



Canadian Sheep Federation: July 2025 Progress Update

Summer is one of the busiest seasons on the farm — and while producers are hard at work managing flocks, pasture, and markets, the Canadian Sheep Federation is just as active behind the scenes. From advancing national traceability to preparing for disease threats and supporting on-farm innovation, we're working to ensure the decisions being made at policy tables translate into real-world benefits. This update captures some of the progress made in July — big steps, quiet wins, and everything in between.

Moving the Needle on National Traceability

The Canadian Sheep Federation is making meaningful progress in our transition into the role of Responsible Administrator (RA) for national sheep traceability. This change is far more than a title shift — it's a major evolution in how traceability will work in our sector, with producers leading the way.

Since the last update, we've advanced legal discussions with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The draft RA agreement, revised with input from our members and is now under formal review. While finalization of the agreement will take time, work is proceeding across multiple fronts to ensure we're well positioned to deliver on our responsibilities the moment it's in place.

Our digital platform, AgroLedger, continues to take shape as the backbone of this transition. Recent discussions with CFIA's traceability team were productive, with encouraging feedback about the strength of our system's trace and reporting capabilities. As the national framework continues to evolve, CSF is ready to fully support trace reporting and compliance needs, ensuring the sheep sector doesn't miss a beat during the transition.



Tag Ordering & Distribution

We're refining the system that tracks how tags move through the supply chain — from ordering to distribution — in preparation for taking on the administrative responsibilities currently handled by others.

Practical Launch Elements

Work continues on business planning, staff support, service agreements, and data preparations to ensure a smooth transition.

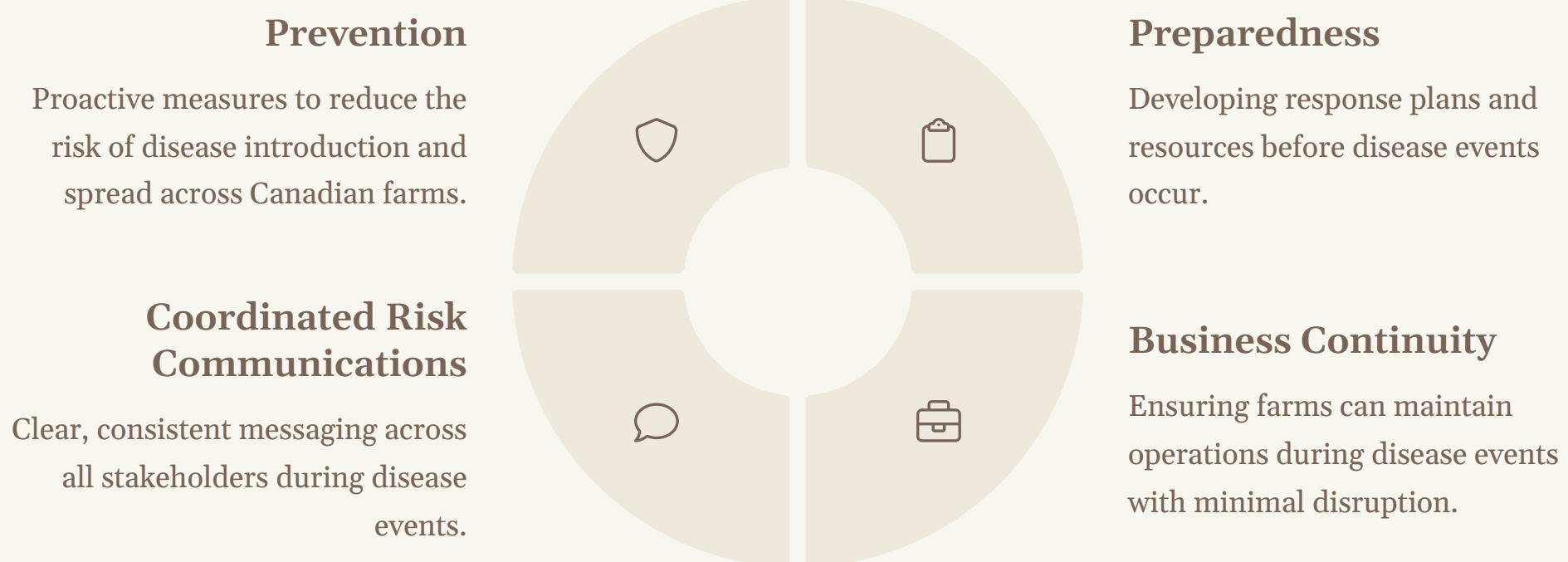
Committee Engagement

We're bringing internal committees back together to review key transition elements and ensure we're incorporating industry input at every step.

From legal review to platform upgrades, contract preparation to committee engagement — this is a complex transition with many moving parts. But it's moving forward. And when it's complete, Canada's sheep producers will have a traceability system that reflects our needs and strengthens our entire value chain.

A Seat at the Table for Emergency Disease Planning

In late June, the Canadian Sheep Federation participated in the inaugural meeting of the new Foreign Animal Disease Executive Management Board — a collaborative body established to prepare for and respond to major livestock disease threats like foot and mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever (ASF), and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). This Board builds on lessons learned from past outbreaks and brings together leaders from across Canada's livestock and poultry sectors, along with key representatives from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.



What sets this initiative apart is its long-term vision. Rather than reacting in crisis, the Board is focused on building trust, clarifying roles, and proactively developing the tools and relationships needed to respond swiftly and strategically when foreign animal diseases strike.

For sheep producers, our presence on this Board ensures that the unique needs and realities of our sector are fully considered in emergency planning. It gives us an early voice in shaping the national approach to managing FMD — a disease that could have devastating impacts if not contained quickly. And it ensures we stay aligned with broader sector strategies while still advancing solutions that fit the scale and structure of our industry.

The meeting also confirmed that this isn't a one-off initiative. The Board will continue to meet regularly, with working groups focused on species-specific strategies and shared challenges. It's an important step toward a more unified, effective response to livestock disease in Canada — and CSF is proud to be helping shape that future on behalf of Canadian sheep producers.

Eyes on Emerging Disease: What We're Watching

While major disease threats specific to sheep have remained quiet in Canada this past month, we're keeping a close eye on shifting global trends that could shape the risk landscape for livestock more broadly.

Vector-Borne Diseases

Recent disease intelligence flagged evolving risks around vector-borne illnesses. The Asian longhorned tick, found in several U.S. states, continues to raise concern due to its role in transmitting diseases such as *Ehrlichia chaffeensis* and *Theileria orientalis* IKEDA. These are not currently a threat to Canadian sheep flocks, but their expanding range serves as a reminder of how quickly conditions can change — especially with warming climates and increased animal movements.

Avian Influenza Developments

The Community for Emerging and Zoonotic Disease (CEZD) flagged updates around Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), including a new genotype found in BC ostriches. While not a sheep health issue directly, outbreaks like this can trigger heightened biosecurity measures across sectors, so we continue to monitor for any indirect effects on supply chains or animal movement controls.

New World Screwworm

Updates on New World Screwworm movement in Central America and modelling showing possible northward migration into central/northern Mexico by September are relevant. Although this parasite isn't currently in Canada, it's a devastating pest for livestock when present. Surveillance and border controls are our immediate remain lines of defense.

At the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System's recent vector-borne disease network meeting, federal and provincial experts reinforced that while Canada's domestic vector populations remain stable, climate-driven shifts are something we need to stay ahead of. As always, CSF remains engaged in these conversations to ensure sheep production risks are not overlooked in broader planning.

Right now, there are no direct or immediate threats to the Canadian sheep industry from the diseases currently under surveillance — but that's exactly why we monitor them. Keeping risk low means staying informed, aware, and engaged, even when the threat feels far away. They are always closer than we think.

Disease Surveillance: Current Global Situation

While Canada’s sheep flocks remain free of major disease threats, the CSF maintains vigilant monitoring of global animal health developments that could potentially impact our industry. Here’s a more detailed look at the current situation:

Disease/Vector	Current Status	Potential Impact	CSF Monitoring
Asian Longhorned Tick	Present in several U.S. states, expanding range	Vector for Ehrlichia chaffeensis and Theileria orientalis IKEDA	Tracking spread patterns and climate modeling
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza	New genotype found in BC ostriches	Potential for cross-sector biosecurity measures	Monitoring for supply chain or movement impacts
New World Screwworm	Movement in Central America, models show possible northward migration	Devastating parasite for all livestock if introduced	Engaging with border surveillance programs
Vector-borne diseases broadly	Canada’s domestic vector populations stable	Climate-driven shifts could change disease patterns	Participating in CAHSS vector-borne disease network

The Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System’s recent vector-borne disease network meeting reinforced that while current risks remain manageable, climate change could accelerate shifts in vector populations and disease patterns. The CSF continues to ensure sheep-specific concerns are represented in these broader surveillance discussions.

Our approach to disease monitoring reflects a key principle: prevention is always less costly than response. By staying engaged with national and international surveillance networks, we help ensure that emerging threats are identified early, giving producers more time to prepare and adapt if conditions change.

Currently, there are no immediate disease threats requiring action from Canadian sheep producers beyond standard biosecurity practices. The CSF will continue to monitor the situation and provide timely updates if risk assessments change.

Progress Continues on the Code of Practice for Sheep

The Canadian Sheep Federation participated in the recent National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) meetings in British Columbia this June. While the discussions held at NFACC are confidential, it's important to note that this gathering brought together national leaders from across the agriculture and animal welfare sectors to discuss Canada's approach to animal care standards.

For our part, the meetings provided an opportunity to reinforce the importance of producer-led engagement in shaping the new Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep — a document that will serve as a foundation for both regulation and on-farm assurance for years to come.

This work is ongoing, and the next meeting of the Sheep Code Development Committee is scheduled for July 29 and 30, where the committee will continue reviewing the scientific literature and developing recommendations based on a balance of evidence, practical considerations, and stakeholder values.

We continue to ensure that the voice of producers is well represented at the table, and that the evolving Code reflects practical, defensible standards rooted in both science and real-world experience. The process is collaborative, thoughtful, and still underway — and we'll keep you updated as key milestones are reached.



Exploring New Ground in Digital Governance

This month, the Canadian Sheep Federation joined an introductory discussion with the Digital Governance Council, a national organization that brings together public and private partners to shape how digital technologies are governed, standardized, and deployed across sectors. While the meeting was exploratory in nature, it opened up an exciting new avenue for potential collaboration.



Data Standards

Working to establish consistent approaches to how agricultural data is collected, stored, and shared across the sector.



Interoperability

Ensuring different digital systems can communicate effectively, reducing duplication and improving efficiency for producers.



Trust & Verification

Building frameworks that protect producer interests while enabling innovation in how technologies are used and verified.

With the increasing role of data, AI, and traceability in agriculture, our sector is rapidly becoming more digital — and governance matters. The Council supports this shift by helping organizations adopt digital standards, improve interoperability, and build trust in how technologies are used and verified.

As an organization working at the intersection of policy, regulation, and ag tech, CSF was invited to share insights from our work in livestock traceability and emerging technologies. We see potential value in working alongside others to shape the digital rules of the road — particularly when it comes to areas like data sharing, AI validation, and creating the standards that underpin responsible innovation.

This was an early conversation, but one that reflects CSF's continued push to ensure the sheep industry has a voice not only in agricultural policy, but also in the digital future that is increasingly shaping how agriculture operates. We'll keep exploring this opportunity to see how best to serve producers through potential partnerships, tools, and standards development.

Building Access to Ultrasound Training, One Partnership at a Time



This fall, the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board and Ontario Sheep Farmers will host ultrasound pregnancy scanning training sessions — in what we hope becomes a regular opportunity that helps producers build vital on-farm management skills.

These sessions do more than just train producers; they reflect a shared commitment to advancing broader public policy goals. The Canadian Sheep Federation continues to advocate for regulatory change that allows trained and certified independent technicians to perform pregnancy ultrasounds across the country. It's a safe, non-invasive, and effective tool that helps producers make more informed breeding and feeding decisions — yet access is still restricted by provincial rules in many areas.



Training

Provincial organizations host ultrasound pregnancy scanning training sessions for producers and technicians



Certification

CSF maintains a national certification program to ensure consistent standards



Advocacy

Working to change provincial regulations to improve access to trained technicians



Access

Long-term vision of better ultrasound access for producers across all regions

By partnering with provincial organizations to deliver training, we're doing our part to ensure producers and technicians alike are set up for success — with a national certification program already in place, and a long-term vision of better access for producers across all regions.

If you're interested in taking part in the upcoming training sessions in Ontario or Saskatchewan, we encourage you to reach out directly to the hosting organizations for more information.

Looking Ahead: Priorities and Next Steps

From national policy tables to on-farm training opportunities, the CSF remains focused on ensuring Canada's sheep producers are represented, supported, and set up for long-term success. These updates reflect just a snapshot of what's underway — much of it complex, much of it still evolving, and all of it driven by the goal of making this industry stronger.

As always, if you have questions, ideas, or want to get more involved, we're just a call or email away. The Canadian Sheep Federation is committed to transparent communication and meaningful engagement with producers across the country as we work together to build a stronger, more resilient industry.