up of representatives from national organizations representing the Canadian sheep and goat industries such as the Canadian Sheep Federation, the Canadian National Goat Federation, the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association and the Canadian Livestock Genetics Association.

The SOP was developed to provide the Scrapie Project Coordinator with an outline that indicates exactly how files should be handled. It also explains how and when producers should be completing and submitting their annual paper work, and the repercussions of not doing so.

As the VSFCP moves forward in its evolution as a program, it is critical that the SOP be followed exactly.

This may have not been the case in the early days of the program, when the administration process was new and producer uptake was low. At that time it was equally important to get the program up and running and get producers

informed about scrapie. To put it simply, Scrapie Canada was young, new and trying to work out the administrative 'bugs'.

Now that the VSFCP has been in place for six years, many lessons have been learned and the industry is more aware of the administrative requirements. As mentioned above, one of the critical points that has been raised as a result of the annual audits by CFIA, and by internal discussions, is that the program's SOP needs to be followed exactly, and for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, the SOP ensures that all producers on the program are treated in the same manner in respect to processing their files. It creates consistency and equality across the program regardless of who the participating producer is or who is acting as Scrapie Project Coordinator.

Because scrapie is related to trade, the SOP is also an important document in regards to accessing and maintaining trade partners. Current and potential trading partners are quite interested in Canada's scrapie program. They want to know that Canada has a strong and reliable program in place. They also want to know that the enrolled producers are following the rules as they are laid out.

This is where the annual CFIA audit comes into play. At the end of each audit, Scrapie Canada is handed a report that outlines the administrative areas that can be improved.

Scrapie Canada then has a responsibility to address those areas and ensure that they are in line with the SOP. Once the suggested areas have been improved, Scrapie Canada reports back to the CFIA confirming that certain changes or corrections have been made.

Scrapie Canada Update Continued

At the same time, Scrapie Canada can determine sections of the SOP that may need to be reevaluated and/or updated. Scrapie Canada comes up with these points of reevaluation through discussions with the Scrapie Working Group and by receiving feedback from producers.

It is important to note that while the credibility of the program is imperative to our trading partners, it is also important to ensure that the program is working well and in the best interest of Canadian producers. The CFIA uses the annual audit report as evidence that Canada is running a credible and consistent program that is being audited, and improved, on an annual basis.

So what does this all mean for producers? Moving forward, Scrapie Canada will be processing files in line with the rules laid out in the SOP. As a result, producers should be aware of and adhere to all program rules.

Some of the more important rules that producers need to be aware of are stated below:

1. Enrollment in the VSFCP is based on a quarterly calendar. Depending on when producers enroll, they will be placed into one of four quarters. The quarters are: January 1- March 31; April 1- June 30; July 1- September 30 and October 1- December 31. Whichever quarter the producer is placed in becomes his/ her anniversary quarter and each year the application of advancement must be completed in this quarter.
2. Producers need to ensure that their application is submitted in a timely manner on an annual basis. Producers' paper work is due no later than 30 days following the end of their anniversary quarter. Therefore, if your anniversary quarter is January 1- March 31, your paper work is due to be received by Scrapie Canada no later than April 30 of that year.
3. The Scrapie Project Coordinator will inform producers, via phone, e-mail or written letter, that their application of advancement due date is forthcoming. Producers should expect this reminder about one month prior to the beginning of their anniversary quarter.
4. As stated in (b) producers are required to submit their application of advancement no later than 30 days following the end of their anniversary quarter. Producers who do not submit their application of advancement paper work in the appropriate timeline will be contacted by the Scrapie Project Coordinator (by phone, e-mail or written letter) and given a 30 day deadline to submit outstanding paper work. If producers fail to submit the outstanding paper work within the 30 day deadline, a temporary suspension will be imposed. If producers fail once again to submit paper work 30 days after the imposed temporary suspension, they will be removed from the program. Those producers who do submit their outstanding paper work within 30 days of the imposed temporary suspension will have the suspension lifted if the paper work is complete.
5. Producers will be required to submit a complete application of advancement. If information is missing, the producer will be informed and given a 30 day deadline to submit the missing information. If this deadline is not met, the producer will be suspended from the program. If the producer fails to submit the requested information after the suspension has been in place for 30 days, the producer will be removed from the program.
6. A number of the rules laid out in the SOP are subject to producer appeal. Please see the SOP for more detail.

Scrapie Canada Update Continued

Of course there are certain extenuating circumstances that may render a producer unable to meet his/ her responsibilities on the program. If this is the case, the best thing to do is contact the Scrapie Project Coordinator directly.

To see a full copy of the SOP log onto <http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/VSFCPappeal.html> or contact Scrapie Canada at 1-866-534-1302 or admin@scrapiecanada.ca

Funding for this project is provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) AgriFlexibility program. Opinions expressed in this document are those of the CSF and not necessarily those of AAFC.

SCRAPIE CORRECTION

In response to the article "Import Regulations", in our December 2010 issue of From the Flock, we would like to provide further clarification. With regards to the first paragraph in that article, we would like to note that, as of January 2011, female sheep or goats for breeding, domestic or captive purposes can only be imported from a property enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) OR from a flock determined to be from a "premise of negligible risk". This is not a change from the current rules in place. Please refer to the following website for details: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/pol/ie-2007-5e.shtml>