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From the flock

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CANADIAN SHEEP INDUSTRY

Characteristics of Drug Use on Sheep Farms in Ontario

Despite the fact that antimicrobials represent a large component of veterinary drug use in Canada, on-going surveillance and research has tended to focus on the major livestock species (e.g., beef, swine). Up until now, there has been little documentation on the use of antimicrobials in sheep. Without such documentation it is difficult to know what drugs are being used, in what manner, and if there is a possibility of the emergence of antimicrobial resistant bacteria.

Recently a project was undertaken in Ontario by University of Guelph researchers, to evaluate the patterns of drug use and prevalence of antimicrobial resistance in sheep flocks. Over the course of twelve months, 49 Ontario sheep producers documented all drug use on sheep, including antimicrobials, vaccines, anthelmintics and vitamins. During this time, these 49 producers, with an average ewe flock size of 216, marketed over 31,000 lambs.

Extra label drug use (ELDU) is defined as the actual or intended use of an animal health product (either prescription or over-the-counter) such as an antimicrobial or any other pharmaceutical, biological or parasiticide in a manner other than what is specified on the label or package insert.

Antimicrobial use on-farm was determined in 2 ways: 1) Frequency of antimicrobial treatment, i.e., an antimicrobial administered to one sheep or to a group of sheep either once or repeatedly (e.g. in the feed); 2) Rate of antimicrobial treatment, i.e., exposure to an antimicrobial taking into account the number of animals treated and the length of time treated, as well as the number of sheep available to be treated over the study period.

Antimicrobials were the most common drug administered (40.7% of treatment events), followed by vitamin-mineral injections (12%), vaccines (11%), and endectocides (10.7%) (e.g. ivermectin).

Continued on next page



Sheep Drug Use continued

Overall, there were 1,103 different antimicrobial treatment events (or 2,715 treatment events with all drug categories) over the 49 participating farms.

The project revealed that the participants used 21 antimicrobial agents. The most frequently used were: short-acting penicillin (27.2% of treatments); long-acting oxytetracycline (23.0%), long-acting penicillin (21.9%) and trimethoprim-sulfadoxine (12.2%). Additional antimicrobials with high rates of use were chlortetracycline (in feed) and tilmicosin (in ewes). Of these drugs, long-acting oxytetracycline and trimethoprim-sulfadoxine (Borgal) are not licensed for use in sheep. Tilmicosin (Micotil) is only licensed for use lambs and so its use in ewes is considered extra-label use.

Overall, 93% of the antimicrobial use in this project was extra-label drug use: 41% was with a non-licensed antimicrobial and 52% was with a licensed antimicrobial, but used in a manner inconsistent with label instructions (e.g. different class of sheep, dosage or indication).

The results of the project indicate that in comparison to other livestock industries, antimicrobial use in the sheep industry is relatively low and is predominantly used to treat one animal at a time (49.2%). Sheep were exposed to an antimicrobial on average only 6.7% of the days spent in the flock, with 50% of flocks reporting much lower exposures. However, when the drugs are used, they tend to be used overwhelmingly in an extra-label fashion. This finding is not surprising given the lack of approved drugs for sheep in Canada.

The final results for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in sheep flocks will be available later in the fall of 2009. Three common farm bacteria were examined for evidence of AMR: E. coli, salmonella and campylobacter.

Initial results indicate that overall AMR levels are low but there are some interesting, and slightly disturbing trends that the industry must address in the future. Stay tuned!

In Canada, ELDU can be performed by a variety of animal care givers including veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and producers. However, the practice of ELDU other than by licensed veterinarians presents some potential human health risks, including a) drug residues from treated animals in meat or milk; and b) development of antimicrobial resistance. In addition, any person using or prescribing extra label use of any animal health product is subject to regulatory action if product residues are found in human food. It is imperative that the FSFP program properly addresses this issue to avoid potential liability and to adequately control the hazards associated with ELDU.

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CNGF National Goat Animal Identification and Traceability

By Sean McKenzie, National ID and Traceability Coordinator

The Canadian National Goat Federation (CNGF) has now developed a program for animal identification for all goats across Canada. The large scale of the task and the diversity that exists within the goat farming sector added to the challenge of developing a program that would suit the majority of goat producers and production types in Canada. That said the CNGF has been working together with CFIA to develop a series of decision points that outline the basic function and design of the program.

CNGF has been getting pressure from producers across the country to work with government and establish an official animal ID program complete with necessary records and animal ID tags. This process can take several years to complete and so to satisfy those in the industry that are looking for tagging options for farm management purposes and get the industry started on this road the CNGF has finalised a number of details that will create the basis for a national goat identification and eventual traceability program.

For the time being individual goat identification (tagging) and the associated record keeping will be available to producers on a voluntary basis. This will give producers anxious to have 'official' tags the opportunity to initiate animal identification on their farms. Taking this initiative prior to the regulatory amendment creates a transition period for goat producers, who before now have not been required to tag animals, nor record traceability information. By easing into the program we hope to foster an environment of collaboration between producers, the CNGF and government and in doing so create a better system overall.

The main requirements for the National ID Program for Goats will be similar in many ways to other species groups; the main requirement being that once regulations are in place all animals must be identified with an official CNGF goat ID tag prior to leaving the farm of origin.

These tags will be manufactured and sold by Ketchum Manufacturing Inc. Three types of animal identification tags have been selected for use in goats. The Ketchum Reyflex strip type tag, the Ketchum Reyflex RFID (electronic) button tag and the Ketchum Small Panel tag have all been approved by the CNGF for use as official identifiers for goats in Canada. These will all be orange in colour and bear both the Canadian symbol and a number between 340 000 000 and 344 999 999.

The national ID database will be held by the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA), who will collect and store all tag identification numbers. Producers will be asked to report to the database the date and tag number when tags are activated; which means when the tag is actually applied to an animal and the date of tag retirement if an animal that has a tag dies on farm. Retirement of a tag number removes it from the system and tells inspectors they don't have to look for that animal in the event of an emergency or animal disease event. Other records will be kept by producers on-farm including animal ID numbers, animals arriving to the farm, animals shipped off the farm to other producers or slaughter and the destination address of these animals.

Other components may come with time however relatively small scale and limited resources mean that the goat industry must wait for other larger and the more established industry groups (Cattle, Pork, Dairy) to move forward and lay the groundwork before more traceability components can be selected and incorporated. For now the voluntary program will get the ball rolling and tags should be available to producers in the very near future.



Briefing: National Goat Animal Identification and Traceability

By Sean McKenzie, National ID and Traceability Coordinator

As you are aware the Canadian National Goat Federation (CNGF) has been in the process of developing a program for mandatory identification of all goats across Canada. However, given the large scale of both the task and the country and the diversity that exists within the goat farming sector it has been a challenge to answer to and develop a program that will suit the majority of goat producers and production types. That said the CNGF has been working together with CFIA to develop a series of decision points that outline the basic function and design of the program.

Also as you are no doubt aware the establishment of regulation or amendments to existing legislation require significant time commitment in their own right. As such the CNGF has requested that CFIA initiate the necessary changes to the Health of Animals Act and Regulation to be inclusive of goats in the mandatory identification section. However, after much discussion and pressure from producers across the country CNGF has opted to initiate the basics of the identification program allowing those producers anxious to have access to 'official' tags and initiate animal identification on their farms to do so. Taking this initiative prior to the regulatory amendment will also create a transition period for goat producers, who before now have not been required to tag animals, nor record traceability information. By easing into the program we hope to foster an environment of collaboration between producers, the CNGF and government and in doing so create a better system overall.

After extensive discussion within the CNGF traceability working group and consultation with producers across Canada, the CNGF has established the main decision points for the National ID program for Goats.

The national database service provider will be the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA), who will collect and store all tag identification numbers, as well as producer information associated to those tags. Tag activation and retirement are two components that are still to be added over time, however for the initial voluntary phase and given that many abattoirs and auction facilities are not yet equipped to collect this information CNGF will not be requiring these components at this time.

Three types of animal identification tags have also been selected for use in goats. All tags will be supplied by the national distributor – Ketchum Manufacturing Inc. who will also be responsible for submitting the tag numbers, volume purchased and producer information to the database. The Ketchum Reyflex strip type tag, the Ketchum Reyflex RFID button tag and the Ketchum Sheep Panel tag have all been approved by the CNGF for use as official identifiers for goats in Canada. These will all be orange in colour as this has been previously approved by CFIA for use as the official colour for goat identification tags.

Once decisions have been made at the Industry Government Advisory Committee (IGAC) level between national industry organisations and provincial/federal governments the CNGF will be able to make further commitments as to the requirements of the program that will develop this national goat identification program into a more comprehensive traceability program. These would include tag activation, tag retirement and eventually animal movement. However at this time, the limitations of scale and limited resources mean that the goat industry must wait for other larger and the more established industry groups to move forward and lay the groundwork before we are able to make these commitments.



Briefing continued

For the voluntary animal identification plan, we have established the official tags available to producers, we have the pre-assigned number set from CFIA that will be used for our national goat tags, and the database provider and the tag manufacturer/distributor have both been chosen. Contracts with Ketchum Manufacturing Inc. have been drafted and are ready for review by CNGF and Ketchum. The agreement with CCIA to be the database administrator is pending as we are awaiting clarification of their fee schedule which was just recently re-done. Many components of the CNGF national goat identification and traceability program will also be released and/or added on as the overall national traceability system grows.

Should all these items flow through as expected the voluntary program will be available to producers in the next 6 to 12 months, and the mandatory animal ID would follow that according to the progress of CFIA on the regulatory changes.

Multiple births key to the national flock

Source: theland.farmonline.com.au

While the soaring price of sheepmeat is providing some relief for farmers ravaged by drought, experts warn the sheep industry may soon reach a point where it cannot maintain supplies - so they are attempting to boost the number of lambs born this year by focusing on ewe nutrition.

The Australian Financial Review reports that the downside of the unprecedented prices for mutton and lamb is that the high slaughter rates are rapidly depleting the national flock, jeopardising the industry's future and its ability to continue to supply key export markets.

The Sheepmeat Council of Australia is promoting strategies to lift reproduction and maintain the flock, including identifying the most fertile ewes for breeding.

"Instead of having one lamb per ewe, we want more sheep having twins," said executive director of the council, Ron Cullen. "So we're looking to put a bit more emphasis on the genetic side."

Low wool prices have triggered a switch from wool to meat production. The high mutton prices are accelerating this, with Merino ewes increasingly sent to the abattoir rather than being kept for wool and to breed prime lamb, in a trend that could jeopardise the entire sheep industry.



Summary of Final Report for the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program - Pilot Project

By Courtney Denard, National Scrapie Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), in consultation with industry, developed the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) for sheep and goat producers to minimize the risk of introducing scrapie into the national sheep flock and goat herd. The program was piloted for a period of five years to determine its feasibility at the farm level and establish a costing framework for nation-wide implementation on an on-going basis.

Between 2004 and 2009, the SFCP pilot project was made available to Canadian sheep and goat producers purebred or commercial. The SFCP pilot project allowed sheep producers to choose between three different pathways to manage the risk of scrapie on their individual farms, while one pathway was made available to goat producers. Pathway 1 was developed under OIE guidelines, meeting international trade regulations put forth by the OIE.

General requirements for the pilot project included: flock surveillance; working with an accredited CFIA veterinarian; and completing an annual inventory of all sheep and goats on the farm. Although not recognized by the OIE, Pathway 2 and Pathway 3 offered sheep producers the opportunity to use tissue biopsies and genotype testing, along with surveillance, to monitor scrapie on the farm. Following April 2007, producers wanting to import female sheep or goats (including embryos) from the United States (U.S.) were required to be enrolled on the SFCP- Pathway 1.

PRODUCER PARTICIPATION

In total, 57 sheep producers and 10 goat producers enrolled on the SFCP. These included producers from Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick.

PRODUCER INPUT AND COSTS

Over the course of the project, producers were surveyed annually on their cost of participation. 71 surveys were completed over the five years of the pilot project, tracking producers' contributions. Taking an average over the five years, producers spent approximately 2 hours per year completing application forms; 7 hours per year on record keeping; 3.5 hours handling animals during the annual vet inspection; and 2 hours assisting the vet during the annual inspection. Two people, on average, were required to complete the vet inspection. In total, producers spent an average of 14.5 hours per year working on all aspects of the program.

PRODUCER INPUT	
Avg. time spent completing application forms	2 hrs. / year
Avg. time spent on record keeping	7 hrs. / year
Avg. time spent handling animals for the vet inspection	3.5 hrs./ year
Avg. time spent assisting vet during inspection	2 hrs./ year
Avg. # of people required for annual vet inspection	2 people
Avg. time spent on all aspects of the project	14 hrs./ year

Allowing producers a rate of \$25/ hour for their time, each producer contributed \$362.50 annually to the program. The average vet fee paid out by producers on the program was \$252.34 per year. Therefore, one producer contributed a total of \$614.84 per year on the program including time and vet expenses.

[Continued on next page](#)



Scrapie Canada continued

PRODUCER COSTS	
Value of producer time spent on the program (\$25/ hour rate)	\$362.50/ year
Average vet fee paid out by producers	\$252.34/ year
TOTAL	\$614.84/ year

Extra expenses paid out by producers were listed (in order from highest to lowest):

1. the cost of extra ID
2. the cost of collecting and submitting obex samples
3. the cost of completing office work (ie: photocopying, paper, software, etc.)

Producers were asked to provide general comments on the program and the top two answers were (in order from highest to lowest):

1. make more subsidies available to producers on the program
2. maintain a high level of communication between producers and the industry (website, updates, etc.).
3. There was a tie for the third highest comment: 3a) do not require a cull to be submitted for testing if there are no natural deaths within a given year and 3b) staff is helpful and knowledgeable

COST TO THE INDUSTRY

In total, the five year pilot project cost \$295,026. Broken down by year, the cost was as follows: 2004-06* = \$78,209; 2006-07 = \$77,304; 2007-08 = \$67,178; and 2008-09 = \$72,335 with an annual average of \$73,757**.

TOTAL PROJECT COST	
2004-2006*	\$78,209
2006-2007	\$77,304
2007-2008	\$67,178
2008-2009	\$72,335
TOTAL	\$295,026

Of the \$295,026 total, industry contributed \$170,530- \$86,608 of this was in cash contributions and \$83,922 was in-kind, meaning time spent on the project on behalf of the industry. The remaining \$124,496 was a cash contribution made by Agriculture Canada.

BREAKDOWN OF PROJECT COST	
Agriculture Canada Cash	\$124,496
Industry Cash	\$86,608
Industry In-kind	\$83,922
TOTAL	\$295,026

*No funds were spent in the 2004-05 fiscal year.

**As no funds were spent in year one of the project, the average was taken by dividing the total spent by four years.



New Zealand Lamb Exports May Fall to 46-Year Low on Restocking

Source: Gavin Evans, www.bloomberg.com

Aug. 5 (Bloomberg) -- New Zealand farmers, the world's biggest sheep meat exporters, may trim lamb shipments to a 46-year low in the coming season to help rebuild flocks.

The export kill may fall about 2 percent to 21 million lambs in the year starting Oct. 1, the lowest since 1963, industry group Meat & Wool New Zealand said today. Total lamb numbers may rise about 2 percent to 27.8 million, reflecting improved breeding rates after drought in the nation's North Island last year, the group said in its annual stock survey.

New Zealand sheep numbers are at their lowest in 50 years after drought forced farmers to cull stock and speed a shift toward more profitable dairy production and cropping. Some farmers may hold back more lambs this season, if they can afford to do so, Meat & Wool Economic Service Executive Director Rob Davison said.

"It's all going to depend on farmers' ability to rebuild some of their sheep flock," he said in an interview from Wellington. "We expect there may be slightly higher retentions" this season, he said.

New Zealand dollar lamb prices are at their highest in at least 15 years after drought cut supply from the Pacific country and Australia, the second-largest exporter, and sheep numbers in Europe declined. The recovery in prices probably slowed the decline in exports this year as drought-affected farmers opted to delay restocking in favor of taking cash, Davison said.

Exports in the year ending Sept. 30 will probably fall to 21.6 million lambs. That's down 19 percent from the previous year, but higher than the 20.4 million Meat & Wool estimated in November. Sheep numbers fell 2.8 percent to an estimated 33.1 million as of June 30, led by a 5.9 percent decline on the North Island, Meat & Wool said today. Dairy conversions and three years of drought on the North Island's east coast were the principal causes, the group said.

Britain wants "radical rethink" on food production

Source: uk.reuters.com

Britain must find ways to grow more food while using less water, energy and fertilisers to help feed a growing world population and offset the effects of climate change on agriculture.

A senior minister said last year's sharp rise in the cost of food and oil and a severe drought in Australia showed the urgent need to develop a food security plan. "Last year the world had a wake-up call with the sudden oil and food price rises," Environment Secretary Hilary Benn said in a statement to launch a national debate on food security. "We need a radical rethink of how we produce and consume our food."

Food and agriculture rose to the top of the political agenda at the G8 meeting in Italy in July. Leaders of the world's richest countries pledged \$20 billion in farm aid to help poor countries feed themselves. A sudden rise in the price of staple foods like rice, maize and wheat in the first half of 2008 triggered riots and hoarding in some parts of the world. Scientists say global warming could lead to devastating droughts and crop failures.

Farmers will have to adopt new methods to grow bigger crops while being more careful with increasingly valuable commodities such as water and fuel for machinery and fertilisers, Benn said. "Globally we need to cut emissions and adapt to the changing climate that will alter what we can grow and where we can grow it," he said.

Global food production needs to rise by 70% by 2050 to meet the demands of a growing world population of 9 billion people, according to estimates from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation. Food production and consumption accounts for about 18% of Britain's greenhouse gas emissions, while generating 7% of its GDP on sales worth 172 billion pounds (\$286.7 billion) in 2007.

Britain, which imports 37% of its food, must find ways of cutting the amount of food that is wasted and making the food and drink sector more sustainable, Benn said. The government's consultation on how the sector should look in 2030 will examine the whole supply chain, from farming and distribution to retail and disposal. The findings will be published later this year at www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/security



Mary had a lot of lambs: Researchers identify way to accelerate sheep breeding

Source: Blaine Friedlander, www.eurekalert.org

Mary had a little lamb, but only once a year. However, Cornell Sheep Program researchers have discovered an unusual form of a gene that prompts ewes to breed out of season as well as conceive at younger ages and more frequently.

They conducted a simple genetic test to identify the presence of the unusual form of the gene, the so-called M allele that other researchers had suspected might be correlated with out-of-season fertility, in their test flock and then validated the gene's relationship with aseasonal breeding by observing that trait in the flock.

The finding, published in the August issue of the *Journal of Animal Science* (Vol. 87, No. 8), may be a boon for the sheep industry worldwide, especially when combined with the Sheep Program's STAR system – a method to manage ewes to lamb five times in three years rather than once a year. "The primary biological limit for sheep production worldwide is the seasonality of breeding, but the market for high-quality lamb is a 52-week thing," said Doug Hogue, professor emeritus of animal science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Although the presence of the M allele has been definitively correlated with the ability to breed out of season, the researchers caution that it may only be a marker for the gene actually responsible for the trait. "Breeding out of season is a complex trait," Mateescu said, "so there are a lot of genes controlling it." Mateescu observed the phenotype – the physical expression of the gene – in the researchers' flock during a postdoctoral fellowship at Cornell.

"In this case, we're talking about a receptor gene for melatonin," Thonney explained. Melatonin is a naturally produced hormone commonly found in many animals. The change in the DNA sequence of the M allele does not change the amino acid sequence of the protein.

This means that it may be an accurate indicator for the phenotype of breeding out of season, though it's uncertain whether the gene actually impacts how the sheep's body reacts to melatonin. And there may be a risk of losing the association over generations, the researchers said, as recombination could occur between the marker and the functional gene.

Thus, the researchers stress that it will be very important to validate the gene's ability to indicate for aseasonal breeding each time the allele is bred into a new sheep population. "I think it's very exciting ... we only have one gene, but it's definitely a tool that farmers can use," said Mateescu, who is now focusing on placing markers across the sheep's entire genome to more accurately determine which gene or genes directly affect the trait of aseasonal reproduction.

The allele is particularly useful for management under the STAR system, developed by Hogue and Cornell sheep farm manager Brian Magee in the early 1980s, which uses nutrition and conventional breeding techniques to reduce the time between heats. "If a ewe doesn't get pregnant when she is supposed to, instead of a year, it's only 73 days [using the STAR system] until she has another opportunity," Thonney said.

While the STAR system requires better nutrition and more farm labor to manage the lambing, each lambing event involves fewer ewes than traditional yearly lambing. The researchers hope that the discovery of the M allele may help the STAR system adapt to consistently high levels of production without any additional risk to flock health.

The study was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station and New York Agricultural Experiment Station.



Michigan lawmakers introduce animal care legislation

Source: By Jeannine Otto, jotto@agrinews-pubs.com

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan lawmakers have joined forces in a bipartisan effort to ensure that decisions on Michigan animal care are made by groups within Michigan.

“We are interested in keeping the decisions of how we do things in Michigan within the boundaries of Michigan,” said Tonia Ritter, manager of state governmental affairs for the Michigan Farm Bureau.

Ritter was referring to separate pieces of legislation, crafted by Republican and Democratic state lawmakers, that would create a set of animal care and food safety standards and an animal care advisory council to oversee and make recommendations to those standards.

The legislation, Michigan HB 5127-28 and Michigan Senate Bill 654-55, were crafted by Democratic Reps. Mike Simpson and Jeff Mayers and Republican Sens. Wayne Kuipers and Gerald Van Woerkom.

“Agriculture is one of the biggest industries in Michigan and the men and women employed by this industry deserve our support. These new standards will ensure that when people think of Michigan agriculture, they think of quality products,” said Simpson in a statement. “With the recent problems with food preparation in other areas of the country, Michigan consumers deserve to know that what’s on their plate is only of the best quality.”

Ritter said the identical pieces of legislation were crafted after months of meetings by working groups.

“A group of agricultural interests, not just the livestock industry, has been meeting and discussing issues of animal care to think about what we could do to provide consumers more confidence in what good animal care is going on in livestock farms in Michigan,” Ritter said.

The legislation would establish a nine-member Animal Care Advisory Council. The bills would also make the state Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Commission the sole authority in the regulation of livestock health and welfare and would put in place science-based standards for animal care that farmers would be expected to implement by 2020.

“We view the bills as a comprehensive approach to animal care. We tried to look at a system that was based on science for advancing changes. We also recognize food safety and recognize that you need to be reasonable from an economic standpoint and to look at those kinds of things from a science perspective,” Ritter said.

The legislation would create an advisory council that would bring together perspectives from farm and veterinary science and consumers.

“We have a consumer perspective which will provide that checkpoint on what are consumers interested in? What do they need? What demands do they have regarding more knowledge about the food they eat and the food that they purchase?” Ritter said, adding that the Michigan Humane Society would have representation on the advisory council.

“One of the individuals that is on the council is Michigan Humane Society. As an organization, we probably don’t see eye to eye with them but we felt they could provide that in-state perspective.”

Ritter said that an increasing number of animal care-related actions was one reason for the working groups and the introduction of the legislation.

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Animal Care Legislation continued

The Humane Society of the U.S. has put pressure on other states to adopt animal welfare legislation but Ritter said the out-of-state HSUS was not a factor in the Michigan legislation.

“There wasn’t any direct pressure that we can necessarily pinpoint. As an industry, we have recognized in the legislative realm more and more activity and interest in animal care issues, even from the pet perspective. We knew there were groups out there like HSUS that do have plans for how they would like things to be in agriculture,” Ritter said.

Talks continue on the legislation.

“The House bills have had the most attention. We expect that we’ll probably get back to further discussion relatively soon. I think it’s difficult legislation to vote against. We recognize that there are some folks who have some concerns about some things that are in the legislation and we’re working to address that. I think we’re optimistic, we’re talking about providing a more clear and better framework for animal care in Michigan,” Ritter said.

Ritter pointed out that agriculture has been a positive light among the dismal economic news in the state, particularly with the downturn of the state’s automotive industry.

“If you read the headlines, you know we’re struggling from an economic perspective. Ag has been more of an economic mainstay in Michigan over the course of the last seven to eight years. That’s the other reason we feel it’s important we have support for this legislation to succeed,” Ritter said.

She said that the state’s agriculture industry contributes \$71.3 billion in economic activity annually, according to statistics from Michigan State University.

Shepherd’s Journal sold to Sheep Canada magazine

The Shepherd’s Journal has been sold to Sheep Canada magazine. Publication of The Shepherd’s Journal, which ended in December of 2008, will not be resumed, but individuals with outstanding subscriptions will receive one future issue of Sheep Canada for every issue of The Shepherd’s Journal that they are owed.

The transfer of the mailing list from The Shepherd’s Journal is underway, and subscribers will receive their first issue of Sheep Canada magazine (the Fall 2009 issue) in September. Subscribers to The Shepherd’s Journal who already receive Sheep Canada magazine will have their subscriptions extended by the appropriate number of issues.

Sheep Canada is a quarterly magazine for Canadian sheep farmers, which was started in 1976 and has been published by Dr. Cathy Gallivan since the year 2000. For more information, or to subscribe or advertise in Sheep Canada magazine, please see their website at www.sheepcanada.com or call (toll-free) at 1-888-241-5124.

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