



FROM THE *flock*

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RECOGNITION

Funding for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program and the Canadian Sheep Federation's Food Safe Farm Practices Program, has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative under Growing Forward.

Funding for the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program has been provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) AgriFlexibility program.

Opinions expressed in this document are those of the Canadian Sheep Federation and not necessarily those of AAFC.

What *Growing Forward* has done for the Sheep Industry

By Barb Caswell

As we enter into April 2011, there has been an increased realization of the end of the current funding framework for agriculture in Canada, Growing Forward, and an increasing focus towards what Canadian Agriculture can expect for the future in terms of federal funding.

Growing Forward replaced the previous funding framework known as the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF). With Growing Forward, governments were investing \$1.3 billion over five years into programming, which represented a \$330 million dollar increase over APF. The \$1.3 billion has been on a cost-shared basis between federal government and provincial/territorial governments. There has been mixed opinions from industry as to whether this approach, with any funding related to implementation of programs like traceability and on-farm food safety being delivered by provincial governments, as worked well.

Growing Forward put an emphasis on building a profitable sector through three strategic outcomes:

- A competitive and innovative sector: From idea to invention to consumer, growing new opportunities that support innovation and competitiveness.
- A sector that contributes to society's priorities: Enabling the sector to contribute to the priorities of increasingly health-conscious and environmentally aware Canadians.
- A sector proactive in managing risks: The **business risk management (BRM)** suite were the first programs available under *Growing Forward*, offering more responsive, predictable and bankable programs for farmers.

The sheep industry, through the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF), has capitalized on the programs offered through *Growing Forward* in order to increase the sustainability and competitiveness of the Canada industry. Just recently, CSF has seen completion of three major projects funded under growing forward. The funding received for National Identification, and the Canadian Sheep Identification Program, seen the move towards mandatory RFID tagging to better equip the industry to meet expected changes in regulations in the future to address government mandated traceability, as well as to continue and increase industry



Growing Forward continued

competitiveness in the domestic market. Consumers, buyers, processors, as well as governments internationally, have stated they are expecting full traceability.

The funding has not only helped the industry move toward RFID tagging, but has helped provide a number of information pieces to educate producers on why the change is being made, but also how to make the change – check out page 6 for information on the release of the CSF tagging videos.

The first year of the RFID pilot project was completed earlier this year. This project has provided some details with respect to anticipated costs of traceability for producers, which have been communicated directly to government. As with the number of challenges initially identified, CSF is committed to seeking a second year of funding to continue to identify those additional challenges that could be anticipated with government mandated traceability, as well as potential solutions and possible benefits to producers of using this new technology.

This spring we seen the completion of the Food Safety funding, funding that allowed a full review of the entire CSF food safety program, Food Safe Farm Practices.

This review led to new training materials, information pieces, as well as pursuing technical review with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency of the changes made to the Producer Manual. A new Producer Manual is expected this year, pending CFIA approval of changes. All three of these projects were funded under the Canadian Industry Traceability Infrastructure Program (CITIP) and totaled over \$1.3 million in funding.

Government is being proactive looking past Growing Forward, and has already begun consultations with industry on the next policy framework. What is a very clear message from many commodities is that if full traceability is going to be government mandated, there needs to be some consideration of long-term funding to help producers address the potential costs.

The Canadian Sheep Federation will continue to be an active part of consultations on the next policy framework, and provide information as available as to what that framework may look like. If you have any comments on the *Growing Forward*, or wish to provide any comments on what might be beneficial to the industry moving forward with regards to federal funding dollars, please let us know at info@cansheep.ca.

TAGGING REQUIREMENTS IN SHEEP

January 20, 2011: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is reminding sheep owners that all animals must be identified with an approved tag before they leave their farm of origin. The CFIA administers and enforces national identification requirements for sheep under the authority of the Health of Animals Regulations. Violations may result in warning letters, fines or, in some cases, prosecution. The ability to identify animals and their origins is important because it allows governments to respond more quickly and effectively to animal health or food safety issues. This has a direct impact on industry as issues can affect consumer confidence and market access.

- For more information on the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP), please visit www.inspection.gc.ca
- For information on the measures to protect animal health, visit www.inspection.gc.ca/biosecurity
- For information: Canadian Food Inspection Agency - Media relations: 613-773-6600



Scrapie Canada: Alberta Is Enhancing Its Scrapie Surveillance in Sheep and Goats

By Courtney Denard

I am taking the opportunity to use April's From the Flock to announce my resignation as National Scrapie Coordinator. After much thought and consideration, I have decided to leave my position with the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) and take my career in a new direction.

When it comes to next steps, the CSF has already begun the search for a new coordinator and the plan is to have someone in the position by late May 2011. Scrapie Canada's e-mail address, toll-free number and mailing address will not be changing. If anyone has any questions or comments about this matter, please contact the CSF office.

Before moving on, I want to take a moment and look back on my time with Scrapie Canada and highlight how far we've come in just a few short years.

My first official day as National Scrapie Coordinator was October 31, 2005. I'll never forget it because when I came into work everyone was dressed in costume and there was candy galore. Back then, Scrapie Canada was administered by the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency (OSMA) and I was to administer two national projects - the National Genotyping Survey and the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program: Pilot Project.

For the next four years, Scrapie Canada worked closely with OSMA, the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association and the CSF on these two projects. One of the biggest challenges facing the sheep industry in my early days was the continued effects of the BSE crisis.

By the time I came on board, the border had been closed for about two and a half years but the industry was still at the beginning stages of recovery. This was one of the most challenging events I had ever dealt with in my young career, and some days would simply be spent on the phone listening and offering a sounding board for producers in distress.

During this time, Scrapie Canada was also working hard to get established and recognized throughout the industry. The two national projects continued and eventually came to an end in March 2009. A lot of valuable information resulted from those projects.

For example, almost 10,000 purebred sheep were genotype tested through the National Genotyping Survey. These test results were added to the Nova Scotia Agriculture College's national database bringing the total up to 18,966 sheep tested from 496 farms.

Results of the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program: Pilot Project were beneficial too. Data collected through this project provided important information on industry costs and producer needs. The Pilot Project concluded that a national voluntary scrapie certification program would run the industry about \$75,000 per year; with producers paying about \$615.00 per year to be enrolled on the program. Producers rated communication between industry and farmers the second most important component to a successful program, after available subsidies.

Scrapie Canada continued

Both projects played a positive role in the Canadian sheep industry. They furthered the industry's knowledge of scrapie; increased the number of sheep in Canada that have been genotype tested; and provided the industry with valuable information to set up scrapie reducing breeding programs and certified flocks/ herds.

When the two national scrapie projects came to an end in 2009, the administration of Scrapie Canada was transferred to the CSF. For the next year and a half, Scrapie Canada worked closely with the CSF to get approval of a new funding contract with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). Government funding is vital to the continuation of these projects and in the summer of 2010 new funding was secured.

Scrapie Canada received \$4.5 million from AAFC's AgriFlexibility Fund to implement a three year, industry driven project that supports the development of the National Scrapie Prevalence Study, as well as the continuation of the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP). The goal of National Scrapie Prevalence Study is to determine scrapie prevalence in the Canadian sheep flock and goat herd. Approximately 15,000 sheep and 1,700 goats will be scrapie brain tested through this project and results will allow the industry to establish a clear time frame in which scrapie can be eradicated from Canada. The continuation of the VSFCP allows Canadian sheep producers' access to female small ruminants in the USA; as well as the ability to certify their flocks/ herds as scrapie free.

Looking back, it is apparent to me that Scrapie Canada has come a long way in a short period of time. Not everything has been perfect, or easy for that matter, but when I first took this position very few people had even heard of Scrapie Canada.

More and more producers, industry representatives and government bodies are becoming interested in scrapie eradication and making it a part of their agendas. I am excited for the future of scrapie eradication and I know that the industry will continue to progress after I am gone.

Before I sign off, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to my success in this role. I have always had a deep passion and respect for agriculture and it was my dream to go to school, learn about farming and some day work in the industry. Working for Scrapie Canada has allowed me to do that I am beyond grateful for all of the lessons this position has brought.

In the past five and a half years I have had the chance to meet amazing farmers and industry representatives who work so hard at what they do. I have had the opportunity to travel to eight different provinces speaking about scrapie and seeing different facets of Canadian agriculture. The experience and memories that I have gained through this position are countless and once again I just want to thank everyone. Good luck with future endeavours and never forget that Canada is the best country in the world when it comes to farming and agriculture.

What's old, new and not quite there yet with the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP)

By Daniel Dion, National ID coordinator

Since my start as National ID coordinator in February, I have been on a very steep learning curve on the ID and traceability side of the sheep world. It seems that animal identification and traceability are moving at a pace that is very hard to follow...either too slow or too fast!!!

A lot of things have been moving along and many are changing or arriving in the new realities of the sheep industry. I hope this article will help everyone know a little bit more where we have been, where we are and where we seem to be going.

KEY MILESTONES

- Starting **July 1, 2011** Ketchum Kurl lock and Allflex dangle tags will no longer be available for sale to sheep producers as Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) tags.
- All animals born or tagged after the **January 1, 2012** must be tagged with approved CSIP RFID tags. Approved CSIP RFID tags include the Shearwell Data Ltd SET tag and the Allflex RFID Button Tag.
- After **December 31, 2012** the Ketchum Kurl lock #3 and the Allflex dangle tags will be officially removed from the list of approved tags for the CSIP, and will no longer be accepted at sales, abattoirs or by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) as official CSIP tags for shipping, transfer or sale of sheep in Canada.



COLLABORATION

Canadian Sheep Identification Program Working Group (CSIP WG), Sheep Technical Advisory Team (STAT) and IGAC - Long Term Cost Sharing Working Group (LTCSWG)

As a member of these groups, industry and government are working very hard for the sheep industry on many subjects related to ID and traceability:

- The CSIP WG advises the Canadian Sheep Federation's Board of Directors on evaluation, approval, testing of tags, taggers, software and any equipment related to the use of RFID for producers, and any other items involving the Canadian Sheep Identification Program;
- The STAT (working with the National RFID and Alberta Lamb Traceability Pilot data) and the IGAC – Long Term Cost Sharing Working Group (a national industry/government advisory group for all commodities) deal with evaluation, analysis, calculations of cost and benefits of identification and RFID systems for the producer and the value chain.

With information and work from these groups, the CSF Board of Directors is also working with the CFIA on the creation, understanding and development of the policies and regulations involved with mandatory ID and traceability.

NEW COMMITTEE

National Identification Device and Methodology Advisory Committee (NIDMAC) - This new national committee has been created by CFIA.

In the draft terms of reference, the initial objectives and tasks of this new committee are:

Objectives:

- Provide a transparent, scientifically-based identification device approval and revoking process
- Taking steps to reduce the impact for regulated parties in adopting new identification devices or new identification technologies
- Enhance communications as to which identification devices have been approved or revoked
- Maximize the retention and legibility of approved identification devices.

Tasks:

- Review identification device trial protocols and trial results
- Review complaints made on approved identification devices
- Review cost-benefit and impact analysis (when required)
- Review appeals made
- Provide recommendations to the National Manager

We are proud to announce the availability of some new material in English and French:

- 8 RFID tagging videos available on the CSF website;
- A PowerPoint presentation on the RFID systems and project is available to National and Provincial Sheep Associations for public events;
- New information brochures will also soon be available.

RESOURCES

SHEEPCENTRAL - A great source for information

www.sheepcentral.ca was originally built for the Alberta Lamb Traceability Pilot Project. As information and experience have accumulated, the website has become a valuable resource, providing information to the Canadian sheep industry on:

- Electronic technology systems
- Costs and potential benefits of improving flock management using new electronic systems
- Provincial and national traceability projects and animal identification
- International information and research on sheep traceability
- The site also serves as a communication link between specific co-operating lamb processors and their producer suppliers.

Use the navigation side bar to help locate information you may be looking for:

- **Alberta Pilot Project** - Cost and benefits, processor and producer information
- **Equipment** - Product review process, contacts, user guides, tutorials
- **Management Software** - Software review process, contacts, tutorials, user manuals
- **Tech Talk** - The language of technology, definitions
- **Links** - Who, what, why, when, where to look for more information
- **MeatCentral** – a prototype of a data exchange system between a processor and lamb producers. Carcass information will assist producers in producing lambs to suit specific market targets.

If you have any comments or questions, please visit the CSF website at www.cansheep.ca or contact me at daniel@cansheep.ca.

A Reminder During Lambing Season – Food Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) Program

By Niki Petrie - Interim National On-Farm Food Safety Program Project Coordinator

During lambing season there can be an increase in the usage of animal health products. This is typically in response to poor milk production, ewe recovery issues or poor lamb performance. Whatever the reason it is important to be reminded that animal health product treatments are a Critical Control Point (CCP) in the FSFP program.

As with all aspects of the FSFP program, records are an essential part of this step. Animal health product records are essential to ensure that:

- Treated animals are identified;
- Withdrawal periods are met; and,
- Animal health products are used properly.

Animal health product treatment records are essential to ensure withdrawal periods are met for the prevention of product residues in the meat and/or other sheep and lamb products.

As outlined in the Producer Manual for the program, Record 1: Animal Health Product Treatments should be used when treating any animals, including breeding stock, slaughter lambs, feeder lambs, orphan lambs and cull sheep, with an animal health product.

Record:

- treatment date(s);
- animal health product used;
- dosage; and;
- animal or pen identification.

Veterinary prescriptions and package inserts must be kept for all animal health products. Use a reliable method to identify and track sheep, or groups of sheep (pens) that have been treated (i.e. eartags, livestock markers, pen description, and/or identification number). If using markers, ensure markings are visible until the end of the withdrawal period.

Review Record 1: Animal Health Product Treatments to confirm withdrawal times are met prior to shipping.

If an animal health product is incorrectly administered (i.e. to the wrong animal, at the wrong dosage, incorrect route, or for a longer period than prescribed), identify the mistreated animal(s), withhold from slaughter and obtain veterinary advice if necessary to ensure correct withdrawal times are met.

Prevention of animal health product residue in our food supply is expected and demanded by our customers and delivered by our producers. Your ability to record and demonstrate compliance is the basis of this food safety program.

For more information about the FSFP program, visit www.cansheep.ca or email me at n.petrie@agrapoint.ca

From Around the World

Tainted lamb fears surface in North China after tests

BEIJING - Consumers who were sent into a panic recently after a banned and hazardous additive was found in pork are facing up to the fact that the same substance may also be tainting lamb. The latest food safety scare flared when clenbuterol was allegedly detected in live sheep that had been sold in North China.

The substance had previously been fed to pigs by farmers because it promoted muscle and reduced fat, bringing a higher price for pigs, even though it risked the health of consumers.

In the latest scandal, 198 sheep awaiting slaughter and processing in Hebei province were suspected of having been fed the banned additive, the food inspection authority in Hebei said on Sunday. The sheep had previously been bought from Qingyun county in Shandong province.

The authority said a spot check indicated that two of the sheep tested positive for clenbuterol. All 198 animals were subsequently impounded. Two farm managers were taken into police custody and further investigation is under way, Qingyun county government said on Monday. The government also dispatched 10 work teams to carry out strict checks at sheep farms in the county. The results of those checks were not known by press time on Tuesday.

The case provoked panic among the public once again following the earlier incident in which Jiyuan Shuanghui Food Co Ltd in Central China's Henan province was found in March to have purchased pigs that had been fed the banned additive.

The substance can speed up the growth of muscles and burn fat, resulting in leaner meat but has been banned in China as an additive in animal feed since 2002 because it can cause

people to suffer from nausea, headaches, limb tremors and even cause cancer.

The scandal last month caused huge recalls of meat products processed by Jiyuan Shuanghui in supermarkets across the country.

Li Bo, a staff member from Beijing's animal health inspection institute, told China Daily on Tuesday that most of the capital's lamb came from the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and none had been found to contain clenbuterol. "In Beijing, all livestock, such as pigs and sheep, must be processed at designated slaughterhouses and undergo strict tests," he said.

But Wang Jiankun, a Beijing resident, said he plans to eat more vegetables and less meat following the health scares.

"It's really terrible that they add so many additives to livestock feed," he said. "I don't know which meat product will test as poisonous the next time so the best thing to do is refuse to eat it."

Liang Haoyi, a senior researcher at the China Animal Agriculture Association, said the flurry of cases connected to illegal additives in livestock feed shows that the government should bring in more effective measures to prevent the supply of such toxic ingredients.

"At present, major checks only target livestock farmers and slaughterhouses," he said. "More investigations should be focused on where farmers can buy the toxic additives."

Source: <http://news.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20110406-272038.html>

From Around the World

NFU urges action over EID rules for sheep

The NFU has met with delegates from the EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) to raise concerns over the implementation of the electronic tagging (EID) rules for sheep.

Delegates are in the UK for a fact-finding tour on how the UK has implemented the rules since its introduction last year. This was an opportunity for both NFU Cymru's President Ed Bailey and NFU chief livestock adviser John Mercer to tackle a number of issues farmers are facing by complying with the regulation.

Mr Mercer said: "There seemed to be a genuine willingness on behalf of the inspectors to listen to the concerns of the industry and we are hopeful that the following two weeks will highlight how UK farmers are trying their best to comply with the legislation.

"We emphasised the need for tolerance when it comes to tag reading for all movements of sheep. We stressed that it was essential that the commission realises that it is impossible to achieve 100 per cent reads 100 per cent of the time, due to a number of factors and working conditions found on farms, markets and abattoirs, and as such formal recognition needs to be given to this.

"Farmers are also rightly concerned about the potential financial implications of read failures and the impact any subsequent SFP penalty would have on their business and income.

"The other main issue raised was the reporting and recording of the historic flock. As of next year farmers will have to individually record the older animals that were identified pre-2010 and therefore do not contain EID tags.

However, the NFU has asked for this requirement to be put back or postponed in order for these older animals to filter out of the system and ease the pressure on producers."

Mr Mercer and Mr Bailey also discussed with delegates ways in which present regulations could be more suited to the conditions of the UK in order to limit the regulatory burden posed by the rules. The NFU firmly believes there are a number of areas which would make its implementation less demanding while maintaining the core principles of traceability and the NFU took the opportunity to raise these with the inspectors.

"We look forward to meeting with the FVO later in the trip and to their report and working with the European Commission to make this regulation more fit for purpose," added Mr Mercer.

Source: http://www.smallholder.co.uk/news/8949526.NFU_urges_action_over_EID_rules_for_sheep

From Around the World

Food Safety in Canada is Lax and Needs Better Oversight, says CMAJ

Canada needs better regulation and oversight of food safety to protect Canadians as the current system is lax, states an editorial in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal).

"Canada's public and private sectors are not doing enough to prevent food-borne illnesses," writes Dr. Paul Hébert, Editor-in-Chief with coauthors. "Among the major failings are inadequate active surveillance systems, an inability to trace foods from "farm to fork" and a lack of incentives to keep food safe along the "farm to fork" pathway."

Canada rates in the middle of the pack in rate of control of some food borne pathogens, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's World Ranking: 2010 food safety performance. The same report ranks our food industries and government agencies second last (15th out of 16) in knowing where food originates, how it is processed and the journey to the consumer.

The country needs more rigorous food safety standards and a surveillance mechanism. The authors argue that better government policies and standards are required, as are incentives for industry to encourage improvements in food safety.

"Private and public oversight of food safety should be reformed to ensure sufficiently uniform practices across the country so that we can make comparisons among different regions, suppliers and types of food," they write.

"Food will never be sterile and risk-free. However, without changes, many people will be harmed and some will die because of preventable contamination," they conclude.

Source: <http://www.foodingredientsfirst.com/news/Food-Safety-in-Canada-is-Lax-and-Needs-Better-Oversight-says-CMAJ.html>