



FROM THE flock

JANUARY 2012 • VOLUME 9 • ISSUE 1

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 Merging Publications
- 2 RFID Timeline
- 3-4 Scrapie Canada
- 4-5 Biosecurity Tool
- 6 Lambposium

RECOGNITION

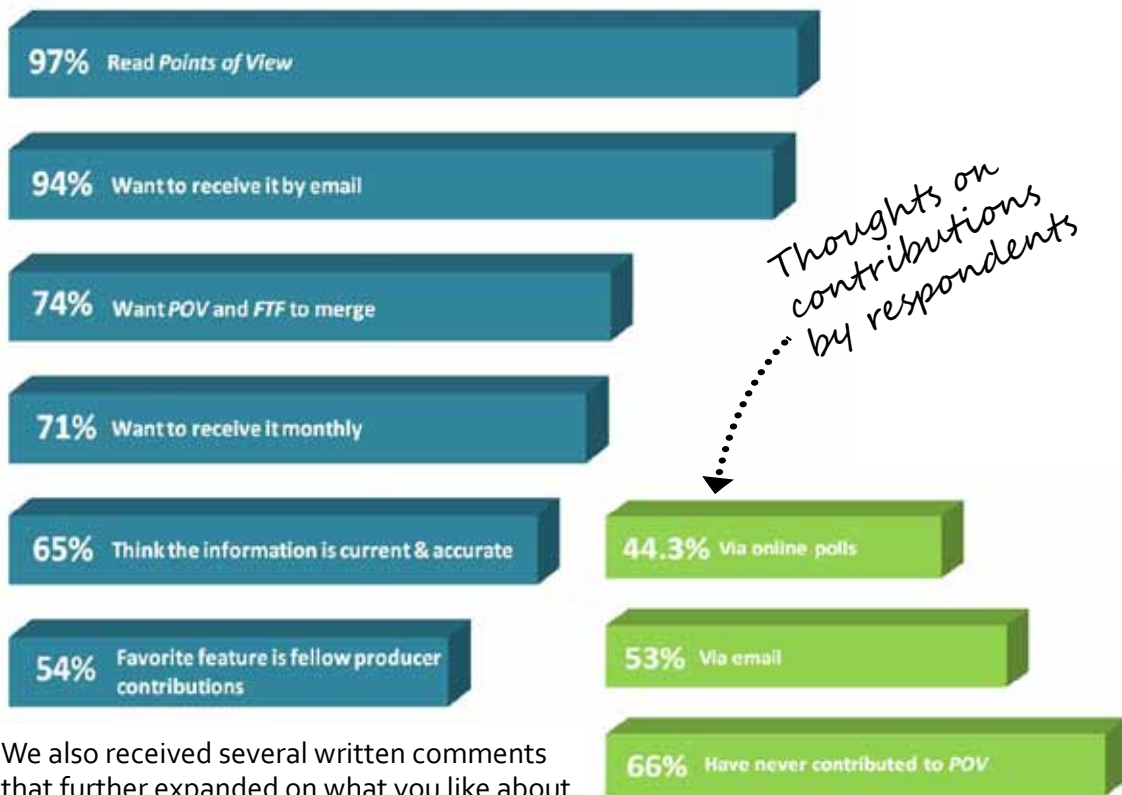
Funding for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program and the Canadian Sheep Federation's Food Safe Farm Practices Program, has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative under Growing Forward.

Funding for the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program has been provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) AgriFlexibility program.

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

Points of View to merge with From the Flock

Over the course of the past few months, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has been asking the industry to provide feedback on Points of View (POV) through an online survey. After four years and 47 issues, we felt that it was time for a change and the survey offered you the opportunity to shape the direction of POV to better meet your needs. Thank you to everyone who took to the time to complete the survey. Here is a snapshot of the results from the respondents:



We also received several written comments that further expanded on what you like about POV and how we can improve it to better meet your needs. We've given a lot of thought to the results and are pleased to introduce the NEW POV concept.

Starting in March 2012, we will merge POV with FTF. Each month, you'll find a POV page within FTF where we will pose a question. You'll be able to click through to a quick, online poll to respond. For those who want to elaborate on your response, there will be a comment option. The following month, we'll publish the poll results along with the comments and pose a new question. We hope that this new format will keep you on top of current sheep industry issues and abreast of what your fellow producers are thinking. By merging with FTF, we will help to keep your e-mail in-box more manageable. We also hope it will be easier for more of you to contribute.

As always, we welcome your feedback!



Timelines towards Mandatory RFID Tags

Since July 1st 2011	Ketchum pink Kurl lock # 3 and Allflex pink dangle tags are no longer available for sale from the manufacturers, Ketchum and Allflex, as official Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) tags.
Since October 1st 2011	Producers can no longer purchase the Ketchum pink Kurl lock # 3 and Allflex pink dangle tags as official Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) tags.
Since January 1st 2012	Producers are encouraged to tag all animals born or tagged after this date with CSIP approved RFID tags (Shearwell yellow Data SET tag or Allflex yellow RFID Button Tag); Producers need to carefully monitor their stocks and use up inventory of the Ketchum pink Kurl lock #3 and Allflex pink dangle tags as they will be officially removed from the list of approved tags for the CSIP in the near future. The objective is to have the tags decommissioned by 31 December 2012.
As of January 1st 2013	If the decommissioning process has been successful, resulting in minimal numbers of the non-RFID tags still in circulation, the Ketchum Kurl lock #3 and the Allflex dangle tags will be officially removed from the list of approved tags for the CSIP and will no longer be accepted from this date forward at sales, abattoirs or by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for shipping, transfer or sale of sheep in Canada.

In June 2010, the Canadian Sheep Federation approved a motion to move the sheep industry towards mandatory RFID tags. This decision was given a great deal of consideration. Not only does an RFID system help sheep producers meet anticipated traceability requirements, it also gives producers an opportunity to move the industry forward.

Government continues to support a mandate to phase in the necessary infrastructure to allow for the tracing of products and food animals from the point of origin (the farm) to the consumer. As such, the sheep industry, in conjunction with other species that have either chosen to move forward and/or were considered one of the priority species with sheep (i.e. beef, swine and poultry), continue to discuss with government what a comprehensive national traceability system will look like. With the necessary infrastructure in place, identified commodities will continue to work with government to develop regulations that will facilitate a comprehensive traceability system.

As primary producers, implementation of new technologies by those further down the value chain requires having animals equipped with RFID tags in order to test and use those technologies. In the end, all those along the value chain will be required to comply with new regulations once in place. CSF remains committed to working closely with provincial organizations to provide them with timely communication, information and education required to make sure the RFID system provides a positive return for the industry.

We strongly believe that this continues to be the right decision for our industry. And we're confident it will play a key role in helping us realize our tremendous potential. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Canadian Sheep Federation at info@cansheep.ca or 1.888.684.7739.

Decommissioning of non-RFID tags

During 2012, CSF will work with the CFIA to assess the levels of Allflex Dangle and Ketchum Kurl Lock tags still circulating at abattoirs and auction marts across Canada. The objective is to have a minimal number of the non-RFID tags still in circulation in order to decommission the tags.



Why Scrapie is a National Concern

By Corlena Patterson - National Scrapie Project Coordinator

Scrapie is a legacy-based prion disease found in sheep and goats. It is a naturally occurring, infectious, neurodegenerative disease that is passed horizontally (from animal to animal or from the environment to an animal) and has a long incubation period; that is to say that an infected animal can transmit the disease without exhibiting clinical signs. Scrapie is a very serious disease that can be in a flock or herd for a long time before it is recognized and the end result can be isolated outbreaks that affect a large number of animals in an infected flock or herd and outbreaks on farms that have sourced animals from affected premises.

The scrapie prion is of the same classification as Creutzfeldt-jakob disease in people and although scrapie has not yet been proven to pose a risk to human health, the extreme chemical and physical resistance of the scrapie agent, and the fact that it is experimentally transmissible by injection to a wide spectrum of mammalian species, suggest that prudence is required in preventing human exposure.

In Canada, scrapie is a reportable disease under the federal Health of Animals Act, and a control program exists to prevent its spread. As scrapie is a reportable disease, any suspect scrapie case must be reported to a CFIA veterinarian immediately. When cases of scrapie are confirmed, the CFIA will quarantine the affected flock or herd. The process hereafter is different depending on if you are a sheep producer or a goat producer, the size of the flock or herd and the genotype of the flock. Inevitably some animals will be ordered destroyed and in some cases whole flocks or herds may be depopulated. An effected flock or herd is required to submit all mature on farm mortalities for a period of 5 years after the quarantine is lifted.

Positive cases of scrapie not only lead to the destruction of carefully crafted breeding programs, they continue to pose a considerable threat to the health of the national sheep flock and national goat herd. Scrapie investigations can implicate a large number of producers in multiple provinces and affect large number animals. Due to the nature of the disease and given the lack of effective live animal testing and the lengthy incubation period of the disease, scrapie needs to be effectively contained in the interest of protecting the national sheep flock and national goat herd.

Both Canada and the United States continue to identify positive cases of scrapie. In 2011, the CFIA identified 6 flocks as testing positive for classical scrapie (and an additional flock with atypical scrapie). The USDA reports identifying 20 field cases of scrapie (from a total of 28 classical cases nationally) as of September 2011. Interestingly enough, of the 20 positive US field cases identified, 10 of these animals were goats from the same herd. Both the national sheep and goat industries need to continue be attentive to the risks associated with scrapie.

The national identification of scrapie also has international trade implications. Due to the nature of the disease, the OIE has designated scrapie as globally notifiable and, as such, all positive cases must be publicly published. Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are encouraged to base their domestic sanitary measures and international trade practices on OIE standards, guidelines and recommendations. These recommendations include assessing a source country's scrapie status and disease control programs. Where some trading partners will import from countries that continue to identify cases of scrapie, others may not be willing to trade with countries where scrapie exists.

Scrapie Canada continued

When a country achieves scrapie-free status by OIE standards, the trade regulations associated with that country will change. Scrapie-free countries will only freely trade with other scrapie-free countries or units. Since the USA is one of Canada's biggest trading partners, and is working towards scrapie-free status by 2017, this is something that our industry needs to keep in mind as we continue to develop and implement scrapie programs.

In order to move the small ruminant industry forward, it is necessary to remain focused on and dedicated to scrapie eradication in Canada. Scrapie eradication is important to the continued viability of both the sheep and goat industries and domestic efforts to mitigate the risk of disease can help build a robust trade based industry on both domestic and international levels where international trade is essential to the vibrancy and long-term sustainability of the Canadian livestock industries.

If, at any time, you suspect that scrapie may be on your farm, contact your local CFIA veterinarian. You can find your local Canadian Food Inspection Agency District Office on the CFIA web site at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/> or by consulting the blue pages of your local phone directory.

New calculator illustrates the on-farm cost of livestock diseases

A new cost calculator model is now available to help the livestock industry put a price tag on disease outbreaks. The program, built in an Excel spreadsheet, will calculate the financial impact of moderate or severe outbreaks of specific diseases on beef, veal, sheep, goat and rabbit farms. This includes Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD) in cattle, mycoplasmosis in veal, Q fever in sheep, Caprine-Arthritis-Encephalitis (CAE) in goats and pasteurellosis in rabbits.

Producers must input a series of data in the spreadsheet, such as feed costs, average daily gain, mortality rates and others depending on the particular commodity, in order for the model to generate results.

For example, an outbreak of BVD in a beef herd can cost an operation \$65,000 - \$268,000 depending on the severity of the disease, as the model showed using a base herd case built on data gathered from real Ontario producers. A similar example of an outbreak of CAE on a dairy goat operation resulted in costs between \$4,000 and \$209,000 due to increased culling rates and decreases in daily gain, milk production and conception rates.

The goal behind the disease model, says Richard Horne of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, is to get farmers thinking about what impact a disease outbreak will have on the profitability of their operations. Horne is part of a steering committee overseeing the project that also includes representatives from the veal, goat, sheep, rabbit and farm service provider sectors, as well as government representatives.

"In the short term, we'd like to draw attention to the importance of disease prevention methods on-farm and get producers starting to think about best management practices," says Horne. "This calculator is a good way to get producers to do some reflection on their own operations to reduce disease risks on their farms. And because you need your own farm data in order to run the model, it underlines the need to keep good records."

Biosecurity calculator continued

Many livestock farmers already use break-even calculators to see where their costs are, adds Horne, explaining that although the model has been built to address specific diseases, it will still generate a general picture of the impact on a farm's bottom line if, for example, gain were to be reduced by a certain percentage.

In the long term, food safety and disease prevention through biosecurity are tied to traceability. This issue will become of increasing importance as governments work to ensure the highest standards of food safety and quality are met, no one wants a disease outbreak or a recall scare," says Horne. "This is also vitally important for our export markets. It is an issue that transcends societal segments. It's an issue for government, consumers, markets and producers."

He encourages farmers to view the disease model as another tool to be used in managing risk. If reducing the impact of disease on farm is part of an operation's greater risk mitigation strategy, this tool is a good way to visualize what could happen in a disease outbreak scenario.

"This is a management and decision-supporting tool and if it encourages record keeping and increasing awareness of biosecurity, then it has done its job," he says.

For more information, please contact the Ontario Livestock Alliance at info@livestockalliance.ca or (519) 824-2942.

This project is part of a new, multi-phase project partnership between Ontario Veal, Ontario Goat, Ontario Rabbit, Ontario Sheep, and Ontario Cattlemen's Association to identify, quantify and address biosecurity gaps and build the livestock industry's emergency preparedness capabilities.

This project was funded in part through Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of several Growing Forward programs in Ontario.

Source: Lilian Schaer, Agri-Food Project Services Ltd.
This article was published in Alliance Magazine Fall 2011 Volume 1 Issue 4. The official publication of Ontario Veal, Ontario Goat and Ontario Rabbit.

Beef, Veal, Sheep, Goat and Rabbit producers can go to www.agbiosecurity.ca to download the calculator for your sector.

It is important to note that the current versions of these cost-of-disease calculators are essentially proof-of-concept works. Each provides a working example of a single disease that is potentially found on Canadian livestock farms and relevant to each of the species for which they have been prepared. The authors and sponsors of the work hope that further development of these models will be possible to extend their value to the livestock community. Anyone interested in discussing this possibility is invited to contact us at info@agbiosecurity.ca.

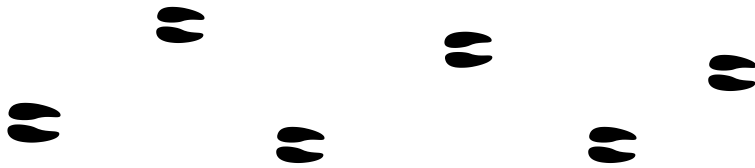
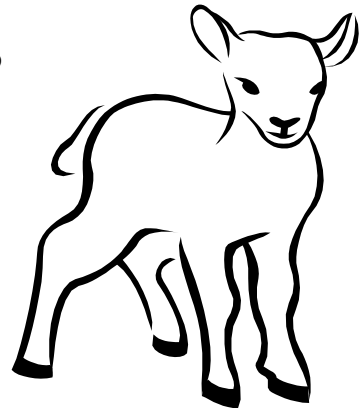
If you have any questions on how to use the calculator please download the user guide and associated Statement of Purpose and Limitation of Liability. By using any of the disease calculators, you accept the limits of liability contained in that document.

Twin Valley
CO-OP MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

CO-OP

LAMBPOSIUM

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON
OF INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO SHEEP
& GOAT PRODUCERS



UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT
NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS AND HEALTH
THROUGH OUR CO-OP FEED SPECIALISTS

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PRESENT TERRY ACKERMAN, A
SPEAKER FROM THE CANADIAN LAMB COOPERATIVE TO
TALK ABOUT HOW THEIR
ORGANIZATION CAN IMPROVE YOUR PROFITABILITY!!

BIRTLE CO-OP HOME AND AGRO CENTER

WED FEB 1, 2012 1:00 PM - 9:30 PM

FREE LUNCH FROM 12:00 - 1:00

**IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE FREE LUNCH PLEASE CALL
AMANDA @ 842-3389**