

Canadian Sheep Federation Executive Director's Report Winter 2024

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What's New

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/>

We're Shaping Our Future: Join Our Strategic Planning Consultation

The Canadian Sheep Federation is excited to announce that we are in the process of updating our strategic plan, a roadmap that will guide our initiatives and direction in the coming years. To ensure that our strategy reflects the diverse voices and needs of our community, we are conducting a comprehensive consultation process. Surveys have been circulated to our member organizations, inviting their invaluable input. If you're keen to contribute your ideas and visions for the future of the sheep industry in Canada, this is your chance! We encourage you to reach out to your member representative organization to learn how you can have your opinions heard through this consultation. Your insights are crucial in helping

us create a strategic plan that truly represents our community's aspirations and challenges. **If you're interested in contributing but need more information, send us an email at info@cansheep.ca.**

Embark on an Exciting Journey: Join the Global Sheep Producer Forum at LambEx 2024 in Australia!

Are you a young, passionate sheep producer ready to make your mark on the global stage? The Canadian Sheep Federation invites you to apply for the prestigious Next Generation Global Sheep Producer Forum, set to unfold at LambEx 2024 in Australia from August 3-9. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for individuals aged 18-35 to network with international industry leaders, explore innovative farming practices, and gain invaluable insights into the sheep industry. Your participation will not only enhance your professional growth but also allow you to represent Canada on this global platform. To apply, showcase your commitment to the industry through a written application and a creative video submission. Hurry, the deadline for applications is March 22, 2024. For more details and to apply, visit [<https://forms.office.com/r/EtfHYjHwvd>]. Don't miss this chance to be part of an international exchange of ideas and experiences!

Program Updates

Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability

Focus on the CFIA's 'What We Heard' Report

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) consultation on proposed changes to the Health of Animals Regulations has been a pivotal step in enhancing the livestock traceability system. The CFIA's 'What We Heard' report released in February, summarises key feedback from the industry, including livestock producers, and sheds light on critical concerns and areas needing clarification. This report is crucial for sheep producers as it directly impacts the future of livestock management and traceability in Canada.

Key highlights from the report that are particularly relevant to producers include:

- **Clarifications on Equipment and Identification:** The report addresses queries about the types of equipment applicable under the passive reading principle and how to maintain identification of a carcass when separated from the head. These clarifications are vital for producers to understand how to comply with the new regulations efficiently.
- **Exemptions and Reporting Requirements:** There's a focus on exemptions related to emergency situations and the clarification of reporting events by proxy. This is significant for producers to understand under what circumstances they can operate flexibly while still adhering to the regulations.

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- **Concerns about Tag Costs and Retention:** The report acknowledges the industry's concerns about the cost and retention of tags, a critical aspect affecting the daily operations of producers. Understanding the standards set for tag quality and the process for approving new animal indicator technology can help producers make informed decisions about their tagging practices.
- **Herd Marks for Goats and Changes in Pig Identification for Exports:** The inclusion of herd marks as approved indicators and the changes in pig identification for exports are particularly relevant for producers dealing with these species. These changes can influence how producers manage their livestock and comply with export regulations.
- **Overall Impact on Livestock Management:** The report's insights into the proposed regulatory changes underscore the government's efforts to strengthen traceability, which is essential for disease control, market access, and consumer confidence. Understanding these changes helps producers align their practices with national standards and contribute to a more robust and effective livestock traceability system.

The CFIA's 'What We Heard' report is more than just a summary of feedback; it represents a dialogue between the regulatory body and the stakeholders, including producers, ensuring that the upcoming regulations are practical, effective, and consider the industry's on-ground realities.

For sheep producers, staying informed about these developments is crucial for ensuring compliance, enhancing disease management, and maintaining market competitiveness. As the CFIA moves towards finalizing the amendments in 2024, it's important for producers to stay engaged and prepared for the upcoming changes.

The full report and further details can be accessed on the CFIA website: [CFIA 'What We Heard' Report](#).

Advances in Trace Technology

As we continue to embrace innovation and technology in advancing our livestock traceability systems, the Canadian Sheep Federation is proud to present significant updates on two groundbreaking projects: the OCR project with the University of Toronto and the new RFID reader integration with AgroLedger. These initiatives are set to revolutionize the way we manage and monitor our livestock, reinforcing our commitment to cutting-edge solutions in the industry.

1. **OCR Project with the University of Toronto:** We have partnered with the University of Toronto to develop a cutting-edge Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. This initiative aims to simplify the process of digitizing paper-based trace reports, a task that has traditionally been time-consuming and prone to errors. The OCR technology will enable quick and accurate conversion of text from paper documents into a digital format. This advancement is particularly significant for producers and stakeholders who handle a large volume of paper records. By integrating this technology, we aim to streamline record-keeping, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance the accuracy of our traceability data. The progress of this project is a testament to our dedication to leveraging technology for the betterment of the industry.

2. **New RFID Reader Integration with AgroLedger:** Another exciting development is our collaboration in the development of a new Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) reader technology that will seamlessly integrate with AgroLedger via cell phone connectivity. This tool represents a significant leap forward in our traceability capabilities. The new RFID reader will allow for efficient and instant recording of livestock data directly into AgroLedger, our blockchain-based platform. This means that producers can capture and upload data on-the-go, ensuring real-time updates and accuracy. This integration not only simplifies the process of data entry but also enhances the traceability and monitoring of livestock movements, contributing to improved disease control and management strategies.

Both these technological advancements underscore our commitment to continuous innovation in the livestock traceability sector. By embracing these technologies, we are not only streamlining our processes but also ensuring that our producers and stakeholders are equipped with the best tools to manage their operations effectively and efficiently. As these projects progress, we look forward to providing more updates and details on their implementation and impact on the industry.

Scrapie and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)

Scrapie Flock Certification Program: Changes Coming to the National Standards

In the upcoming changes to the National Standards for the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP), effective from June 2024, a notable focus is on the new limitations regarding the acquisition of male animals. These changes are particularly significant for producers and are detailed as follows:

1. **Introduction of Males from Certain Sources:** Males from flocks/herds registered in the SFCP at an equivalent or higher certification level, from countries recognized by the CFIA as being free from BSE and scrapie, or from flocks/herds registered at an equivalent or higher level in a country's scrapie flock certification program, will not impact the certification level of the recipient flock/herd. This includes rams genotyped as 136AA 171RR or 136AA 171QR from any status sheep flocks, provided they are not from flocks currently under scrapie disease control measures. A letter from the seller confirming the ram's flock status is required, and the ram's genotype must be determined twice
2. **Restrictions on Previously Allowed Males:** Males previously allowed to enter the herd at a different level from the rest of the flock or herd, must continue to be kept separate from female animals except during the breeding period and from lambs/kids and lambing/kidding facilities at all times. These males will continue to have their statuses advanced separately until they reach the same status level of the rest of the flock or herd. They must not commingle with animals from non-participating flocks/herds or a flock/herd of a lower status. These requirements ensure that the risk of scrapie transmission is minimized.

These changes reflect the SFCP's commitment to enhancing biosecurity and disease management within the sheep and goat industries. Producers should be aware of these new standards to ensure compliance and to maintain or improve their flock/herd's certification level under the program. Updated program SOPs and forms, aligned with these changes, will be made available when the changes come into effect.

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.
2. **Dive into the Manual:** Our comprehensive CVSP Producer Manual has all you need to integrate the program into your daily operations.
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 ached 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 the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) Working Group

The Canadian Sheep Federation is proud to announce the formation of a dedicated Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) Working Group. This initiative is a proactive step towards strengthening our preparedness and response strategies for FMD, a critical concern for the livestock industry. The FMD Working Group is composed of experts and stakeholders from various segments of the industry, bringing together a wealth of knowledge and experience to tackle this significant issue.

The Working Group will meet for the first time this week, marking the beginning of a collaborative effort to develop comprehensive plans and protocols to prevent and manage FMD effectively. This meeting will set the stage for future actions and strategies, ensuring that the Canadian Sheep Federation remains at the forefront of disease management and biosecurity.

We welcome the participation of interested members in this vital initiative. Anyone wishing to contribute their expertise or learn more about the Working Group is encouraged to get in touch. For more information or to express your interest in joining, please contact Megan Kroes at megan@cansheep.ca.

This Working Group underscores our commitment to safeguarding the health of our flocks and the sustainability of our industry against the challenges posed by Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Working with Industry Partners

- **Collaborative Dialogues: CSF's Meeting with Minister MacAulay on Advancing Sheep Industry Success:** The Canadian Sheep Federation recently had the opportunity to meet with Minister MacAulay, where we engaged in a meaningful dialogue about the latest advancements in traceability technology within the sheep industry. This pivotal meeting allowed us to showcase our innovative technology that enhances the management and monitoring of sheep, addressing key issues vital to the industry's success. Alongside this, we discussed other critical industry issues, highlighting the diverse challenges and opportunities faced by our producers. We deeply appreciated the Minister's keen interest in and support for the success of our producers. This engagement reflects our ongoing commitment to work collaboratively with government officials to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for the Canadian sheep industry.
- **Strategic Collaboration for ELD Regulation Advancements: The Canadian Sheep Federation Partnership:** Over two years, alongside industry partners, the Federation played a pivotal role in advocating for the interests of livestock haulers. Notably, our advocacy at the House AGRI Committee and the subsequent adoption of our recommendations in the Committee's report mark significant milestones. These include clearer regulatory guidance, amendments favoring livestock haulers, and the proposed use of AgroLedger trace technology for transport time verification. Additionally, our efforts towards eliminating inter-provincial trade barriers resonate deeply with the needs of Canada's sheep producers, enhancing sector efficiency and welfare. This collaboration underlines the Federation's commitment to advancing the interests of the industry. The full text of the AGRI Committee's report, *STRIKING A BALANCE: ELECTRONIC LOGGING DEVICE REQUIREMENTS IMPACTING ANIMAL TRANSPORTATION*, can be found [here](#).
- **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

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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.

- **Revitalizing Collaborative Efforts: The Renewed Barnyard Coalition:** In the spirit of collaborative advancement, a recent confluence of senior representatives from key livestock groups, including the Canadian Sheep Federation, heralded a new era in unified advocacy. This gathering, though not widely publicized, marks the resurgence of a pivotal coalition in the Canadian agricultural landscape. Operating with strategic discretion, this group is dedicated to leveraging the collective voice and expertise of livestock producers to influence pivotal policy decisions. While details of this coalition's workings remain reserved for exclusive circles, its existence signifies a powerful, coordinated effort to shape a more favorable future for animal agriculture in Canada.
- **Strategic Alliance for AMR Management: CSF's Involvement in Antimicrobial Stewardship:** The Canadian Sheep Federation has embarked on a crucial collaboration within the AMU/AMR Leadership Team, reinforcing our dedication to both contributing to and shaping AMR activities. This partnership not only positions us at the forefront of sustainable animal health initiatives but also strategically positions us to safeguard the sheep industry's access to essential veterinary health products. Through this alliance, we aim to influence policies in a manner that aligns with the well-being and prosperity of our industry, while maintaining a vigilant stance on antimicrobial stewardship and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Advocating for Sheep Producers in Health and Regulatory Arenas:** The Canadian Sheep Federation's (CSF) recent invitation to join the Canadian Animal Feed and Health Products Engagement Committee (CAFHPEC) presents an opportunity to directly impact the well-being of our sheep and the broader sheep industry. This committee, working closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada, plays a critical role in shaping decisions around livestock feed and veterinary products, ensuring that they are safe, effective, and readily available. As sheep producers, our foremost concern is the health and welfare of our flocks. With the CSF's role in the Canadian Animal Feed and Health Products Engagement Committee, we are in a position to directly influence the decisions that affect our sheep. This committee focuses on ensuring the availability and safety of animal health products and feeds, which are the lifelines of our industry. Our involvement means we're not just at the table – we're actively contributing to the conversations that determine the availability and quality of the products we rely on. It's about making sure our voices are heard and that the needs of our sheep are front and center in every discussion. This is a significant step in ensuring that our industry's needs are met, keeping our flocks healthy and our operations thriving.
- **Shaping the Future of Sheep Farming: CSF's Role in the AgriLMI Project:** The Canadian Sheep Federation's (CSF) involvement in the CAHRC's AgriLMI project, particularly as part of the advisory group, has been crucial in understanding and addressing the labor market challenges in the sheep industry. The AgriLMI project, led by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC), provides comprehensive labor market information, focusing on the current and future state of the agricultural labor market in Canada. One of the key findings of the CAHRC's labor market forecast to 2030 is the significant impact of unfilled jobs on the agriculture sector. In 2022, there was a 3.7% sales decline, amounting to \$3.5 billion, primarily due to over 28,000 unfilled positions. This trend is expected to continue,

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with a 15% increase in the domestic labor gap projected by 2030. These gaps highlight the importance of CSF's involvement in the project, as it allows for a deeper understanding of the specific labor challenges faced by the sheep industry and the development of targeted strategies to address these issues.

The project emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts to find sustainable solutions to these labor challenges. Some of the key strategies outlined include improving the sector's perception, enhancing human resources practices, attracting skilled immigrants, and embracing technology. These strategies are crucial for the sheep industry as well, as they can help in addressing labor shortages, improving productivity, and ensuring the sustainability of the industry.

CSF's contributions to the advisory group have been instrumental in tailoring the project's outcomes to the unique needs of the sheep industry. By participating in this project, CSF is able to influence the development of policies and practices that directly impact the health and sustainability of the sheep industry in Canada.

For more detailed information on the labor market forecast and the strategies proposed, you can refer to the CAHRC's AgriLMI project report and the executive summary report available on their website [CAHRC's AgriLMI project report](#).

- **Strengthening International Relations: CSF's Role in the Ambassador's Farm Visit and Advancing Scrapie Certification:** Our participation in the recent visit by the Colombian Ambassador to the Graves' farm, a key member of the Scrapie Flock Certification Program, highlights our commitment to fostering international relations and market expansion for Canadian sheep producers. The Graves' farm serves as a model for the stringent biosecurity and advanced breeding practices that are prerequisites for entering new markets like Colombia. The CSF's support for their participation in the SFCP not only underlines our dedication to maintaining high standards in animal health and welfare but also showcases our efforts in opening new international trade avenues. This visit was a prime opportunity to demonstrate the quality and standards of Canadian sheep farming to international stakeholders, paving the way for future exports and reinforcing the global standing of our industry.
- **CSF at the Forefront: Elevating Canadian Wool at the 2023 IWTO Wool Round Table:** The Canadian Sheep Federation's involvement in the 2023 IWTO Wool Round Table event in Montreal was a significant contribution to the global wool textile industry. This event, held for the first time in Canada, brought together over 70 delegates from around the world, including Canadian producers, processors, spinners, designers, and retailers. The event, organized in partnership with the Canadian Wool Council and the Campaign for Wool Canada, focused on highlighting Canadian wool and the individuals transforming it within the country.

During the Wool Round Table, key insights were shared by various speakers from the Canadian wool value chain. For instance, Jobair Jaber, founder of Milo & Dexter, discussed the revival of the traditional wool industry in Canada and their WOOL PROJECT, which featured items like beanies, sweaters, and vests made from 100% Canadian wool. This project not only showcases the capabilities of Canadian wool but also represents a step towards reviving the industry in the country.

The Wool Round Table emphasized the value of wool as a natural, renewable fiber and provided a platform for networking and knowledge-sharing. The event's focus on Canadian wool's potential in various applications, from artisanal to commercial uses, aligns with the Canadian Sheep Federation's goals of advocating for and giving a voice to the Canadian wool industry on the international stage. The involvement of the

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Canadian Sheep Federation in such a globally recognized event underscores its commitment to developing practical opportunities for the Canadian wool industry and those working within it.

For more information about the IWTO Wool Round Table event and its impact on the Canadian wool industry, you can visit the IWTO website: [IWTO Wool Round Table 2023](#).

Out and About

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.

- IWTO Round Table Event – Montreal
- Canadian Cattle Identification Agency Board of Directors – Calgary
- CFIA Food Safety Recognition Program modernization
- Canadian Sheep Federation Annual General Meeting
- Canadian Agricultural Policy Institute
- Simon Fraser University X 4
- Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC) – AgriLMI Advisory Group
- Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program Working Group
- Canadian Sheep Federation Audit & Finance Committee X 3
- Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) Vaccine Strategy Working Group X 3
- University of Toronto
- Canadian Sheep Federation Board of Directors X 3
- American Sheep Industry Association Convention – Denver
- Digital ID & Authentication Council of Canada (DIACC) Digital Traceability in Agriculture and Food (DTAF) Special Interest Group X 2
- Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board Annual General Meeting – Regina
- Minister MacAulay – Prince Edward Island
- Animal Protein Table – Ottawa
- Animal Health Canada Finance Committee
- Animal Protein Table Technology Working Group X 3
- AMU-AMR-PCAP Leadership Team – Ottawa

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- Canadian Sheep Identification Program Working Group
- Future of Food Symposium – Ottawa
- Global Sheep Producers Forum
- Government of Saskatchewan (Trade)
- Animal Protein Table Regulations Working Group
- Canadian Sheep Federation FMD Working Group