



# 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.*

## Work to update Code of Practice for Care and Handling of Sheep

The CSF is working with the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) to update the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of sheep, through NFACC's Code of Practice development process.

The current code was published in 1995 and has guided producers for almost a decade as an educational tool in the promotion of sound management and welfare practices. While the Code is not intended as a production manual, the Code contains recommendations to assist producers to improve their own management practices.

NFACC is a collaborative partnership of diverse stakeholders created in 2005 to share information and work together on farm animal care and welfare. It is the national lead for farm animal care issues in Canada. As such, they were a perfect fit to take on the lead role in updating various commodity codes of practice. While NFACC applied for funding through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agri-Flexibility program to update a number of commodity codes and is overseeing the development process, it has been up to producer organizations to step forward and express interest in updating their codes – an opportunity that CSF capitalized on, recognizing the benefits for sheep producers across the country. There continues to be growing concern, both by producers and consumers, for the welfare of livestock.

The Codes are prepared with input and support of scientific experts and by consensus of diverse groups involved or interested in farm animal care and welfare. "Renewing the Codes of Practice provides a good opportunity to ensure the Codes are based on the most current scientific literature," states Andrew Gordanier, Chair of the Canadian Sheep Federation. "As production systems and management evolves, reviewing the Codes of Practice helps ensure they remain relevant and well-used by producers. This assures stakeholders and the public that Canadian sheep and lambs continue to be produced under sound management and welfare practices that promote the well-being of the animal."

The expectation is to have an updated version of the Code available in 2013. For more information on the Codes of Practice and NFACC's Code development process visit.



# Reimbursements Available for Producers on Scrapie Flock Certification Program

If you are enrolled, or planning on enrolling on the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP), you could be eligible to receive the following reimbursements until December 17, 2012:

- \$100 per year towards the cost of the annual veterinarian inventory visit.
- Scrapie brain testing (at designated laboratories) will be paid for by the program. See information below about laboratories.
- \$110 towards the cost of hiring a veterinarian to come to the farm to remove a brain sample meant for scrapie brain testing.
- \$20 per shipment to send scrapie brain samples to designated laboratories.
- Producers must submit copies of all receipts to Scrapie Canada at 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, ON, N1K 1B1. Producers who completed their annual inventory or shipped brain samples to a laboratory for testing between April 1st and October 31st, 2010 are permitted to send in their receipts for reimbursement.
- As of November 1st, 2010 receipts must be submitted within 30 days of the billing date on the veterinarian invoice or shipping receipt to be eligible for reimbursement.
- The Canadian Sheep Federation, who administers the financial aspect of the program, will be responsible for mailing out reimbursement cheques to producers.
- Reimbursements will not be applied to expenses incurred prior to April 1, 2010.

Scrapie Canada has made an agreement with the three laboratories listed below to provide scrapie brain testing for producers enrolled on the VSFCP.

- The Animal Health Laboratory at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario.
- Prairie Diagnostic Services in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
- Alberta Agriculture Laboratory in Edmonton, Alberta.
- Producers must submit the appropriate sample submission form with their sample in order to avoid being charged for the testing fees. Sample submission forms are available by contacting Scrapie Canada. If producers do not submit the sample submission form with their sample, they will be charged the full cost of the testing fees. The VSFCP will only pay for testing fees; other costs such as sample removal and/ or head and carcass disposal will be invoiced to the producer.

For more information, contact the National Scrapie Coordinator at [scrapiecanada@gmail.com](mailto:scrapiecanada@gmail.com) or 1.866.534.1302.

# Traceability for sheep – Back to basics

## Understanding traceability

**When will traceability be implemented?** Federal government has mandated that full traceability for the livestock sector be phased in starting in 2011.

**What is full traceability?** “Traceability” or “traceability system” means the ability to trace the movement history, application or location of an entity by means of recorded identifications.\* Traceability already occurs for livestock in Quebec.

*\*Defined by Industry-Government Advisory Committee (IGAC), which leads the development and implementation of a national traceability system.*

What are the advantages?

- Unique identification and traceability play key roles in on-farm risk management.
- Traceability allows for governments to trace animals during disease outbreaks and zoned quarantines for faster recovery of markets, etc.
- There is potential to reduce on-farm labor and handling costs as well as improve management practices.
- It is already possible to register purebred and commercial sheep with Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) tags, which also fit with the requirements for traceability.

## Towards full traceability

**Why aren't sheep fully traceable under the current CSIP?** Currently, identified sheep in Canada (not including Quebec) can only be traced to their farm of origin – movement and contact with other animals in the marketing chain are unknown. The ability to rapidly trace an animal throughout its life cycle is essential to isolating animal health emergencies and can help limit the health, economic, trade, environmental and social impacts of such emergencies.

Traceability systems in Canada are based on three basic elements: animal identification – unique identifiers (usually ear tags) for each animal; and, premise identification – where the animals were born; and animal or product movement tracking.

The animal or product movement requirement is not being met today due to the limitations of the current tags, and as such will limit the creation of a traceability database. Tags used in a manual system pose great challenges – they are labor

intensive to read and report – not to mention they often result in a high margin of error. The fact that tags are not retired from the tag database when sheep die or are slaughtered is another barrier to full traceability.

**What's required to achieve full traceability?**

To meet the requirements set out for a national traceability system, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has investigated a number of tracking options that would best suit the unique size and structure of our industry, with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems emerging as the best option of those currently available.

These systems, which incorporate RFID tags, readers and computer software, collect and combine animal identification information with other recorded attributes. Industry-specific research is currently being conducted on-farm to test the technology's practicality and to determine the benefits for sheep producers.

## Traceability for sheep – Back to basics

**What's the benefit of RFID over a manual system?** RFID tags and readers increase the accuracy and speed of transactions and processing of animals, while reducing the amount of manual labor and transcription errors that can occur under a manual system.

**Will RFID be a bigger investment than a manual system?** The initial purchase and application of RFID tags will be a greater investment than the current tags, but it is expected the advantages of the electronic system will outweigh the manual one.

### Evolving for a changing industry

**What is Canadian Sheep Federation's (CSF) role in traceability?** Traceability is a joint responsibility between industry and government. As such, CSF is committed to ensuring that the CSIP evolves with the changing needs of producers and the industry. Canadian sheep producers and provincial and national sheep organizations are discussing how to best capture the benefits to sheep producers from electronic flock management systems.

**Why pursue traceability?** Traceability is essential in today's environment that includes a growing emphasis on animal health and an increased threat of foreign animal disease. Since 2000, there have been eight foreign animal diseases in Canada. Handling these outbreaks properly to minimize risk to sheep producers requires an effective traceability system.

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