

# Canadian Sheep Federation Executive Director’s Report Summer 2023

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## What’s New

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Are you looking for up-to-date information about the Canadian Sheep Federation’s current initiatives? Our Board of Directors are briefed monthly on our key activities. Reach out to your appointed CSF Director with questions.

Our website has had a facelift. Check out the site’s summer glow-up: <https://www.cansheep.ca/>

Have you had a chance to check out the global next generation work? There’s a fantastic new podcast series geared towards young sheep farmers around the globe. Give it a listen: <https://www.globalsheepforum.com/nextgen2022podcasts>

## Program Updates

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### Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability

This summer, our focus was on bringing clarity to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) proposed changes to livestock traceability rules. We facilitated 23 town hall meetings to ensure you're not just aware of these changes but also equipped to adapt. These proposed regulations are available for review on the CFIA's [website](#).

#### **What Are These Changes?**

The proposed regulations aim to modernize how we track livestock movements. This includes new reporting requirements that could have a direct impact on your farm operations.

#### **Why Is This Relevant to You?**

Understanding these changes is essential for compliance and avoiding potential penalties. More importantly, a robust traceability system benefits producers by enhancing disease control measures and providing a selling point for consumers concerned about food safety.

#### **How This Helps You**

**Transparency:** These town halls offered a transparent platform for you to understand the ins and outs of the new regulations.

**Readiness:** Being informed means you can prepare for what's ahead, making transitions smoother.

**Feedback Loop:** Your opinions matter and can influence how these regulations take shape, ensuring they're practical for everyday farming.

We don't just bring you the news; we help you engage with it. Your input gave us the leverage to advocate effectively on your behalf, making sure these regulations work not just in theory but in the reality of your daily operations.

#### **What we heard:**

##### **Regulatory Burden and Mental Health**

The issue of regulatory burden resonated strongly across our stakeholder base. Producers are already grappling with time constraints and the added load from new regulations risks heightening stress levels. We've emphasized to the CFIA that the introduction of new tools and technology to facilitate data collection and reporting is not just desirable—it's essential.

##### **Compliance and Enforcement**

Stakeholders also questioned the CFIA's capability to enforce new, expanded regulations, particularly when existing ones are not fully monitored. We've urged the CFIA to ensure that the entire value chain contributes to the effort and shares the burden.

##### **Misaligned Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)**

We disagree with the Executive Summary's assumption that the new regulatory package offers a net benefit. Our review indicates several inconsistencies in the CBA. For instance, the labor costs are severely underestimated—by about 43%. We have encouraged the CFIA to recalculate the CBA.

### **Public Funding and Benefits**

Both the Executive Summary and the CBA highlight the public health and food safety benefits of these new regulations. Our stance is clear: if the regulations aim to protect the general public, then public funding should be extended to support both tool acquisition and ongoing program requirements for all regulated parties.

### **Reporting Timeframes**

A 7-day reporting window is a good start, but the ultimate goal should be a 48-hour interval. The key is advancing technology, like AgroLedger, for faster and more reliable reporting.

### **Geolocation vs. PIDs**

Relying solely on Premises Identification (PIDs) is cumbersome and fraught with issues. Modern GIS technology offers a more effective, real-time solution for traceability and should be integrated into the regulatory framework.

### **Regulatory Agility**

Regulations need to be flexible and forward-looking, accommodating innovations in animal identification, event geolocation, and data management.

### **Movement Reporting to Community Pastures**

We support reporting animal movements by individual IDs at departure sites. Accurate accounting is essential given that animals from multiple operations mingle at community pastures.

### **Group Movement Reporting at Assembly Points**

We accept group reporting but urge the ability to capture individual IDs for better traceability. The frequent movement and high disease risk at these points need better data collection solutions.

### **Movement Reporting for Abattoirs**

We advocate for the mandatory reporting of U.S. identifiers for imported sheep slated for immediate slaughter. Regardless of their destination or end use, imported animals must be identified with an equivalent approved U.S. identifier. We are concerned by the ongoing practice of allowing animals to be imported without an official form of ID, full stop. Allowing animals without ID poses a high risk to animal health status in Canada.

### **Movement Reporting for Fairs and Other Sites**

Operators should report individual IDs for animals moving to fairs and similar events. This simplifies the tracking process and aligns with recommendations from the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions.

### **Passive-Reading Principle**

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Panel readers at assembly points should adhere to a minimum 85% read rate for approved indicators. Handheld devices should not be included in passive-reading.

### Modifications to Requirements Related to Animal Indicators

**Indicator Allocation:** Indicators should be tied to a regulated party's operation, not to each premises.

**Tag Removal:** Approval by CFIA inspectors should not be required to replace malfunctioning or harmful tags.

**Exemptions:** Events like fairs should be exempt from having to apply approved indicators; the responsibility should lie with the parties moving the animals to the events.

We've channeled your feedback directly into our robust advocacy efforts. These points form the crux of our submission to the CFIA, emphasizing the need for a balanced, realistic, and sustainable approach to livestock traceability. Thank you for trusting us to amplify your concerns and advocate on behalf of Canadian sheep farmers.

### AgroLedger: A Summer of Refinement and Achievement

This summer, our focus was trained on refining AgroLedger's technology to ensure it met, and ideally exceeded, Canadian performance standards. We're pleased to report that not only did we meet these benchmarks, but we've surpassed them.

Feedback has always been the linchpin of our development strategy, and it's no different with AgroLedger. We've integrated invaluable insights from our early adopter community, enhancing the system's functionality and user experience.

Looking ahead, we're excited to usher in a new cohort of users this summer and fall. These fresh perspectives will continue to be instrumental as we refine and evolve our technology. AgroLedger isn't just meeting standards; it's setting them, thanks to ongoing user feedback and our commitment to innovation.

Interested in becoming an AgroLedger early adopter? Contact Megan to get signed up: [megan@cansheep.ca](mailto:megan@cansheep.ca)

### Scrapie and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)

#### Scrapie Flock Certification Program: Triennial CFIA Audit Completed

In a normal year, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) would conduct an annual audit of our delivery of the Scrapie Flock Certification Program. However, the ongoing COVID-19 situation necessitated a deviation from this schedule. Consequently, this year's CFIA audit was a comprehensive one, covering the years 2020 through 2023.

We're pleased to announce that the audit has been successfully completed. This review scrutinized not just our records, but also our operational integrity, reinforcing our commitment to quality program delivery.

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In short, despite the logistical challenges posed by the pandemic, our focus on regulatory compliance and system integrity has remained unswerving. We continue to stand by the efficacy and reliability of our program design, validated by this latest CFIA audit. Going forward, we aim to continue excelling in these annual audits, reaffirming our place as a trustworthy and competent player in livestock traceability and health.

### Audit outcomes and reminders:

1. **Tissue Samples:** For accurate and compliant testing, it's crucial to include both Retropharyngeal Lymph Node (RPLN) and obex tissues when submitting samples. If you're working with accredited veterinarians, kindly remind them of this requirement. Omissions will be reported to the CFIA, who will follow up with the producer, accredited vet and laboratory.
2. **Deadlines:** We've transitioned away from sending anniversary quarter reminders. All essential deadlines, including your anniversary quarter, are clearly specified in your certification and acceptance letters. The onus for timely compliance is fully yours, so please mark those calendars.
3. **New Acquisitions:** Expanding your flock? Great. Just be diligent in confirming that any new additions, males included, come from farms not under any scrapie-related controls. This can be as easy as having the seller make a note on the sales receipt that you produce you're your annual report. Soon, we will make a template letter available on our website. This step ensures the health and safety of your entire flock.

These protocols are not just procedural but are critical to maintaining the integrity of the program and the health of our herds. Compliance is in everyone's best interest.

## Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP)

Unlock your farm's potential with the Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP)—Canada's premier quality assurance program tailored just for sheep farms. Developed collaboratively with the expertise of farmers, veterinarians, industry stakeholders, and government, this voluntary program elevates your farm's food safety, animal welfare, and biosecurity standards to new heights.

**Why Jump In?** The CVSP doesn't just set the bar; it provides you with the toolkit to reach it effortlessly. We offer FREE training that's laser-focused on minimizing on-farm risks related to food safety, biosecurity, and animal welfare. Yep, you read that right: **100% FREE training** to empower you with top-notch management practices.

### How to Get Started:

1. **Join a Training Session:** Whether online or in-person, you'll be guided by seasoned trainers often affiliated with provincial sheep organizations. Start your free online training journey at [fsfp.cansheep.ca](https://fsfp.cansheep.ca).
2. **Dive into the Manual:** Our comprehensive CVSP Producer Manual has all you need to integrate the program into your daily operations.

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3. **Tailor to Fit:** While the manual contains essential "must-dos," adapt them to what makes sense for your farm.
4. **Train Your Team:** Make sure everyone on the farm knows the drill and adheres to the guidelines.
5. **Keep Records:** Note down any incidents and corrective actions taken.
6. **Get Certified:** After a full production cycle of following steps 1-5, you're ready for an audit and the potential to become fully CVSP certified.

**Seal of Approval:** Not only is the CVSP backed by the Canadian Sheep Federation, but it also holds recognition from the CFIA's Food Safety Recognition Program. We recently aced our 18-month review, assuring you that this program meets the highest standards in food safety.

If you haven't yet taken advantage of this FREE, industry-leading training, now's the time. The CVSP offers invaluable resources for efficient farm management. So why wait? Elevate your farm practices and become an industry leader today.

### **\*\*New\*\*** [Introducing Canada's New Sheep Industry Sustainability Framework](#)

This summer, we kicked off the development of a comprehensive Sheep Industry Sustainability Framework aimed at bolstering sustainability across Canadian sheep farming. Our framework focuses on four key pillars: the land, the animals, the people, and their communities. Through this initiative, we aim to equip producers with the tools and knowledge needed to improve profitability and sustainable practices, all while fostering transparency and environmental stewardship. The framework covers everything from rigorous monitoring and carbon sequestration via wool to innovative practices like solar grazing. By uniting farmers, stakeholders, and consumers under this framework, we're setting the stage for a more sustainable, transparent, and thriving sheep industry in Canada. We invite producers to get involved in shaping this transformative initiative.

## Working with Industry Partners

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- **Collaborating on Global Gastro-Intestinal Nematode Research to Empower Producers:** We've joined forces with Beef & Lamb New Zealand and other international stakeholders on an impactful project aimed at revolutionizing the management of Gastro-Intestinal Nematodes (GIN) in livestock. The initiative, "Revolutionising Parasite Management: Achieving Sustainable and Lasting Global Management of Livestock Gastrointestinal Nematodes," focuses on creating a comprehensive set of tools and methods. These will be integrated into sustainable systems for effective GIN control, offering producers enhanced disease management capabilities. By leveraging global expertise, we're aiming to equip producers with the resources they need for more effective, sustainable parasite control, thereby improving livestock health and productivity.
- **Advancing Leadership in Digital Agri-Food Innovation: Our Participation at the University of Guelph Conference:** We are proud to share our recent involvement in the 1st International Conference on Digital Innovation in Agri-food, hosted by the University of Guelph and Wageningen University & Research. This esteemed gathering served as a trans-disciplinary platform for dialogue on pressing agri-food topics, from data economy to ethical digitalization. Importantly, we took an active role in a panel discussion focused on 'Improving Food Integrity and Safety: The Role of Data-Driven Technologies.' Our participation allowed us to highlight the Canadian sheep industry's strides in traceability and

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digital tech, positioning us as thought leaders in this evolving landscape. The conference not only amplifies our commitment to responsible and transparent practices but also fortifies our role in shaping the future of digital innovation in the agri-food sector.

- **Elevating Industry Preparedness: Our Role in the Foot and Mouth Disease Working Group (FMDWG):** Being part of the Foot and Mouth Disease Working Group (FMDWG) offers us an invaluable seat at the table in shaping Canada's livestock industry's approach to one of the most critical health challenges: Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). The group is integral in developing a vaccination strategy that unites industry and government efforts, laying the groundwork for an integrated, national response plan. This cooperative model positions us and the entire livestock sector in a state of proactive readiness, rather than reactive scramble, if FMD were to strike. Our work over the summer was centered on reviewing work to be done on FMD Vaccination Guidance documents and SOPs. While some progress has been made, there is still vital work ahead in defining vaccine quantities, costs, and other logistical considerations that directly impact producers. These activities are not just bureaucratic exercise; they translate to quicker, more efficient responses in crisis situations, ultimately safeguarding producers' livelihoods and the entire value chain. Up next for the FMDWG is to formalize these protocols, ensuring they are comprehensive and actionable. The deliverables will focus on the tactical aspects such as vaccine quantities, cost considerations, and required capital infrastructure. This continued involvement underscores our commitment to protect producers and the industry at large, fortifying our collective resilience against FMD.
- **Empowering Sheep Farmers through the Animal Protein Table:** We're actively participating in the Animal Protein Table, a collaborative platform that focuses on fortifying the animal protein sector's competitive edge. This participation is channeled through four critical working groups: Labour, Regulations, Technology, and Supply Chain Resiliency. For our sheep farmers, this isn't just high-level talk; it's about targeted, actionable outcomes that directly benefit you.
  1. **Labour:** The Labour Working Group is hammering out long-term immigration policies aimed at broadening the domestic workforce, reducing reliance on Temporary Foreign Worker programs. This effort will not only stabilize but enrich the labour force available to sheep farmers, freeing them to focus on growth and innovation.
  2. **Supply Chain Resiliency:** A resilient supply chain means that producers can consistently and reliably get their products to market. The group's work here will ensure seamless movement of products and offer more access to processing facilities nationwide - reducing any bottleneck that could impact our sheep farmers.
  3. **Regulations:** This group is scrutinizing long-standing policies and regulations that may need revisiting or reengineering. A more streamlined, scientifically-based regulatory environment can significantly affect the cost of doing business and thereby improve profitability for sheep producers.
  4. **Technology:** The development and implementation of an Animal Protein Technology Strategy will spur the adoption of innovative technologies in our sector. These advancements could range from productivity-enhancing tools to traceability systems, directly contributing to the efficiency and profitability of sheep farming operations.

In a nutshell, our involvement in these working groups offers sheep farmers a voice in shaping policies and strategies that directly impact your livelihoods and the industry's future. This is about real-world results, not just discussions. Through this collaborative approach, we aim to create an environment where our sheep farmers can thrive.

## Out and About

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Welcome to the "Out and About" section of this month's ED Report—a spotlight on pivotal industry gatherings that are shaping the future of livestock and agriculture. Here, you'll find a curated list of essential meetings, conferences, and workshops where thought leaders, policymakers, and innovators converge. These events not only offer rich dialogues but also present tangible opportunities to drive meaningful change in the field. Stay tuned to this section to keep your finger on the pulse of industry trends, technological advancements, and best practices. Don't miss out; these are the conversations that are setting the course for a more sustainable, efficient, and resilient agricultural landscape.

- Our summer intern team met 40 times in 8 weeks. Daily standups are how we kept the team of 16 connected and pulling in the same direction.
- CSF staff met with CFIA's SFCP audit lead twice in-person for opening and closing meetings, then 3 times virtually to reconcile the audit report.
- 1st International Conference on Digital Innovation in Agri-food – Guelph
- Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency and Alberta Lamb Producers
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada trace team x 3
- Animal Protein Table Technology Working Group x 2
- FMD Working Group x 6
- American Dairy Science Association Graduate Luncheon (speaker) – Ottawa
- Animal Protein Table Supply Chain Resiliency Working Group x 3
- Animal Protein Table Regulations Working Group x 3
- National Farm Animal Care Council
- Agricultural Trade Negotiation Consultative Group
- Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Ontario) Appeal Tribunal
- Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council – Fredericton
- Pest Management Residue Agency
- MP Martin Shields
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Canadian Food Innovation Network
- Livestock Transportation Working Group
- Attestra
- vPUSA (Voluntary Product of USA) Working Group
- Shearwell
- Simon Fraser University



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- Animal Health Canada Finance Committee
- CSF Audit & Finance Committee x 3
- CSF Board of Directors x 3