

License fee increase to add value to Ontario's sheep value chain

August, 2023 [Guelph, ON] – The Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) board has reviewed the financial position of the organization and determined that after 13 years with no change, a \$0.40 increase to license fees to \$2.20 per live animal sale is important for the future success of the organization.

Ontario Sheep Farmers is a tough and credible advocate and unified voice for the province's sheep farmers, representing all sectors of the industry. OSF has done well to represent its members with the resources available, but costs continue to rise. Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) are committed to using the valuable license fees to support programs and services that help our farmers.

"Our new strategic plan prioritizes the relationship between the board, the districts and the members," says OSF Chair, John Hemsted. "The budget increase will increase our engagement with our members and improve our market knowledge to prepare for future initiatives to grow the sector for all producers."

In 2021, OSF launched a new five-year plan, Building Strength for a Better Future, that was created with farmers' valuable input and insights from across the entire sheep value chain. The OSF board of directors have committed funds to new initiatives to carry out the goals within this plan including market research, data collection, a wool pilot project and new courses within the Sheep Institute.

A new part-time Member Relations role beginning in the Fall will improve dialogue with districts and coordinate activities across the province to ensure ongoing engagement and support of district committees and members. OSF will also maintain the delivery of our current programs at current levels, including supporting our local districts and members.

Ontario Sheep Farmers is a producer-run organization established in 1985 and represents the province's 3,000 sheep farmers who contribute over \$530 million to Ontario's economy. Ontario is home to the country's largest sheep flock and processes over 50% of the sheep and lambs born in Canada. We believe passionately that sheep farming is an agricultural business sector that is profitable, contributes to the well-being of our communities and our province and offers unique opportunities to develop new markets, provide needed environmental benefits and grow both our domestic and international markets.

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