



# Lots of Work Being Done at the National Level

Ontario Sheep continues to work with other likeminded organizations in the agriculture industry and also increase the industry's profile within Canadian agriculture. Our ability to be at the table, working with other commodities on specific areas of interest, has gone a long way to ensure that our industry's voice is being heard and that we are being recognized as an important sector of the agriculture industry.

We strongly believe there continues to be a need for diverse, flexible tools to help producers navigate the risks that are beyond their control.

A key example of this is the National Sheep Network (NSN) joining the AgGROWTH Coalition. This coalition is made up of representatives from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA), the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC), the Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO), and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC). These groups came together after recognizing

that the business risks producers face have changed since the inception of the current suite of business risk management (BRM) programs. With the development of the next policy framework under way, industry leaders recognized that now is the time to ask for a more comprehensive review of BRM programs.

The coalition has requested a comprehensive analysis of BRM programs to determine the most effective way to maximize investment and growth in agriculture with existing funds. We strongly believe there continues to be a need for diverse, flexible tools to help producers navigate the risks that are beyond their control. It is especially important that the sheep industry is part of the AgGROWTH Coalition to ensure that BRM programs work for livestock producers since we do not have access to any other programs to help us manage risk.

The NSN has also been working with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to arrange for a national meeting to bring together producers from across Canada to discuss what they need and what the industry can afford when it comes to a national voice. We are emphasizing to AAFC that this is to be a producer meeting. For there to be a long-term and sustainable national voice, we need to ensure that its development is producer driven and producer supported.

As OSMA chair, I have also continued to be in contact with President Mike Corn of the American Sheep Industry. We have been discussing issues that our respective industries are dealing with.

Before I sign off, I wanted to bring to your attention the recent announcement of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA). Coming into effect in July, the agreement has been designed to reduce barriers to trade, investment, and worker mobility between the provinces and territories. I'm especially looking forward to hearing how the regulatory reconciliation and cooperation table will work. It has been established under this agreement to resolve trade barriers between provinces; an example of this is the different requirements between federally and provincially inspected meat processing plants. This could prove to be an exciting opportunity for our industry. **OSN**



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