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# From the flock

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CANADIAN SHEEP INDUSTRY

## Russian market opens for Canadian small ruminant genetics

By Jennifer MacTavish, CSF Executive Director



October 13, 2009 – Guelph, ON – The Canadian small ruminant industry applauds today’s announcement from the Government of Canada indicating that the industry now has access to the Russian market. The reaching of an agreement on the export certificate for live sheep and goats into Russia is a clear indication of the growing demand for Canadian small ruminant genetics on the international stage.

"Russia has committed to doubling its small ruminant production, and has identified Canadian genetics as an integral part of this expansion," says Brian Atkinson of the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association.

"Recognizing the quality of Canadian small ruminant genetics and Canadian breeding stock will be used as the base from which the Russian industry can expand," Atkinson explains.

Over the next three years it is anticipated that the Russian market could be worth over \$8 million for the Canadian small ruminant industry.

"For almost two years, the Canadian Livestock Genetics Association (CLGA) has been working with the Government of Canada and industry representatives in Russia to reach an agreement on the animal health conditions that would allow Canadian small ruminant genetics access to the Russian market," explains Rick McDonald with the CLGA. McDonald goes on to say that "CLGA members have established strong relationships with counterparts in Russia and are very pleased to know that trade can now get underway.

Russia has been and remains a key market in our Small Ruminant Marketing Strategy and we appreciate the assistance received via the CAFI and now AMP programs of AAFC.



## Russian Market continued

We are confident that Canadian sheep and goat genetics and know-how will contribute positively to the advancement of the sector in Russia. Our thanks are extended to all for their perseverance and commitment and we wish the Canadian and Russian partners every success.”

The 2003 border closure due to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy marked not only an inability to access lucrative United States and Mexican markets, but also the beginning of shrinkage in the Canadian ewe flock population. “Not only does this announcement demonstrate Minister Ritz’s commitment to trade and the industry, it indicates that the industry is able to diversify its markets,” says Dwane Morvik, Chairman of the Canadian Sheep Federation, “but it could also be the incentive needed for the Canadian industry to start to rebuild its ewe flock.”

The Canadian Sheep Federation is a national, non-profit organization that represents all Canadian sheep producers. Its mission is to 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 [cansheep@cansheep.ca](mailto:cansheep@cansheep.ca)

## McGuinty Government Protecting Animal and Human Health

Source: [www.news.ontario.ca/omafra](http://www.news.ontario.ca/omafra)

Ontario is moving to protect animal and human health, and the economic viability of the livestock and poultry sector, by reducing the impact of animal diseases.

The proposed Animal Health Act, 2009 was introduced in the Ontario legislature today. The legislation, if passed, would:

- Provide measures to assist in the prevention, detection, response to and control of animal diseases and other hazards to protect the livestock and poultry sector
- Require the reporting of specific animal diseases to the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario
- Enable the use of quarantine orders, surveillance zones and animal health control area orders to help control the spread of any detected disease or hazard
- Support a future traceability framework for the quick identification and control of disease and food safety hazards.

### QUICK FACTS

- Ontario's livestock and poultry sectors generate more than \$4.45 billion in cash receipts each year.
- Ontario is home to Canada's largest poultry industry, second largest swine and dairy industries and third largest beef industry.



# PEI Lambs Thrive on Slatted Floors

By David MacKay, Technician at the Atlantic Veterinary College

*This article first appeared in the Fall 2009 issue of Sheep Canada magazine. To subscribe to Sheep Canada magazine, call 1-888-241-5124 or visit the website at [www.sheepcanada.com](http://www.sheepcanada.com).*

The sheep industry in Prince Edward Island is relatively small, but a recent research study by Atlantic Veterinary College technician Lloyd Dalziel may provide new opportunities for its expansion. The project, titled "Evaluation of Slatted Floor Systems in Sheep Production Research", found no difference in weight gained by lambs raised on slatted floors versus a straw pack. Dalziel says the positive result comes at a time when Maritime lamb is experiencing modest growth, fueled both by increased demand from ethnic markets and a rising desire by consumers to purchase local and Atlantic region food products.

## PROJECT DESIGN

The project was carried out in an unused Prince Edward Island hog barn that has slatted floors. Four pens were used: two with completely slatted floors, and two with the floors covered with plywood and bedded with straw (the control group). Each pen housed 15 lambs, with lambs entering the trial at 50 to 60 pounds. The lambs were fed until reaching market weight of 100-110 pounds. Several parameters were used to evaluate the effectiveness of using slatted floors compared to a conventional straw pack (see below). Overall health condition was assessed on a weekly basis. At the end of the project the underfloor manure system was flushed to determine its adaptability to the removal of sheep manure.

### PARAMETERS:

- **Cleanliness:** Lambs were assigned a cleanliness score upon entering the trial, and every week thereafter until shipped to market.
- **Parasite load:** Lambs were wormed with an anthelmintic, and fecal samples taken from each at the start of the trial. Fecal samples were submitted for coccidia every week during the course of the trial.
- **Weight gain:** Lambs were weighed at the beginning of the trial and every week thereafter.
- **Carcass evaluation:** Lambs were evaluated at the slaughter plant to compare treatment versus control groups.
- **Feed conversion:** Grain ration and forages were weighed into each pen so that feed efficiency and cost per pound of gain could be calculated.
- **Labour requirement:** The labour required for the care and management of each pen, including manure removal, was recorded.



*(Photo from left to right)* Claude Gallant, President of the Prince Edward Island Sheep Breeders, Allister Veinot, Sheep Producer from Avondale, Prince Edward Island, and Lloyd Dalziel, Project Co-ordinator

Photo was taken at an open house in June 2009 where there was a great turnout of both sheep producers and hog farmers who are looking at alternative uses for their barns. The trial evaluated average daily gains, cleanliness, as well as health issues.



## Lamb Study continued

### RESULTS

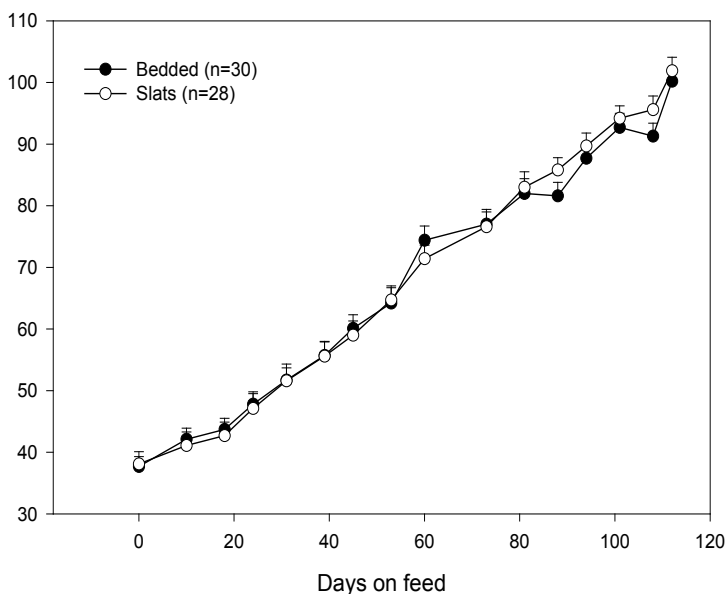
**Weight:** There was no significant difference between the days to market or weight gained by lambs raised on slatted floors compared to those kept on the straw pack. Lambs raised on slatted floors actually grew 7% faster in the second half of the growing period than lambs raised on conventional floors.

**Cleanliness:** A cleanliness score was developed and ratings were given as lambs were being weighed. Shortly after the lambs entered the trial there was an increase in coccidia in all lambs, which caused an increase in soiling by manure. The lambs were treated for five days and the coccidia problem quickly resolved. The lambs became progressively cleaner over the following weeks, and there was no significant difference in cleanliness between lambs raised on the slatted floors versus the straw pack.

**Manure Handling:** Another objective of the trial was to determine how effectively the manure pit could be cleaned out. The composition/moisture content of swine manure is different than sheep manure. However, it was found that the water used to clean the alleyways and equipment was sufficient to maintain the effectiveness of the manure pit. This course of action to get manure to flow in a slatted floor system is not uncommon in hog facilities, particularly when certain types of grains (such as 6 row barleys) are fed. When the lambs were gone and the plugs were pulled to allow the manure to exit, no problems were encountered.

**Production Cost Efficiencies:** Production of lambs on slatted floors cost \$5.33 per lamb less than production of lambs on straw pack. This difference resulted mostly from the saving of \$4.00 per head in labour, as removing hard packed straw manure took considerably more time than pressure-washing slatted floors.

Liveweight of Weaned Lambs  
Grown on Bedding or Slats



Project co-ordinator, Lloyd Dalziel says the research project indicates that unused pork production infrastructure can easily be adapted to sheep production and, as a result, there are benefits to former hog farmers as well as sheep producers.

“Not only will these facilities receive a second life, they will offer the owners an opportunity to diversify or receive rental income from producers wishing to enter the sheep industry.”

He added that the benefits to the sheep industry are many. “The increased pressure from predators, the cost of acquiring additional land for pasture and the capital costs for building predator-resistant fencing are making the housing of sheep increasingly attractive.”

Dalziel says that, with an entire flock indoors on slatted floors, sheep can be managed efficiently and intensively, using current technologies and thus getting the highest production possible.



## Food Safety – Where do we go from here!

By Barbara Caswell

I'm very excited to be joining the team at the Canadian Sheep Federation. With a Bachelors degree in Animal Biology and a Masters degree in Animal Science, both from the University of Guelph in Ontario, my first venture into the area of food safety was with a national poultry organization. I have to say, I found on-farm food safety an exciting position that allowed me to meld my scientific degrees with my long time love of farming. Although never raised on a farm, I carry strong roots to agriculture from an upbringing in a rural community in central Ontario.

While working with sheep will be a new experience for me, it is one I am looking forward to. The CSF's on-farm food safety program has come a long way since it's inception in 1997, and I think there is a very exciting future in store! The program was developed jointly by producers, veterinarians, and industry and government representatives from all across the country. These individuals were brought together on a Technical Committee to create the Food Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) program, an on-farm food safety program for Canadian sheep and lamb producers. Thanks to the guidance of producer input, the Technical Committee has currently undertaken to make the program more 'producer-friendly'. The most important component in making an on-farm food safety program work is you, the producer.

So many of you know where we have come from, but a better question may be where we need to go, a question I am hoping to answer in writing this article. Although the outlook may change as I spend more time in my new position and, hopefully, get the benefit of conversing with as many of you as possible, the ultimate goal is to get the program out to producers in a form they can easily work with.

The Food Safe Farm Practices program consists of a producer manual of good production practices (GPPs), as well as forms to record those practices and assess the effectiveness of the program. There are additional sections for those producing milk, as well. Therefore, although currently voluntary, the program can be easily adapted to any Canadian sheep and lamb operations.

The program is based on the internationally recognized principles of HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points. The principles require you to analyze an operation for any physical, chemical or biological hazards - in this case, hazards applicable to food safety. Without getting into too much detail on HACCP - better left for another discussion - one must then determine the places within managing the operation where those hazards can be prevented, eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels. The good news – all of this work has been done for you! In developing the Farm Safe Food Practices Program, the Technical Committee had to first develop an applicable generic HACCP plan for sheep and lamb operations, upon which they could base the program. Both the HACCP plan and the Farm Safe Food Practices program received technical recognition from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). This outside review by CFIA helps ensure the program is technically sound and does, indeed, serve the purpose of controlling food safety hazards on-farm.

In reviewing and improving the program, the Canadian Sheep Federation is required to submit all changes, both to the program and to our HACCP plan, back to CFIA to again achieve technical recognition.

**Continued on next page**



## Food Safety continued

The Technical Committee is currently at the stage of making the necessary changes to the HACCP plan, which will then flow through to changes in the producer manual. This is a step by step process, in which we hope to produce an updated version of the producer manual, with increased ease of implementation on-farm and broader acceptance of the program by industry.

Once technical recognition is achieved on the HACCP plan and producer manuals, the next step is to apply to CFIA for the next stage in the technical review process – review of the program’s management system. Management of the program encompasses all of the processes outside of the producer manual, such as the certification process and ways to ensure that sufficient people are available to provide producer training and auditing for the program.

It is with certainty that I can say you will see some great changes in the program over the next year and I look forward to bringing those to you! If you have any questions or comments on the Food Safe Farm Practices program, please do not hesitate to contact me at [barbara@cansheep.ca](mailto:barbara@cansheep.ca). Here’s to an exciting year in food safety.

## Farming news: Industry must work together to revitalise sheep sector

Source: [www.thisisthewestcountry.co.uk](http://www.thisisthewestcountry.co.uk)

The sheep sector must work together internationally to tackle the challenges it faces and to ensure a profitable and sustainable long-term future, according to NFU livestock board chairman Alistair Mackintosh.

Mr Mackintosh was speaking after attending the International Sheepmeat Forum in Brussels where he spoke to delegates from around the world about the challenges the sector was facing and the action needed to tackle them.

He said: “The Forum discussed ways the sector could work together to deal with worldwide challenges facing the sheep industry, such as stimulating consumption and reversing the decline in the European production base, as well as issues such as the sector’s impact on climate change.

“Greater international co-operation will help secure a profitable and sustainable future for the sector. Issues such as the challenges posed by climate change, the need to reduce unnecessary regulation, and promoting the nutritional benefits of lamb are issues that the whole industry can look at in a co-ordinated way on a global level.”

Mr Mackintosh said that while consumption in some EU countries had shown a significant decline in recent years consumption in the UK remained strong and he was optimistic for the sector’s future.

“I believe the UK produces a quality produce and is well placed to successfully meet any future increase in demand both domestically and on an EU level,” he said.



# National RFID Project and the Alberta Lamb Traceability Project

By Sean McKenzie – National ID and Traceability Coordinator

The Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) recently initiated the National Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Pilot Project. This project has been designed to help determine the ability of RFID systems in meeting government traceability standards as well as to determine the return on investment to the producer when RFID systems are incorporated into sheep production systems.

Building on the Alberta Lamb Traceability Project (LTP) the goal is to determine what the true costs of RFID are on Canadian sheep production. The Alberta project, now entering year three, has provided some excellent insight and information. To allow the CSF to effectively represent all producers, a national project was called for.

The management teams from CSF and the Alberta will be working closely together to develop better information, to create a larger and more extensive dataset that will provide a more complete and accurate picture of the costs associated with RFID when applied to sheep production. Being national in scope this will allow for exposure of RFID technology to a greater range of producers, develop skills and experience and will allow the CSF to draw information from a wider range of production types and methods.

Participating producers for the national project will be selected from BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and the Maritimes. By offering the project in provinces outside of Alberta and Quebec, the CSF will be maximising the available funding and will avoid duplication of effort and information. Quebec has not been included in the project as RFID tagging is already mandatory in this province and so Quebec producers are already familiar with this technology. This project is intended as much to investigate the cost associated with RFID as it is to expose producers to the technology,

provide information and an opportunity to see and use the equipment on farm and in real life applications.

These projects will analyse costs of production for sheep producers prior to implementation of RFID technology, then re-evaluate following the introduction of RFID systems to determine the impact of making these changes. The aggregate information will then be used by the CSF to demonstrate to the federal and provincial governments what is truly being asked of sheep producers as governments discuss mandatory traceability for livestock. Currently, there is little concrete evidence available to make these arguments either way and so completion of both the Alberta Lamb Traceability Pilot Project and the CSF Pilot Project will provide important lobbying tools to the CSF and provincial sheep organisations going forward.

Improving the capacity for accurate health records, reducing labour requirements and lower costs of production are benefits that this project hopes to bring to producers. Creating a stronger and less fragmented industry nationally is a benefit that can be realised then by the whole industry. These projects will bring producers together to learn and experience RFID technology and see firsthand how it may be used to improve both our quality and consistency of product while reducing overall costs for production. This joint effort between the province of Alberta and the Canadian Sheep Federation to raise awareness within government of the challenges of sheep production, while also providing producers the opportunity to learn and experience new technology shows a growing effort across the country of a young industry that is looking for new ways to draw market attention, increase overall production, and generally mature into a stronger industry that is capable of ongoing long term success and growth.



# Scrapie Canada Update

By Courtney Denard, National Scrapie Coordinator

At a recent Canada- U.S. Consultative Committee on Agriculture meeting, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) stated that it may publish its comprehensive bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) rule (that would likely include the BSE provisions for small ruminants) as early as fall 2009. At the same time, the USDA announced that it will assess the scrapie controls in Canada and go through a separate rule-making process before trade in the full range of small ruminants and related products can be re-established.

Although Canada still does not yet have a definitive timeline for the full access of Canadian small ruminants into the U.S. market, the U.S. government does seem to be prepared to engage in the review necessary to open its border to sheep and goats sooner than previously thought.

This means Canada is going to have to make a decision about the future of its scrapie eradication plan sooner rather than later. There is a lot to consider and all players in the Canadian sheep and goat industries will be impacted.

Producer cooperation and involvement is vital if Canada wishes to fully achieve scrapie eradication. One of the biggest steps producers would be responsible for is monitoring for the disease. This means completing brain testing on any on-farm deads over one year of age. While discovering scrapie in a flock or herd is never a welcome experience for producers, monitoring for the disease is nonetheless a key component to moving national eradication forward.

Commitment from producers is also needed to ensure that they can recognize the clinical signs of scrapie. This means becoming educated on the disease enough so to notice it in your flock or herd. Producers can find out more information on scrapie by talking to their veterinarian,

contacting Scrapie Canada or reading about it online at [www.scrapiecanada.ca](http://www.scrapiecanada.ca). The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) website also has a lot of valuable information on scrapie. This information is posted at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anim/hasan/disemala/scrtree/scrtree.shtml>.

Scrapie is a very serious disease that can be in a flock or herd for a long, long time before it is recognized. To advance national eradication, it is critical that producers commit to reporting any and all suspected cases of scrapie on their farm to the CFIA as soon as they are recognized .

An open dialogue between producers and industry is another important component to achieving national scrapie eradication in Canada. Producers should communicate with their provincial and national sheep and goat associations, staying up to date on all matters related to eradication. Producers can also contact Scrapie Canada by phone or e-mail with questions or concerns. Scrapie Canada posts monthly updates on its website at the following link: <http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/whatsnew.html> and many of the provincial associations have information related to scrapie on their websites as well.

Canadian sheep and goat producers' role in full eradication is crucial and irreplaceable. Producers are the most important defense against scrapie because they see the disease first on the farm and have the opportunity to stop it before it goes any further. Producers will need to consider whether or not they are willing to offer their time and efforts to a national scrapie eradication plan because without their involvement, any plan that is developed will be unsuccessful. It is only by working together that full scrapie eradication will be achieved.





# Why Food Matters

Source: [www.calgaryherald.com](http://www.calgaryherald.com)

Food. It's one of just three basic human needs, yet we're spending a smaller and smaller portion of our income on what we eat.

Forty years ago, Americans spent 18 per cent of their income on food and only five to six per cent of their income on health care, according to David Suzuki's Green Guide (Greystone Books, \$19.95). Now Americans spend nine per cent of their income on food (the lowest proportion in the world) and 16 to 18 per cent of their income on health care. Canadian stats portray a similar trend in food spending.

It's with that in mind that we at The Green Guide find arguments against the sustainable food movement hard to swallow. And we're not the only ones.

In recent years, Michael Pollan has become a household name with his bestselling books *In Defense of Food* (Penguin, \$18.50) and *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Penguin, \$20). In the past few months, the documentary *Food Inc.* has revolutionized the way North Americans view their food and the term "localwashing" -- used when a company tries to make their product look local when it's not -- has popped into our dialect. All you need to do is visit a local farmers' market or catch a glimpse of Calgary's burgeoning Slow Food scene to know the local food movement in our city is alive and well.

Still, some people question the merit of paying more for food just because it's produced close to home or without the use of chemicals, antibiotics and hormones. Here, we address some common questions surrounding sustainable food.

**What qualifies as sustainable food?** Food choices are not black and white. Organic isn't always better. Local isn't always better. "More than anything, it's about starting to pay attention," says Josh Laughren, director of communications at WWF Canada.

The environmental non-profit is launching a nationwide campaign today, called Localicious, which provides Canadians with tools, such as local buying guides, to make more informed choices.

"It's complicated," Laughren says. "People want simple, quick information. We've tried to resist that request for clearcut information."

Instead, WWF is suggesting consumers inform themselves as to what choices are available and to make the choices that work sense for them. Wade Sirois, a local food proponent and owner of Infuse Catering and Forage: Farm to Fork Foods to Go, has a guideline that works for him: "Buy food you know from people you know."

Of course, that's not always possible when you live in a place like Alberta, but if you choose foods produced in a sustainable way close to home when you can, you're on the right track. Why should I care where my food comes from? "There are lots of negative things that should drive you to eat locally, but there are lots of positive things, too," says Sirois.

A lot of top restaurants use local food these days--and it's not because it's in vogue. It's because fresh, local food tends to taste better. Aside from providing quality, local agriculture preserves important farmland, keeps money in the community--and generally greatly reduces the greenhouse gas emissions related to food production and transportation.

**Why does local food cost more?** "We are not fully understanding our food systems," Sirois says. To produce large quantities of food cheaply, companies look for economies of scale, using chemicals to control weeds and pests instead of more labour- and space-intensive organic options and often packing animals into very crowded spaces.



## Why Food Matters continued

The cost of this cheap food trickles down in many ways, including food safety issues (14 Americans die every day as a result of food-borne illness); increased use of antibiotics (more than half of all antibiotics used in North America are fed to livestock and 90 per cent are administered to make animals grow faster, not to treat infections); and water pollution (The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates agriculture is responsible for 70 per cent of the country's water pollution).

"These things have to be important to you in order to get past the price you pay," Sirois says. "We seem to have no problem paying \$50 for Internet each month and \$80, \$90, \$100 for a cellphone each month, so why do we want to pay the least possible for food?"

Indeed, when you head out shopping for clothes, do you look for the cheapest possible jeans? "We can't seem to make the connection on a broad scale between food and health. Yes, we eat cheaply and poorly, but it adds to this incredible health expenditure on the other end," Sirois says.

All the while, 38 per cent of food for retail sale in Canada is wasted, according to a Statistics Canada report released in June. "When we look at the cultures that value food the most, they come from a history of scarcity," Sirois says. "It's maybe our abundance that is to blame."

**Why is making sustainable food choices my responsibility?** "Everyone eats. Food is the one thing that is applicable to everyone," Laughren says, explaining why WWF decided to venture into the food arena.

"If we're going to solve our sustainability issues, there's no question we need government to lead and we need business to take leadership, but

none of that can happen if consumers don't make these choices as well," Laughren says. "When people lead, leaders follow."

**We outsource our cars, electronics and call centres. Why not outsource food?** "It comes down to security. Are you willing to rely on someone else to feed you? The second you control the food of a population, you control the population," Sirois says. And right now, governments and companies largely have control of our food systems. Choosing small, local producers enables us to wrest back some of that control, Sirois says. "I don't think we'll ever reach the day when we'll feed ourselves (entirely) locally, but I think it's important to increase that percentage," he adds.

**Why shop at a farmers' market when I can get the same products elsewhere for less?** Sure, some farmers' markets allow vendors to carry food from elsewhere -- which speaks to the importance of diligent label-reading no matter where you are -- but there are plenty of local products at farmers' markets that aren't available elsewhere.

**Is all Alberta beef the same?** "The cow has to live three months in Alberta to be called Alberta beef," Sirois says. "Usually that time is spent in a feedlot. What goes into that animal? How was it raised? And what do we get out of these animals?" Industrial agriculture works on a pretty simple premise, Sirois says. "(They) try to get as much fat on a cow in a short amount of time and keep the cow alive at the same time." That can be achieved by feeding cattle corn, linked to a particularly dangerous strain of E. coli.

Alternatively, choose beef that is hormone and antibiotic-free, range-fed and not finished on corn. Get it directly from local producers, at health food stores, farmers' markets and push for it at your local supermarket.



## Australia shows how to keep tabs on cattle with 15 staff and tiny budget

Source: [Press and Journal](#)

Australia threw down the gauntlet to the UK Government yesterday as it revealed its cattle tracing system employed just 15 staff and cost £1.6million a year to operate. David Palmer, the chief executive of Meat and Livestock Australia, said the system was efficient and based wholly on electronic tags (EID) with farmers using computers to send in movements and births involving the country's 28 million-strong cattle herd.

Australia's database has since its inception recorded the details of some 60 million animals. By contrast, Britain's traceability system remains largely paper-based and employs hundreds of civil servants at the Workington-based British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS).

The Rural Payments Agency, which is responsible for it, was unable to provide details last night on the annual costs nor employee numbers at BCMS over which farmers have long complained because of the bureaucracy that surrounds it. Industry, however, estimates the costs of the service to be about £50 million a year for a herd one-fifth of size of that in Australia.

Mr Palmer, on a visit to the Perth Bull Sales at Stirling, said the Australian system could within 30 minutes provide full traceability details on any animal recorded on it. Britain's can take days.

Australia introduced the system in 1997 because of a European demand if it wanted to continue exporting. Although there was initial resistance, it is now seen as giving producers an advantage. It is funded through the £2.82-a-head levy that farmers pay on their cattle.

Mr Palmer said Australia had no desire to sell the system, but saw benefits from working with other large cattle-producing nations such as America to cut operating costs further still. He also saw considerable potential in adding the country's 73 million sheep on to it, although conceded tags were, perhaps, too expensive to justify it at the moment.

British sheep farmers remain up in arms at European Union demands to impose electronic identification on the sheep flock, in stages, from January. Mr Palmer added: "We see the system as a platform for herd improvement and herd management, the likes of which we have never seen before. EID is a platform for the recording of performance traits and in which we can link live animals to carcasses. The benefits on-farm are fantastic. This was a system driven by market access and the need to have information if there were ever a calamity that meant us having to trace animals and beef quickly. It is, however, delivering real long-term benefits.

"Australia's beef industry is critically dependent on exports. We are reluctant to share the benefits for the very important reason that we want to make this regime work 120% for us first."

Quality Meat Scotland chief executive 'Uel Morton acknowledged the benefits of Australia's cheaper traceability system, but said the priority here remained in cutting the costs of BSE controls that industry remained shackled with 13 years from the height of the crisis. Australia has also pioneered a grading system that guarantees meat eating quality, while Europe is focused on a regime that rewards producers instead on beef yield.

Australia exports 68% of its beef production to 106 countries. The biggest market is Japan at 350,000 tonnes a year, followed by the US at 320,000 tonnes, mostly for burgers, and then South Korea at 110,000 tonnes. Indonesia is also an important market for live exports, bringing in 650,000 head, as well as 35,000 tonnes of frozen beef.

Lamb and mutton are important too to a country where the sheep flock is about 73 million animals. Exports to America are worth £169 million annually, with the Middle East also vital.



## Controlling Killer Coyotes

Source: [www.mysask.com](http://www.mysask.com)

Martin Catto has lost about 150 sheep this year due to coyote attacks. In total, about \$30 000.

**MARTIN CATTO/Farmer**

"It hits hard. I mean, we're at the point where we're just considering whether we stay in the business, or whether we get out." It's not just sheep on the coyotes' menu. Down the road, neighbour Duane Thompson has lost eight calves this year to the hungry predators.

**DUANE THOMPSON/Farmer**

"The adult coyotes muzzle the calf, and the baby coyotes eat their bellies out." Catto and Thompson have tried everything they can think of to save their livestock.

**MARTIN CATTO/Farmer**

"From electric fences, guardian dogs..."

**DUANE THOMPSON/Farmer**

"We compost our dead, and we try to bury things so we're not feeding them and promoting the problem."

**RYAN PILON/CTV News**

"The province even has a program where ranchers can request hunters and trappers to come out to their property to hunt coyotes. The government also gave an additional \$100 000 to help fight predators."

**BOB BJORNERUD/Saskatchewan Ag. Minister**

"We're trying to work with them, and find ways to either cut the number of coyotes down out there or deal with the problem right on the farm." It's on the farm where Catto and Thompson would prefer to deal with the problem themselves.

**MARTIN CATTO/Farmer**

"All we want to do is eliminate the ones that are giving us trouble."

**DUANE THOMPSON/Farmer**

"I think we do have to depopulate the coyote population."

Catto and Thompson say by law they are not allowed to hunt coyotes at night when they are most active, or lay down poison. The only other solution they say is for the government to compensate them for every animal they lose. Otherwise, they won't have any animals left.

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