

Canadian Sheep Federation Executive Director’s Report January 2022

Action Items from the December 2021 Board meeting.....	1
Program Updates.....	1
Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability.....	1
AgroLedger.....	2
Scrapie and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP).....	3
Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP).....	4
National Maedi Visna Program.....	4
Canada’s Small Ruminant Ultrasound Pregnancy Assessment Training and Certification Program.....	5
Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP).....	5
Working with Industry Partners.....	6
This month’s meetings.....	6

Action Items from the January 2022 Board meeting

- An application to the Canada Summer Jobs Program was submitted with input from the Board.
- The Board was provided with legal counsel’s feedback regarding questions to help inform the subsidiary discussion at the Special Member’s Meeting.
- A one-page summary of objectives for the two new Global Sheep Producers Forum working groups was circulated to members to help canvas for those interested in participating in the sustainability and next generation working groups.

Program Updates

Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability

The [Canadian Sheep Identification Program \(CSIP\)](#) is Canada’s mandatory, national sheep identification program. First introduced into regulations in 2004, CSIP was the first step in the development of a traceback system that will lead to a full-scale traceability system. A fulsome traceability system will help mitigate the spread of livestock diseases, support rapid disease response, address producer concerns about sheep health, provide valuable management feedback to producers, and meet consumer expectations for quality assurance and food safety. CSIP requirements for identifying sheep

and recording and reporting certain animal movement/disposal information have remained largely unchanged since they were first introduced in 2004. New technologies in animal identification have been incorporated into the program over the years as we work to modernize the system. The next round of traceability regulations has been in consultation since 2013. These incoming regulations will include requirements that track sheep, premises where sheep reside, and vehicles that transport animals as sheep move through the value chain. Not only will these regulations increase the amount of work required by farms to collect and report data, but they will also expand the scope of those involved in traceability reporting. The Canadian Sheep Federation is the national industry lead for traceability. We remain committed to ensuring that CSIP and future traceability regulations are affordable, flexible, and effective. To stay up to date on CSIP requirements and incoming traceability regulations, be sure to visit our website at www.cansheep.ca and follow our Facebook page @cansheep.ca.

Here are your January CSIP and traceability updates:

- An increasing number of tag shortages are being reported in other sectors including sheep tags in Quebec. Initially the shortage was primarily with Allflex tags as the Quebec manufacturing facility underwent upgrades. The Allflex tag manufacturing halt lasted longer than anticipated and other manufacturers began to experience supply chain issues. Luckily, Shearwell CSIP tag inventories across Canada are well stocked thanks to excellent planning by Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers!
- The CSF has partnered with the University of Toronto's Multidisciplinary Capstone Design program to develop new artificial intelligence technology that will use facial recognition to uniquely identify animals and expand the technology to be able to assess an animal's welfare status based on changes in facial expression. The Capstone team delivered their design review and critique in January, outlining the design overview, development pipeline, training models and preliminary user interface being used in the project. Over the next four months, the team will focus on completing the prototype, benchmarking and improving the technology's efficacy, deploying the solution and refining the user interface.

AgroLedger

The Canadian Sheep Federation developed AgroLedger to serve as the information management system for the sheep industry traceability program. The message from Canadian sheep farmers and ranchers was clear; if traceability is to become a reality in the sheep industry, it must give value back to its users. If we think of traceability solely in terms meeting regulations, the systems that manage them are nothing more than black holes into which farmers throw data and dollars. Canada's sheep farmers deserve better. The CSF set out to find a traceability solution that fits both future trace regulations and user needs without breaking the bank. We didn't have a lot of luck finding the kind of technology we needed so we built a custom system...we built AgroLedger. With the second phase of AgroLedger development complete, we have a program that can support traceability reporting for incoming regulations AND that provides some added value to users. Right now, AgroLedger lets you share animal records like registrations and performance indexing records, as well as vaccination and treatment records, with future animal owners. Want to scan a new animal's tag and know if it has been vaccinated? There's an app for that! And there is a lot more to come as we move to the next phase of development in 2022 and create even more value for AgroLedger users.

Here's some of the work we did with AgroLedger in January:

- The CSF was asked by the Standards Council of Canada to participate in a workshop aimed at adopting a framework that will promote the adoption of blockchain technology in Canada. Given the organization's work with AgroLedger, the CSF's Executive Director and IT Manager met with the leading consultants in preparation for the two-day event.
- The CSF ED met with project managers from the Canadian Centre for Swine Improvement working on a small ruminant genetics project, to

Approved for Distribution

discuss how AgroLedger might help the project meet its objectives of data collection and sharing. The group will touch base again in April to assess the potential for collaborating.

Scrapie and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)

The SFCP is a national flock/herd scrapie risk management program for the Canadian sheep and goat industries and is available to any sheep or goat producer who agrees to meet the program's requirements. The primary benefit to participating producers is the individual risk protection against scrapie in their flock/herd. Over time, producers will have their flock/herd recognized as being at a much lower risk for scrapie than the rest of the farms in the national flock and herd. This recognition can increase trade opportunities within Canada and considering the recent announcement about the U.S small ruminant rule, allows SFCP Certified Plus farms to export breeding stock to the United States. The long-term goal of the SFCP is to eradicate scrapie from the national flock and herd and to help open market access for export. The SFCP's National Standards (rules) are maintained by the CFIA, and the program is administered through Scrapie Canada, a division of the Canadian Sheep Federation. You can learn more about scrapie and the SFCP on the Scrapie Canada website, www.scrapiecanada.ca.

What's new with scrapie and the SFCP in January:

- An announcement from the United States Department of Agriculture that the 'small ruminant rule' [Docket no. APHIS-2009-0095] has been published means that Canadian producers will once again be able to export live sheep and goats for breeding and captive purposes (breeding stock) to the United States. Here is a summary of the rule's key points, with the complete version available on the Federal Register website: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/12/03/2021-26302/importation-of-sheep-goats-and-certain-other-ruminants#p-115>
 - For sheep and goats imported from Canada for purposes other than immediate slaughter or restricted feeding for slaughter, the importer would have to provide documentation showing that the animals have reached and maintained certified status in a scrapie flock certification program that has been evaluated and approved by the Administrator. Canada's Scrapie Flock Certification Program has been evaluated, and it has been determined that farms who have achieved Level Certified Plus on the SFCP meet this requirement. [<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-26302/p-115>]
 - Permits will be issued by the Administrator (APHIS) for sheep of certain classical scrapie-resistant genotypes (as determined by the NVSL or other APHIS approved lab). This includes female sheep of genotype AARR and male sheep of genotypes AARR and AAQR. [<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-26302/p-40>]
 - Imported sheep and goats must be permanently identified with a country mark using a means and in a location on the animal approved by the Administrator, but they did not specify any method of identification. Official ear tags will be required for imported animals but do not meet the country mark requirement. Tattoos are expected to meet the country mark identification requirement. [<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-26302/p-125>]

The CSF is working with the CFIA to finalize conditions for the Canadian export certificate and we will keep industry apprised once the certificate is ready to be used.

Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP)

The Canadian Verified Sheep Program is Canada's quality assurance program for sheep farms. Developed by the Canadian Sheep Federation with support from Canadian farmers and input from veterinarians, industry stakeholders and government, this voluntary program helps farmers and ranchers implement, demonstrate, and validate exemplary food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity management practices. With the help of the CVSP's **FREE** training, you will have the tools to help reduce on-farm food safety, biosecurity, and animal welfare risks.

The steps to implementing the Canadian Verified Sheep Program are straight forward. The Canadian Verified Sheep Program Manual has everything you need to implement the program on your farm. The steps for implementation are:

1. Participate in a producer training session either online or in person. In person sessions are delivered by trained trainers, usually associated with provincial sheep organizations. You can start your **FREE** online training by visiting the CVSP website at fsfp.cansheep.ca
2. Review the CVSP Producer Manual which contains all the practices and record keeping requirements for the program.
3. Adapt the material in the manual to fit your operation. While there are various "must do" good production practices in the program, they may not all be applicable to your farm.
4. Utilize the good production practices and records on your farm, and train workers to follow practices.
5. Record mishaps when they happen and keep notes on how they were corrected.
6. After completing steps 1-5 for one full production cycle, you can apply for an audit to become fully Certified on the program.

Did you know that the CVSP is recognized by the CFIA's Food Safety Recognition Program? The [Food Safety Recognition Program \(FSRP\)](#) is a program led by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), with the participation of provincial and territorial governments, that provides government recognition of on-farm and post-farm food safety systems developed and implemented by national industry organizations. The FSRP is a multi-step process that consists of a review, an assessment, the recognition and ongoing monitoring of the technical soundness and administrative effectiveness of national industry organizations' implemented food safety system.

- If you haven't taken the CVSP training program, you should. The material is helpful for managing on-farm food safety, biosecurity and animal welfare risks. The record keeping documents help you organize critical information, and the training is completely, **100% FREE** courtesy of the Canadian Sheep Federation. Did we mention training is **100% FREE**?

National Maedi Visna Program

- The CSF re-invigorated its National Maedi Visna Working Group, with support from the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association and Canadian National Goat Federation, to pick up with work plans last considered in late 2018. The Working Group met first in early October and again in November. From the last workplan, the WG expects to focus on establishing testing, biosecurity, and status assessment protocols, evaluate testing methodologies and standardize testing costs, and propose a future program administration framework.
- The National Maedi Visna Working Group is accepting new members including members from the veterinary community interested in helping improve maedi visna control measures in Canada.

Canada's Small Ruminant Ultrasound Pregnancy Assessment Training and Certification Program

- Canada's small ruminant industries have finalized their Ultrasound Pregnancy Assessment Certification program, which offers two programs 'pathways': Trained and Certified.
 - The *Trained* pathway requires completion of the theory training unit as outlined in the program documentation with the option of completing the practical training unit. The practical training unit is not required to be deemed Trained. This pathway is intended for those whose goal is to perform their own on-farm pregnancy ultrasound assessments. Trained individuals who wish to upgrade their program status to Certified will need to demonstrate practical training or experience equivalent to that required of Certified individuals and will be required to successfully complete the examination process outlined in the program's documentation.
 - The *Certified* pathway requires completion of the theory and practical training units as outlined in the program documentation, as well as an examination to evaluate skill level. This pathway is intended for those who wish to provide commercial ultrasound pregnancy assessment services. *Certified* technicians endorsed by the SRUOC are deemed to be proficient in conducting pregnancy ultrasound assessments in keeping with the expectations of Canada's small ruminant industries. *Certified* program status does not necessarily confer the right to practice.
- Planning is underway for an ultrasound training course in the summer of 2022. Please reach out to the CSF if you are interested in taking the training program.

Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP)

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a progressive, fatal nervous system disease that affects cervid species. It is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy, or prion disease. It is contagious amongst cervids, like scrapie in sheep. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) belongs to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), or prion disease. Though it shares features with other TSEs, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle and scrapie in sheep and goats, it is a distinct disease only known at this time to naturally affect members of the deer (cervid) family. In 2002, the CFIA established national standards for a Voluntary Herd Certification Program (VHCP, now the HCP) to provide cervid owners with tools to help mitigate the risk of developing CWD and the opportunity to have their herds identified as minimal risk with respect to CWD.

The Canadian Sheep Federation began administering the CWD HCP in Ontario back in 2009, because both its National Standards and the program's administration closely mirrored the Scrapie Flock Certification Program. Now the CSF serves as CWD HCP Regional Administrator and Status Assessor for cervids farms located in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.

What's new with CWD:

- Based on its role as Regional Administrator for the Chronic Wasting disease Herd Certification Program in various provinces, the CSF is contributing to the work of the CWD Feeds Working Group. This working group is undertaking a risk assessment of the transmission of CWD through feed sources and will look at the potential for CWD to be spread through contaminated feed sources. The risk assessment is intended to wrap up in April and should provide interesting insight into the risk of spread of infectious prion through the environment.

Other Updates and Working with Industry Partners

- Exciting news from the Canadian Sheep Federation's Special Member's Meeting held Tuesday January 11th; CSF members voted in favor of the organization striking a for-profit subsidiary. The new corporation will commercialize the CSF's new technologies and design and develop innovative new agriculture technology tools. The subsidiary will be defined as an agriculture technology company.
- The Canadian Sheep Federation hosted its Annual General Meeting virtually on Tuesday January 11th. Here are a few highlights from this year's AGM:
 - A presentation from MKP Chartered Professional Accountants with respect to the CSF's annual audit noted their opinion that "...the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at August 31, 2021, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations."
 - The CSF wrapped up its 2020-21 fiscal year with a surplus of revenues over expenses, increase in net assets and improved cash position compared to the previous fiscal year.
 - The Annual Report shared exciting developments with respect to renewed access to the U.S. market for Canadian breeding stock, access to new vaccines, new program development including pregnancy ultrasound technician training and certification, and innovative technology development for the purposes of animal identification and welfare assessment.
 - Attendees had an opportunity to view AgroLedger and some early progress on the artificial intelligence technology that will use facial recognition to uniquely identify animals and assess their welfare state.
- The CSF met with Telus Agriculture representatives to discuss a collaborated response to Canada's 5G consultation with a goal of improving rural connectivity. Feedback on the consultation will include recommendations allowing up to 4 suppliers to service any given area, and would require successful spectrum buyers to deploy 5G in rural areas with 3-5 years of purchase. Traditionally, telecom companies buy up coverage only to develop urban areas leaving rural coverage areas undeveloped.
- The CSF is working with national small ruminant groups to develop recommendations for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency regarding the recently suspended import option 2C for male sheep and goats. Meetings took place in December and early January and recommendations are currently being drafted and once ratified, will be submitted to CFIA.

This month's meetings

- Animal Health Canada Governance Committee X 2
- Canadian Sheep Federation Board of Directors

Approved for Distribution

- Animal Health Canada Working Group
- Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions (CAFÉ) Animal Care Committee
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Humane Transport
- University of Toronto Capstone Team X 2
- Canadian Livestock Transportation Advisory Committee
- Veterinary Drug Directorate – Access to veterinary pharmaceuticals
- Canadian Sheep Federation Special Member’s Meeting
- Canadian Sheep Federation Annual General Meeting
- Capstone – Volunteer students
- Intersol
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency – AgroLedger
- Telus Agriculture – 5G Consultation
- Standards Council of Canada (2 days) – Blockchain Standardization Workshop
- Inventures Canada – Summer speaker’s panel
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency X 2 – U.S. small ruminant certificate negotiations
- Capstone – Volunteer student presentation
- Chronic Wasting Disease Feeds Working Group X 2
- National Farm Animal Care Council X 2
- Canadian Sheep Federation subsidiary Board of Directors
- Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System (CAHSS) Small Ruminant Network
- Canadian Sheep Federation Audit & Finance Committee
- University of Guelph
- Thrive Canada
- Centre for Emerging Zoonotic Diseases (CEZD)
- National Farm Animal Care Council
- Canadian Centre for Swine Improvement – Genetics project and AgroLedger
- Small Ruminant Group – Import policy