



FROM THE *flock*

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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.



National TSE Eradication Plan

The National TSE Eradication Plan is a joint industry project designed to study establish the prevalence of scrapie in this countryCanada and to develop a plan for eliminating eradicating the disease from Canada. Establishing the prevalence of scrapie is important to the continued growth and success of the national goat industry. and determining scrapie prevalence in goats separately from that in sheep could impact future disease control efforts and programs for goats.

Canada's scrapie status impacts not only animal health and disease control measures, it also affects our ability to maintain current trading partners and gain new ones. Eliminating Eradicating scrapie from Canada will allow the industry to harmonize with US disease control measures and help to remove trade barriers that already exist.

A Canadian scrapie-free status will prevent the destruction and disposal of scrapie infected herds that financially impacts the goat industry and presents animal welfare concerns to the Canadian livestock sector and general public.

Project coordinators are encouraging Canadian goat producers are being encouraged to voluntarily submit goat obex samples for scrapie testing. Samples will be tested by a scrapie accredited laboratory and results will be used to determine scrapie prevalence.

Samples can be submitted to the University of Guelph's Animal Health Lab, Saskatchewan's Prairie Diagnostic Services or Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's TSE Laboratory.. The cost of the obex testing is covered by the project and reimbursements for sample submission are available for a limited time.

To learn more about how you can participate in the National TSE Eradication Plan, or for information on submitting obex samples for testing, contact Scrapie Canada at 866-534-1302 or visit our website: www.scrapiecanada.ca

Funding for the National TSE Eradication Plan is provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Agricultural Flexibility Fund, as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

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How Do We Control Scrapie?

By Corlena Patterson, National Scrapie Coordinator

The question has arisen lately; how do we control scrapie? Scrapie is neither a new nor an emerging disease and has in fact been around for hundreds of years. The current day driving factors for controlling and eradicating scrapie are linked to increasing global animal health and food safety concerns and the fact that scrapie, as a TSE, belongs to the same family of diseases as BSE. Over two thirds of the world's countries, including Canada, have some form of scrapie control program(s) in effect aimed at controlling the spread of the disease or eradicating it altogether.

So why, with all these control measures in effect, does scrapie still exist today? The disease has a long incubation period where seemingly healthy yet infected animals can pass on the disease and remain undetected in flocks and herds for years, for which there is no 100% reliable live animal test and there is certainly no vaccine available. Most commonly scrapie is spread from an infected female to her offspring at birth, or to other animals exposed to the birth environment, through fluid and tissue from the placenta. Smaller amounts of scrapie prion can be excreted in the feces, saliva and milk of infected animals. As a result, pasture previously grazed, or buildings previously inhabited, by infected animals may also be a transmission risk for many years.

In short, the nature of the disease itself makes it difficult to control and scrapie is not easy to get rid of. There is no quick and easy fix, but there are some well established control measures that work effectively.

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) is recognized as the international authority on animal health and disease. Made up of member countries, the World Organization for Animal Health works to collect, analyze and provide expertise on the latest animal diseases, animal disease control methods, ensure transparency in the global animal disease situation, establish guidelines for animal welfare and to improve the safety of food of animal origins from hazards originating in animal production.

The recommendations for scrapie control methods set out by the World Organization for Animal Health are based on the most up to date and proven methods of controlling the disease, and are made taking into account the nature of the disease, the economic impact of the disease, animal welfare and economic impacts of disease control. In essence, the recommendations produced by the World Organization for Animal Health represent the most effective means of controlling the disease, all else being considered.

So it would stand to reason that scrapie control programs in Canada be fashioned on the these internationally recognized standards for most effective means of controlling the disease. Scrapie is challenging to control and that is reflected in the disease control programs, yet the programs are shown to be effective. Controlling scrapie at the farm or national level requires commitment to following disease control methods...without which eliminating the disease is impossible to do.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) initiated an active scrapie surveillance program in 2005. The current CFIA national scrapie eradication program consists of an internationally recognized and science based approach that includes i) an active surveillance program aimed at identifying as many sources of scrapie infection in Canada as possible and ii) the implementation of scrapie control actions on farms where scrapie has been identified, and iii) providing support to a Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP).

Controlling Scrapie

The basics of the World Organization for Animal Health's recommendations for scrapie freedom control, at the farm level, include:

- sheep and goats are permanently identified and records maintained, to enable tracing them back to their establishment of birth
- records of movements of sheep and goats in and out of the establishment are maintained
- introductions of sheep and goats are allowed only from free establishments or establishment at an equal or higher stage in the process of accreditation
- introduction of in vivo derived goat embryos and in vitro processed sheep and goat embryos /oocytes should comply with Article 14.9.9. of the code (OIE)
- sheep and goat semen should be introduced into the establishment in accordance with Article 14.9.8. (OIE)
- an Official Veterinarian inspects sheep and goats in the establishments and audits the records at least once a year
- no case of scrapie has been reported
- sheep and goats of the establishments should have no direct or indirect contact, including shared grazing, with sheep or goats from establishments of a lower status
- all culled sheep and goats over 18 months of age are inspected by an Official Veterinarian, and a proportion of those exhibiting wasting signs and all those exhibiting neurological signs are tested in a laboratory for scrapie. The selection of the sheep and goats to be tested should be made by the Official Veterinarian. Sheep and goats over 18 months of age that have died or have been killed for reasons other than routine slaughter should also be tested (including 'fallen' stock and those sent for emergency slaughter)

Canada has a producer level scrapie risk management program in place, the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP) which is part of the larger National TSE Eradication Plan funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Canada has a producer level scrapie risk control management program in place, the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP). The main pathway of this program (Pathway 1) is, fashioned based on the World Organization for Animal Health recommendations for scrapie control criteria for a scrapie-free establishment. The VSFCP is administered by the Canadian Sheep Federation and is overseen and endorsed by the CFIA as a scrapie risk management program that provides enrolled producers the opportunity to exercise scrapie control on farm have their herd or flock recognized as being at a much lower risk for scrapie than the rest of the national herd or flock. Program participation entitles enrolled producers receive national and international recognition of their status, and international recognition is currently being sought for their scrapie risk control mitigation measures taken on these farms. and program administration is upheld to a standard that ensures domestic and international trading partners are protected when trading with program participants.

If you would like more information about the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program, and steps that you can take towards controlling this disease, contact Scrapie Canada at 866-534-1302 or visit www.scrapiecanada.ca

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Changes to Federal Legislation and Regulations Expected

By Barb Caswell, National On-Farm Food Safety Coordinator

Both the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada are undergoing change in order to modernize their processes. The changes come in light of the federal government reviewing of some of Canada's oldest legislation and regulations surrounding the safe production of food.

The Improved Food Inspection Model

'The Improved Food Inspection Model: The Case for Change', which outlines its plans for Inspection Modernization, was recently released by the CFIA. The goals in undertaking this process '... are to standardize the inspection approach and provide for consistent and appropriate oversight across all regulated food commodities.' The CFIA currently inspects food products under eight different programs facilitated by five different Acts. In a changing global food economy with ever new and changing food safety risks, the CFIA has struggled to remain efficient and effective in overseeing the safety of Canadian food. The need to 'modernize' the legislative framework under which CFIA works was one of the major points coming out the Weatherill Report and the deadly listeriosis outbreak during the summer of 2008.

The CFIA has requested comment on its plans for inspection modernization. The Canadian Sheep Federation has reviewed the draft document and addressed a need for additional information on what the potential implications could be for the primary producer. Could this new legislation open up the inspection powers of CFIA to those further back the food chain from the processor, such as requiring the implementation of on-farm and post-farm food safety programs.

Health Canada's '[Regulatory] Roadmap lays out the way to move from the old [regulatory] frameworks to the new regulatory system.' Particular changes are not yet clear and what, if any, effect they may have on primary production and on-farm food safety programs. The most promise could come from a comprehensive review of the processes under which new drugs are approved for use in animals. One of the biggest impediments for sheep producers in Canada is a lack of approved drugs.

This has created difficulty for producers looking to implement the Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food Safe Farm Practices Program, as there is currently a requirement for a vet script for all extra label use of animal health products. While there was no other suitable alternative to ensure the safe use of many of the drugs being used by Canadian sheep producers, the ideal scenario would to simply have more drugs approved for use and give producers and veterinarians alike label directions on safe use. A review of the current regulatory framework under which veterinary drugs are approved may reduce some of the administrative red tape that has prevented better access to medications for producers.

The Canadian Sheep Federation anticipates keeping watch on the progress made by both the CFIA and Health Canada during these legislative and regulatory reforms, keeping in the forefront what is important for producers to ensure that Canadian agriculture remains a sustainable and profitable. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the legislative reviews, please contact me at barbara@cansheep.ca

Sources:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency. *Safe Food for Canadians Act.*

Canadian Food Inspection Agency. *Safe Food for Canadians Act: What it means for Canadian industry.*

Canadian Food Inspection Agency. *The Improved Food Inspection Model: The Case for Change*

Health Canada. *Regulatory Roadmap for Health Products and Food.*

My Thoughts on the Lamb Prices and What Can Be Done

By Gord Schroeder , Executive Director - Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board

“What’s going on with the lamb prices?”

This is a very common question as of late. In an article written in May for the last issue of Sheep Shape (Saskatchewan’s provincial newsletter) I encouraged producers to recognize that last year’s prices were record setting, and that there would be some moderation in prices this year. Slaughter lamb prices were very high last year, which translates into high lamb prices in stores. This normally creates consumer resistance and consumption declines. A moderation in prices would be required once again to increase consumption, this is the cycle. To add to this, the high cost of feed grains would make feeding lambs less attractive and the price gap between slaughter and feeder lambs would narrow. The numbers indicated no reason for a significant price decrease; prices and demand should be good.

The numbers:

- Stocks of frozen and chilled lamb and mutton down 4% over the same period last year.
- Meat imports down 19.4% over the same period last year
- Consumption, seeing a slight decrease in 2011 to 0.9 kg per person down from 1.07 kg per person in 2010, suggest in most part due to higher price of lamb in stores.
- Modest increase in the Canadian flock comparing inventories from January 1, 2011 to January 1, 2012. Ewe numbers were up 0.6 %, replacement ewe lambs up 4.1%, market lamb numbers up 4.9%. Nothing substantial and there was a shortage of lambs.

Price decreases

Nothing in the numbers would indicate any reason for a substantial decrease in prices. Well, my market assessment/prediction was not accurate with regards to price. So what’s happening? There are a number of factors in my opinion putting downward pressure on lamb prices:

- Currently there is a backlog of heavy lambs being created by a lack of demand. Consumption is way down due to the extremely hot weather in Canada’s largest lamb eating market, who wants hot food when it’s that hot?
- Prices paid for lambs last year was not supported by product marketing. Consumers will pay more when there is perceived value for cost, we asked them to pay more but did consumers perceive more value for the extra cost?
- Lamb slaughter plants are in control and there’s currently a backlog of lambs. A simply supply and demand issue.
- Lamb prices were driven up to a level which was not good for the industry as a whole under the current marketing structure, producers did very well. However; buyers and processors did not. This year buyers and processors are being very cautious as there is pressure to recoup losses or narrow margins from last year.
- High feed costs; \$8.85 a bushel corn and \$5.75 a bushel barley, the heat and price decline make feeding lambs extremely risky and not very attractive , thus the very poor feeder lamb prices
- There is a worldwide price correction happening, this was the moderation in prices as predicted. The price of lamb is down in many countries not just in Canada. Last year prices were at all time record high, we knew this was not the new norm.
- The drought in the United States is driving up feed prices and driving market price down. Heat is also reducing consumption. The markets in the US have collapsed making it very attractive for processors to bring up American lambs and they are coming up by the truck loads.

Price decreases continued

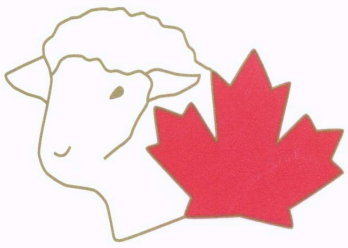
- Auction mart numbers to date are up, created in part by producer panic rather than an actual increase in overall supply. Flock expansion was very modest across Canada over last year. Adding to the panic are weather related issues, very dry hot conditions in the east and through much of the US are creating feed shortages and high feed costs.
- Lamb buyers are very cautious because of the degree and speed of the collapse in prices. I've talked to many buyers who bought lambs they thought were at fair prices, by the time they got possession of the lambs or sold them the price at the plants had dropped to levels to where buyers were losing money. In one case the price dropped \$40 cwt in one week.

You put it all together and the results are what we are seeing in the industry right now. So when will the price rebound? I am somewhat reluctant to make a further prediction as you know how good my last one was. But again going back to the numbers; I have some thoughts. Once we get through this backlog of heavy lambs and the weather moderates and starts to cool down in fall, consumers will again start eating lamb. We will eat our way through this. We are not in an oversupply situation as a whole in Canada just the timing of a number of factors created this situation. Consumers ate lambs last year at very high prices with prices moderating consumption should go up again. I encourage producers to hang in there; we are coming off an extremely good year last year which makes this hurt even more. Consider lamb prices over the last few years.

Long term, I feel we need to make some fundamental changes to the way we market Canadian lambs. To keep producers in the industry and attract new entrants, producers need to be paid fairly and be profitable. What's happened recently in the lamb industry will set the industry back once again. This frustrates me as I've seen this cycle over and over again in the years I've been in the industry. We've all heard the saying, "the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". The history of the lamb industry for the most part is this; it gets rid of its lambs; it does not market them.

What's happening to producers right now is exactly why the Canadian Lamb Producers Cooperative is being developed. We've traveled across this country talking to producers about their interest and the feasibility of a producer owned marketing organization. Many of you were excited about the opportunity and encouraged us to continue the development process; others of you say it will never work. I would ask this; is the current marketing structure for Canadian lamb working? Many retailers long for access to Canadian product. There is no Canadian marketing organization; there is no Canadian brand, very limited value adding. Consumers are looking for Canadian product. The words "Canadian lamb" alone brings with it perceived value. Consumers will pay for value. How are we currently marketing the value of Canadian product? How can Canadian lamb producers capture some of this value?

The Canadian Lamb Producers Cooperative initiatives' goals are to address many of the current marketing issues in the Canadian lamb industry. There are some things we can't change but there are things we can. How we market our Canadian lamb is one of them.



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La Société Canadienne des Éleveurs de Moutons

2012 CSBA SUMMER UPDATE

All Canada Sheep Classic:

The very successful 2012 All Canada Sheep Classic was held in Truro, Nova Scotia from June 14th-16th. The event, which was sponsored by the Canadian Sheep Breeders' Association and hosted by the Purebred Sheep Breeders' Association of Nova Scotia, attracted consignors and buyers from across Canada. Warm, sunny days and cool nights allowed for good traveling and comfortable sheep.

56 consignors showed sheep representing 14 breeds to judge Gerald Hunter, a seasoned Suffolk and Border Leicester breeder from Smiths Falls, ON, who ranked the 230 animals. The Supreme Champion Ewe was a Dorset (Driscoll Dorsets 2Y) consigned by Mike and Cindy Driscoll of Elora, ON and the Supreme Champion Ram was a Texel (Brien G&L 1Y) consigned by G&L Brien of Ridgetown, ON. The Supreme Flock was awarded to MacTaggart Suffolks of Rockwood, ON.

Throughout the weekend, an extensive variety of fleeces were on display for the Fleece Competition. After the judging, detailed comments were provided to competitors and the fleeces were offered for sale through silent auction. Educational displays, wool clip preparation demonstrations and numerous vendors offering wool and wool products drew attention to the versatility of wool.

Following the show, a sold out Nova Scotian Lamb and Salmon Banquet began with a welcome from the Honourable John MacDonell, Nova Scotia's Minister of Agriculture. The CSBA presented "Good Shepherd Awards" to Angus Rouse and, posthumously, to Jim Hewitt for their outstanding contribution to the sheep industry.

The sale was held on Saturday and 226 animals consigned by producers from 9 provinces sold as they passed through the auction ring. The auctioneer for this year's Classic was Andy Carter, 2008 Canadian Champion Auctioneer. Over 220 official bidders from 10 provinces competed to purchase purebred animals. Prices were strong with an average of \$534 paid for ewes and \$696 for rams. The top selling ewe was a Suffolk (Trillium Woods 20Y, consigned by Trillium Woods Sheep, Shallow Lake, ON), which sold to Jill Declark, Belmont, ON for \$2200. The top selling ram was a Dorset (Brien G&L 77X consigned by G & L Brien of Ridgetown, ON), which sold to Shereff Stock Farm, Carberry, MB for \$4000.

Breed averages and sale results for every animal can be seen on the CSBA's website at www.sheepbreeders.ca. Photos of the Shepherds' Social, around the barn and the banquet can be seen on www.sheepnovascotia.ns.ca. Those who would like to purchase pictures taken by the official photographer, Pam MacKenzie, can go to her website at www.shotsbypam.com.

The CSBA is extremely appreciative of the tremendous support that it has received from sponsors, exhibitors, consignors and buyers from across Canada. In particular, the CSBA congratulates and thanks the Purebred Sheep Breeders Association of Nova Scotia for the outstanding leadership and hospitality they demonstrated in hosting the 2012 Classic. The hours of careful planning and hard work performed by the local team led to another positive event for the Canadian sheep industry.

The next All Canada Sheep Classic will be held in Barriere, BC, which is 45 minutes northwest of Kamloops, from June 28-30, 2013.

Tattoos: Correcting Mistakes

The CSBA's constitution requires that breeders using tattoos to register sheep must, **within 100 days of birth**, tattoo: i) flock letters in the right ear, and ii) an identification number and year letter in the left ear, by 100 days of age. Tattoos are a form of permanent identification and the corresponding numbers are printed on the animal's registration form. Although the vast majority of tattoos are legible and correct, errors (reversed letters, reversed ears, indistinct ink, incorrect or missing numbers/letters, etc.) can occur. Insuring that the animal's tattoos match the registration paper is very important. If the numbers do not match, animals may be culled from shows or sales, fail parentage testing or be mistaken for different animals.

When registration papers are received, it is important to verify the paper with the animal's tattoos. If an error is noted, contact Lorna Woolsey at the CLRC (1-877-833-7110 (306)) and she will guide you through the correction process. In many instances, the original registration paper will need to be returned with a description of the issue/error, so that a new registration paper can be printed to match the animal's tattoos. In other situations, a new tattoo may need to be applied above or below the original tattoo and a new registration paper printed. When a correction is made, a note will be added to the registration paper indicating the type of error and how the adjustment was made. There is a \$10(+tax) charge for issuing corrected registration papers.

Scholarship: The CSBA will be offering a \$500 annual scholarship to students who are CSBA members or children/grandchildren of members. The first scholarship will be offered for the fall 2012 college or university semester. The application form can be found on the CSBA's website under Industry Involvement. Applications must be received at the CSBA office by August 1, 2012.

Requirements for Importing Sheep:

Under section 189 of the Health of Animals Regulations, with the exception of animals imported for immediate slaughter, every person who imports sheep shall report to the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA): (i) the number of the approved tag, and (ii) enough information about the origin of the animal to allow the origin to be traced. This information shall be reported to the CCIA within 7 days after importation of sheep.

Please note that the CCIA database (CLTS) is now able to receive sheep import information. As of today, in the course of conducting compliance verification inspections, CFIA will verify that sheep import information is reported to CLTS.

Failure to meet this requirement is subject to a fine under the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations.

You can reach the CCIA to report the import of sheep at 1.877.909.2333.

CSBA Office Address Change:

As of July 2, 2012, the CSBA office will be relocated to Bluffton, AB. Stacey White will continue to work as half-time general manager of the CSBA. The toll free number and email address will remain the same. The new mailing address is: RR 2, Site 7, Box 46, Bluffton, AB T0C 0M0. Any correspondence sent to the old address will still be received. The new, toll-free, fax number is: 1-877-207-2541.

In order to stay on the mailing list, it is important to have a current CSBA membership and active email address. Please renew your membership now by contacting the CLRC on-line at www.clrc.ca or by calling Lorna Woolsey at 1-877-833-7110 ext. 306.