



FROM THE *flock*

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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.

2011 Statistics Canada numbers show increase in National Ewe Flock

By Barbara Caswell

The January 2011 Sheep Statistics were released last month and indicate that, for the first time since 2004, the Canadian ewe flock has increased by 1.1%. Growing from 515,700 ewes in 2010, the Canada flock now has 521,600 ewes. While seven provinces saw their flock increase over the past 12 months, PEI had the largest ewe flock increase at 36%; followed by Newfoundland at 12.5%; New Brunswick at 12%; Ontario at 7%; Alberta at 4%; Saskatchewan at 3.75% and; Nova Scotia at 3%.

This is positive news for the industry, which has been focused on increasing their National flock for over a decade. In 2009, production by Canadian producers only met 47% of the domestic demand for sheep and lamb, and included over 30,000 lambs shipped in from the United States for slaughter. Consumption data for 2010 won't be released until May.

Most recently, in an attempt to address the lack of supply, producers from the Canadian Sheep Federation's Board of Directors represented producers nationally on an Agriculture Canada Sheep Value Chain Round Table held last November in Calgary. The Round Table also saw participation from the processor and retailer sectors of the value chain and the message was consistent – there is a lack of supply to meet the domestic demand. Flock numbers have been shrinking on an international scale due weather fluctuations causing difficult lambing and lack of available feeds, to the changing economic climate, and ever rising production costs and regulatory demands. With Canada importing over half of its demand for lamb, the fear has been if there is no lamb to import to fill the demand, sheep and lamb products may start disappearing off supermarket shelves and industry infrastructure may be lost.

Both CSF and many of the provincial sheep associations have been active in addressing the need for increased production, and have been working to provide producers with the necessary resources to either expand their current production or productivity, or to allow for new producers to enter the industry. While there has been concern about flooding the industry with product causing a decrease in price, the road to meeting the current domestic supply is proving to be a slow but measured process.

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Sheep Stats continued

While the latest numbers are optimistic, the current supply is still far off of meeting the demand. CSF will continue to work both in the capacity of the Sheep Value Chain Round Table with other stakeholders along the value chain, as well as in partnership with the provincial sheep associations to encourage growth while monitoring market trends.

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 jennifer@cansheep.ca.

CSF Welcomes New National ID Coordinator

Coming this February, It is with great pleasure that I will be taking on the role of National Animal Identification and Traceability Coordinator for the sheep industry. For the past 15 years, I have had the chance to work within the Canadian sheep industry as a technical counselor for the Centre d'insémination ovine du Québec (Centre for ovine insemination) and for more than 10 years at the Société des éleveurs de moutons de race pure du Québec (Purebred sheep association of Quebec). Through the years, I have had the chance to be a board member of both the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association and the Canadian Sheep Federation and I have been involved in many committees including the Canadian Sheep Identification Program working group.

My career path has led me to acquire a broad experience in the sheep industry at the provincial, national and international levels. In particular, I have worked in project development and management, in the organization and leadership of meetings and committees, in education and technical counseling for sheep producers and in business and financial management.

With regards to identification and traceability, from 2002 to 2005, I was involved, as a sheep producer, in the Quebec sheep identification and traceability projects leading to many experiences in testing different tags, readers, scales and information management systems for traceability. Since 2002, I have also been involved, as an industry representative, in sheep identification and traceability projects and committees at provincial and national levels.

It is highly motivating for me to take on this role working in identification and traceability for the Canadian Sheep Federation. I strongly believe in the need for and the role of animal identification and traceability within the industry to help in animal disease control but also in food security and safety. Furthermore, I believe, tools like electronic identification and its related readers, scales and computer programs can become an integrated part of very effective business management and information management systems, on farm and throughout the sheep and goat value chains.

I am looking forward to work closely with all Canadian sheep producers, industry organizations and stakeholders.

Best regards,
Daniel Dion
daniel@cansheep.ca

Good news for sheep breeders

SOURCE: <http://www.atlanticfarmfocus.ca/Agriculture/2011-02-03/article-2195501/Good-news-for-sheep-breeders/1?action=sendToFriend>

Jonathan Wort delivered a lot of good news during the recent Purebred Sheep Breeders' Association of Nova Scotia's annual meeting.

The Agrapoint sheep and beef production specialist gets about one call a week from someone wanting to get into sheep production and he would not be surprised to see provincial flock numbers rise.

Price and demand are also strong, Wort reported. "If you know of people who have sheep for sale; let me know."

There is also a greater demand for sheep with superior genetics proven by record of performance evaluation. Wort admitted performance evaluation is not cheap, "but we need to generate more interest... or we could lose this program. Look at the chicken industry's astounding record of genetic improvement and productivity. The sheep industry, by contrast, has been disappointing."

He noted that AI service this year is about \$150 per ewe. He has also learned of an opportunity to buy semen from the United Kingdom. He is looking at North Country Cheviot and needs an order for at least 50 straws.

Wort extended an offer to hold a series of workshops on various aspects of sheep production. He will be holding the Modern Shepherd course at the NSAC; it has already exceeded its maximum number of registrants. At the Nappan research stations Agri-Futures is funding "a really exciting research program" looking at the effects of sheep grazing on fescue and red clover pastures. The theory is that the content of healthy fatty acids, CLA and Omega-3 will be higher on lamb raised on red clover.

There is also a feeding program in the barn to change the fat content in CLA and Omega-3. Researchers will also be examining the sexual development of pasture-raised sheep. Wort said, "There is some folklore you shouldn't put sheep on red clover or they will not come into heat."

Scientists will examine the parasite level in sheep manure in different pastures. The NSAC has a research project in its initial stages examining the feasibility of making insulation out of wool that may mean new opportunities to develop new markets.

The college is also getting new ultra sound equipment for pregnancy testing for ewes and, perhaps with industry support, a trial project could be assembled to commercialize it as a service.

There is also a good market opportunity coming out of the Scrapie Flock Certification Program. Wort noted, "If you want to move animals into the U.S., unless they have been through certification, you can't."

Similarly, if a breeder wanted to bring in ewes from the U.S. they will have to be in the certification program for at least a year, he explained.

Scrapie certification will also be extended to rams and there will be a national program to look at scrapie prevalence in breeding flocks. Wort expected more positive flocks will be detected, "but the upside is we could eliminate scrapie." He noted Nova Scotia's flock health program is still in place and recommended producers take advantage of it.

Good Sheep News continued

It is an exciting time for the sheep industry, Wort declared. He urged breeders to retain their good ewes and lambs. "If we have more animals for sale; it will attract more people to the industry."

He also urged them to look for good quality and genetics when buying breeding stock. The Genovis program seeks to increase performance recording to improve the genetic and reproductive quality of Canadian sheep. "Genovis is the only program we have for evaluating our flocks."

The cost of Genovis can quickly be recovered "because it means new opportunities to market your sheep," Wort said.

Cathy Vallis, representing the Sheep Producers Association of Nova Scotia, reported: "We seem to be getting more tags sold which means we are getting more lambs sold. The demand is so huge and our supply is so small."

OFFS Training is Gaining Momentum

By Niki Petrie, Interim National On-Farm Food Safety Program Project Coordinator

The Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board provided a great learning opportunity for producers in mid-January. There were 26 producers in total that were available to take advantage of the On-Farm Food Safety (OFFS) workshop training component. For these participants, it was the first step in meeting the Food Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) program requirements.

The training included a review of the producer manual and how it could be implemented at their farm. The "Must Do" categories were generally considered to have already been

in place and some have adopted the "Highly Recommended" standards. The gap, as with most OFFS programs was reported to be with the record keeping component. I would like to encourage all producers to begin by looking at their existing records. Most know where they need to be a little more diligent. The sooner producers are able to adopt good record keeping practices, the better equipped they will be to prove they are following Good Production Practices (GPP's). Remember, from an auditor's perspective, if you didn't record it, it didn't happen.

I found that the Saskatchewan producers were very supportive of the program. I was encouraged by the ease at which they were able to navigate through the producer manual. This demonstrates that the manual design is working and that it will support producers during their implementation and on-going compliance.

Once the final changes are completed and approved to the Producer Manual it will be made available to those producers who are currently on the program, or have attended a workshop. All other requests can then be made to me or individual board offices.

We are able to continue the training momentum in Nova Scotia due to support for OFFS workshops under the Growing Forward initiative. We are planning to offer a full day of training for NS producers on March 19th, 2011 in the Annapolis Valley area. A full program description will be available shortly and communicated to producers. These sessions are crucial for the Food Safe Farm Practices program success and I would like to encourage all producers to attend any offerings in their area.

Let the training momentum continue.



Scrapie Canada: Canadian Food Inspection Agency Annual Audit- Part 2

By Courtney Denard, National Scrapie Coordinator

Last month's update focused on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) annual audit with Scrapie Canada. The article explained that the goal 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). The article highlighted that the Scrapie Project Coordinator's compliance is based upon the rules and regulations laid out in the VSFCP's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

This month's update is a continuation of that discussion, detailing how the annual audit and required compliance of the SOP impacts producers enrolled on the VSFCP.

Scrapie Canada is required to process all 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 so they can continue to successfully advance on the VSFCP. A full copy of the SOP can be received by calling Scrapie Canada or by going online to: www.scrapiecanada.ca/VSFCAppeal.html

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, their enrollment on the program will be revoked. 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

Scrapie Canada Update Continued

be informed and given a 30 day deadline to submit the missing information. 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, their enrollment on the program will be revoked. 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.

Temporary suspensions and revocations can be appealed by the producer. This means, if a producer does not agree with an imposed temporary suspension or revocation, or can give justification for missing an imposed deadline, he/ she can send a formal letter of appeal to Scrapie Canada.

All appeals are reviewed by a separate Scrapie Appeal Committee made up of representatives from the Canadian sheep and goat industries. The Scrapie Project Coordinator sits on the appeal committee as a non-voting representative, as does a representative from the CFIA.

Appeals can also be made when a producer's situation falls outside of the program's SOP, meaning it is not covered in the current set of rules

The SOP is reviewed on an annual basis and producers are encouraged to offer suggestions for changes, questions and/ or feedback. Any feedback received through the year will be considered in the subsequent review. The SOP review usually takes place between June and July each year.

As mentioned in last month's update, the CFIA uses the annual audit report and compliance to the SOP as evidence that Canada is running a credible and consistent program that is being audited and improved on an annual basis. This evidence is presented during trade negotiations with partners like the U.S. or other international communities.

It is important to once again emphasize 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.

Scrapie Canada encourages producers to offer any questions or feedback regarding the VSFCP. The most important goal is to have a strong, credible program that works for the industry.

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Tight sheep meat supply predicted to expand

SOURCE: <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/farming/147647/tight-sheep-meat-supply-predicted-expand>

World sheep meat may be in short supply, but there are signs sheep farming countries are starting to ramp up production.

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) reported last week the Australian flock is expected to grow 2% this year due to favourable growing conditions and what it called exceptional lambing rates prompting restocking in eastern states. Australian lamb production this year is expected to increase 7% and exports to grow by a similar amount.

Beef and Lamb New Zealand's (BLNZ) mid-season update reports European Union sheep production has been in decline, but both the United Kingdom, where production has fallen 5% in recent years, and France are showing signs of rebuilding their breeding flocks.

The immediate future still appears tight globally, with importers reporting stocks were at record lows.

BLNZ warned European consumers switching to cheaper forms of protein would result in further declines of sheep meat consumption this year, but given global shortages, prices for lamb were expected to remain strong and relatively stable.

A shortage of sheep meat in North America was expected to curb consumption, but imports were expected to grow 9% to compensate for the drop in domestic production.

"If exchange rate relativities between the euro and United States dollar favour the United States dollar, then an increase in supply from New Zealand can be expected," BLNZ said.

Demand for sheep meat in Asia and the Middle East was expected to stay high due to the global shortage and strong growth in those regions. Launching Meat & Livestock Australia's 2011 Sheep Industry Projections last week, senior economist Sylvia Athas forecast lamb production in 2011 to

increase by 7% to 436,000 tonnes as a result of increased slaughter and carcass weights, expected to average 21.6kg.

Exports were forecast to rise by 7% in 2011 to a record 167,000 tonnes, with the Middle East expected to become Australia's largest export destination for lamb, while Southeast Asia and China were also seen as strong growth prospects. The domestic lamb market was resilient in 2010 but consumption in 2011 is forecast to rise 7% to 236,000 tonnes.

Demand for live sheep in the Middle East remains strong, but drought has depleted stock numbers in Western Australia and the lack of suitable cull wethers as a result of the reduced merino flock could mean exports fall 6% to 2.8 million. Mutton exports are forecast to recover slightly, increasing 12% to 111,000 tonnes.

BLNZ reports wool prices were pushed by manufacturers competing for stock to replenish depleted inventory, with cotton producers enjoying similar demand and high prices.

US beef prices rose 26.7% in the year to December, helped by limited supplies from New Zealand and Australia and what BLNZ called "robust demand". Australian exports are forecast to fall 2% to 880,000 tonnes this year, due in part to the Queensland floods and a low US exchange rate relative to the Australian dollar, forcing some beef to be redirected to Russia and Asia.

BLNZ says there was plenty of uncertainty about US beef production.

New Zealand beef exports to north Asia were static due to slow economic growth, the high NZ-US exchange rate and competition from Australian and US beef.