

## **Government Invests to Help Ontario Sheep Producers Prosper**

Ontario sheep producers can look forward to enhance genetic improvement services as a result of a \$275,000 investment by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The government funding will support the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency in its enhancement and delivery of the Ontario Sheep Flock Improvement Program. It will also support the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency in its collaboration with the Centre for Genetic Improvement of Livestock, Le Centre d'expertise en production ovine du Québec and other sheep organizations to develop Canadian genetic improvement services as well as a made-in-Canada linked sheep information system.

“Having the latest technology will help Ontario’s sheep producers grow and expand their markets,” said Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. “We are pleased to support them in their efforts.”

“This will give Ontario sheep producers access to state-of-the-art flock improvement services and allow them to take advantage of genetics to produce the type of lambs that consumers want,” says Markus Wand, chair of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency.

### **QUICK FACTS**

- The Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency (OSMA) represents all aspects of the sheep, lamb and wool industry in the province and works to improve the sector through development activities, producer education, promotional campaigns, consumer education and public awareness.
- The Sheep Flock Improvement Program is a genetic improvement program designed to assist Ontario purebred and commercial sheep producers in the evaluation of potential breeding stock and to provide a measure of the comparative productivity of ewes in the flock.
- Ontario Sheep Statistics:
  - There are approximately 3,600 registered sheep farms in Ontario.
  - On January 1, 2009, there were 215,000 sheep and lambs on Ontario farms.
  - Ontario represents 30 per cent of the nation’s breeding flock.
  - There are 103 provincially-registered plants processing lamb in Ontario and five federally-registered plants. This represents 52 per cent of the nation’s processing capacity.
  - Farm cash receipts for sheep and lambs in Ontario in 2008 were \$46 million.