

Canadian Sheep Federation Executive Director’s Report March 2021

Action Items from the March 2021 Board meeting.....	1
Program Updates.....	1
Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability.....	1
Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP).....	2
Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep.....	2
Pregnancy Ultrasound Training & Certification.....	2
Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP).....	3
Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP).....	3
Industry Initiatives.....	4
This month’s meetings.....	6

Action Items from the March 2021 Board meeting

- The CSF Board met a second time in March, for an informal discussion about sparking the development of a promotions and research agency.
- The February ED Report was circulated to the Board for approval and final version was subsequently circulated to Board, Staff and Associate members.
- A University of Toronto Capstone project has been drafted for submission in April.
- The Small Ruminant Ultrasound Working Group met to discuss final changes to the ultrasound training and certification program.
- The CSF has submitted its voting representative and Director to the CCIA.
- CLT has been provided a CSF letter of support for their *Enhancing Poultry and Livestock Handling and Transportation Training* project.

Program Updates

Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability

- The CSF had an opportunity to make an AgroLedger presentation to Canada’s Chief Veterinary Officer and members of CFIA’s senior leadership, at the request of the CFIA. The goal was to provide greater detail about the functionality of the technology, to support discussions at the international level as they relate to the future of livestock traceability.

For Broad Distribution

- The CFIA-led Regulatory Implementation Committee met in March, after a brief pause in regular meetings. The Committee agenda and discussion included:
 - A review of workplans with updates to recent activities related to the workplan,
 - Updates from Responsible Administrators,
 - Debriefs from provincial reps on the status of PIDs (Premise Identifications) in each jurisdiction,
 - An update from CFIA on TNIP (Traceability National Information Portal),
 - Thoughts on when draft traceability regulations might make it to Canada Gazette I – best guess was late summer or early fall 2021, and
 - Some insight into what changes are being made to draft regulations based on industry feedback on the side-by-side document and which points will be left for more fulsome feedback through the CGI comment period.
- Final AgroLedger testing of the first phase of development is underway and we are grateful to the producers who have volunteered to help with testing. Testing is expected to wrap up by the first week of May.

Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP)

- Did you know...that the Canadian Verified Sheep Program provides **FREE** online food safety, animal care (welfare) and biosecurity training for producers, farm employees and other industry stakeholders? The program provides some great record keeping and flock health plan tools...also **FREE** of charge to all participants. The CVSP is recognized by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Food Safety Recognition Program, having achieved Technical Review Part II. No small feat!

Register today, take the training for free and complete the program at your own pace. [Fsf.ca/cvsp](https://www.fsf.ca/cvsp)

Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep

- The outcome of the 5-year review of the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep* is now publicly available on the National Farm Animal Care Council website at <https://www.nfacc.ca/sheep-5-year-code-review>. The Code Technical Panel that carried out the review, with support from the Research Committee, identified minor and moderate challenges with the existing Code that should be considered during the 10-year Code update. Similarly, the CTP and Research Committee updated the list of sheep industry research needs. Ultimately, the CTP re-affirmed the Code until the 10-year update. Visit the NFACC website for more details from the 5-year review.

Pregnancy Ultrasound Training & Certification

- The CSF set out to address issues around lack of access to pregnancy ultrasound services, a long-standing issue that has been admired for some time and needed tangible action. It began with a firm position on the issue:
"It is the position of the Canadian Sheep Federation that pregnancy in small ruminants is not an illness needing to be diagnosed but part of the continuous cycle of normal farm practices that allows farms to be productive and profitable. Knowing whether an ewe or doe is pregnant or open is increasingly important to flock/herd management and access to accurate and affordable trans-abdominal ultrasound is becoming an important management tool for making that assessment. Trans-abdominal ultrasound scanning is a safe, humane, and non-invasive process for providing pregnancy assessments."

For Broad Distribution

It is important that anyone involved in providing a pregnancy assessment service in small ruminants be fully trained and competent in the use of fully functioning, well maintained equipment and be certified by a national, industry led certifying body. It is important that farm operators have confidence in the abilities, accuracy and affordability of independent technicians, veterinarian technicians and/or veterinarians performing pregnancy assessments. The Canadian Sheep Federation's position is that trans-abdominal ultrasound assessments may be performed by any trained and competent individual regardless of professional designation.”

- The Small Ruminant Ultrasound Working Group, comprised of sheep and goat industry representatives along with certified ultrasound technicians, set out to develop an ultrasound training and certification program. The program draft has expanded to include two levels of participation based on what the working group heard from the industry survey. The program will offer training for those interested in learning the theory of pregnancy ultrasound for their own purposes and will offer certification for those who wish to add apprenticeship work and proficiency testing to their training for the sake of providing the service commercially. The program is based on the model first developed by the College of Veterinarians of Ontario and used to approve Ontario technicians.

Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)

- The best defense is a good offence. Scrapie is a devastating neuro-degenerative disease that affects both sheep and goats, and a disease that is difficult to control given the nature of its incubation period, mode of transmission and duration of infection. An animal can become infected with scrapie at any point in its life, and there is no way to tell definitively where a positive animal became infected. More importantly, once an animal becomes infected, it can shed and share that disease with other animals without showing any clinical signs of the scrapie. Since 1984, 200 Canadian farms have been identified as scrapie source or infected farms. Disease control actions on each of these farms have seen anywhere from 1 animal to 20% of the population destroyed because of scrapie. Join us in the fight to eradicate scrapie from Canada. Visit our website to learn more about the steps you can take to protect your flock against scrapie, www.scrapiecanada.ca. The Scrapie Flock Certification Program is one way to mitigate your risk of scrapie, but it is not the only way. You can reduce risk by introducing scrapie resistant genotypes into your flocks (<https://scrapiecanada.ca/scrapie-genotyping/>), you can purchase animals from SFCP Certified farms and you can scrapie test animals over 12 months of age that die on farm by submitting them to your district CFIA office (free of charge) or an approved lab (you will be invoiced through your veterinarian). Find out more about testing for scrapie here <https://scrapiecanada.ca/sfcp-samples/>.
- Scrapie Canada is an arm of the Canadian Sheep Federation tasked with the delivery of the industry's scrapie eradication programming including administration of the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP). The SFCP is an internationally recognized compartment program, set to the OIE's global standards for scrapie control. Canada currently has two recognized compartment programs for disease control and the CSF serves as regional administrator and status assessor for both programs.

Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP)

- The CSF serves as the Regional Administrator and Status Assessor for the cervid industry's Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP) in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. The CSF began administering the CWD HCP in Ontario back in 2009, when the program closely resembled the Scrapie Flock Certification Program and administering the program was a natural extension of the SFCP work. More recently the governments of Saskatchewan and Quebec, who had been delivering the program in their regions, approached the CSF looking for a new

For Broad Distribution

administrator. The CSF took over the files to help ensure the program remained available to farmers, and we can maintain the program on a cost recovery basis. As with the SFCP, the CWD HCP's National Standards are maintained by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the CSF's delivery of the programs is audited annually to ensure the program is delivered in keeping with the CFIA's requirements.

- CWD HCP enrolled producers are reminded of the importance of following program requirements in their day-to-day work. The program is more comprehensive than simply remitting an annual report and if there is ever an instance where CFIA needs to inspect your farm for compliance, they will look closely at your on-farm practices and record keeping. Make sure you have copies of all program materials readily available and ensure you are following all the program's biosecurity practices. Information about the CWD HCP is available on our website <http://www.cansheep.ca/cwd.html>

Industry Initiatives

- The Market Access Secretariat hosted a presentation by the EU Commission regarding the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy (part of the European Green Deal) and the Strategy's implications for animals and animal products destined for import into the EU. Of specific concern to Canadian exporters are the EU regulations that underpin the strategy, which limit the use of antimicrobials in animals or animal products destined for the UE market. Article 118(1) of Regulation 2019(6) will require that imported animals or animal products have not been administered antimicrobials from a list of medically important microbials (the list is currently under development). The overall goals of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy are to:
 - Reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the food system,
 - Lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork,
 - Tap into new opportunities, and
 - Create a robust and resilient food system.

The Strategy has quantified 2030 targets for sustainable food production to include:

- Reduce by 50% the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and reduce use by 50% or more hazardous pesticides,
 - Reduce nutrient losses by at least 50% while ensuring no deterioration in soil fertility; this will reduce use of fertilisers by at least 20%,
 - Reduce sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50%, and
 - Achieve at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming.
- The CSF's NextGen Programming Working Group met in March to work on plans for an industry-specific forum for next generation producers. The goal is to create resources that support next generation sheep farmers starting with a space where they can connect virtually. While the forum platform still needs to be selected with the help of our web developer, the wish list for functionality includes room for discussion threads, a marketplace, article and video archives, private groups, and mentor interaction. The WG discussed criteria for forum users including a requirement for users to be in the business of sheep farming, and a user agreement that defines the forums rules and code of conduct. Similarly, the WG developed a strategy for moderating the forum to ensure users stick to the rules and code. Next steps including selecting and setting up the forum, expected to take place April through May.
 - The ED met with leadership at the Veterinary Drug Directorate (VDD) to discuss requests made through a CSF submission regarding updates to the MRL list. Specifically, the CSF asked for consideration for approval of fenbendazole for use in sheep. The MRL consultation had included an inclusion

For Broad Distribution

of fenbendazole for turkeys which originally sparked the discussion. VDD's impression was that a label expansion may be all that is needed to get fenbendazole labelled for sheep. The Pest Management Residue Centre had considered a label expansion for sheep previously but a data gap between dosage recommendations in other jurisdictions and those proposed for Canadian approval differed. More research was needed to support the claim for higher dosage in Canada. The sheep industry will need to consider what can be done to support research needed to bridge this gap, if fenbendazole remains a priority for the industry.

- CAHI (the Canadian Animal Health Institute – the organization that represents veterinary pharmaceutical and biologics manufacturers) has undertaken an exercise to create priority list of product needs for each species. The CSF had an opportunity to contribute to a draft list for the sheep industry, first drafted with the help of small ruminant veterinarians. The list was circulated to members for input and revised with producer feedback. The list included 53 veterinary drugs and 10 vaccines, prioritized by urgency of the need. CAHI will further flesh out this list with the help of its own members, with information about specific barriers to access and from this create an action plan to approve priority/easy access products.
- Two of the Global Sheep Producers Forum working groups met in March to start the work plans set out at the 2021 Virtual Conference. The Global Narrative WG set out to create key messaging that could serve as common themes in global communication pieces. The Future Leaders WG shared ideas on how to connect future sheep industry leaders around the world. The original intent was to build out an international exchange program, which remains a goal, but the pandemic has the group developing virtual tools. Look for some exciting opportunities to come for our next generation of producers!
- CAFÉ (the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions) invited the CSF to join its newly formed Animal Care & Best Practices Committee, whose inaugural meeting took place mid-March. The goal of the Committee is to develop national best practices in animal care at public events. The Committee will investigate the best practices already in place and how they differ when it comes to public events. The committee will pull together existing resources as a starting point for an animal care framework to be used by Canadian fairs and exhibitions.
- CAHSS (the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System) AMU/AMR (antimicrobial use/antimicrobial resistance) Surveillance Network met for the first time in March to discuss how best to establish a fulsome surveillance network. There was some confusion about how the group is positioned as compared to other AMU/AMR groups working in the livestock space and much of the meeting was spent delineating the differences between the CAHSS group and others. Hopefully, the next meeting provides greater clarity and creates a network that successfully connects all the operators in this space. There seem to be many!
- Work continues by the national FMD Working Group. A subset of livestock associations reviewed the 2nd draft of a business case that makes an argument for government funding of a national FMD vaccine bank. The report provides some history of the North American FMD Vaccine Bank (NAFMDVB) shared between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, including recent developments that had Mexico withdrawing from the vaccine bank in 2020 (unable to support their portion of the maintenance costs) and indications that the U.S. is building their own separate bank with some expectation that they are leaving the current system. Furthermore, Canada never had sufficient vaccines of its own with the NAFMDVB to protect Canada in the case of an FMD outbreak.

The revised business case included corrections and clarifications provided by the species groups around the investment that industry already makes towards disease risk mitigating measures. This includes money spent on animal health, biosecurity, and traceability. The business case calculates livestock industry contributions to these activities in the amount of \$62 million annually. The cost of a Canadian FMD vaccine bank is predicted to be \$3,244,500 CDN annually.

This month's meetings

- AgroLedger weekly standup X 5
 - Health Canada – Update on re-evaluation of tetrachlorvinphos
 - PEI Department of Agriculture & Land
 - Canadian Sheep Federation Board of Directors x 2
 - Animal Health Canada
 - CgFARAD Sustainability Committee
 - Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer for Canada
 - CLT Advisory Board
 - CSF NextGen Programming Working Group
 - Veterinary Drug Directorate -
 - Global Sheep Producers Forum – Industry Narrative Working Group
 - Global Sheep Producers Forum – Future Leaders Working Group
 - CAHSS AMR/AMU Network
 - Canadian Sheep Federation Audit & Finance Committee
 - CAFÉ (Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions) Animal Health and Care Committee
 - CAHSS Small Ruminant Network
 - Market Access Secretariat – EU Farm to Fork Strategy
 - FMD Working Group, livestock associations
 - Canadian Livestock Market Information Advisory Committee
 - Regulatory Implementation Committee
 - Small Ruminant Ultrasound Working Group
 - Community for Emerging Zoonotic Disease
 - Canadian Centre for Food Integrity – Cell-Based Protein – Consumer Appetite & Emerging Markets
 - FMD Working Group
 - AAFC – Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS)
 - Canadian Forage & Grasslands Association – Wrap Up Workshop
-