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From the *flock*

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CANADIAN SHEEP INDUSTRY

Value Chains

By Jennifer Fleming, Executive Director and France Lanthier OFFS Coordinator

There has been a lot written in the sheep industry lately about the importance of understanding the consumer. Knowing our customers' needs and the ever-changing dynamics of the end-use market are critical components of our long-term success and sustainability – how else are we to deliver a product that people want?

At the same time, the microscope seems to be turning on us as producers of food – a quick glance at the current media coverage of the “local” and “slow food” movements indicates that more than ever consumers are interested in where their food comes from, its healthfulness and how its production is affecting society and the environment.

In recent months one would have to be completely shut off from the media not to have read, heard, or seen something to do with where food comes from or how it is produced. For example, books such as *The 100 mile diet* and articles written in magazines like *Utne Reader*. In their January/February 2008 edition there is an article titled “Sunny side up”, which explains how free range eggs are not only better for you (lower in cholesterol) but the hens are also happier. There is also the USDA's recent statement that there are no food safety issues associated with cloned food.

It all sounds good, right? This kind of scrutiny on food production can only have a positive outcome. The problem is it doesn't tell the complete story.

Because the reality is that today consumers are also still clamouring for food that is both convenient and affordable – two features that have significantly shaped how food is produced – and delivered – to the consumers' dinner table for the past several years.

How is one to explain this apparent dichotomy between attitude and behaviour? Other than pointing out the local and slow food movements might just be the latest trends extolled by a small, but loud, minority, I don't pretend to have the answer. However, I do propose that these observations highlight an opportunity that is facing our industry – and the agriculture industry at large.

Consumer interest in food production is only a good thing if the information they receive is accurate and complete. And current interest aside, it's safe to say that the average consumer today is still woefully unaware of where and how their food is produced. We, as the producers of this food, have a role in filling this gap.

How are we to do that? One way I propose is through value chains. Value chains will play an increasingly significant role in providing information to producers on how their food is produced. Not only do value chains assure that a consistent message is delivered, they also increase the outlets through which the food chain communicates with the consumers.



Value Chains continued

In order for a value chain to work and be effective the chain must first be linked, that is all the players in the food chain from the producer to the retailer must first be brought to the table. Without a concerted effort the chain breaks.

One example of an effective value chain is the Mutton Renaissance in the UK spearheaded by Prince Charles. While it is evident that having a spokesperson of a Royal pedigree has surely helped with headlines, the glamour factor in this story does not overshadow the fact that this initiative is working because market analysts found a market for mutton, that restaurateurs and retailers found a way to present it in an appealing way, and most importantly producers worked at producing mutton that no longer has the characteristics of fattiness and toughness that has plagued it since World War II.

Value chains are one way that the industry can focus its efforts, and that we can ensure that consumers are getting accurate and complete information.

Some upcoming value chain management workshops and conferences:

Date	Location	Fee	Topic	Contact
January 22	Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Super 8 Hotel	\$25.00	Internet Marketing	Bryan Kosteroski (306) 975-6851
January 28	Guelph, Ontario Ramada Inn	\$35.00	Value Chain Management for the sheep industry.	Norma Collett (519) 836-0043
January 30 to February 1	Westin Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax, Nova Scotia	\$ 330 early bird \$415 regular	Leading edge professional development and networking opportunity for farmers, farm families and their advisors	www.farmcentre.com 1-866-492-1171
January 30-31	Ramada Plaza Hotel 36035 North Parallel Rd, Abbotsford, British Columbia	Day 1 – free Day 2 - \$50	Day 1: Understanding Supply Chain Distribution Problems Day 2: An Introduction to Value Chains Workshop	Bill Henderson (250) 356-1675
February 7	Langenburg, Saskatchewan	n/a	Identifying opportunities to improve competitiveness	Michelle Andrews (306) 743-5176
February 22	Acme, Alberta	n/a	Explore how value chains can help improve your business practices and long-term profitability.	Callie Fox (403) 443-5541



Scrapie Canada Update

By Courtney Denard, Scrapie Coordinator

As the New Year is upon us, it is a good time to take stock of past events, focus on where we stand today, and develop plans for the future.

The past year was a productive one for Scrapie Canada. The beginning of the year saw the approved extension of the National Genotyping Survey, which was to be originally completed in November 2006. With the extension, the project was permitted to run until March 31, 2008. This extra time offered producers another chance to genotype test their purebred registered sheep at a significantly lower cost. To date, the project has genotyped a little over 6,000 purebred sheep nationwide.

In April, movement at the border was big news. American sheep and goats were once again permitted to enter Canada. For producers who are interested in purchasing US breeding stock, this was a step forward. Stipulations came with this announcement however. Any Canadian producer importing American female sheep or goats must be a participant on the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program. The same goes for American producers- all farmers exporting female sheep or goats into Canada must be on the US scrapie program. There are no restrictions on importing male sheep or goats.

In July, the Canadian Sheep Federation attended the World Sheep & Wool Congress in Querétaro, Mexico. Networking with producers, industry representatives and delegates from around the world, CSF promoted the Canadian sheep industry- including its scrapie programs. Scrapie Canada sent promotional and informational material- in both English and Spanish- down to the meeting. Sheep industries throughout the world are placing value on scrapie programs, highlighting the importance of industry and producer involvement.

As it does every year, the fall brought agricultural events and producer meetings. Scrapie Canada attended 'Canada's Outdoor Farm Show' in Woodstock, Ontario. Each year, thousands of producers and industry representatives meet at this biggest outdoor farm show in Canada. Scrapie Canada took this opportunity to endorse the scrapie programs and answer inquiries from many interested producers.

Scrapie Canada also attended the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' Sheep Seminar in Atwood, Ontario in November. This meeting is a great venue for producers looking for practical, real life advice on the business of sheep production.

In October and November Scrapie Canada presented at both the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency annual general meeting in Guelph, Ontario and the Canadian Sheep Federation annual general meeting in Victoria, B.C. Between the two meetings, local, national and international producers and delegates met to discuss Ontario and Canada's sheep industry. Scrapie Canada took this opportunity to once again promote its initiatives- answering many questions and networking with a variety of industry stakeholders.

Currently, Scrapie Canada is focusing on two major priorities. First off, the completion of the National Genotyping Survey is taking place on March 31, 2008. Until this time, Scrapie Canada encourages all producers who are interested in genotyping their purebred, registered sheep, to do so. The reimbursement offered under the program is quite substantial. Producers are only charged \$10/ sample (plus tax) for testing, and are reimbursed an extra \$6/ sample for the vet call (up to 70% of the total invoice). Half of all shipping costs are also covered by the program. Testing outside of the program is about \$30/ sample, depending on the lab, plus tax and shipping. If you are interested in genotype testing your purebred, registered sheep, you can still do so until March 31, 2008. For more information, please contact Scrapie Canada.

Secondly, Scrapie Canada is currently working closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on the development of a long term Scrapie Surveillance program. Industry partners and government representatives throughout Canada and the world are placing more focus on national scrapie programs, and Canada does not want to lag behind. More details on this program will be revealed as it is developed.

Moving towards the future, Scrapie Canada continues to encourage all producers to get informed and involved. For further information, please call Scrapie Canada at 1-866-534-1302 or e-mail at admin@scrapiecanada.ca.



Treating the Critters

By Dr. . Kathy Parker, ASWC Zone 3 Director and Member of the CSF-OFFS Working Committee

This month's On-Farm Food-Safety article comes to us from Dr. Kathleen Parker. Dr. Parker is not only a practicing veterinarian for 27 years. Since 1989 Dr. Parker, along with her husband Glen and daughters Beverly and Lindsay has been operating a commercial flock in Three Hills Alberta. Over the last 9 years the farm has become more purebred focused. Dr. Parker has been an active member of the CSF's On-Farm Food Safety Technical Committee for over 2 years, and is currently Director of Zone 3 for the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission.

Medicating sheep can be frustrating because there are not a lot of the newer generation drugs labeled for sheep. Can you treat sheep like small cows? Will the pig dose work? If I have a withdrawal time for a cow can't I just use that? These are all questions that as producers we ask ourselves often daily. Preparations of antibiotics, insecticides, hormones, de-wormers, etc come with a label for a reason; it explains how to use the product so that you do not create a food safety mess. To be safe you should ALWAYS use any product that you inject, drench, pour on, feed or water to your sheep exactly how the label says.

So here is "how to read a label 101", I will use Oxymycin LA just because it is readily available through most farm supply stores. To start, sheep are not on the label AT ALL. So stop now. Nobody can just assume (myself included) that this particular drug will work for the diseases that are listed on the label but in sheep. To make that assumption you would need to know just what bug you think is causing the disease and if oxytetracycline will kill it. Rarely is mastitis, scours, pneumonia and the like caused by just one pathogen. Covering all of the bugs that could be causing you grief, is critical to the success of your treatment.

So because there is a subcutaneous dose for cattle on the label I can use that in my sheep, right? Maybe. Knowing how irritating the product is and how that affects absorption would be good to know. What is most worrisome is that if the treatment works and the animal makes it to slaughter, does the 42 day withdrawal time on the label for cattle with subcutaneous injection work for sheep? Maybe. The questions for you now are you willing to accept the risk for selling an animal to slaughter that might have an antimicrobial residue?

Are you willing to accept the liability of the consumer having an allergic reaction to that antimicrobial? Have you done what you can to protect yourself from such liability? I know that this can be scary stuff but there are things that you can do to protect yourself and your operation.

1. Follow the label, if the word "sheep" is not there STOP.
2. If the drug is NOT identified by a DIN number STOP
3. If the ailment that you are treating is not listed under the "Indication" part of the label, STOP
4. If the class of animal that you are treating is not listed on the label (e.g. lamb), STOP.
5. Now BEFORE you throw that bottle you are holding at the farm dog (better than at the farm wife) and call the truck to haul the sheep away, know that you do have options.
6. Use a product that actually has sheep on the label would be a great idea at this point. You can always call the truck later after you consider some other options. Yes drugs that actually have sheep on the label do exist and are currently under review by the Canadian Sheep Federation On Farm Food Safety Working Committee (CSF-OFFS WC). All outlets that sell farm animal supplies must have a "Compendium of Veterinary Products" (CVP) either on the premise or have it available on line. Ask for the label if you are not given one when you make your purchase. If you use a product in a food producing animal extra label YOU assume all of the risk if harm is caused.



Treating the Critters continued

7. If a labeled product isn't available that will do the job, then you need to get a prescription from your vet to use a drug in an extra label manner. Not only does the vet have a better idea that the drug is appropriate to use for that animal and disease, it is the veterinarian who wrote the prescription that is liable for damages. Prescription writing is something that vets take very seriously. Prescriptions are usually written for very specific cases and are not part of general protocols. The Canadian gFARAD (Farm Animal Residue Avoidance Database) exists to assist veterinarians in determining appropriate withdrawal times when drugs are used in a manner not indicated on the label. This knowledge may make a potential food safety disaster turn into application of sound medical judgment.
8. Remember to write down the identification of the animal you treated. Ear tags are really helpful here. What you treated the animal with, the dose given, the weight of the animal treated, what you were treating them for, and how long the meat withdrawal time is are all critical points to be noted. Record this information in some way that you can read it and retrieve it. Record keeping systems can be very elaborate and very simple, what is important is that accurate information is written down and you remember to look at it before any animals goes off to auction or slaughter.
9. Is this whole process a giant pain in the back side? If it is, its not pain without gain. All commodity groups are in the process of developing On Farm Food Safety Programs and have been for quite a while. So we may as well get our heads wrapped around this and get on with it.

The OFFS program currently under development by the CSF has at its heart the objective of protecting producers and consumers from food associated hazards. Whether that be bacterial contamination of meat, carcass condemnation because of sheep measles, or drug residue hazards, the program is designed to show "due diligence" on the part of the producer. The whole process of providing a safe product will also involve others in the food production chain such as the veterinarian, the packer, etc. It is impossible to control risk if do not know what those risks are.

So there is light at the end of the "pharmaceutical tunnel". All is not lost, sometimes you just need a new map and a bigger flashlight to see the end. While food safety involves the whole food chain, identifying and controlling the risks on your farm is up to you.



News From Around the World

Close More Farms

Reproduced from: www.nationalpost.com

'Buy local' is just the latest bid for protection from our tiny, shrinking agricultural sector.

If you're like me, you enjoy starting the day with a steaming cup of fresh data. Statistics Canada's The Daily, which arrives every morning by e-mail, usually satisfies my addiction. Yesterday's edition, on the "agriculture value-added account," provided a surprisingly pleasing jolt.

As you might think, the ag VA account measures value-added in agriculture. Value-added is the difference between the value of what you produce and the value of the purchased inputs you use to produce it. Total Canadian value-added, which is another name for our GDP, was \$1.45-trillion in 2006. How much of it do you suppose was due to agriculture?

If you're a reasonably informed Canadian who's heard for years from farm spokesmen about the importance of farming and the family farm and traditional farm values and you've the TV commercials promoting the Canadian dairy and beef and egg sectors and the sign-off every evening (when TV did sign off for the evening, that is) with O Canada! playing and grain elevators and amber waves of grain--oops! Sorry, that's the U.S. sign-off -- well, you'd probably put farm value-added at 4% or 5% of GDP, at least.

So it comes as a shock that Statistics Canada calculates gross farm value-added for 2006 at just \$12.8-billion, or 0.89% of GDP. Net farm value-added (after you take out depreciation) is just \$8.2-billion. A funny thing about the calculation is that in valuing farm output, StatsCan counts the \$4.5-billion of "program payments" farmers got from governments. To a certain extent that makes sense. If we give farmers \$4.5-billion a year, we must figure we get at least that much out of them beyond what we pay for food in the open market. Still, counting only what farmers actually sell brings them down to 0.57% of GDP.

Good for them! In absolute terms, half a per cent of GDP is a lot of economic activity. But it's hardly the economic cornerstone -- the vital lynchpin -- farming's advocates so often proclaim it to be. Maybe next time they come asking for program payments we shouldn't simply assume such a small sector is as critical to our collective wellbeing as its spokesmen claim.

Maybe that's why they prefer the "agri-food" sector. But more than a third of all employees in agri-food are in the hotel, restaurant and institutional sectors. You know, if farm lobbyists' nightmare scenario ever came to pass and every last farm was paved over, I suspect hotel, restaurant and institutional workers would still serve food for a living. It would be imported food, but they'd still serve it and we'd still eat it. We'd lose the "agri" but not the "food." To be sure, if the Taliban ever does break out of Kandahar province and succeed in blockading Halifax and Vancouver, not to mention the 119 land bridges between us and our NAFTA partners, we'll be in big trouble without viable domestic agriculture. But the odds of their doing that don't seem high.

Where the Taliban fail, however, Canadian "locavores" may succeed. As readers of the National Post's New Year's series on the innovative ideas of 2007 learned, a "locavore" is a devotee of the "local food" movement. Eating locally, which isn't actually a new idea -- agricultural protectionists have been recommending it ever since the first turnip peddler wheeled his wagon in from the next settlement over -- seems to be the next green fad.

Mary Vallis' charming piece in the Jan. 3 NP quoted one movement member who said local eating is so popular because it's voluntary: "We're not telling people to do something ... We're telling people to try something." How long will it be, though, before the Minister for Local Food tells us the time for trying is over, now we must do?



News From Around the World continued

Close More Farms continued

Reproduced from: www.nationalpost.com

Ms. Vallis quotes another locavore as saying: "Why would we be buying garlic in China when we could go out to our garden and dig it?" I can think of six reasons for starters:

1. I have a skating rink in my backyard and don't really want a garden.
2. If I had a garden, it would currently be covered with snow.
3. I'm not good at gardening.
4. Doing other things I'm better at allows me to make income I can use to buy garlic.
5. The Chinese do garlic well and sell it for less. ("Save money. Live better.")
6. There are things we'd like to sell China that they won't buy if we boycott their garlic.

And, oh, a seventh: Most of the world's poor people would like to try to better themselves selling us food. Should we really tell them to "Stuff it"?

But what chance does good sense have in the face of green mania? My bet is we're about to reverse four centuries of progress and raise farming's share of value added.

Record Australian lamb exports ... again

Reproduced from Meat & Livestock Australia

Australian lamb exports during 2007 smashed the previous calendar year record, as increased domestic production was matched by strong export demand, according to Meat and Livestock Australia. But exports for 2008 are forecast to decline from the 2007 record volumes, as tighter lamb production, higher lamb prices and a high Australian dollar impacts shipments.

MLA today reports that shipments for 2007 surpassed the previous record of 2006 by 10pc, to 161,037 tonnes (shipped weight) – the third consecutive year of record shipments, according to the Department of Agriculture. MLA says the growth in lamb shipments over the past three years has been largely fuelled by the combination of strong demand, particularly from the US, the Middle East and North Asia.

Since 2004, Australian lamb exports have increased 44pc, with exports more than doubling in the past 10 years. Complementing the growth in shipments has been a concerted shift towards lamb production, with producers responding to favourable returns and increased demand.

The US remained Australia's largest lamb destination during 2007, with shipments jumping 12pc year-on-year, to a record 44,500t. Assisting the record exports for the year was an abundance of well-finished heavy lambs during the final quarter of 2007, lower US lamb production and tighter NZ shipments. China established itself as Australia's second largest market for lamb during 2007, with exports for the year jumping 23pc, to 14,504t.

In contrast to China, lamb exports to Japan during 2007 slipped back 28pc, to 8516t, as demand eased and competition, particularly from US beef, increased. Shipments to the Middle East for 2007 jumped 26pc year-on-year, to a record 22,277t, as increased volumes were reported to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Jordan.



News From Around the World continued

Brazil sees sharp farm growth, despite environment

Reproduced from: uk.reuters.com

Brazil's farm sector will grow rapidly over the next decade and double some of its leading exports despite concerns over Amazon destruction and farmers' debt, the government said on Wednesday. Critics say Brazil's rapidly expanding agricultural frontier has helped push farmers and loggers deeper into the world's largest rain forest, increasing destruction.

"We can still grow substantially without any deforestation," Agriculture Minister Reinhold Stephanes told a news conference after presenting the government's 10-year farm sector outlook. Brazil's production of ethanol derived from sugar cane would grow by 113 percent and exports of the biofuel by 270 percent over the next decade, the report said. Brazil is to surpass the United States as the number one soy exporter, with foreign sales rising 40 percent to 50.5 million tons by the 2016/17 harvest.

The government last month banned the sale of farm products from illegally deforested areas in the Amazon in an attempt to reverse months of increasing destruction. It will impose fines for buying or trading goods such as beef or soy produced on illegally deforested properties. A new zoning law is in the making that would regulate farming according to environmentally sensitive regions.

Still, conservationists question whether the government has the resources to implement controls, even though it sent hundreds of additional police last month to the vast Amazon region, part of which is dominated by local political bosses, land speculators and gunmen.

Increased agricultural production would come from improved yields and increasing the use of already cleared land. Only 3 percent of Brazil's total land was being used for soy production, Stephanes said. Beef exports, which have grown 104 percent since 1994, would expand by a further 62 percent over the coming decade, the agriculture ministry projected. In order to expand its already dominant position in many commodities on the international market, Brazil would have to become more aggressive in coming years, Stephanes said. That included additional lines of credit for farmers, who have lost some capital after two consecutive bad crop years, he said. The government's projections assume world per capita income growth of 3.05 percent through 2016, up from 2.86 percent over the past decade.

Ranchers still unsure about the safety of cloned animals

Reproduced from: www.news8.com

After what's been called the largest food safety study in the world, the Food and Drug Administration announced this week that cloned animal meat is completely safe for humans to eat.

"It opens the door for the livestock breeder community to take the next step and look at how this technology can be used on their farms and ranches," ViaGen president Mark Walton said.

ViaGen is a global leader in commercial animal gene banking and cloning services and has been working with the FDA studying the safety of food from cloned animals and their offspring. Walton said they're thrilled that the final hurdle has been cleared. But most ranchers are still unsure about the safety and quality of cloned animals. "It's not on our radar screen right now because it's so new," cattle rancher Jim Schwertner said. He owns Capitol Land and Livestock in Williamson County.

Even though the FDA ruled that cloned meat is indistinguishable from natural animal meat, Schwertner isn't ready to invest just yet. "I don't care what the government says. I want to hear what the consumer tells me," Schwertner said. "If the consumer believes in the product, we'll develop it."

So what do consumers think?

"I wouldn't eat it, it sort of grosses me out," Lisa Roe said.

"Seems a little odd to me," Evette Alvarado said.

But Walton said that may be a preconceived notion.

"What most people know about cloning comes from science fiction rather than science fact," Walton said.

He points out some of the products already lining grocery store shelves come from animals that are a result of artificial insemination. And he added that cloned animals aren't genetically mutated. Instead they're exact replicas of the donor animal.

"We're not going to go to HEB probably ever and purchase meat from a cloned animal or milk from a cloned dairy cow," Walton said. But you could, in theory, purchase meat or dairy products from a clones' offspring starting now.

Walton said the consumer would not be able to taste the difference in milk from a natural-born cow or a clone. Consumer advocates are starting the fight to demand proper labeling for foods that come from cloned animals. Last month Congress passed legislation asking for further research on the issue.



Sheep Shows and Sales

Olds College Fibre Week 2008 -- Twisted Sisters & Company Fibre Mill Coloured and White Wool Show and Sale

Fibre Week is hosting The Twisted Sisters and Company Fibre Mill Coloured and White Wool Show and Sale, Sunday, June 29th, 2008 starting at 2:00 PM, in the large bay of the Ag Mech Building at Olds College, Alberta. All wool producers are encouraged to enter.

General classes for both coloured and white wool (Fine Wool, Down Wool, Long Wool, etc.) may include crossbred fleeces. In addition, there will be breed specific classes such as Merino, Shetland, Icelandic, Romney, Jacob, etc. for breeds with at least 5 entries and at least 3 different producers entering.

The Sale is by silent auction between bidders and producers, bids will close Tuesday, July 1st. Show fleeces are not required to be in the Sale.

Fibre Week has been hosting wool shows since 2004. Each show brings new opportunities for producers to display and sell their fleeces and for Fibre Week attendees to learn more about the wool of a wide variety of breeds of sheep. Fibre Week welcomes entries from all wool producers.

Date: Sunday, June 29th at 2:00 PM. The Sale begins after judging and is a silent auction format with winning bids payable to the producers. The Silent Auction Sale ends on Tuesday evening, July 1st.

Place: Olds College, Ag Mech Building, in the large bay in the Wool Show designated space.

Fees: The fee is \$5.00 per fleece which covers the Show and the Sale. Show fleeces do not have to be entered in the Sale but only those in the Sale will be displayed after the Show.

General Class Organization: Breed classes will run for any breed (Shetland, Icelandic and Jacob are listed and additional classes can be added, e.g. Merino, Romney, Suffolk or others) if there are at least 3 producers entering at least 5 fleeces of that breed. Please note on entry if a fleece could be entered in a breed class and state Breed. Crossbred fleeces and those fleeces without breed classes will be entered in the General Classes. Classes may be combined or split, as required to facilitate judging. All fleeces not in a breed class should be entered in the appropriate general classes based on fineness and wool character.

For example:

Fine: (under 30 micron) e.g. Merino, Rambouillet, Targhee, Corriedale, Finn and crossbreds with similar wool.

Down type: (~26 - 33 micron) e.g. Hampshire, Dorset, Suffolk, Texel and crossbreds with similar wool.

Long wool: (~30 - 42micron) e.g. Romney, Leicester, Cotswold, Lincoln and crossbreds with similar wool.

Specialty Fleeces: (~18 - 42 micron) e.g. Karakul, Churro, Scottish Blackface and crossbreds with similar wool.

Breed Classes: Class B1 - Shetland; B2 - Icelandic; B3 - Jacob, plus additional breed classes as warranted.

Coloured and White General Classes:

Class C1 – Coloured Fine wool; Class W1 – Fine wool
Class C2 – Coloured Down type wool; Class W2 – Down type wool; Class C3 – Coloured Long Wool; Class W3 – Long Wool; Class C4 – Specialty fleeces and Class W4 – Specialty fleeces

Awards: 1st, 2nd and 3rd place ribbons in each class; Grand and Reserve Champion prizes and Spinners' Choice Awards will be awarded for both coloured and for white fleeces.

Entries: Fleeces for the Show and Sale can be dropped off on Saturday, June 28th 11 PM to 3 PM at the Show and Sale area in the Ag Mech Building at Olds College. Show fleeces may be mailed, postage prepaid, to Linda Wendelboe, Box 43, Site 2, RR 2, Sundre, AB, T0M 1X0, prior to June 15, 2008. Mailed Show fleeces which are to be returned by mail must be accompanied by return postage as well.

CONTACT: To obtain rules and entry forms, phone Nancy, Extension Services, at Olds College and ask for a Fibre Week Brochure: (403) 556-4677; toll free in Canada: 1-800-661-6537, ext. 4677. Or download from the web site: www.oldscollege.ca/fibreweek. Any questions about the Show, fleeces or classes, contact Linda Wendelboe at (403)638-3912 or lrw@fibreworksfarm.com.

Volunteers: Anyone interested in helping with the Show and Sale, in any capacity, please contact Linda Wendelboe.



Sheep Producers Need to Focus on Costs

A sheep specialist with OMAFRA says producers need to start looking at their costs of production.

Anita OBrien says many in the industry merely raise the lamb and then ship it -- without really knowing what's going into that animal. She says producers should be asking themselves questions like can I raise a lamb for 60 dollars and how do I get more green in my pocket.

OBrien says if you've got your costs in front of you - then you can start figuring out how to reduce some of those costs. She says many producers she has worked with - have been able to save quite a few dollars -- without doing a lot different.

NFC Canadian Wool Judging Certification Levels 1 & 2

The Natural Fibre Centre in conjunction with Fibre Week at Olds College, is offering both its Wool Judging Certification, Level 1 scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, June 28th and 29th and Level 2 scheduled for Monday, June 30th, 2008. Both courses have lecture material and hands-on work with white and with coloured fleeces. Level 1 deals with judging criteria and methodology as well as wool characteristics, classifications and breed specifics. Level 2 covers objective measurement, more breed specifics and more in-depth information on wool faults and characteristics.

The instructor, Morris Beauvais, is a professional Wool Classer and has had an extensive career in the Wool Industry both in New Zealand and in Canada. Morris has in-depth knowledge of wool science as well as practical experience as a Wool Classer and a Wool Judge.

For details, fees and registration forms, visit the Fibre Week web site: www.oldscollege.ca/fibreweek or call Nancy at Extension Services, Olds College, ph. 1 (403) 556-4677; toll free in Canada: 1-800-661-6537, ext. 4677. If you have any questions about the course content, please contact Ruth Elvestad at NFC, (403)507-7977 or relvestad@oldscollege.ca

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