

# Advancing Canada's Sheep Industry Together

CANADIAN SHEEP FEDERATION

Annual Report 2024



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Delivers to  
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# 2024 Annual Report from the Chair

I have considered it a privilege to have been elected to serve as Chair of the Canadian Sheep Federation for 2024 and to carry on with the renewed vision established by provincial members when they breathed new life and governance into the organization following the events of 2016. 2024 was an eventful and successful year for the Canadian Sheep Federation thanks to the diligent work of our Executive Director and the dedication of the Board of Directors who not only volunteer their time but put their hearts and souls into making decisions that contribute to the longer term success of some 13,000 Canadian sheep enterprises that contribute more than \$212 million annually to the Canadian economy. Canadian sheep farms, because of their very nature as smaller, sustainable and family operated enterprises, make vital contributions to the local communities in which they are located as well as producing food and fibre for the nation.

2024 was a year of significant change. A number of experienced Board members cycled off the Board as their terms ended or their personal businesses and lives required them to change priorities. The Federation owes them a debt of gratitude for their years of service and contributions to the industry. Allan Ribbink completed his term as Chair. Howard Morry stepped down as the Board member from Newfoundland. Ruth Mathewson stepped down as the Board member for the Sheep Producers of Nova Scotia. Harry Elsinga stepped down from representing the sheep producers of Prince Edward Island and Reggie Campbell completed his term as the Board member representing the Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers.

Welcomed to begin their contributions to the Canadian sheep industry in 2024 are Beverly Palmeter, representing the Sheep Producers of Nova Scotia, Brenda Aylward, representing the sheep producers of Newfoundland and Labrador, Kim Schneider representing the Ontario Lamb Producers Caucus and Warren Moore representing the Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers.

Rather than recount the successes and disappointments of our programs from 2024, I have decided to leave that to the annual program review, where each can adequately be covered and to instead focus on what I believe will be a challenging year ahead for the industry and our Federation, given the incoming administration in the United States and the changing Federal and Provincial political dynamics within Canada. Uncertainty is sure to be a watch word we all use more often as we proceed into 2025 and I want to use some old maxims gained from four and a half decades of producing market lambs and breeding stock to provide some food for thought as we head into it.

While the sheep industry is fortunate in not having to depend on an export market to the US, we are sure to be sideswiped by larger forces that will affect us in one way or another. It took sixteen years to get the US border reopened to Canadian breeding stock and market lambs after the BSE closure in 2003 and the sheep industry was just beginning to make some return to that market becoming a net exporter again for the first time in years,

At this annual meeting, we are unveiling the newest Strategic Plan which will guide our work for the next five years and we will be voting on a necessary adjustment to our bylaws. Both were accomplished through consultation and discussion and will benefit the Federation but we must keep in mind that the very best road map won't show the danger waiting around the next curve in the road. While good governance and updated policies are very important, the Federation needs to resist the governance trap that some organizations fall into, crafting the perfect set of policies and tools to the point where they are unable to accomplish anything else. We have a solid foundation and structure to work with and plans and policies can be altered as needed but opportunities are lost when they are not recognized and acted on.

I was once told that for every mile of road we travel, there are two miles of ditches with disasters lurking. The way to avoid the disasters is to keep the focus further down the road and to avoid the attention grabbing things along the sides of the road that can drag you sideways or cause a dangerous swerve. As we deliver on our strategic plan, the Federation needs to focus on delivering benefits to our members, our industry and by extension, our rural communities.

It is so easy these days to get caught in the vortex of negativity that seems to be swirling through society. Everyone seems angry. Everyone seems negative and entitled and few are willing to recognize all the good things that surround us. The collaborative nature of the Federation is one of our strengths and the fact that we deal with difficult challenges almost every meeting yet there is almost always a laugh or two in the process which benefits not only us but the producers we serve. I hope we can keep the collaboration going as we deliver for our members in 2025.

Fred Baker

Chair, Canadian Sheep Federation



# Bridging Perception and Reality

The Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) stands as a unified voice for farmers navigating a complex agricultural landscape. Yet despite our many achievements, some within the industry don't have a clear understanding of what the CSF does to support the sector. This reflects a broader challenge faced by national organizations: the difficulty of communicating complex, wide-reaching work to a diverse audience. This report leaves no question unanswered. It provides an exhaustive account of our actions, successes, and purpose—demonstrating unequivocally how the CSF protects the fundamental right of farmers to farm, strengthens the Canadian sheep industry, and contributes to a thriving agricultural future for all.

National organizations like the CSF play a pivotal role in safeguarding the interests of entire industries. We address challenges that individual producers cannot tackle alone, from navigating intricate trade agreements to advocating for science-based regulatory frameworks. Our work amplifies the voices of farmers, ensuring their concerns are heard at the highest levels of decision-making. This is not merely about solving immediate problems; it's about shaping the conditions that allow farmers to thrive for generations to come.

This is more than an annual report. It's a full narrative of how we've worked tirelessly over the past year to empower producers, address industry challenges, and build a sustainable future. It's a story of resilience, advocacy, and innovation.



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Improvement in environmental  
management, innovation, and  
and environmental production



Canadian Sheep Federation



# Global Challenges in Farming and Food Supply

Farming today is not what it was a generation ago. Unpredictable weather patterns brought on by climate change threaten crops and pastures, disrupting livestock production. Geopolitical instability complicates supply chains, making it harder to access essentials like feed and fertilizer. Meanwhile, the global population grows, demanding not only more food but food produced sustainably and with high ethical standards. These pressures fall disproportionately on farmers, who are often expected to do more with less.

Compounding these challenges is a growing disconnect between producers and consumers. Misinformation distorts public perception of farming practices, casting doubt on the very people dedicated to feeding the world. Farmers must balance criticism with the critical work of preserving food security. Their resilience is remarkable, but their challenges are not theirs to face alone.

The importance of national organizations like the CSF cannot be overstated in this context. We connect producers with policymakers, researchers, and international organizations, ensuring that their interests are not overlooked in the face of global pressures. Through advocacy and leadership, we help secure the resources, technologies, and regulatory frameworks needed to keep Canadian farms productive and sustainable.







# The Canadian Sheep Federation's Role in Shaping Policy

This past year, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has been deeply engaged in a series of consultations aimed at addressing key issues that affect Canadian sheep producers and the broader livestock industry. From transportation challenges to traceability regulations, the CSF has worked tirelessly to advocate for policies that protect producers, improve sustainability, and ensure the welfare of animals.

Through its work on these issues, the CSF has demonstrated its unwavering dedication to supporting producers and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Canada's sheep industry. By engaging with policymakers, advocating for fair and practical regulations, and promoting innovation, the CSF continues to act as a trusted voice for producers and a steward of progress in agriculture. As the challenges facing the industry evolve, the CSF remains committed to building a resilient future for Canadian sheep farming.

## Advocacy at Home: Strengthening Canada's Sheep Industry

Throughout 2024, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has been at the forefront of critical discussions and initiatives aimed at addressing key issues affecting the sheep industry. With a focus on improving conditions for producers and supporting long-term sustainability, the CSF has actively engaged with policymakers, stakeholders, and international organizations to create meaningful change for sheep farmers across Canada.

### Transportation Regulations

One of the more pressing issues the CSF tackled this year was the implementation of electronic logging devices (ELDs) in livestock transportation. While these devices are intended to improve road safety, their rigid regulations often conflict with the realities of transporting live animals, where delays can jeopardize animal welfare. The CSF brought these concerns directly to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, advocating for greater flexibility in ELD regulations to account for animal welfare emergencies during transport. This engagement highlighted the unique challenges faced by livestock haulers and emphasized the importance of aligning transportation policies with the welfare of animals in transit.



## Policy Engagement

The CSF also participated in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Fall Farm Tour, a valuable opportunity to connect policymakers with the realities of Canada's sheep industry. During these discussions, the CSF outlined the challenges and opportunities producers face, ranging from sustainability practices to market access barriers. This initiative not only educated government staff on the sheep sector's unique needs but also laid the groundwork for more informed policy decisions that align with the sector's priorities.

## Genetic Resource Conservation

On a global scale, the CSF played a pivotal role in advancing the conservation of genetic resources. By leading Canada's submission to the Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources, the CSF brought together leading industry experts through a Genetics Panel. This collaboration produced a detailed report reflecting Canada's contributions to biodiversity and sustainable livestock production. The results of this effort will guide both national and international reports, ensuring that Canada's leadership in genetic resource conservation remains firmly recognized.

## International Collaboration

The CSF further supported the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in implementing the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. Through its participation in surveys, characterization efforts, and policy development, the CSF advocated for producer-friendly approaches that promote the sustainable use of genetic resources. These contributions reinforce the importance of balancing conservation efforts with practical strategies that support farmers and preserve biodiversity.

From tackling transportation regulations to championing genetic resource conservation, the CSF's domestic advocacy efforts in 2024 reflect a steadfast commitment to strengthening Canada's sheep industry. By addressing these critical issues head-on, the CSF is ensuring that the voices of producers are heard, their needs are clearly understood, and their future is secure.





# Advancing Fairness in Canada's Sheep Industry

In 2024, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) addressed a critical issue of fairness and trade equity that has long impacted sheep producers across the country. Out-of-province producers marketing sheep in Ontario faced unjust licensing fees imposed by the Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF), creating barriers to interprovincial trade and placing unnecessary financial burdens on farmers. In response to widespread member concerns, the CSF acted as a participant in a legal challenge to uphold fairness and compliance with Canada's trade agreements.

The landmark decision came in September 2024, when the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal (AFRAAT) ruled in favor of the appellant and participants' position. The Tribunal determined that the OSF had overstepped its authority by charging licensing fees to non-resident producers. This decision required OSF to exempt out-of-province producers from licensing fees and directed Ontario buyers to cease deducting these fees from sales involving non-resident producers.

The implications of this ruling are far-reaching. By eliminating these inequitable fees, the decision ensures fair trade conditions for all sheep producers, regardless of their province of origin. It aligns with the principles of Canada's Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), which aims to remove trade barriers and foster collaboration across provincial borders. For producers, this means more equitable access to markets, reduced financial strain, and the opportunity to compete in a fair market.

The CSF's involvement in this case highlights its commitment to advocating for policies that promote fairness and unity within Canada's sheep industry. With full member support and approval, the CSF stood as a representative voice for producers, reinforcing the value of abiding by national trade agreements and ensuring a level playing field for all farmers.

Looking ahead, the CSF remains steadfast in its mission to advance equitable trade conditions and foster collaboration across the industry. This commitment to fairness is not just about resolving immediate challenges but also about laying the foundation for a sustainable and prosperous future for all Canadian sheep producers. By addressing systemic issues and championing collaboration, the CSF is building a stronger, more unified industry equipped to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.



# Representing Canada's Sheep Industry on the International Stage

In 2024, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) played a pivotal role in shaping international policy discussions that impact the global sheep industry. From advocating for science-based animal health strategies to influencing food labeling standards, the CSF ensured that Canada's sheep producers remain at the forefront of innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness on the world stage.

A key focus of the CSF's international engagement was its participation in consultations with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). The discussions centered on three critical areas: scrapie eradication, animal welfare principles, and zoonotic disease surveillance. The CSF emphasized Canada's leadership in genetic resistance strategies to combat scrapie, advocating for flexible approaches that balance scientific progress with achievable eradication targets. Supporting the "Five Domains" model for animal welfare, the CSF stressed the importance of adaptable, science-informed policies that reflect Canada's diverse production systems. Additionally, the CSF urged the adoption of risk-based policies for zoonotic disease surveillance to prevent unnecessary trade restrictions related to emerging diseases like SARS-CoV-2. These efforts bolster Canada's reputation as a leader in animal health, welfare, and trade, while protecting producers from restrictive measures that could hinder their operations.







The CSF also contributed to consultations with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) regarding veterinary drug regulations. Recognizing the critical need for effective treatments, the CSF advocated for the inclusion of essential veterinary drugs, such as Florfenicol and Moxidectin, on JECFA's priority list. Harmonizing Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) with international standards was another key focus, aimed at enhancing food safety while reducing trade barriers. These efforts ensure Canadian sheep producers have access to the tools they need to maintain animal health and meet global market expectations.

In the United Kingdom, the CSF participated in the Fairer Food Labelling Consultation, supporting initiatives for clear and consistent labeling of production methods and country of origin. The CSF highlighted Canada's high standards of animal welfare and environmental stewardship, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing Canadian sheep products in an increasingly transparent and ethically driven marketplace. These labeling reforms provide an opportunity to showcase Canada's superior production practices and align with consumer demand for ethical and sustainable sourcing.



# Addressing Global Health Challenges

Another pressing global issue addressed by the CSF was the threat of gastrointestinal nematodes (GIN) to livestock health and productivity. Through its contributions to the Global GIN Stocktake, the CSF collaborated with international partners, led by Beef & Lamb New Zealand, to identify gaps in diagnostics, genetic resistance, and sustainable control strategies. GIN poses a significant challenge to animal welfare and farm profitability, exacerbated by growing resistance to traditional anthelmintic treatments. The CSF's involvement strengthens Canada's role in developing innovative tools like advanced diagnostics and vaccines while promoting sustainable practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with parasitism.

By participating in these key international discussions, the CSF continues to advocate for science-informed policies that protect producers, enhance animal health, and promote industry sustainability. These efforts not only ensure Canada's sheep industry remains competitive on the global stage but also reinforce its reputation as a leader in ethical and sustainable livestock production. Looking ahead, the CSF remains committed to collaborating with international partners to address shared challenges and seize emerging opportunities, fostering a brighter future for producers at home and abroad.



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# Supporting Producers Through Key Programs

In 2024, the CSF continued to deliver programs that empower sheep producers, improve sustainability, and enhance industry standards. Through strategic updates, advocacy-driven initiatives, and robust certification frameworks, the CSF has strengthened the foundation for a more resilient sheep industry in Canada.

The **Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)** underwent significant updates by the CFIA this year in an effort to bolster disease prevention and certification accuracy. Effective June 30, 2024, the program now includes enhanced protocols, such as requiring males to be sourced from farms with equivalent or higher SFCP status and updated procedures for live animal testing, sampling, and reporting. These changes are meant to ensure producers can continue to meet global standards for disease management while maintaining the program's integrity.

One of the most exciting developments this year is the renewed value of **Canada's Small Ruminant Ultrasound Pregnancy Assessment Training and Certification Program**, spurred by a recent shift in the Ontario Veterinary Act that now permits independent technicians to perform ultrasounds. While the training course itself is not new—having been developed and successfully run by the CSF a few years ago—this regulatory change has created fresh momentum. The change, which we hope will ripple across the country, expands opportunities for producers to access affordable and accessible ultrasound services. The CSF offers a training program with two pathways: a Trained designation covering theory and a Certified designation that includes practical apprenticeships and examinations. Interest has grown in provinces like Ontario and Saskatchewan, with training sessions expected to run in 2025.



There is also hope for future courses in other provinces and advocacy efforts to harmonize regulations nationwide. This initiative not only provides producers with valuable farm management tools but also builds confidence among both regulators and the industry.

The **Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP)** remains a cornerstone of the CSF's commitment to food safety, animal care, and biosecurity. In 2024, the CVSP successfully completed a mandatory review of program changes to maintain its certification under the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Food Safety Recognition Program (FSRP). A recent comparison with the UK's Red Tractor program highlighted the CVSP's strengths, ranking it second overall while excelling in categories critical to Canadian producers. These included housing and shelter requirements tailored for extreme climates, stringent food safety protocols, comprehensive biosecurity measures, and superior traceability practices that ensure accountability from farm to table. The CVSP's global competitiveness affirms its position as a leader in sheep farming assurance, providing Canadian producers with a distinct edge in both domestic and international markets.

To build on this success, the CSF has identified potential next steps for the CVSP. These include increasing producer participation through targeted campaigns, simplifying enrollment processes, and creating incentives such as certification discounts or market premiums. Expanding training opportunities and recruiting peer ambassadors to share their success stories will also help encourage adoption. By showcasing the practical benefits of the program, such as improved farm management and access to premium markets, the CSF aims to demonstrate how the CVSP can drive meaningful results for producers.







# AN SHEEP FOCATION

The **Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP)** also saw a major transition in 2024. After years of administration, the CSF is transferring its responsibilities to NSF International LLC, aligning with Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI), which is also transitioning its duties. This consolidation under a single administrator will streamline operations, enhance producer support, and align anniversary dates for certification renewals. The CSF worked closely with the Canadian Cervid Alliance and NSF to ensure a smooth handover, emphasizing collaboration, data sharing, and training to maintain the program's effectiveness.

Through these initiatives, the CSF has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to supporting Canadian sheep producers. Whether through disease prevention, enhanced training, or globally competitive certification programs, the CSF continues to provide the tools and resources producers need to thrive in an evolving agricultural landscape. As the industry moves forward, these programs will remain vital in safeguarding the sustainability, profitability, and reputation of Canada's sheep sector.

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Producers



# Ongoing Efforts to Improve Access to Veterinary Drugs

Access to veterinary drugs is a cornerstone of effective livestock management, ensuring the health, welfare, and productivity of animals while supporting the sustainability of the sheep industry. For Canadian sheep producers, the availability of products specifically labeled for use in sheep is critical, as it reduces reliance on extra-label drug use and fosters regulatory alignment that builds consumer trust. Recognizing the challenges posed by limited access, the CSF has prioritized efforts to improve the availability of veterinary tools and create a more supportive regulatory environment for producers.

This year, the CSF celebrated a major milestone with the successful registration of Covexin 10, a critical vaccine for many producers in Canada. This achievement, made possible through collaboration with Merck and the Canadian Centre for Veterinary Biologics (CCVB), underscores the importance of partnerships in overcoming barriers to access.

Additionally, the CSF co-authored a whitepaper alongside 16 industry organizations to explore solutions for reducing regulatory hurdles and aligning Canadian standards with international benchmarks. This joint effort highlights the collective commitment to improving access to veterinary tools across the livestock sector.

The CSF's ongoing work in this area reflects a comprehensive approach to tackling the systemic issues surrounding veterinary drug availability. As an active member of the Canadian AMU/AMR Leadership Team under Animal Health Canada, the CSF has taken a leading role in shaping national strategies on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). By advocating for education, stewardship, and harmonized regulations, the CSF is helping producers adopt sustainable practices that safeguard animal health while addressing global concerns about AMR.







Engagement with the Canadian Animal Feed and Health Products Engagement Committee (CAFHPEC) has also been a key focus. Through this platform, the CSF continues to address industry challenges, support initiatives to streamline approval processes, and advocate for practical, producer-oriented solutions. These efforts aim to make veterinary drugs more accessible and affordable for farmers, ensuring they have the tools needed to maintain high welfare standards.

Collaboration with the Veterinary Drugs Directorate (VDD) further exemplifies the CSF's commitment to policy advocacy. By contributing to initiatives like the "needed veterinary drugs" list and priority review pathways, the CSF is working to ensure that critical products reach the market efficiently. These initiatives are essential for addressing gaps in the availability of veterinary tools and supporting timely responses to the health challenges faced by Canada's sheep industry.

The impact of these efforts extends beyond individual producers, strengthening the foundation of sustainable livestock management across the country. By addressing barriers to veterinary drug access, the CSF is not only supporting high welfare standards but also fostering greater consumer confidence in Canadian sheep products. These ongoing initiatives demonstrate the CSF's dedication to collaboration, innovation, and advocacy, ensuring that sheep producers have the resources they need to thrive in an increasingly complex agricultural landscape.

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# Advancing Traceability for Canada's Sheep Industry

The Canadian Sheep Federation is leading the way in developing innovative traceability systems that meet the evolving needs of producers while fulfilling stringent regulatory requirements. By leveraging cutting-edge technology and industry collaboration, the CSF is driving forward initiatives that enhance the efficiency, reliability, and transparency of livestock traceability in Canada.

One of the cornerstone projects this year is the **Responsible Administrator (RA) proposal**, which aims to position the sheep industry as the central authority for managing the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP). By taking full ownership of traceability, the industry can centralize management, improve responsiveness, and ensure that the system is tailored to the unique needs of sheep producers. This initiative underscores the CSF's commitment to empowering producers with a traceability framework that is both functional and producer-focused.

To enhance the reliability of traceability systems, the CSF has been conducting tag retention trials in collaboration with manufacturers. These trials replicate real-world conditions, providing critical data on tag performance. The insights gained will inform decisions about tag approvals, ensuring that producers can rely on robust and durable identification tools that stand up to the demands of livestock production.

Innovation in traceability has also taken a major leap forward with the continued enhancements to **AgroLedger**, a blockchain-based platform designed to provide real-time data sharing, enhanced security, and greater transparency across the value chain. **AgroLedger** integrates seamlessly with assurance programs and farm management tools,







## CANADIAN SHEEP FEDERATION - MANAGING

The Canadian Sheep Federation of the Canadian Sheep Federation is a national farm management association that is dedicated to promoting the interests of the sheep industry in Canada. The Federation is committed to the advancement of the industry, and to the improvement of the lives of sheep producers. The Federation is also committed to the improvement of the lives of sheep producers, and to the improvement of the lives of sheep producers.



Advocacy  
Innovation



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offering producers a comprehensive solution for tracking and managing livestock movements. This technology not only streamlines operations but also strengthens trust between producers, processors, and consumers.

The CSF has also introduced **ReadIT**, a machine-learning-based optical character recognition (OCR) technology that digitizes paper-based records. By reducing manual workloads and increasing accuracy, ReadIT makes it easier for producers, including small-scale operators, to participate in digital traceability efforts. This technology represents a major step forward in accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that all producers can benefit from advancements in traceability, regardless of their scale or resources.

The potential impact of these initiatives could be transformative for the industry. If the CSF is successful in achieving RA status and implementing AgroLedger as the sheep industry's traceability system, it would enhance disease response times, reduce administrative burdens, and elevate Canada's reputation as a leader in sustainable and transparent livestock production. The innovative nature of these technologies has garnered increasing recognition, with the CSF's leadership being celebrated through several prestigious awards. These include **Livestock Software CEO of the Year 2023 - North America**, **Most Pioneering AgTech CEO of the Year 2024**, and **Agricultural Software CEO of the Year 2024 - North America** in the Canadian CEO of the Year awards.

The CSF's traceability efforts not only address immediate regulatory and operational needs but also lay the foundation for a more resilient and forward-thinking industry. By embracing innovation and championing producer-driven solutions, the CSF is ensuring that Canada's sheep industry remains at the forefront of global livestock management. These advancements highlight the CSF's unwavering commitment to empowering producers with tools and technologies that foster sustainability, transparency, and trust across the value chain.



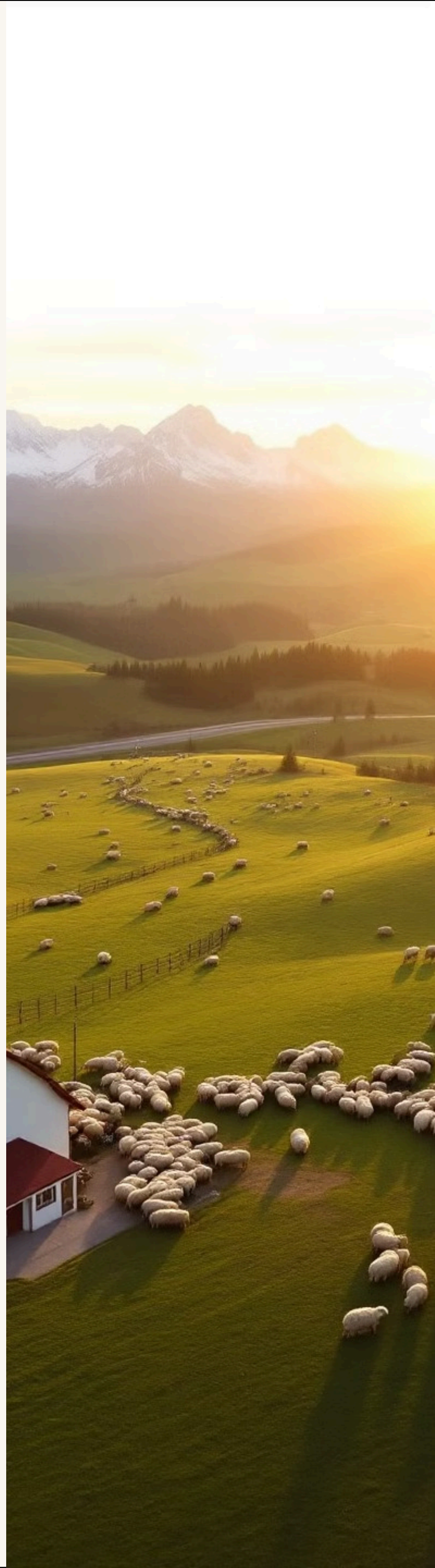
# Ensuring Fair Market Access for Canadian Sheep Producers

In 2024, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) remained steadfast in its advocacy for fair market access, addressing critical trade challenges that impact Canada's sheep producers. With the United States as the largest export market for Canadian sheep and lamb products, the CSF focused on eliminating trade barriers, mitigating risks, and promoting equitable access for producers in North America's integrated supply chain.

A significant issue this year was the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) proposal for voluntary "Product of USA" (vPUSA) labeling guidelines. While labeled as voluntary, these guidelines are effectively mandatory due to retailer pressures, creating costly burdens for Canadian processors. Compliance requires extensive record-keeping and product segregation, disproportionately affecting small and medium-sized operations. Additionally, these labeling complexities risk market discrimination against Canadian sheep and lamb products.

The CSF addressed these challenges by highlighting Canada's advanced traceability systems, such as AgroLedger, as models of efficiency and transparency. By showcasing the robust systems already in place, the CSF demonstrated Canada's commitment to food safety and sustainable practices. The CSF also worked to advocate for joint regulatory solutions under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), ensuring the integrity of integrated supply chains and protecting the seamless flow of goods across borders.

This advocacy extended to broader consultations under the agriculture chapter of CUSMA, where the CSF focused on addressing trade barriers such as the vPUSA labeling rule and the longstanding Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) requirements. These rules create inefficiencies and increase







costs for producers, echoing challenges that beef and pork industries faced in the past. The CSF emphasized the parallels between vPUSA labeling and the WTO-challenged COOL regulations, advocating for their removal. By pushing for regulatory harmonization and leveraging CUSMA dispute mechanisms, the CSF sought to reduce trade disruptions and foster fair market conditions for sheep and lamb products.

Another major concern in 2024 was the proposed 25% tariff on Canadian exports to the U.S., a move that posed a critical threat to the \$212 million Canadian sheep industry. Such a tariff could reduce export volumes by an estimated 16.5%, costing producers \$3.3 million annually and disproportionately impacting smaller farms operating on tight margins. Recognizing the economic ripple effects, particularly in rural communities, the CSF engaged with the Minister of Agriculture and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency President to help negotiate solutions. This included advocating for regulatory alignment, emphasizing the importance of trade diversification, and showcasing the industry's role in sustainable protein production and rural economic stability.

Through these efforts, the CSF is working to protect access to the U.S. market and ensure Canadian producers remain competitive in North America. By advocating for harmonized trade standards and fair policies, the CSF has not only mitigated immediate threats but also strengthened the foundation for long-term growth. These actions reaffirm the CSF's commitment to representing the interests of Canadian sheep producers and ensuring their continued success in an increasingly complex global marketplace.



# Preparing for FMD: A Renewed National Priority

**Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)** remains one of the most significant threats to global livestock sectors, with the potential to devastate economies, disrupt trade, and cripple rural communities. In 2024, Canada renewed its focus on FMD preparedness, driven by the establishment of a new national vaccine bank and updated international guidelines from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) recognizing zoning as a critical tool for outbreak containment. A recent outbreak in Germany has reinforced the urgency of proactive measures to protect Canada's FMD-free status and safeguard the livestock industry.

The CSF has been at the forefront of these efforts, contributing to the development of robust FMD preparedness plans and ensuring producers are well-equipped to face potential challenges. Central to this work is the creation of an FMD vaccine protocol, developed in collaboration with the CFIA and industry stakeholders. This protocol outlines a comprehensive framework for vaccine distribution, ring vaccination strategies, and validation processes, ensuring a rapid and effective response to any potential outbreak.

Biosecurity and emergency preparedness have also taken center stage. Drawing inspiration from the African Swine Fever (ASF) Executive Management Board model, the CSF has advocated for a multi-stakeholder approach to FMD planning. Efforts include conducting an environmental scan to establish baseline biosecurity standards and developing zone-specific enhanced biosecurity plans. Additional measures involve drafting detailed standard operating procedures for depopulation, disposal, and cleaning and disinfection processes. The CSF is also advancing an Integrated Emergency Response Plan, which clearly defines roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders during an outbreak. Strengthening AgroLedger's integration for movement controls and traceability further ensures accurate and rapid tracking in emergency scenarios.







Collaboration with CFIA on the **CanDIS-FMD simulation model** has been another key initiative. This modeling project analyzes potential outbreak scenarios and evaluates control measures tailored to Canadian livestock systems. Results from these simulations underscore the critical role of optimized traceability and vaccination strategies, showing significant reductions in both the size and duration of outbreaks. These findings will guide policy decisions on movement controls, vaccination protocols, and resource allocation, ensuring Canada is prepared for even the most complex outbreak scenarios.

Likewise, the CSF has taken on a leadership role in national FMD preparedness efforts. Through active participation in the FMD Working Group and the FMD Leadership Team, the CSF has ensured that producers' voices are heard in shaping national strategies. The organization is further enhancing internal expertise by recruiting subject matter experts to advance biosecurity, depopulation, and carcass disposal planning. To support producers, the CSF will help raise awareness about FMD's potential impact and the critical importance of preparedness, providing tools and resources to help them protect their operations.

These collective efforts position Canada to mitigate the devastating economic and animal welfare impacts of an FMD outbreak. By contributing to national and international preparedness initiatives, the CSF is safeguarding the industry's future and ensuring Canadian producers remain resilient in the face of this ever-present threat. Through proactive planning, innovation, and collaboration, the CSF continues to strengthen Canada's defenses against FMD and uphold the country's reputation as a leader in livestock health and sustainability.

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# Empowering the Future of the Canadian Industry

The future of the Canadian sheep industry lies in the hands of its next generation of producers, and the CSF is dedicated to ensuring they have the tools, knowledge, and networks to succeed. One of the most transformative initiatives supporting this vision is the **Global Sheep Producers Forum (GSPF) Next Generation Exchange**.

This program exposes young Canadian producers to global best practices, innovative technologies, and international collaboration, equipping them to lead the industry into a more sustainable and competitive future.

The CSF has played a pivotal role in facilitating Canadian participation in the 2024 exchange, which included a visit to Australia's LambEx conference. From managing the application and selection process to providing logistical and financial support, the CSF ensured that Canada was represented by a diverse group of young producers eager to learn and contribute.

Beyond facilitating participation, the CSF has worked to build long-term capacity within the industry by fostering opportunities for knowledge-sharing. Participants returning from the exchange are supported in delivering presentations to broader producer audiences, sharing insights and lessons learned from their experiences abroad.

The CSF's advocacy for young producers extends beyond logistical support. By championing the importance of investing in the next generation, the organization has emphasized Canada's leadership and contributions to global initiatives in the sheep industry.

Looking ahead, the CSF is committed to sustaining and expanding its support for initiatives like the GSPF Next Generation Exchange. By continuing to invest in young producers, the organization is ensuring the Canadian sheep industry has the capacity to adapt, innovate, and thrive in an increasingly interconnected global marketplace.



Canadian Sheep Federation  
Canadian Sheep Farmers





# Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep: Raising the Bar for Animal Welfare

The **Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep** is a cornerstone of Canadian sheep farming, providing science-informed, practical guidelines that reflect the highest standards of animal welfare. As the Code undergoes its current review, its importance has never been greater. The updated document will ensure that producers have the tools to meet evolving consumer expectations and market demands while aligning with ethical and sustainable farming practices.

The review process is critical in supporting producers by offering actionable, research-based guidance that promotes sheep welfare without losing sight of the realities of farm operations. It also strengthens public trust in Canadian sheep products, showcasing the industry's commitment to ethical animal care. By addressing Priority Welfare Issues (PWIs)—including pain control, parasite management, neonatal care, housing, and environmental sustainability—the updated Code ensures that Canadian producers remain global leaders in responsible livestock management.

The CSF has taken a leading role in this review, ensuring that producers' voices are well-represented. Recognizing the importance of balancing scientific advancements with practical, farm-level solutions, the CSF advocates for recommendations that are both effective and feasible. This partnership ensures the challenges faced by sheep producers are addressed and that the updated Code will serve as a valuable resource to guide on-farm practices.



The CSF's involvement aligns closely with its mission to promote sustainable and ethical farming. The updated Code will serve as a reference for producers to demonstrate compliance with evolving welfare standards, bolstering market access and consumer confidence in Canadian sheep products. Additionally, the CSF collaborates with the **National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)** to support their transparent, science-informed process for Code development. This partnership brings together expertise from academia, industry, and government to create a comprehensive document that reflects the needs of all stakeholders.

The Code's revision is informed by detailed reviews conducted by scientific committees, addressing critical areas such as lambing procedures, pain management, and housing needs. The CSF's collaboration ensures that these updates not only reflect scientific consensus but also provide producers with practical tools to implement them effectively.

Looking forward, the Code Committee and Scientific Committee will continue to refine the updates and address key welfare issues, such as genetic resistance to parasites, ewe-lamb relationships, and strategies for effective pain control. The CSF remains deeply committed to supporting producers during this process, providing education, advocacy, and guidance to help them adapt to the updated standards.

The revised Code is expected to be published by **August 2027**, delivering a timely, relevant, and comprehensive framework for the care and handling of sheep. By actively participating in this process, the CSF ensures that Canadian sheep producers are equipped to meet the highest standards of animal welfare, maintaining their leadership in ethical and sustainable livestock management. Through this collaboration, the CSF continues to champion a future where innovation, responsibility, and trust drive the success of the Canadian sheep industry.







# Exciting News Coming in February!

The Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) is thrilled to share that it has been selected as "**Innovative Agricultural Organization of the Year 2025**" by **Corporate Vision**. This prestigious recognition celebrates the CSF's dedication to advancing Canadian agriculture through groundbreaking technology, meaningful collaboration, and initiatives that prioritize the needs of producers.

This award is part of the **Canadian Business Awards**, a program that honors organizations demonstrating exceptional leadership, innovation, and impact across industries. For the CSF, this accolade highlights its unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of what is possible in agriculture, from pioneering traceability technologies to advocating for policies that strengthen Canada's sheep industry.

The official announcement will be made in February 2025, and we invite you to stay tuned for more details about this exciting achievement. To learn more about the award and the program recognizing leaders across Canadian business sectors, visit the Corporate Vision Awards platform.

As we celebrate this milestone, we extend our gratitude to the producers, partners, and stakeholders who inspire and support the CSF's mission to create a resilient and forward-thinking agricultural future. Stay tuned—this is just the beginning of another exciting year for Canadian sheep farming!



innovation  
sustainability





# Building the Future of Canada's Sheep Industry

As we reflect on the past year, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) celebrates the progress made in three key areas: **advocacy, innovation, and unwavering support for producers.** These pillars have shaped our work, positioning the Canadian sheep industry to thrive amidst evolving challenges and opportunities.

**Advocacy** has been central to our efforts, amplifying producers' voices in shaping policies and fostering collaborations that level the playing field. By engaging with government and industry stakeholders, we've built partnerships that enable growth and resilience across the sector.

Our focus on **innovation and sustainability** has delivered advancements in traceability, biosecurity, and market access. These initiatives promote environmentally responsible practices while highlighting Canada's leadership in ethical livestock production.

Above all, our commitment to **supporting producers** remains steadfast. Through tailored programs, resources, and international collaborations, we equip producers to adapt, innovate, and succeed in a rapidly changing landscape.

Looking ahead, we see even greater milestones on the horizon. To those who have partnered with us, we extend our heartfelt thanks—your support drives our shared success. To those not yet involved, now is the time to join us. Together, we can meet new challenges, seize emerging opportunities, and build a stronger, more sustainable future for Canada's sheep industry.

