



NEW CSF BOARD ELECTED

By Jennifer Fleming, Executive Director

Florence Henning, a sheep producer from Rochfort Bridge Alberta was acclaimed Chair of the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) at their Annual General Meeting in Ottawa Ontario last week.

Henning along with her husband and 4 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 elected chair of the CSF,” says Henning adding that “As a key leader and advocate of the Canadian agriculture and food industry, the CSF will continue to raise the profile of the sheep industry throughout Canada and abroad”.

Andre Trépanier of Ste. Sabine Quebec stepped down as the CSF’s Chair; however he will remain active in the CSF as Vice Chair. Trépanier has been a member of the CSF’s board for the past six years, and as also been on the executive of the *Fédération des producteurs d’agneaux et moutons du Québec* for a number of years.

John Hemsted of Oro Station Ontario who had been Vice Chair will remain on the CSF’s Executive Committee.

Hemsted was recently re-elected Chair of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency for his sixth consecutive term. Along with his wife and daughter, John operates a 200-head commercial flock. Rounding out the Executive Committee is Randy Jordan from Raymore Saskatchewan. Jordan is also on the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board.

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: 1-888-684-7739 or cansheep@cansheep.ca.

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PROGRAMS AIMED AT ERADICATING SCRAPIE IN CANADA

By Jennifer Fleming, Executive Director

The Canadian sheep industry has been lobbying the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and/or Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to implement programs to eradicate scrapie for years.

Finally, after years of lobbying, the industry got two of its three wishes granted with the implementation of the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program and the National Genotyping Program.

The National Genotyping program is open to all producers with sheep registered with the Canadian Livestock Records Corporation and allows them to incorporate test results into their breeding programs to increase

NEW ZEALAND SHEEP FLOCK INCREASES FOR FIRST TIME IN 17 YEARS

New Zealand, where sheep outnumber the human population by 10 to one, increased its national flock for the first time in 17 years as higher prices and mild weather prompted farmers to keep more animals for breeding. There were 39.9 million sheep in New Zealand at June 30, a 1.7 percent gain from a year earlier, according to government figures released in Wellington today. The number of young ewes for breeding surged 21 percent to 3.2 million.

Rising world prices for lamb have helped buffer farmers' earnings from a surging New Zealand dollar, which has averaged 70.55 U.S. cents this year, the highest since it began trading freely in 1985. Meat is New Zealand's second-biggest export, valued at NZ\$4.6 billion (\$3.2 billion) in the 12 months ended Sept. 30, a 2.4 percent gain from a year earlier.

"Profitability from sheep has been good," said Rob Davison, executive director of the economic service of Meat & Wool New Zealand, an organization funded by farmers. "We've had quite good prices in most major markets," he said in an interview from Wellington.

Lamb prices have soared 58 percent in the past seven years. The average price per kilogram in the season ended in June was NZ\$3.95, up from NZ\$2.50 a kilogram in 1997-1998, according to ANZ National Bank Ltd. figures.

Mild weather through the June-to-August southern hemisphere winter prompted some farmers to hold onto stock for longer, allowing them to get higher prices for heavier-weight lambs in the third quarter of the year, Davison said. New Zealand's dollar bought 68.90 U.S. cents at 4 p.m. in Sydney, from 69.43 cents in late Asian trading yesterday.

Source: www.bloomberg.com/apps/news/

SCRAPIE PROGRAMS...

scrapie resistance while maintaining production traits. It allows and encourages the testing of both rams and ewes and as such, is the most extensive testing program in the world.

The program began in June 2005 and since then just over 1,200 registered pure-bred sheep have been tested; this is out of a possible 35,500 samples. Producer uptake has been very low; which is a concern. Given the years of lobbying the industry has done to get programs like this one established, there was a sense that producer uptake would have been greater. The result is that we are not using the funding that is available and are in danger of losing it if participation does not increase.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to establish a

base of information about the genetic resistance to scrapie in your flock. As an industry we need to be proactive and take advantage of all the opportunities that are presented to us.

In order to try and increase producer participation, DNA tags have been approved for producers to use to decrease the cost of having the vet come and take samples. In addition, we are currently considering incorporating the testing of commercial sheep into the program.

The ability to genotype animals for scrapie resistance is becoming increasingly important in terms of being able to maintain market access and competitiveness. For instance, the United Kingdom is working on a program where at least 20% of an individual's flock must be

genotyped. While in France a genotyping program has been in place since 2001 to eradicate the VRQ allele from the pure-bred flock.

The second program that was funded is the Scrapie Flock Certification Pilot program. This program is intended to establish the cost of delivery of a Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program. Flocks enrolled in the program will establish that their breeding stock is low risk for scrapie. There is funding for 60 sheep flocks and 10 goat herds. Enrolment on this program is open on a first come basis.

For more information on either of the programs call **Courtney** 519 836 0043; admin@scrapiecanada.ca or visit the web site at www.scrapiecanada.ca

FFA SAYS RETAILERS MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FARMERS ARE NOT GETTING A FAIR DEAL

Farmers For Action has challenged the retail giants to publicly accept that farmers are not getting a fair deal and to address the problem immediately. The organisation has also warned that further protests and activities are being looked at, after a summit meeting involving five other organisations.

The summit was attended by FFA, the National

Sheep Association, the Farmers Union of Wales, NIAPA, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association and Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association (ICSFA).

FFA has said there was unanimous agreement on a course of further action to drive home the message that farmers are not receiving a fair share of the retail price for key products such

as dairy, beef and lamb.

"One thing that has become clear is that consumers want farmers to get a just price for their products. In fact one poll showed that 78% of consumers are willing to pay more," said FFA leader, David Handley. Mr Handley added that there was a commitment from all the organisations to co-operate further.

ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY UPDATE

By France Lanthier, National On-Farm Food Safety Coordinator



“I found out that there weren't too many limitations, if I did it my way.” Johnny Cash

Food Safety is increasingly a consumer concern and an industry priority. With issues like mad cow disease and the avian flu virus getting headline airtime on our local and national news stations, and not to mention the amount of information and *misinformation* available to the public on the internet, the safety of our food supply is indeed a hot topic.

The Canadian agricultural community and government have responded to these food safety concerns through a partnership called the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety program (COFFS). Since the establishment of the COFFS program in 1997, 21 commodities have developed or are in the progress of developing on-farm food safety programs.

In 2002, Dietwald Klaus, an official with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which has spearheaded the development of national COFFS programs expressed the following: “The nightmare scenario for farmers was that Loblaws, IGA, etc. would all come out with individual programs that farmers would have to live up to.

In order to avoid the fragmentation and the redundancies of such an approach – farmers having to follow different protocols for different customers – the COFFS program was envisioned and put into place [national programs], it allows farmers to have a farmer-driven and farmer-organized approach to on-farm food safety and so far, marketers and distributors (of food) have backed off individual programs.”¹

Although for the most part large food retail stores have not yet demanded that their producers participate in on-farm food safety programs, it does appear that this may be an emerging trend, especially in food retail stores catering to the consumers seeking brand differentiated or “value added” products. For instance WholeFoods Market now has a *Natural Meat Program and Animal Compassionate Standards for Sheep*².

The following is an excerpt from the general Meat and Poultry Standards outlined by WholeFoods “To verify if a producer's animals are humanely raised on the farm/ranch, each producer's operation must be audited annually by Whole Food Market to ensure that the following expectations are being provided:

- A wholesome diet and clean drinking water to maintain the animals' good health and satisfy their nutritional needs.
- Well-managed living conditions suitable to the species with adequate space, good ventilation and temperature level, and an environmentally sound sanitation system that protects the animals from physical discomfort and distress.
- Trained and skilled managers and caretakers competent in animal husbandry and welfare.
- An established preventative healthcare system, including medical treatment when needed.

I recently had the opportunity to attend annual general meetings in many provinces. Recurring themes were: the opportunity for Canadian sheep producers to increase production for our domestic market, traceability, scrapie, on-farm food safety, but mostly the talks pointed to the necessity for our industry to distinguish itself through “value added products”. It was generally agreed that product branding was essential to make this value added differentiation. One area where there was some debate was the definition of “value added” and what it meant to consumers. A comparative look at the requirements of one of the world's largest natural and organic food chains (WholeFoods see previous paragraph) and our Food-Safe Farm Practices program, it would seem that added value, to a large extent means food safety.

No, the markets and government have not made on-farm food safety programs mandatory - yet. However, as food safety concerns continue to attract media attention it would seem that one day they could. The Canadian Sheep Federation along with producers and industry has put together a Food-Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) manual that has been approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. By being proactive and participating in this program our industry has the opportunity to demonstrate due diligence rather than having to comply with potentially excessive market demands or government legislation.

ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY ...

While the costs of full FSFP participation and accreditation (requiring on-farm audits) has yet to be fully determined, we must keep in mind that at the moment the program is voluntary and that there is no pressure to be audited. That is, producers can obtain the information, evaluate their current record keeping and farm management protocols and

simply adapt their current good practices to meet the FSFP program requirements.

Our industry has the opportunity to gradually implement the FSFP program, and the CSF currently has resources to assist producers to do this. Then why wait for customers or government to dictate? To echo the words of

the man in Black, Mr. Johnny Cash: *Our industry has very few limitations, if we do it our way.*

Currently Food-Safe Farm Practices program information sessions and manuals are available for all Canadian producers at no fee.

For more information contact france@cansheep.ca or call 1-888-684-7739.

References

Canadian Farm Manager. August – September 2002. (farmcentre.com/english/cfm/CFM_pdf/CFM-Aug02.pdf)

Whole Food Market Meat Program and Animal Compassionate Standards for Sheep. (www.wholefoodsmarket.com)

SHEEP SECTOR WORRIES DOMINATE WOOL BOARD ANNUAL MEETING

The future size and structure of the UK sheep industry was the topic of debate in Bradford following the annual meeting of the British Wool Marketing Board.

This sector of the farming industry has been under considerable pressure in recent years and there are some who reckon that the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy could result in a further drop in the number of breeding ewes. That eventuality would clearly have implications for the BWMB, which handles more than 37 million kilos of wool annually.

But first the facts; in 1999 the total UK breeding flock totalled 19.8 million ewes and gimmers with sheep kept on 82,550 holdings and an average flock size of 242 head. Move on to December 2001, following the catastrophic epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease, and the breeding flock had slipped to 16.08 million.

There was a modest level of re-stocking after the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, but the December 2004 census shows that the national flock was still a relatively modest 16.3 million breeding animals with the number of holdings registered as

wool producers down to 78,454. Ten years ago, around 90,000 farms and crofts kept some sheep.

CAP reform has given producers the option of collecting the new single farm payment without producing at former levels of output. Already this year large numbers of breeding sheep have been sold off hills and glens in Scotland with a parallel trend evident in Wales.

John Cameron, who is widely credited as being the largest sheep farmer in the European Union with 10,000 breeding ewes in west Perthshire, admits

that he gone from the "optimistic to the pessimistic", in his view of the future of the industry.

Speaking in Bradford, he said: "We had one of the worst lambing seasons ever this year and the losses were particularly high over the winter months, especially among the tups. "Perhaps we, like many others, have been keeping too many ewes just to collect the subsidies. I am giving serious consideration to taking off 60 ewes from each hirsle, but the last thing I want to do is to cut back on labour."

Source: Dan Buglass, UK

SOUTH AFRICA JOINS AUSTRALIAN NLIS FOR SHEEP & GOATS

After more than a year of negotiation with industry, the South Australian Government has signed the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) for sheep and goats. The system will be in place from January, and NLIS tags will be subsidised by the state and federal governments. Ben Mumford, who is in charge of implementing the scheme, says the improved traceback method will encourage producers to be more vigilant about the quality of their stock. "Guys with good quality stock have got nothing to worry about and guys that perhaps need to pull their socks up, will need to do so," he said

The following chart explains the difference between the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program and the National Genotyping Program. If producers would like any further information or would like to apply to either program, please contact the Scrapie Project Coordinator at 519-836-0043. Funding for these programs has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program.

	VOLUNTARY SCRAPIE FLOCK CERTIFICATION PROGRAM	NATIONAL GENOTYPING PROGRAM
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help producers determine whether scrapie exists within their operation, and to minimize the risk of introducing the disease into clean flocks or herds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain flock productivity while increasing scrapie resistance of the flock through genotyping rams and ewes.
WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Canadian sheep or goat producer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any Canadian sheep producer with sheep registered under CLRC
DURATION OF PROGRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers must advance through 6 levels throughout the program. This takes approximately 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A one-time commitment from producers. Samples will be accepted between June 2005 and November 2006, with funding available for 36,000 head.
PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purebred or commercial flocks are accepted into the program. Under the three strategies (Pathways) that producers can follow, basic requirements include: a closed ewe/ doe flock; submission of dead stock for scrapie testing; maintenance of a detailed flock/ herd inventory. Long-term commitment from producers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sheep tested must be registered with the Canadian Livestock Records Corporation (CLRC). Producers do not have to be a member of the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association. Producers are not required to make any changes in flock population (no culling required).
COST TO PRODUCERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers must pay for an accredited veterinarian to inventory their flock/herd- this varies between vets. Producers are responsible for collecting the obex (brain) sample, either on their own or through a vet (this cost varies between vets). One dead animal per year must be produced. Death can be either from culling or natural causes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers can either use a vet for collecting blood samples or use ear tags designed to collect tissue samples (no vet required for this). \$10/ sample for lab analysis of 3 codons (136, 154, 171) of the sheep prion gene.
WHAT DOES THE PROJECT PAY FOR?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers will receive \$50/ year for the first two years on the program. Lab analysis of the obex (brain) sample is paid for. Administration of the project is paid for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of the vet visit reimbursed, up to \$6.00/ sample. 50% of shipping costs will be reimbursed. [*All invoices must be sent to the Scrapie Project Coordinator within 90 days of the sampling]. Producers can receive \$5.00/animal for any samples taken between June 2003 and June 2005 by submitting official lab reports of genotype results to the Scrapie Project Coordinator. The analysis must have been completely paid for by producers-not funded through various provincial projects.
VET INFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producers must work with a vet approved by the CFIA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vet does not have to be accredited with the CFIA.

LEADERS PRAISE FARM DEAL, BUT SAY WORK NEEDED FOR BROADER WTO DEAL

Government leaders on Monday praised a WTO trade agreement to end farm export subsidies but said much work remains to reach a broader, binding global trade treaty by late 2006. The agreement late Sunday was a badly needed breakthrough for the World Trade Organization, whose credibility was on the line following devastating collapses of two of its last three key meetings.

After six days of intense negotiations, delegates from both wealthy and poor countries reconciled their conflicting interests, agreeing to eliminate farm export subsidies by 2013, work toward dismantling trade barriers in manufacturing and services and to provide greater protections and support for developing countries.

"You put the round back on track. You gave it a new sense of urgency," a jubilant WTO chief Pascal Lamy told the delegates.

Developing countries felt the final agreement addressed many of their concerns, from opening up rich nations' farming markets to measures that could enable the world's poorest countries to increase their tiny share in global trade.

"We welcome it," said India's

Trade Minister Kamal Nath. "It is focused and it strikes at various problems of developing countries."

But the outcome of the six-day meeting left some disappointed - and puts pressure on the WTO if it hopes to conclude a binding global trade treaty by the end of next year. "The agreement we have reached, if it didn't make the conference a success it certainly saved it from failure," said EU trade chief Peter Mandelson.

Pushing back the date for eliminating farm export subsidies to 2013 was a key demand of the 25-country EU, which held out against intense pressure from Brazil and other developing nations to end the payments by 2010. Developing nations say the subsidies undercut their competitive advantage in farm trade and threaten the livelihood of their poor farmers.

The agreement approved by all the WTO's 149 member countries and territories also gives the world's poorest nations special trade privileges. Exporters from least developed countries - with annual per



capita incomes of less than \$750 US - will be allowed duty-free and quota-free market access on 97 per cent of the products imported by rich nations by 2008. "That is something people have only dreamed of up until this time," said New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark.

Clark said getting rid of export subsidies by 2013 is an advance - but said progress needs to continue.

"There's still the market access issue, and that's us getting our goods into other markets without high tariffs, and that's what's proving a bit tricky at the moment," she told TV One Monday.

French President Jacques Chirac welcomed the accord, saying Sunday that it favours France and global economic growth, but did not go far enough to help poorer countries.

The deal "will contribute to development of the poorest countries while still preserving the indispensable potential of European agriculture," Chirac said in a statement.

France's farmers are among the top beneficiaries of EU agricultural subsidies. However, he added, "this progress on development still remains insufficient and must be followed up upon." Germany's economy minister, Michael Glos, said the outcome fell "short of expectations."

"In the new year, it will be important for us to represent

emphatically in the follow-up negotiations in Geneva the interests of our industry in opening markets," he said. The agreement falls far short of the delegates' original ambition for Hong Kong: producing a detailed outline for a final trade treaty that would conclude the Doha round of talks, named after Qatar's capital, where it was launched in 2001 particularly to address the concerns of poorer nations.

Negotiators now aim to work out formulas for cutting farm and industrial tariffs and subsidies - the nuts and bolts of an eventual trade pact - by April 30.

Activists and other critics of the Geneva-based WTO claim its work on opening up markets benefits big companies and the rich at the expense of ordinary workers and the poor. Past WTO gatherings served as battlefields for anti-globalization protests, but Hong Kong authorities managed to prevent violent clashes between police and activists from disrupting the talks. More than 800 protesters - mostly South Korean farmers - remained in detention Monday. Police rounded them up after they went on a violent rampage Saturday outside the WTO convention hall in downtown Hong Kong.

Source: Rajesh Mahapatra, Canadian Press

Photo credit: aul.ilcs.hokudai.ac.jp/Sheep%20glacier%20.JPG

TWO AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS FOR SHEEP AND GOAT INDUSTRIES TO IMPLEMENT NLIS

Australian Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister Peter McGauran says the funding, for the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS), is part of a broad-based risk management approach for the sheep and goat industries. The \$2.5 million funding for the sheep and goat industries will run a national communication and extension program, at a cost of \$350,000.

The funding will also incorporate a national NLIS monitoring program for the two industries and will partially subsidise the review of the entire NLIS (Sheep) programme which includes re-evaluating its planned, alternate pathway (\$1,025,000).

A strategic reserve will be established to support research, analysis and pilot programs to help implement NLIS in the two industries (\$1,090,000). "Importantly, an independent review of NLIS (Sheep) will take place in 2007 to underpin the effectiveness of traceability.

"The plan from the NLIS (Sheep) Management Committee, covering sheep and goats, was subsequently given the go-ahead — proposals from other sectors will be examined in due course," Minister McGauran said.

Source: www.farmonline.com.au/news_daily.asp?g_id=31328

LAMB EXPORTS TO THE U.S. BOOMING

Australia reports record lamb export figures to November.

Australian lamb exports during November remained historically high, increasing 13 percent on the same period last year, to 13,178 tons. Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) said that strong demand from the U.S., China, Japan and the Middle East boosted exports for the month, with the decreasing value of the Australian dollar assisting exporter margins.

Australian lamb exports for the 11 months to November are a record at 130,000 tons— an increase of 28 percent on 2004.

MLA reported that lamb exports to the U.S. during November hit a new monthly record, surpassing the 4,000 ton mark for the first time. The

U.S. is Australia's largest market for lamb, with shipments during the 11 months totalling a record 37,000 tons—a 27 percent increase on the same period last year.

MLA further relayed that the rise in shipments to the U.S. can be attributed to decreased domestic U.S. supplies, along with a 20 percent fall in New Zealand shipments—Australia's main competitor in this market.

Similarly, according to MLA figures, demand from China and Japan appears to be growing, with exports during November increasing by 32 percent and 75 percent, respectively. Japan is becoming an increasingly valuable market for Australian lamb, as disrupted supply channels for beef and poultry, as well as an increasing popularity of

lamb among Japanese consumers, boost demand.

For the 11 months to November, Australian lamb exports to Japan were 45 percent greater than the equivalent period in 2004, at a record of almost 10,000 tons.

Shipments to the Middle East were also strong during November, increasing 14 percent compared with last year, to 1,275 tons. MLA said that much of the increase in shipments for the month can be attributed to preparations for the upcoming Hajj festival. However, exports to Saudi Arabia weakened, as Australian lamb competed with a rise in both domestic supplies and Australian live sheep imports.

Source: Chris Harris, www.meatnews.com/index.cfm?useaction=Article&artNum=10712

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