

OntarioSheep FARMERS

2024 Ontario Sheep Farmers Awards Announced at Annual Meeting

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Guelph, ON [October 26th, 2024] – Ontario Sheep Farmers celebrated the best in the industry at the annual Lamb Banquet following the Ontario Sheep Farmers’ AGM on October 25th. The OSF yearly awards honor the hard work, innovation, and sustainable practices demonstrated by this group of celebrated Ontario sheep farmers.

“The OSF awards highlight the dedication and resilience of sheep farmers and help foster a positive farming community while encouraging the next generation of farmers.” Art Alblas, OSF Chair.

Ontario GenOvis Program Award Nominees and Winners:

Hybridizer	Farm Name	Breeder Name
1st	Craigmore Farm	Wayne Kreklewich
*only one farm qualified this year in the hybridizer category		
Commercial		
1st	Brubacher Ovine	Earl Brubacher
2nd	Asphodel Sheep Co.	Todd Payne
3rd	Fare Vewe Acres	Mark & Betty Bearinger
Terminal		
1st	Codon Suffolks	Bill & Lynne Duffield
2nd	Maple Meadow Farms	Dwayne Bazinet & Collen Acres
3rd	Cedar Creek Charollais	Ted & Joanne Skinner
Maternal Breed		
1st	Rising Oak Dorsets	Laura Mosley
2nd	4s Maple Lane Farm	Kim Schneider
3rd	Century Lane Farms	Robert & Shirley Graves & Sons
Prolific Breed		
1st	Lamb Lady Farm	Shelagh Finn
2nd	Tulach Ard Farm	Sean McKenzie
3rd	Maple Meadow Farms	Dwayne Bazinet & Collen Acres

OSF Undergraduate Scholarship Award: Jessalyn Hendriks

This scholarship is open to applicants who are enrolled in their first or second year at an accredited university, college or apprenticeship program. Applicants do not have to be enrolled in an agriculture program to be eligible for the award.

Ontario Forage Network Mapleseed Pasture Award Winner: Steve Ernewein *(Please refer to Ontario Forage news release for information and highlights regarding this award)*

(Continued below)



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Emerging Leader Award: The Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) Emerging Leader Award celebrates and recognizes distinguished younger members of Ontario Sheep Farmers who are socially responsible leaders and innovators, currently making notable contributions to the Ontario sheep industry with significant impact.

Winner: Jason Emke

Jason Emke, a 4th generation sheep farmer from Elmwood, Ontario, took over Oak Generation Farms in 2017. He's contributed significantly to Ontario's sheep industry by exhibiting at events like the Royal Winter Fair and serving as a judge at various 4H and local shows. As OSF District 2 chair, Jason introduces innovative practices like grazing sheep under solar panels and has revamped the annual District 2 Lamb Banquet. A dedicated youth volunteer, Jason co-leads the Hanover 4H sheep club, organizes the Maple Hill Youth Market Lamb show, and supports the Roots of Bruce display. Known for his knowledge and innovation, Jason receives the Emerging Leader Award for his dedication to the sheep industry.

Long Service Award:

Awarded in acknowledgment and appreciation of long-standing contributions to the Ontario sheep industry, recipients of this award have demonstrated outstanding dedication, leadership, and an innovative spirit. This award is presented to an Ontario shepherd or industry service provider in recognition of their significant contributions to the advancement of the Ontario sheep industry over many years of service.

Winners (2):

Sarel Smit

Sarel Smit immigrated to Canada 21 years ago and quickly became an advocate for Ontario's sheep farmers as Manager at North Wellington Co-op's Mount Forest and Hanover branches. In 2005, he launched Sheep Education Night, which evolved into the popular Sheep Education Day, and during COVID-19, he created a 200-page Sheep Handbook, now a staple resource for Ontario farmers. Known for his expertise and commitment, Sarel supported the needs of local farmers, especially the Mennonite and Amish communities, while fostering a customer-focused team environment. After over 20 years of service, he retired in 2023, leaving a lasting legacy in Ontario's sheep farming community.

Jim Johnson

Jim and Wanda Johnston moved to New Liskeard to work at the College of Agriculture and Technology, where Jim became known as a leading researcher, producing practical publications to help sheep farmers improve pastures. He later directed sheep flock research for the Ontario Ministry, making it more accessible and impactful. After leaving OMAFRA in 2002, Jim and Wanda ran a 600-head grass-fed sheep operation, where Jim applied his expertise in pasture management, extending grazing seasons without tilling. His support for new sheep farmers and collaboration with researchers has benefited the Ontario sheep community widely. As District 11 Sheep Producers' secretary, Jim led inclusive, impactful meetings and advocated for positive policy changes.

For more information on the OSF Awards, visit www.ontariosheep.org/Awards%20Scholarships

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