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# From the flock

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CANADIAN SHEEP INDUSTRY

## Annual General Meeting in Review

By Jennifer Fleming, Executive Director

Last week the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Victoria, British Columbia. The Agenda was aggressive with three and a half days geared to providing attendees with as much information as possible on some of the issues that are impacting the Canadian industry; most notably animal identification and traceability and marketing.

Guest speakers representing the American, Australian and British sheep industries came in to discuss their experiences with animal identification and traceability, as well as what they are doing to meet consumer demand. Additionally, speakers from Ipsos Reid, Sunterra Meat Packers and AgraPoint International spoke to the group on what consumers are looking for in lamb, how producers can best meet their customer's needs and grading lamb.

Another highlight from the AGM was the launch of the sheep industry's latest website:

[www.freshcanadianlamb.ca](http://www.freshcanadianlamb.ca)

This website is where people can go for a wealth of information on how to prepare and market lamb. There is also an industry information and resources section which includes fact sheets and handling and safety information.

We also spent a lot of time at the AGM discussing how over the past year the CSF Board of Directors has been working diligently to develop a Business Plan for the organization that ensures that the priorities have been set to move the entire industry forward.

This plan – developed in consultation with those who have a vested interest in the industry – was officially accepted by the Board in Victoria.

Consisting of seven Key Result Areas (KRA) the plan also includes the CSF's mission statement, core competency and values. The KRAs are viewed as the priorities for the industry for the coming year and include communications, business development, financial management, information management, human resource management, education and training and governance. To see the plan in its entirety please visit [www.cansheep.ca](http://www.cansheep.ca). This plan will be continually evolving and an annual planning cycle is in place to ensure that it (the plan) consistently meets the needs of the industry.

Next year's AGM has been set for Moncton New Brunswick.

In closing, CSF would like express its gratitude to the British Columbia Investment Agriculture Foundation and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands for their financial support. We would also like to thank the British Columbia Sheep Federation for helping to organize the AGM.

*P.S. Keep an eye on your inboxes – in early December, the CSF will be circulating a special edition of Points of View which will be geared at providing an overview of the AGM and synopses of all the guest speaker presentations.*



## From the Chair

### Henning Headed for Third Term as Chair of Canadian Sheep Federation

November 21, 2007 – Guelph, ON

Florence Henning, a sheep producer from Rochfort Bridge Alberta, was re-acclaimed Chair of the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) for a third term at its Annual General Meeting in Victoria British Columbia last week.

The successes that the sheep industry has had over the past few years under Henning's leadership made her the obvious choice for Chair. Her hard work, focus and determination to push the organization and industry forward have made her an incredible asset to the sheep industry. Since Henning took the helm in 2005, the CSF has forged stronger working relationships with other national and international organizations and has been successful in implementing its Other Ruminant Market Development project.

Henning, along with her husband and four children, moved to Alberta in 1987 from Northern Ireland, and currently operate a flock of 450 commercial ewes. Henning has been a dynamic member of the sheep industry for many years; she has been a member of North West Sheep Producers and has represented zone 5 on the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission. Presently Henning is involved with the flock health, Canadian Sheep Identification Program, traceability, and Growing Alberta committees.

"It is a privilege to have been re-elected chair of the CSF," says Henning adding that, "This coming year will be an exciting one as the Federation moves forward with its Canadian Sheep Identification Program and implements its Business Strategy."

Dwane Morvik was acclaimed as Vice-Chair. Morvik and his wife Jaime run a 350 head commercial Targee sheep flow and 25 head of Angus cattle in Eastend Saskatchewan. Dwane has been a member of both the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board and the CSF Board for the past three years.

Rounding out the CSF's Executive Committee are Andre Trepanier of Ste. Sabine, Quebec and Beth Barczyk of Sacville, New Brunswick. Trepanier has been a member of the CSF's board for the past seven years, and has also been on the executive of the Fédération des producteurs d'agneaux et moutons du Québec for a number of years.

Barczyk, along with her husband Arnd and three children, run a 320 commercial ewe flock and 90 acres of wild blueberry fields. She has Chaired the New Brunswick Sheep Breeders Association for the past three years and was recently named South Eastern New Brunswick Farmer of the Year by the Chignecto Soils and Crops Committee.

The Canadian Sheep Federation is a national, non-profit organization that represents all Canadian sheep producers. Its mission is further the viability, expansion and prosperity of the Canadian sheep and wool industry.

For more information contact the Canadian Sheep Federation at 1-888-684-7739 or [admin@cansheep.ca](mailto:admin@cansheep.ca)

### CSF Chair Comments

Before I became a Director with the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, and now with the Canadian Sheep Federation, I was not overly concerned about what happened beyond the point of my farm gate. We lambed, we weaned and we fed to slaughter and as long as costs were covered, and some profit was made along the way, life was good.

Now my vision expands far beyond our farm, our province and even our nation. I now see an industry with enormous potential, committed to growth and continued excellence.

Representing the needs of producers both provincially and nationally has its challenges, but these challenges have been addressed competently by your Boards. Your boards have also embraced opportunities, consistently focusing on furthering the viability and expansion of our industry.

Volunteer time given to the industry on lobbying can be long and sometimes frustrating, especially at the national level. We are a "small," though important, part of Canadian agriculture. Through constant lobbying our efforts are now being recognized. We have been asked for input at the national level in regards to traceability, scrapie eradication, business risk management, West Hawk Lake, Emergency Management and the National Farm Animal Health Strategy.



## From the Chair

### CSF Chair Comments continued

Our national lobbying has been successful in opening the Canadian border to small ruminants, and is ongoing to reopen the U.S. border to live animals from Canada.

All of these initiatives and our presence at the political table bodes well for our industry; however, the financial cost of being a participant is rising. It is true, this lobbying is needed in order to ensure that opportunities are attainable and affordable for the producer.

We have accomplished a lot, we are recognized as an important part of agriculture and we are building a credible and solid reputation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as well as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

I would like to commend the staff and Board of the CSF for their hard work and dedication to the Canadian sheep industry. I would also like to thank you, the producer, and offer you a guarantee of continued support and passion for future success in our industry. In return we ask for your commitment to the sheep industry.

## Food Safety

### On-Farm Food Safety Report

By France Lanthier, National OFFS Coordinator

The Canadian Sheep Federation is pleased to announce that a second producer has been audited and found to comply with the requirements of the Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food-Safe Farm Practices program. Spruce Grove Farm, owned and operated by Shawn and Amelia Perry in Daniel's Harbour, Newfoundland was successfully audited on November 21st, 2007. In March 2006 Mr. Perry opened his farm and his home to myself, and some employees of the Department of Natural Resources, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (DNR), for an informal and frank discussion of the program. As a newcomer to the sheep industry and to on-farm food safety, this experience was very valuable and appreciated. In addition to Mr. Perry's hard work and dedication to food safety, the implementation and audit were also made possible through the financial support of the

DNR, and through the tireless work of the provincial program coordinator Kathy Gillam. Also greatly supporting these efforts were Paul Dunphy, Ben Pungtilam (ret.), and a recent addition to the team Sabrina Brock, all of the DNR.

This past November 15th the Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food-Safe Farm Practices Technical Committee met in Victoria, BC during the CSF's annual general meeting. Since our last meeting in November 2006 we have taken great strides forward: 185 producers have participated in an on-farm food safety workshop, which is almost as many as had participated in the previous 3 years. We have also seen the elaboration of a draft registration procedure manual, which will be invaluable in managing producer registrations. The past year has indeed been positive and I expect that we will continue in that vein for the remainder of 2007 & 2008.

As I have previously mentioned, the CSF can currently access On-Farm Implementation (OFI) funding to run producer workshops. This funding allows the CSF, or the local producer organization to recuperate up to \$100 per workshop participant to offset the costs of running the workshop. This funding is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

While producer training and education remains the top priority, the Technical Committee has also undertaken the tasks of revising and improving the producer manual, establishing a program audit cycle, and addressing issues surrounding extra-label drug use. The goal of these tasks is to make the program more practical, more informative, easier to implement and at the lowest cost possible. With the recent registration of 2 producers on the program we are currently in a better, and decidedly more hurried, position to iron out the remaining program kinks.

Finally I would like to thank the Technical Committee, not only for the support and guidance they provide me but also for all the hard work and many volunteering hours they put into the industry; your passion and dedication to the sheep industry is truly admirable.



# Scrapie Canada

## Program Updates

By Courtney Denard, Scrapie Coordinator

Scrapie Canada attended the CSF's Annual General Meeting this past November, in Victoria, BC.

Taking the opportunity to address a national and international audience, Scrapie Canada presented to Directors, producers and delegates from around the world. Highlighting program partners, achievements and goals, the presentation detailed the past, present and future directions of Scrapie Canada.

The National Genotyping Survey commenced in July 2005, offering producers financial compensation for the collection of genotyping samples from Canadian purebred sheep. Initially the program was to end in November 2006, however, due to low producer uptake; the project was extended until March 31, 2008. As the end of the survey draws near, the project will focus on calculating results and presenting new genotyping data on purebred sheep across Canada. It is important to remember that the results will only apply to the animals that were tested on this project, and therefore will not be a true representation of the national flock. Valuable information will be shed however. Results will offer new information to the growing body of work on Canadian purebred sheep genetics.

The Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program is about mid-way through its run. Developed as a pilot project to establish estimates on program time and costs, the official length of the pilot project was five years (2005- 2010). The pilot project offers Canadian sheep and goat producers an opportunity to join the flock certification program, filling a subsidized position without being subjected to an annual enrollment fee.

To date, all of the subsidized positions offered to goat producers have been filled, but there are still 29 subsidized spots available for sheep producers.

Scrapie Canada is continuing to promote the program to sheep and goat producers across the country, encouraging anyone interested in joining to contact Scrapie Canada for further information.

Discussion of future ventures for Scrapie Canada revolved around working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to a) develop a long-term, permanent national scrapie program and b) gaining long-term funding to do this. To accomplish these tasks, Scrapie Canada is working with a team of industry, government and producer representatives.

For both projects, updates are posted on the Scrapie Canada website:

[www.scrapiecanada.ca/whatsnew.html](http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/whatsnew.html)

and any information can be obtained by contacting the office at the following:

[1-866-534-1302](tel:1-866-534-1302) or [admin@scrapiecanada.ca](mailto:admin@scrapiecanada.ca)

Information on Scrapie Canada's programs can be made available by contacting Courtney Denard by phone at 1-866-534-1302 or by e-mail at [admin@scrapiecanada.ca](mailto:admin@scrapiecanada.ca)



# Disease Concerns from Around the World

## Bluetongue Claims 300 Wyoming Sheep

Reproduced from: [www.theprairiestar.com](http://www.theprairiestar.com)

Sheep producers in the Big Horn Basin and area are urged to closely monitor their flocks for bluetongue, an infectious disease due to a potentially fatal virus. An outbreak of bluetongue this fall has killed more than 300 sheep in the Worland, Otto, Basin and Greybull areas of the Big Horn Basin and led to sickness in hundreds of other sheep.

The virus also killed pronghorn antelope, white-tailed deer and mule deer in the Big Horn Basin as well as antelope and mule deer in the Cody, Wyo., Sinclair, Wyo., and Douglas, Wyo., areas. The disease is also present in southern Montana.

Sheep owners are urged to contact their vet if they notice symptoms of bluetongue in their flocks, says Don Montgomery, director of the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory (WSVL), which is managed by the University of Wyoming's College of Agriculture. Montgomery says samples from sheep (live or dead animals) can be collected and sent to the WSVL for testing.

"We may see additional losses due to abortion, particularly in sheep but possibly in cattle. This could occur even after a hard freeze kills the midge vector," Montgomery says. "Bluetongue crosses the placenta and causes fetal malformations. We are most likely to see this in the Big Horn Basin along the affected drainages."

UW Department of Veterinary Sciences Professor Donal O'Toole says this has been an unusual year for bluetongue in Wyoming.

"We don't usually see high death loss like we have this fall," O'Toole says. "If wool growers see an outbreak of lameness or sore mouths in their flocks, they should work with their veterinarian to establish whether it is bluetongue rather than orf or other common diseases of sheep."

Orf is a highly contagious disease of sheep and goats caused by a parapoxvirus. O'Toole adds, "We can confirm a clinical diagnosis of bluetongue if vets submit blood samples from live sheep or organ samples from dead sheep."

Lesions seen in the current outbreak include crusting around the nose and mouth, inflammation of the feet, and swollen lips.

Bluetongue's distinctive name is due to blue discoloration of the mouth and lips of infected animals. The cause of death in affected sheep is usually pneumonia. The disease is transmitted by a small *Culicoides* biting midge, commonly called "no-see-ums."

There is no risk to human health from bluetongue, and though the virus can infect cattle, it does not usually cause disease, O'Toole says. When wild animals are affected, such as antelope or deer, they are usually found terminally ill or dead, generally close to water sources.

The outbreaks in wildlife and sheep in the Big Horn Basin are being investigated by the Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) in collaboration with the WSVL, area vets, wool growers, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (G&F).

The outbreak of a bluetongue-like disease was first recognized in wildlife in mid-September by the G&F. A press release issued by the G&F reported deaths in pronghorn, white-tailed deer and mule deer. The role of bluetongue in the wildlife die-off was confirmed in mid-October. As of Nov. 8, the WSVL had confirmed infection in sheep on seven ranches in the Worland, Otto, Basin and Greybull areas. Lambs and adult ewes have died, with deaths tending to occur among older ewes.

Big Horn Basin veterinarian Tim Graham reports that approximately 300 of 900 affected sheep in one range flock died from the infection. Livestock premises with confirmed infection have been quarantined.

Bluetongue is a warm-weather disease due to the insect vectors. Signs subside after the first hard frost, since freezing temperatures kill the insects that transmit the disease. Thus, quarantines are expected to be lifted soon. There are unconfirmed reports of the disease affecting other Wyoming flocks, but, to date, none of these occurred outside the Big Horn Basin.

O'Toole says treatment is symptomatic. "It involves support and nursing care. Because the mouth is so sore, sheep are reluctant to eat. Valuable animals may have to be fed by a stomach tube, which producers in the Big Horn Basin are doing," he says.

"Animals need to be given shade and access to water, and they need time to recover."



# Disease Concerns from Around the World

## Bluetongue Claims 300 Wyoming Sheep con't

Antibiotics aren't used to directly treat bluetongue since it's a virus, but sometimes antibiotics are given to reduce secondary infections, he says. Preliminary results of wildlife cases indicate the strain of bluetongue virus in this year's outbreak is not unusual for Wyoming. Most have occurred in the Big Horn Basin, but small numbers of affected pronghorn and mule deer have also been diagnosed near Sinclair (south central Wyoming) and Douglas (eastern Wyoming).

Losses in livestock have not been confirmed in areas outside the Big Horn Basin. The WLSB reminds producers that bluetongue is a reportable disease. Additionally, it is important that producers who suspect the disease work with their veterinarian to establish whether bluetongue is involved. Typically, this involves submitting blood (from live sheep) or tissue (from dead sheep) samples to the WSVL.

Images of bluetongue are available on the WSVL Web page at [http://wyovet.uwyo.edu/Diseases/2007/gross\\_lesions\\_of\\_bluetongue\\_in\\_s.html](http://wyovet.uwyo.edu/Diseases/2007/gross_lesions_of_bluetongue_in_s.html)

## Bluetongue will be back - warning

Reproduced from: <http://new.edp24.co.uk>

Bluetongue disease is likely to return with a vengeance in East Anglia next year, two top livestock farmers have warned after a fact-finding trip to northern France.

"The midge-borne disease has hit farmers far worse this year when it returned in August," said mid-Norfolk farmer Roger Long, who has just returned from a visit to the Lille area close to the Belgian border. "We must have a vaccine available as soon as possible and certainly by late spring if a serious animal welfare problem is to be averted."

Mr Long, who is a regional member of the National Farmers' Union's livestock board, said bluetongue has come back this year "with a bang" to cause real problems for French livestock producers.

"The ones that were infected last year are getting it far worse this year because the animals build up no immunity to it whatsoever."

The five-strong NFU party, which included Suffolk farmers' leader John Collen, was clearly surprised that

cattle and sheep would be hit so hard by the disease in the second year. "I think we all thought that animals would build up immunity once they had been bitten," he said.

Mr Collen, who has two confirmed cases in his 300-cow dairy herd at Gisleham, near Lowestoft, also has 24 cattle infected by the disease since it arrived in Suffolk in early August. The group, which included East Anglian sheep producer, Andrew Foulds, of Elveden, near Thetford, toured farms in an area about half the size of Norfolk during the three-day visit.

There have been about 7,000 cases of bluetongue in France since August last year while there have been just 62 in eastern England since September 22. Mr Long, of Scarning, near Dereham, said their French hosts reported numerous cases of "abortion and premature births in cattle and sheep and also loss of fertility in bulls and rams. It was a sorry picture."

One dairy farmer with 46 milking cows and 15 suckler cows had brought all his stock inside every night as a precaution but it had not really helped, said Mr Long. One French farmer told him: "There's no stock management that can stop a midge."

The French government pay to collect fallen stock, which encourages farmers to report cases. Mr Collen said that e43 (£30) was paid for every dead lamb and pro-rata for ewes and cattle.

"We were also told that light-coloured cattle are more susceptible, possibly because the midges can target these animals," said Mr Long. "Vaccination is the only way forward and the sooner the better. It has got to happen. We must have it before the end of April or early May for cattle turnout time."

Defra's chief vet, Debby Reynolds, 55, has taken early retirement after four years, it was announced yesterday.



## Disease Concerns from Around the World

### Bluetongue affects sheep sales

Reproduced from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Farmers inside the bluetongue control zone in south-east England have said they are being forced to sell sheep at half price because of restrictions.

The animals can only be moved within the zone stretching from Norfolk to Kent and Sussex - except for slaughter - limiting where they can be sold. East Sussex farmer Frank Langrish said he was down thousands of pounds on last year at Ashford's livestock market. And he warned that those buying sheep were being "brave speculators".

Sheep and lambs would normally have been moved onto the South West for fattening at this time of year, as farmers in Kent and Sussex run out of feed for them. But they cannot go beyond the control zone boundary in Sussex.

**No compensation.** Mr Langrish - who recently had bluetongue confirmed in some sheep at his farm in Northiam, near Rye - attended the Ashford market on Friday. He said: "There's so few buyers here, they can only come from the control zone which is basically Kent, East Sussex, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. "But there's very little grazing there and these people are being quite brave speculators in taking them anyway."

Howard Bates, from the National Farmers' Union, said that with feed running out there was simply no choice but to sell the sheep on at a reduced price.

"No good farmer will ever allow his sheep to starve and he will make a serious decision about disposing of them through the market at a great financial loss, on welfare terms," he said. "Time is running out and with a change in the weather it'll be too late."

The only way ruminant animals can be moved out of the bluetongue control zone is for slaughter purposes within the much wider protection zone. Defra said it had to "weigh up the needs of people in the zones being able to move their animals, with the risk of spreading disease further".

It added that it was "not the government's position to pay compensation for wider consequential losses from any disease outbreak".

### Sheep Worm Resistance targeted by gene marker

Reproduced from: [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz)

A genetic weapon has been launched against the \$100 million problem of worm resistance in young sheep.

Catapult Genetics, a New Zealand-Australia research venture, is unveiling the latest in its armoury of gene markers to farmers at meetings this week.

Marketed as Wormstar, the marker identifies sheep that can both fight off the worm challenge and grow well at the same time. It comes at a time when worm resistance to chemical drenches has been steadily rising on sheep farms. A recent survey found that two out of three sheep farms had drench resistance to at least one of the three drench families.

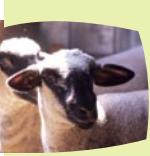
Some farmers have tried to breed lines of sheep that fight off worms, energy-sapping creatures that live in the gut. Selection is made by counting the worm eggs in their faeces. Others have tried a different tack, breeding sheep that still thrive, despite a high worm burden.

Catapult's gene marker appears to highlight the sheep that do both - have low faecal egg counts and high growth rates of meat and wool. Wormstar is the result of five years' research by scientist John McEwan and a team at AgResearch Invermay. AgResearch is a shareholder, along with Meat & Wool New Zealand, Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and Australian venture capital firm Nanyang Innovation Fund.

Catapult's product development manager, Mike Tate, placed a potential value yesterday of \$882 a ram on the benefits Wormstar could bring to a farmer. This compared with an average, non-tested, ram. Also, the benefits would grow over time as the level of natural resistance to worms within the flock increased. Less drenching would be needed and other methods of managing the worm burden would become more effective.

The marker was a breakthrough for breeders, Dr Tate said. It meant farmers could select rams with more confidence and know they did not have to compromise on important productive traits such as weaning weight and hogget fleece weight.

**Continued on Page**



## Sheep Worm Resistance targeted by gene marker continued

Catapult had developed a star ranking system to identify top Wormstar rams. A two-star ram was estimated to have a reduction in faecal egg counts of between 7 and 12 per cent compared with a normal ram. In a one-star ram the reduction was estimated to be between 2 and 9 per cent.

Data from more than 900 sires in 111 breeders' flocks and over 100,000 measured progeny from Northland to Southland were tested to find the gene marker. The key maternal breeds, Romney, Coopworth and Perendale, made up the bulk of the animals, though Poll Dorset, Texel and other breeds were also included.

Wormstar joins Catapult's other sheep gene marker tests: Myomax, which identifies sheep with increased muscling; Loinmax, for sheep with 10 per cent bigger loin muscles; Inverdale, a profligacy gene; and I-Scan, which identifies a blindness gene. Genestar, a test for beef animals, is a suite of gene markers that identifies marbling and tenderness, along with feed efficiency, a trait that measures how quickly animals grow.

## Product of Canada

### How to Really Eat Local

Reproduced from: [www.cbc.ca/marketplace](http://www.cbc.ca/marketplace)

Normally in this space you would see the words "read the label". In this case, you have to really read the label. Watch for any of the following words and phrases:

- modified milk ingredients
- skim milk powder
- milk protein concentrates
- milk protein isolates
- casein
- caseinates
- whey protein concentrates

**Finally, here are a few quick tips.** If it claims to be ice cream but doesn't contain any cream, it may not be from not from around here. Authentically Canadian cheese will always contain milk.

Look for authentic local garlic at specialty shops or in farmers' markets. You won't find it in supermarkets.

The more processed a food is, the more obscure its origins become, because of the 51% rule. If you buy fresh vegetables and meats instead of TV dinners you'll have an easier time figuring out where it all came from.

Ask. Many packaged foods have toll-free numbers for customer enquiries. If you don't get a satisfactory answer, let the people on the phone know that the issue is important to you, and that you're prepared to switch brands over it.

## Contact Us ...



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