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Vol. 39 - Issue 2 June 2021

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ONTARIO SHEEP FARMERS STAFF

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jennifer MacTavish | General Manager jmactavish@ontariosheep.org |
| Jennifer Johanson | Executive Assistant / Bookkeeper jjohanson@ontariosheep.org |
| Anita O'Brien | On Farm Program Lead aobrien@ontariosheep.org |
| Tom Lewis | Industry Relations Specialist tlewis@ontariosheep.org |
| Jan Smith | Administrative Assistant jsmith@ontariosheep.org |

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

ONTARIO SHEEP FARMERS
 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1B1
 Phone: (519) 836-0043
 Fax: (519) 836-2531
 E-mail: admin@ontariosheep.org
 Website: www.ontariosheep.org
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Photo submissions for use in publications (magazine, promotional/education materials). Photo submissions are welcomed. Include the following information with your submission: name, mailing address, phone number, email address, expressed consent for Ontario Sheep Farmers to use the photo. If there are individuals in the picture, they should be identified and permission to print their picture must be secured either directly (if adults) or (if children) from a parent/guardian. Emailed photos must be a minimum of 300dpi and each photo should be clearly identified with the required information as outlined above. Photos will not be returned, and all submissions become the property of Ontario Sheep Farmers to be used or reproduced at the organization's discretion. Wherever possible, credit will be given to the photographer if used.

COVER PHOTO: Around the Sheep Farm - Danielle Sargla

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Crossroads Challenge Update

The Crossroads Challenge is as much about listening as it has been about building a new strategic plan for the Ontario Sheep Farmer (OSF) organization. We have listened, and followed you as your emails, survey responses and conversations have led us along the path being created, towards the kind of future you want for the Ontario sheep industry.

We have heard clearly that growing the industry is your priority over the next five years. To help you be successful at capitalizing on the significant opportunity the industry has, there is a need for the OSF to intentionally engage you, governments, value chain partners and the public strategically and professionally. This lays the foundation for our draft strategic objectives (note emphasis on draft):

1. **Public policy and public trust.** To grow an industry that is sustainable, ethical, and beneficial to our communities by engaging stakeholders within the agri-food sector, locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally.
2. **Research, knowledge transfer and mentorship.** To support you in your own business by focusing on finding and mobilizing critical information and professional development opportunities.
3. **Value chain relationships.** To focus on the needs and challenges of the industry and build strategic relationship that support growth.
4. **Governance and operations.** To focus on continuous improvement and organizational excellence.

It is exciting to get this point; where the feedback we have received from such a vast cross-section of the industry is starting to take shape and become a plan that the OSF can allocate its resources against. Where we can start to see how we can align our activities with your business goals. I'm sure there were times over the past few months where you, like me, have wondered if, or how, we'd get here. Although, to be honest, I never imagined a time where I would think strategic planning, or strategic plans, were necessary, or exciting.

By following the path you've created, we have diverged a bit from where I thought we were heading. Over the last few months, you have told us that there is a need to not only think about how we can support a growing industry, but that we must expand the conversation to including talking about how the industry will be governed and, perhaps more importantly, how it will ensure sustainable, effective, efficient, leadership that is rooted in trust, transparency, and inclusiveness.

Thank you. This is exactly the kind of critical thinking and input that we wanted from our Crossroads Challenge. As a board we know firsthand some of the challenges with our current governance structure and we are concerned about leadership succession. Its reassuring to know that is on your minds as well.

Therefore, we've gone out to you with a second round of townhalls specifically on governance. I appreciate that some of you were anticipating and wanting to see a draft strategic plan to comment on. However, taking the time to address governance and leadership, alongside the development of a new strategic plan, is necessary and smart. As I write this, we are heading into our second Governance Townhall, and I am excited to see what comes from these discussions.

Despite this divergence, we are still on track to have a complete, draft, strategic plan out to the industry by August. I would like to also take the time to acknowledge the courage and leadership of the board to engage, support and participate in this process. They are risking criticism and devoting their own time and efforts for the possibility of doing better for the industry. This is leadership in motion – something to acknowledge, celebrate and build upon.

I look forward to being able to talk to you about the plan, and to continue to follow your lead. **OSN**

Editorial policy: Ontario Sheep Farmers welcomes and encourages letters to the editor and article suggestions from farmers and industry partners as a means of communicating with the Ontario Sheep Farmers board of directors and other farmers on issues of importance. Letters may be on any sheep industry topic, including Ontario Sheep Farmers' policies, programs and procedure. Letters may address previous articles or letters to the editor, and the editor may comment on the accuracy of the information in letters. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for style and grammatical errors. When submitting a letter, please include the name of the author, address, phone number and/or email address (for verification purposes). Printed letters will include the author's name. Potentially defamatory or libelous material, or personal attacks on individuals will not be permitted. If an author feels that the editor has inappropriately edited or not print a letter, a written request can be submitted to the board of directors for review to determine if there has been a violation of *Ontario Sheep News'* editorial policy.



Our Commitment to Care

Over the years, the sheep industry has invested heavily into the care and welfare of its livestock. From the development of the Code of Practice to the time spent on emergency management and planning. From programs like Maedi Visna to investing in research on genetic resistance to parasites. Building flock resiliency and diversity has, in a lot of ways, been the cornerstone of the work of the Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF).

However, I can't stop thinking about a conversation I had with a livestock transporter recently. We were talking about the feed, water, and rest stations for sheep in Canada, which largely he is happy with. But after a pause he said "you know the one thing that is a problem is that there is a lack of places to park your truck. We are running out of places to park and get something to eat and if you run out of hours in a day, you have no where to go."

Could it be that in our collective quest to care for the health and welfare of our animals, we have lost sight of the importance of taking care of the people?

OSF has done some good work over the past to demonstrate how, as an organization, it cares for people. Some of the work may not be obvious, such as being the first commodity organization to support the Farmer Mental Wellness research at the University of Guelph, while others are more obvious, such as creating the Code of Conduct and Meeting Policies and Procedures document.

Recently, the OSF board passed a Diversity and Inclusion policy. Some may recall that diversity is something that OSF has embraced as part of "doing different." In that context diversity was in relation to sheep the operations represented around the board table, and the number of women around the OSF's board table (something not seen in other commodity boards). This Diversity and Inclusion policy, however, expands on this and speaks to the organization's commitment to continuous improvement on how it cares for people.

It is important that, as an organization, OSF is intentional about listening, and learning how to speak up about prejudice and discrimination, that it works with other organizations to fight discrimination and that we advocate for more diversity and inclusion in agriculture.

The expansion of OSF's commitment to diversity is also part of our commitment to care for people who make up the sheep industry in Ontario. It is not just a recognition of our diverse group of farmers, but also a recognition of the diversity along the supply chain, including consumers.

It is not enough though to just talk about diversity and inclusion. It is important to put action to these words and to invest in understanding how to create a culture that fosters and builds diversity and inclusion. This is why the OSF has some staff and board members participating in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training with Beef Farmers of Ontario.

This training is another example of the OSF's commitment to continuous improvement and will help evolve the conversation and our culture. A cultural evolution that will help us make the wellbeing of people at least as important as the health and welfare of our sheep. **OSN**

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New Resources Available for Ontario Sheep Producers

With summer finally here and temperatures continuing to rise, so do our mutual hopes that life may be heading back to normal. The team here at Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) hopes this issue of Ontario Sheep News (OSN) finds you, your family, and friends well. We also hope that you enjoy the articles, advertisements and updates provided in this issue.

Earlier this spring, OSF announced the addition of an online self-guided professional development course that focuses on Parasite Management. This new course is tailored towards sheep and goat producers. With thanks to online learning, this can be done in the comfort of your own home. More details on this and other OSF Professional Development Courses can be found if you visit www.ontariosheep.org/programs. This issue provides additional information on courses available, such as the Introduction to Small Ruminant Production and the Master Shepherd Course, which can be found on page 11.

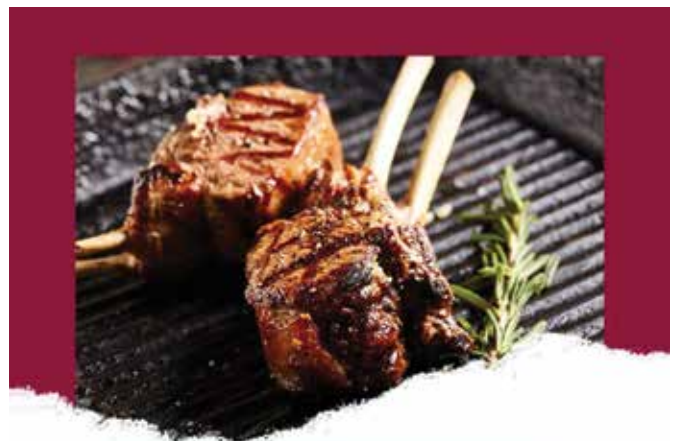
This spring OSF teamed up with AgSights and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to develop some resources and tools to support on-farm health/biosecurity and more information can be found on page 18, including information on protocols to ensure safe on-farm visitor interactions. We have also included three separate tear-away signs that can be displayed at the farm entrance or business operation. These and other resources are available for downloading at www.ontariosheep.org/biosecurity.

OSF did not stop there, we listened to what we have heard from producer's who were looking for additional information for on-farm technology. This led OSF in the development of a series of new resources referenced on page 15, and can also be found by visiting www.ontariosheep.org/Technology. This resource page is meant to further support producers in choosing the right technologies to assist in their farming operations.

Technology is changing the way we farm and has improved efficiencies. Can you imagine using facial recognition technology to identify your sheep? This innovation could one day replace tags and instantly record data like location, health status and animal behavior. OSF also looked at data collecting software options for farm operations and has provided a handy comparison chart for producers to aid in the decision making and information on In the Chute Technology, Hardware, EID, Geofencing and Electronic Record Keeping Comparisons and more. Should you need any materials printed please do not hesitate to contact the OSF office.

Lastly , OSF would like to remind producers that we provide weekly market reports, which can be viewed at www.ontariosheep.org/market-info also, in partnership with the University of Guelph and OMAFRA, have developed a price and profit predictability tools www.ontariosheep.org/price-predict to help guide decisions and provide additional information on what prices to expect at auction. Pricing predictions for lambs in the 65 to 79lb and 95 to 109lb categories are currently available with price predictions for one to four weeks out provided. These great tools and resources assist producers in navigating today's markets.

In closing stay safe and take care of yourself, and each other and happy reading! **OSN**



Use Ontario Sheep's product locator tool to find out where you can purchase products such as meat, dairy and wool.
www.ontariosheep.org/product-locator



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ARE WELCOME

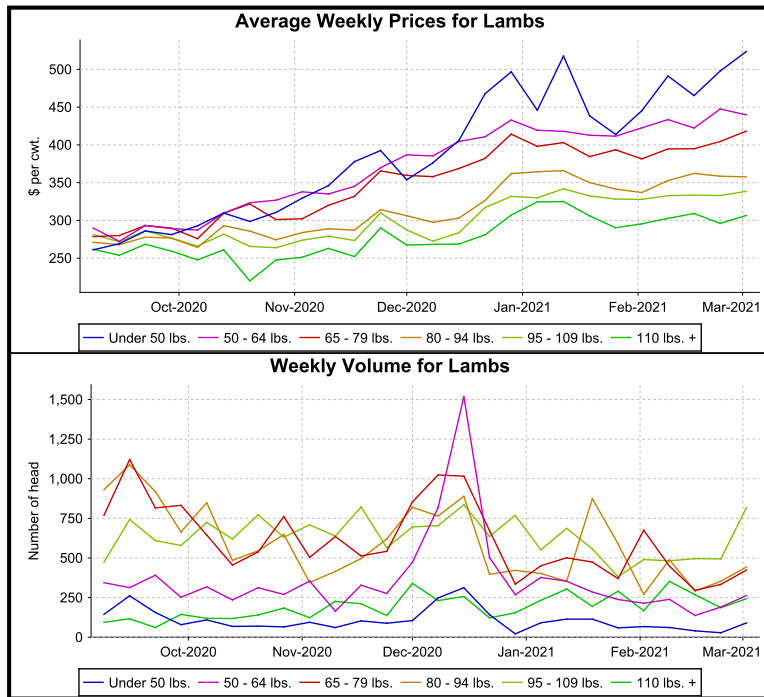
The OSN welcomes letters to the editor.

Please email: tlewis@ontariosheep.org or mail to:

Ontario Sheep News, 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph ON N1K 1B1.

The Ontario Market Report

Full market information can be found every week in the Ontario Farmer and online at www.OntarioSheep.org under "Market Information". The graphs here show the trends in pricing and volume of the last six months in Ontario
 NOTE: OSI did not submit numbers from September 15th to November 15. **OSN**



You can also listen to the weekly information by calling 519-836-0043 and press 4 to go to the market line.

Market information for OLEX, the Ontario Stockyards, Brussels and Embrun are recorded every week. You can also find archived weekly summaries on the Market page.

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Getting a Handle on Carcass Yield and Quality

5 Tips to Improve Lamb Shipping and Handling

By Erin Massender, Sheep Specialist OMAFRA

There are many factors that contribute to lamb carcass yield and quality, everything from nutrition to genetics, but have you considered the impact of your handling? Pre-slaughter handling and transportation is only a small part of raising market lambs, but it can have a big impact.

Improper shipping and handling increase the risk of bruising, reducing carcass yield as the affected areas of the carcass are trimmed off during processing. It can also cause lambs greater stress, which has negative effects on several meat quality attributes including: pH, colour, shelf-life, drip and cooking loss, tenderness and eating quality.¹ Careful pre-slaughter handling will ensure that the hard work of your breeding and management programs are fully realized in the sale barn and on consumers' plates. Here are 5 handling and transportation tips to improve the yield and quality of your lamb carcasses.

1. Inspect and repair handling facilities routinely.

Protrusions in handling systems, pens and trucks all contribute to bruising. Inspect hinges, latches and over-head gates regularly as they are common causes of bruises.²

2. Think about the age, weight and fitness of animals being handled.

The risk of bruising is greater for younger, heavier and/or leaner animals with less fat cover for protection.^{4,5,8} Animals will also differ in their ability to recover from the stress and activity of handling.⁸ Be aware of these factors and handle groups of animals that are at greater risk for bruising or stress carefully.

3. Use sheep behaviour to your advantage when handling.

Move sheep and lambs quietly and calmly, using flight zones to encourage forward movement. Impatience and rushed handling cause stress and can result in poorer meat quality even if lambs are rested for more than 24 hours before slaughter.⁷ Difficult to move livestock are often frightened livestock. Fear leads to behaviours such as freezing, fleeing, baulking and riding on top of other animals, which can increase incidences of bruising.² In intensive systems, walking through pens and moving animals through handling systems routinely will help reduce the stress and risk of bruising during pre-slaughter handling.

Under no circumstances should pulling on the wool or the tail be used to restrain or re-direct small ruminants as this

is among the most common causes of bruising. Handling methods such as pulling the first few animals to start movement through chutes or lifting small lambs by the wool are never acceptable. Figure 1 clearly shows the bruising damage that wool-pulling during pre-slaughter handling can have on lamb carcasses. In this image, there is bruising to both the back of the neck and loin. The red colour suggests the bruises were recent and occurred during pre-slaughter handling, as bruises turn a yellow or green colour as they heal.

4. Plan transport to minimize stress.

Forward-thinking and careful planning will help reduce stress and risk of injury during shipping. Transport durations of longer than four hours has been associated with bruising, stress and lower carcass yield, with heavy lambs being most affected.^{8,12,14} Where possible, try to use sale barns and abattoirs that are close to the farm.

It's also important to plan ahead for shipments to maintain appropriate stocking densities and minimize mixing of unfamiliar groups of animals. Overly high stocking densities may increase bruising, stress and the number of non-

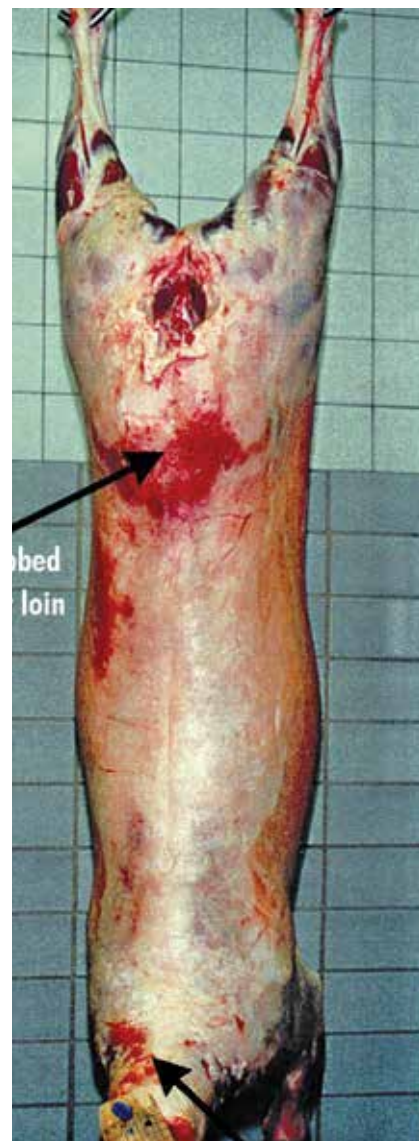


Figure 1: Image of lamb carcass bruising caused by a handler pulling the lamb's wool.

ambulatory or dead animals on arrival.^{2,14} Mixing unfamiliar animals during transport disrupts their social structure, increasing stress and risk of injury.²

5. Consider your marketing system.

Where possible, consider opportunities for direct to slaughter marketing. Research suggests that lambs sold through auctions are likely to experience greater stress, bruising, injury and even death than those sold and shipped directly for slaughter because they are handled multiple times by different stockpeople.^{4,12}

Conclusions

Carcass bruising and stress reduce both carcass yield and quality. Research studies have reported incidences of bruising affecting up to 70% of inspected carcasses and they are both a welfare and profitability concern.⁴ Factors associated with stress and bruising include the animal itself (genetics, age, weight, fatness), handling facilities, stockpersonship, acclimation to handling, transportation duration, stocking density and choice of marketing system. Careful pre-slaughter handling and transportation will ensure that the efforts of your breeding and management programs are fully realized in the sale barn and on consumers' plates. **OSN**

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Seeking Nominations and Applications for 2021 Awards and Scholarships

Each year Ontario Sheep Farmers recognizes the achievements and contributions of members and industry service providers of Ontario's sheep industry through awards and scholarships. The award winners will be announced at the virtual AGM in October 2021.

This year, OSF is seeking nominations and applications for five awards and scholarships, including the new Ontario Sheep Farmers Memorial Fund – Industry Leader Award. Read more below about each award and scholarship and consider applying or nominating a deserving sheep farmer or industry representative.

Application and nomination forms are available on the OSF website www.ontariosheep.org/awards-scholarships or by contacting the OSF office at (519) 836-0043.

Outstanding Shepherd Award

This award goes to an Ontario shepherd who has made significant contributions to the advancement of the Ontario sheep industry. The recipient exemplifies the values of leadership and responsible sheep husbandry.

Deadline for nominations: September 14th, 2021

Long Service Award

Awarded in acknowledgement 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.

Deadline for nominations: September 14th, 2021

Mapleseed Pasture Award

This award, sponsored in part by OSF, Mapleseed and the Ontario Forage Council, recognizes individual sheep farmers who are doing an outstanding job of pasture management. The Mapleseed Pasture Award is a way of encouraging sheep farmers to implement pasture management strategies to maximize production per acre.

The winner of this award receives a cash prize of \$250.

Deadline for submissions: September 14th, 2021

2021 Undergraduate Scholarship

This \$500 cash 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. Applicants must be 21 years of age or younger (as of January 1, 2021).

Applicants must be one of the following:

- A registered sheep producer as of April 30th, 2021
- Have a parent/guardian registered as a sheep producer as of April 30th, 2021; or
- A member of a 4-H Ontario sheep club.

In addition to completing the application form, applicants must also write an article (minimum 500 words) on one of the following topics:

- What strategy or strategies do you think the sheep industry should employ to address public trust?
- If you were going to produce sheep, what management style – annual lambing, accelerated lambing or a combination of the two, would you choose and why?
- Give a detailed description of a biosecurity set up and explain why this is important to the individual sheep farmer and the industry.
- What do you feel is the sheep industry's greatest weakness, and therefore greatest challenge? How would you address that if you could?

Application deadline: September 14th, 2021

Ontario Sheep Farmers Memorial Fund – Industry Leader Award

This \$500 cash award is open to applicants who are wanting to further their leadership development in Ontario's sheep industry. This award can be used by the successful applicant to participate in post graduate or industry education opportunities, and leadership courses.

In addition to completing an application form, applicants will be asked to submit either an essay (of at least 500 words) or a two to three-minute video answering the following question:

What do you see as your contribution to the Ontario sheep industry in the next 5 years? 10 years?

Application deadline: September 14th, 2021 **OSN**

Ontario Sheep Farmers Professional Development Courses

Looking for ways to improve on farm production? Sign up for one of our professional development courses today!

Ontario sheep Farmers (OSF) offers several online professional development courses aimed at assisting producers either looking to get into sheep production or are looking to tune up on their sheep production skills and improve their operation. Check out the courses below currently being offered by Ontario Sheep Farmers!

Online Introduction to Small Ruminant Production

Are you looking to get started in small ruminant production? To help facilitate education and knowledge transfer, Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) offer an online Introduction to Small Ruminant Production Course. Each online module covers both sheep (meat, fibre, and dairy) and goat (meat, fibre, and dairy) species, providing an overview of each of the sectors and introductory concepts. The online professional development course is designed for individuals who are thinking about starting a sheep and/or goat farm and can be viewed at your own pace in the comfort of your home. Registrants are given 60 days to complete the course.

- The course fee: \$30 per participant.
- For more details visit www.ontariosheep.org/programs

Online Parasite Management Course *New!*

This new self-guided online course focuses on parasite management in Ontario. Parasite management is always a challenging topic for producers. This course is geared toward sheep and goat producers.

Each self-guided module will take approximately 75 minutes to complete which includes 50 minutes of presentation time and the module quiz. The course is broken down into 6 modules.

- The course fee: \$50 per participant.
- For more details visit www.ontariosheep.org/programs

Master Shepherd Course (Full Course and Individual Module Registration)

The current version of the Master Shepherd's Course consists of 12 modules including: Business Planning; Flock productivity and reproduction; Ewe flock nutrition; Industry dynamics and governance; Genetics; Infrastructure and feeding systems; Effective flock health management; Lambing and lamb rearing; Predation and pasture management; Lamb feedlots and dairy; and Marketing and wool.

Full course applications will continue to be accepted. The new policy enables students to enter the course at any time and complete the course in the following offering. The course is halfway completed with Module 7 started on June 1st.

- The course fee: Full course cost is \$1750 and individual modules are \$200. The On-line format has enabled OSF to reduce registration fees.
- For more details visit www.ontariosheep.org/programs

For more information visit www.ontariosheep.ca **OSN**



The advertisement features a central image of a woman in a blue jacket and black beanie holding a white lamb. To the right, the bioLinks logo is shown with the text: "Have an on-farm store or retail business? Take your sales online with the bioLinks e-Store and market your products directly to consumers. Grow Sales Track Orders Payments Online". Below this, a hand is shown holding a smartphone displaying the bioLinks app interface. At the bottom, the Go360 | bioTrack logo is displayed with the text: "Record Keeping Made Simple Anytime. Anywhere." The bottom of the advertisement includes a dark blue footer with a globe icon, the website www.agsights.com, a phone icon, the number 1.855.246.2333, and social media icons for Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

A Plan to Put Canadian Wool Back on the Map

By Jeanine Moyer

As The Campaign for Wool in Canada continues to gather momentum, this year marks a more focused approach to building demand for Canadian wool with the development of a five-year strategic plan. With its parent organization the Canadian Wool Council, the team has forged an alliance that will build on each other's strengths, leverage connections and ultimately, foster additional strategic partnerships between domestic and international wool value chain stakeholders to drive demand for Canadian wool.

“We've dedicated five months to build our strategic framework, or The Wool Plan as we like to call it,” says Matthew Rowe, Chief Executive Officer, The Campaign for Wool in Canada. “Our consultations included every link in the wool value chain, from primary producers and shearers to retailers, designers and manufacturers, both in Canada and around the world. Importantly we also brought in experts in technology, innovation, and venture capital to help round out the discussions. The outcome is a vision for a better and more sustainable Canadian wool industry. Wool has been a part of this country since before it was founded and we have a vision that will ultimately drive demand for a revalued Canadian clip.”

The Campaign for Wool was launched in Canada in 2014 and is a global endeavour initiated by its patron, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, to raise consumer awareness about wool's unique, renewable and biodegradable benefits. The strategic plan is based on the primary aim of the global campaign, to increase the demand for wool by explaining its many benefits to consumers but with the added lens of finding opportunities for Canadian wool.

The Process

A strategic planning committee worked to build a framework that followed three phases – research, analysis and conclusion. The research phase saw the group include supply



chain mapping to identify challenges and opportunities, along with in-depth research into the environment, land and water management, agricultural best practices, sheep, wool, other natural fibres, processes, machinery, technology and economics.

Data analysis led to the conclusion that Canada's wool industry had five significant obstacles to overcome in order for a viable industry to evolve. The conclusion saw the development of a strategic framework with goals, outcomes and actionable items, complete with a five-year timeline.

The work was supported by a staff team including Rowe, Wool consultant Jane Underhill and Student Researcher Courtney Harder.

The five-year strategic plan was developed with the support of The Ontario Water Centre, The Dalglish Family Foundation, Clearwater Farm and the University of Guelph.

The Outcome

Wool Plan 2021-26 outlines three goals to support stakeholders of the Canadian industry, five outcomes to respond to the five identified obstacles and nine actionable items that will be programs or initiatives for the Campaign for Wool and its partner organizations to implement. Many

of the actionable items are already in progress, while others will be timed to roll-out over the course of the strategic plan timeline.

Three goals:

1. To rebrand and revalue Canadian wool
2. To advocate for the Canadian wool supply chain stakeholder
3. Ambassadorship for Canadian wool on the world stage

Five outcomes:

1. Education proposal involves creating a Shearing Guild to help wool producers access affordable shearing and support for their wool.
2. Outreach proposal involves strategic initiatives to bring attention and value to Canadian wool and to support value chain stakeholders.
3. Brokerage proposal involves different tweaks to the existing wool pipeline to achieve innovation, profitability but also a fair price to producers.
4. Infrastructure proposal involves establishing the right size and style of infrastructure required to manage the existing Canadian wool inventory. Where necessary, a plan to outsource aspects of processing to countries

Continued on page 14.



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who've already mastered environmental footprint, waste management, processing capacity and cost efficiency.

5. "Proudly Canadian" Products proposal involves early stages incubation, research and development into products created using certified Canadian wool. For the next five years, research into "Proudly Canadian" products development will focus on the interiors market, the semi-industrial market and the agricultural products market.

Nine actionable items:

1. Develop a national Shearing Guild.
2. Create wool industry apprenticeship, internship and placement opportunities for young people.
3. Lead Canada's application for membership in the International Wool Textile Organization.
4. Honour Canada's wool legacy through strategic partnerships with Canadian institutions.
5. Expand the role of the Advisory Council to include task forces covering Canada's wool value-chain.
6. Develop "Proudly Canadian Wool" product incubator partnerships to test the commercial viability of Canadian wool products in strategic product sectors.
7. Develop a Canadian Wool Trademark (i.e. Woolmark for Canada) with associated standards that define Canadian wool as a premium product. Would include adherence to the principles of The Campaign for Wool's Dumfries House Declaration at every step of the way.
8. Develop "Proudly Canadian Wool" marketing collateral and point of sale materials to support retailers/makers in telling the story of Canadian wool.
9. Establish partnership with an off-shore (UK-based) scouring operation to unlock short-term processing capacity (measuring and offsetting carbon footprint where possible) while building the case for investing in machinery in Canada.



The Future

"For the past eight years, The Campaign for Wool in Canada has promoted the benefits of wool," says Rowe. "While we generated millions of media impressions with our partnerships, we were struck by the broken supply chains and the profound disconnect between stakeholders across our domestic industry. We resolved to, not only talk about making things better, but to take meaningful action."


The development of this five-year strategic plan is the first of its kind for Canada. The Campaign for Wool in Canada and its partners, believe the timing is right to implement a strategic approach to renewing Canadian wool as a valuable and viable natural product with endless applications.

"The conclusions I've drawn for a reimagined, revitalized Canadian wool industry hinge on creating the right size and configuration of infrastructure and brokerage system for our existing wool clip so that wool producers and stakeholders can start to see immediate benefits," says the reports co-Author Jane Underhill.

Rowe added, "Wool Plan 2021-26 draws its strength from collaboration. We need the support of the entire value chain to realize our full potential and invite everyone with a stake in wool to join us in building a stronger, more sustainable Canadian wool industry."

For more information about The Campaign for Wool in Canada, the Canadian Wool Council, and the Strategic plan visit campaignforwool.ca. **OSN**

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Advanced Biosecurity Technology Now Available for Your Farm

Lock-down, quarantine and health management have become common conversational terms in the past year. Farmers are no stranger to these discussions, having used these terms to describe biosecurity and animal health for years. But just as the Covid-19 pandemic has brought awareness to the speed and seriousness of virus and disease transmission in human health, farmers also need to be aware of the increasing risk of infectious diseases in livestock and poultry.

The threat of a serious disease outbreak is real, no matter what type of livestock or poultry farm you operate or where you are located. And the best defense is biosecurity.



Virtual Protection

Canada's poultry and swine sectors are no stranger to the disastrous results of an outbreak like Avian influenza or porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS). The good news is biosecurity protocols, best practices, tools and technology have advanced since the first serious disease outbreaks registered on our radars.

One of the latest innovations in biosecurity and on-farm disease management utilizes GPS to create a geofence, or virtual farm fence, around a farm property to monitor the movements of people and vehicles in real-time. Ontario is home to the first agri-food industry software company using this geofence technology to protect animal health and the people that live and work on farms.

How does it work?

A geofence is a virtual 'fence' or invisible boundary around a farm property using latitude and longitude points. Once created, the coordinates are registered in a software system, so a farm visitor can use the GPS on their smartphone to recognize the geofence. As a person gets close to the geofence, their phone records the moment it crosses the geofence latitude and longitude points, registering a farm entry in real-time. The same thing happens when a visitor leaves the farm, triggering a phone's GPS when it crosses the virtual 'fence' to record the date and time.

Geofencing software systems, like Ontario-based Farm Health Guardian (www.farmhealthguardian.com), are growing in popularity with farm operations that manage multiple barns or farm properties, parent herds or flocks that have a high replacement value, or barns at high risk for disease transmission.

By enhancing a farm's biosecurity protocols with a system like Farm Health Guardian, farmers can use geofencing to monitor personnel and vehicle movement on their properties and within their barns. The system uses contact tracing to monitor disease transmission and efficiently respond to disease outbreaks, quickly quarantining any infected barns and identifying any people or vehicles that could be at risk of inadvertently spreading disease. Farm Health Guardian is available as a smartphone app or on a tablet for easy, confidential, and touchless farm entry and exit monitoring. The system also utilizes several geolocation devices for trucks and provides farmers with real-time trace-in and trace-out reports to quickly identify disease threats or outbreaks.

Geofencing biosecurity systems offer farmers a next-level approach to protect the health of their animals and family or employees who work in their barns. A healthy barn means happy and healthy employees, increased efficiencies, and a stronger bottom line.

Boost Your Biosecurity

Geofencing solutions may not be the next step for every farmer, there are plenty of ways to enhance biosecurity tools and protocols before investing in software systems, but it's important to be aware of new technology and market developments available to improve the health and safety of our farms.

For farmers looking at upgrading or investing in barn monitoring systems, electronic logbooks, the ability to quickly generate trace-out reports or just improving overall biosecurity, products like Farm Health Guardian could be a fit for your farm.

Ontario Sheep Farmers is working to provide members with the latest information on available on-farm technologies, biosecurity and health and safety practices. For more information on improving your farm's biosecurity, visit www.ontariosheep.org/biosecurity. **OSN**

Helping Your Sheep Beat the Heat

By Carissa White M.Sc. Candidate- Immunology UofG

Heat stress (HS) is the single largest stressor affecting the efficiency of animals in global production systems, impacting their development, growth, and reproduction [1]. HS begins to impact sheep performance and health when temperatures rise above 25-31°C, impeding their ability to thermoregulate. The magnitude of impact is influenced by individual characteristics (i.e., age, breed, body condition, gender), environment, and management practices [1].

Implementation of bioclimatic indices on-farm is thought to be the gold standard in identifying HS in production animals; the most prominent being the Temperature-Humidity Index (THI). However, bioclimatic indices have limitations and fail to consider physiological states like core temperatures or altered respiratory states during excessive heat load [1, 2].

Bioclimatic indices were originally implemented on-farm in the early 1940s [1]. Over time, indices have been developed and modified to include meteorological data, associated physiological, and production characteristics for production systems [1]. The THI was developed to determine the influence of HS on production by measuring both ambient temperature and relative humidity [1-3]. For sheep, THI values < 22.2°C, 22.2-23.2°C, 23.3-25.6°C and > 25.6°C, predict absence of, moderate, severe, and extreme HS respectively [4].

Historically, THI has been favoured due to ease of application; however, it is not a “one index fits all circumstances”, since it needs to be adjusted for temperate region, species, and breed to provide an accurate assessment [1,3]. The THI also does not account for solar radiation or wind speed; both of which have major impacts on the accumulation of heat load and its loss through evaporative cooling [1-3].

More complex bioclimatic indices, like the Comprehensive Climate Index and Heat Load Index, have been developed to pick up where the THI falls short. These indices provide a more comprehensive assessment of HS due to their inclusion of wind speed and solar radiation, but their accuracy is still limited. For instance, all bioclimatic indices are single time-point measurements, meaning that they do not estimate the impact, intensity, and duration of hot conditions [1,3]. Additionally, bioclimatic indices are only as good as the available meteorological data. Weather stations should be located close to animal pens to account for fluctuations in microclimates and topography. Wang et al. (2018) determined that a difference of 500 meters between the meteorological station and pens resulted in a drop in accuracy for THI measurements (up to 10%). Bioclimatic indices are no longer sufficient for assessing livestock well-being and productivity under HS; their accuracy is subjective and heavily reliant on the correct use of meteorological inputs, operator diligence and knowledge of local conditions [1].

Research suggests that the physiological response could provide more accurate, early indicators of HS. In sheep, the primary response to HS is an increased respiration rate (RR), which can be assessed manually by counting flank movements for one-minute intervals [1,6], or through the implementation of monitoring devices. For example, infrared thermology cameras in barns/pens, which measure the temperature differences between inhalation and exhalation, show a 93% success rate in measuring RR [7]; allowing continuous monitoring of your flock.

Core temperature (monitored by probes, bolus sensors, and cameras) is another important indicator of HS, but the accuracy and reliability of results can vary depending on the monitoring device used [1,3].

Panting, a function of RR and core temperature, is a crucial thermal exchange mechanism and an excellent visual indicator of HS [6]. The Panting Score Index (PSI), developed in 2018 (outlined below), can be used to assess the effects of heat load intensity and duration on sheep [6]. Monitoring devices for PSI are available but can be costly and impractical for pasture use at this time [1].



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| PANTING SCORE | STRESS CATEGORY | BREATHING CONDITION |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0 | No Stress | No panting, normal respiration rate |
| 1 | Mild Stress | Slight panting, mouth closed, easily observed chest movements |
| 1.5 | Mild Stress | Fast panting, mouth closed, easily observed rapid chest movements |
| 2 | Moderate Stress | Fast panting, mouth slightly open, easily observed rapid chest movements |
| 2.5 | Moderate Stress | Same as 2, but occasional tongue extension to the lips |
| 3 | Severe Stress | Open mouth, neck extended, head held high, tongue extended, rapid panting |
| 4 | Extreme Stress | Open mouth, tongue fully extended for prolonged period, head lowered, shift to deeper, slower breathing with intermittent fast panting |

In the future, precision biomonitoring, the use of bodily tissues or fluids to assess an animal's stress response, may provide the most comprehensive assessment of HS on an individual and cohort level [1]. Development of wearable biosensors in combination with machine learning techniques promise to provide real-time monitoring of HS, alerting producers far sooner than conventional methods. Biomonitoring may also assist in the selection of more thermotolerant breeding stock. For example, HS-tolerant dairy animals exhibit higher levels of heat-shock protein 70 (HSP70) in their milk [8]. Producers may be able to use HS-tolerant biomarkers like HSP70 to identify breeding rams and ewes to improve flock thermotolerance.

Current climate models project an increase in ambient temperature, impacting local and global agriculture [1,4], and leaving sheep vulnerable to HS. The current research indicates that THI is no longer the gold standard in measuring HS and should not be relied upon as a stand-alone measure. Instead, farmers should monitor the physiological stress response in conjunction with THI to accurately identify and manage HS, limiting the potential negative production and health outcomes. **OSN**

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New Suite of Health and Management Resources Available to Ontario Sheep Farmers

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has been a long haul for everyone, especially farmers who have been left to navigate new health and safety protocols and regional restrictions, all while trying to keep their farms running and maintain business as usual.

Understanding the struggles and uncertainties farmers have faced over the past year, Ontario Sheep Farmers teamed up with AgSights and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to develop practical resources to support on-farm health and safety Covid-19 protocols.

Managing the health of farm families, employees, visitors, contractors and ultimately, our livestock isn't new to Ontario sheep farmers – we call it biosecurity. So, while we were developing these new resources, like printable biosecurity posters, a guide to safe visitor interactions, on-farm Covid-19 pre-screening forms and a workplace safety sign to remind farm visitors to self-screen for health concerns, it made sense to update on-farm biosecurity and technology information for our members too.

The result is a new in-depth suite of health and safety materials, along with information on the latest on-farm technology for Ontario sheep farmers to use when researching new tools or software for their farms. These new resources include comparison tables, interactive decision-making tools and videos that cover everything from up-and-coming innovations to watch for and the newest health tools available for Ontario sheep farms, extensive cost vs features comparisons for EID/RFID readers and electronic record keeping software to introductions to the latest biosecurity software systems.

“We took a whole-farm approach to creating these resources,” explains Jennifer MacTavish, Ontario Sheep Farmers General Manager. “Every poster, chart, video and interactive questionnaire was created to help our members manage their health, biosecurity, farm management and long-term planning.”

The decision-making tools are designed to save members valuable research time by comparing tools and providing the latest information on new innovations available to help farmers enhance their on-farm biosecurity or improve animal handling and recording keeping efficiencies.

Limit visitors
to include only
essential services.



Funding support for this initiative was provided by OMAFRA, while AgSights provided research support to compile the list of extensive resources and tools.

These new Covid-19, on-farm health and safety and technology innovation resources are available at www.ontariosheep.org. Included in this issue of Ontario Sheep News Magazine are a selection of pages that can be posted around your farm, on barn doors or entrances to remind visitors about safe on-farm interactions, pre-screening procedures for health symptoms and general health and safety protocols to keep everyone safe on your farm.

Ontario Sheep Farmers encourage all our members to prioritize the health and safety of their family and flocks by posting these resources and following best practices for personal health and biosecurity. Take care, we're all in this together.

Safe On-Farm Visitor Interactions During COVID-19

Biosecurity is vital to the sustainability of livestock production, especially when disease outbreaks occur. With world-wide travel, the global environment has increased the potential to spread disease(s) rapidly and the Covid-19 pandemic is just one example.

Managing biosecurity and the risk of spreading Covid-19 is every farmer's responsibility. The health and well-being of your family and farm workers should be top priority. Here are some general health tips and reminders for safe on-farm interactions and protocols to manage the risk of Covid-19 on your farm.

Before entering your farm

- Identify if a farm visit is required or if the issue can be resolved virtually or over the phone
- Inform all visitors of your farm's biosecurity protocols and PPE requirements
- Post biosecurity protocols like Ontario Sheep Farmers posters (available in this publication) in highly visible areas
- Ask all visitors to self-assess for illness symptoms, wash or sanitize hands before entering and wear necessary PPE

- Pre-screen all personnel for Covid-19 symptoms prior to visiting. Visit www.ontariosheep.org/COVID19 for a downloaded pre-screening form

During a farm visit

- Maintain a visitor logbook, recording the date, names, contact information, arrival and departure time for all farm visitors and personnel
- Limit the number of essential visitors and related activities on your farm
- Designate visitor zones and restrict visitor access to only necessary buildings or equipment
- Wear appropriate PPE and avoid close contact, maintaining a minimum of 2 metres apart
- Maintain diligent cleaning and disinfecting practices

After visitors leave your farm

- Ensure the visitor logbook is complete
- Wash your hands thoroughly
- Sanitize any surfaces or equipment used or touched during the visit
- Wash your clothes or coveralls
- Restock cleaning supplies, like soap and hand sanitizer for visitors **OSN**



BEST BIOSECURITY PRACTICES FOR SAFE VISITOR INTERACTION ON-FARM



Is Heat Stress a Problem for Sheep in Ontario?

By Delma Kennedy, OMAFRA Sheep Specialist, Marlene Paibomesai, OMAFRA Dairy Specialist

I don't know about you, but I don't really think of Canada as a hot country. I think of our summers as being too short with a few hot spells that usually happen in July. When I hear about climate change, I am concerned, but more about other places in the world. But what about our sheep? Do they get heat stressed?

What is heat stress for sheep?

Heat stress is when core body temperature rises because of outside temperature. Sheep are considered to be a heat tolerant species, but not all breeds and individual animals have the same heat tolerance. Most of the breeds in Ontario are temperate breeds which perform the best and are most comfortable when temperatures are between 5 and 25 degrees Celsius.

When sheep are heat stressed, their respiration rate increases, they drink more water, they stop eating, their heart rate increases, they sweat, and they pant. These are natural body processes to bring core body temperature down,

similar to what we notice ourselves. Adequate water and not moving sheep under heat stress will generally avoid distress. Although sheep adapt to heat and can tolerate heat stress events, there are production consequences to heat stress.

How does heat stress affect production?

Heat stress during mating

In the ram, the scrotum is the cooling system which keeps the testicles about 4°C cooler than body

temperature. When rams experience heat stress and the scrotum is not cool enough, the number of abnormal sperm increase, sperm motility and sperm numbers decrease. The production of sperm takes time and sperm that are already developed at the time of heat stress will be normal. But by two weeks after heat stress, ewes don't get pregnant. Then, it can be 8 weeks or the time that it takes for sperm to develop before the ram will be fertile again.

It is clear from several studies that ewes experiencing heat stress between -7 and +7 days of breeding results in failure to conceive, shorter estrus and embryo loss. Ewes experiencing heat stress in this timeframe have been shown to be 12-26 times more likely to have embryo loss than ewes that are not heat stressed.

Heat stress during pregnancy

Heat stress during pregnancy results in lower birth weights and increased lamb mortality. The reported studies used heat stress treatments over several weeks with lamb birth weights lowered by 20-35% and survival rates dropping by as much as 30%. Fortunately, in Ontario, our heat stress events are shorter than those studied.

Heat stress during lactation

Lactating ewes are more sensitive to heat stress than ewes in late gestation due to the amount of heat created by milk production. Short periods of heat stress can cause milk yield to decrease by 15-20%, as well as cause changes to the composition of the milk. For dairy producers, it is important to note that there is also an adverse effect on coagulation properties and an increase in the bacterial load which can affect cheese production.

Heat stress – growing lambs

In general, as respiration, water consumption and sweating increase, feed intake and feed conversion are reduced. Polli et al 2019, compared feedlot lambs grown for 70 days with 15 days of heat stress (average temperatures of 23.4C) and those with 4 days of heat stress (average temperatures of 14.9C). This increase in heat stress was not enough to cause a change in dry matter intake relative to body weight but the lambs with less heat stress used the feed more efficiently.

Heat Stress - Meat quality

Heat stress prior to slaughter can increase the chance of dark and tougher meat with less water holding capacity. Zhang et al 2020, speculates that this is more likely when the animals are not well adapted to heat stress along with the severity and duration of the heat stress.

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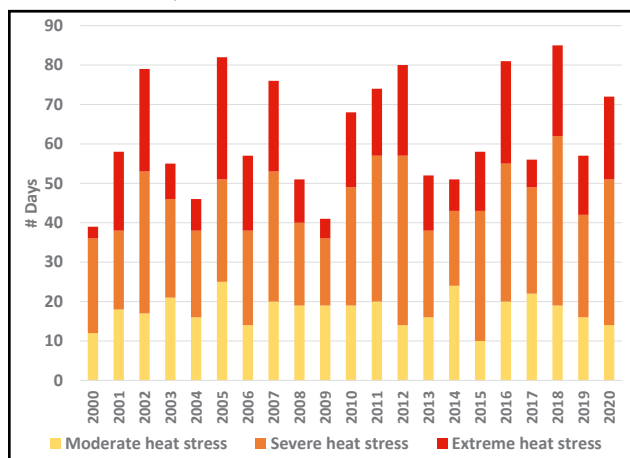
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How often do we have days of heat stress?

Using a temperature and humidity equation to estimate heat stress as suggested by researchers, Marai et al. 2007, figure 1 shows the difference between the number of days per year with moderate, severe and extreme heat stress between 2000 and 2020. The climate data was collected in Mount Forest which isn't the hottest area in Southern Ontario so the number of heat stress days may be different in your area.

Figure 1. Number of days of heat stress per year in Mount Forest, Ontario.



You will notice that the moderate heat stress days have stayed the same over the past two decades with a lot of variation in the number of severe or extreme days from year to year. If we compare the first decade in this century to the second it is easier to see the trend. Table 1 shows that there has been an increase of 13% in the number of days of severe and extreme heat stress in the past decade compared to the decade before.

Table 1. Number of days of heat stress per decade, Mount Forest, Ontario.

| Days of Heat Stress | 2000-2009 | 2010-2019 | Change |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| # days moderate heat stress | 181 | 180 | 0% |
| # days severe heat stress | 248 | 315 | 27% |
| # days extreme heat stress | 155 | 167 | 8% |
| Total # days heat stress | 584 | 662 | 13% |

This is information from the weather station at Mount Forest and it doesn't take into account all of the environmental factors influencing heat stress or the various microclimates that exist on your farm. It does point out the need to keep in mind that heat stress is gradually happening more often and can affect production.

Continued on page 22.



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The best method to determine if your sheep are heat stressed is to use the panting score described by Carissa White in her article called “Helping your sheep beat the heat.” Once sheep are starting to open their mouths to pant, they are experiencing moderate heat stress

What can we do about it?

Water

Sheep will drink as much as 50% more water when heat stressed. To reduce heat stress, it is important to ensure an adequate supply of water. Reducing the distance sheep need to travel to the water supply in times of severe or extreme heat stress improves their ability to adapt.

Shearing

Although wool has an insulating factor and can protect sheep from heat and sun, this is generally only useful for a short moderate heat stress event. Under longer or more severe heat stress, sheep that are shorn have lower core body temperatures, require less water and pant less than animals with their wool. Shearing creates more evaporation from the skin allowing a breeze to have a greater cooling effect.

Shade

Shade provides some protection from extra heat caused by solar radiation. Animals with shade will use less energy to thermoregulate and therefore maintain better body condition scores than sheep without shade. In the longer term, trees can be planted in or beside pasture fields. There are also cost-effective solutions that can be implemented right away such as shade cloth along fence rows or strategically placed stacks of straw. Plan pasture rotation to use fields with shade when heat stress is most likely and for the animals that are most vulnerable to heat stress production losses. It is important to ensure there is enough shade for all animals in the group to lie down to avoid piling.

In years past, recommendations have been made to avoid shade in pasture fields. Shade causes the sheep to congregate which creates compaction and loss of grass and the sheep aren't grazing when they are laying in the shade. Although those recommendations are valid, the changing weather means that practices will need to be adjusted to prevent production losses in vulnerable groups and to ensure animal wellbeing during sudden and long-lasting severe heat stress events.

Ventilation

High temperature and humidity levels negatively affect air quality and raise the risk of heat stress in barns during heat stress events. Many barns will combine natural and mechanical ventilation strategies to move maximal air and improve animal comfort. Natural cooling relies on barn side wall curtains to allow breezes through the barn and ceiling vents which allow air heated by livestock to escape. This is possible because of a process called thermal buoyancy, which explains why hot

air rises. Thermal buoyancy is not always an effective means of cooling barns in summer, as the difference between barn and outside air temperature is often minimal. You may need to consider mechanical ventilation systems to improve cooling. Fans increase the speed of air that is passing over livestock, providing a cooling effect. For air flow to be able to reduce the body temperature and cool down the flock, it must generate air speeds of around 1.0 m/s to 2.0 m/s. You can check your air speeds in your barn using a handheld wind monitor. Circulation fans, like High Volume Low Speed (HVLS) large diameter fans, can improve barn temperature, but must be chosen based on individual barn design to maximize efficiency. It is important to remember that while fans provide cooling, they do not improve air quality unless they introduce outdoor air into the barn. Air turnover rates of 40-60 times per hour are recommended during hot weather for cooling purposes, as well as maintaining optimal air quality.

Conclusions:

Heat stress is something that may be affecting the performance of your sheep. To a degree, mammals including sheep, adapt to climate conditions over time. If the weather changes gradually from cooler to hotter, animals have a better chance of adapting. In the last few years, we have seen periods of rapid change from cooler temperatures to hot temperatures which can cause heat stress. The effects of heat stress can be reduced with adequate water, good ventilation, provision of shade, and avoiding sheep handling, moving, transporting or mating during hot spells or the heat of the day. To reduce potential production losses, make sure rams are not heat stressed for 8 weeks prior to the breeding season and ewes are not heat stressed for 7 days before or after being bred. **OSN**

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THE 2021 ONTARIO LAMB MARKET CALENDAR

| Year | Holiday | Consumption Preferences | Market Processor Needs | Public Auction Market Impact |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 6 | Epiphany (Christian) | Lamb is featured in many celebration meals. | Recently weaned and milk fed lambs are preferred. | Lower market volumes generally. |
| February 12 | Chinese (Lunar) New Year | Both mutton and lamb are used in a variety of dishes and is a favorite ingredient in hot pots. | | Lower market volumes. |
| March | | | Easter holiday inventory buildup. | Growth in supply following winter, with Easter demand increase. |
| March 28 to April 4 | Passover (Jewish) 8 days | Traditionally must be processed under Kosher laws. | Healthy finished lambs. (up to 64 lbs live weight; ideally milk fed and fat) | Steady market. A limited influence. |
| April 2 | Western Easter Eastern Orthodox Easter (May 2, 2021) A peak sale period for in the year. | Roast lamb is a main festive meal for European (Italian, Portuguese, and Greek) heritages. | Healthy young lambs. (under 60 lbs live weight; ideally milk fed and fat) Numbers of lambs under 65 lb begin to increase in three weeks before Easter, and peaks during the week before Easter. Numbers of 65-79lb lambs will increase during this time as well. | Higher market demand in 2 to 3-week period preceding holiday. Hint: check local auction schedules for 'special' Easter sale dates. |
| Apr 13 to May 11 | Ramadan (Islam) 1 month (daylight fasting) | Some celebrations will occur prior to start of Ramadan. | Weaned market lambs (60 – 90 lbs live weight) | A moderate market factor for week leading into Ramadan. |
| May | | Start of barbeque season which more frequently featuring Ontario lamb. | Mod demand. Processors see an increase in BBQ lamb demand from May to August. | Commonly higher supply and slightly higher but still moderate demand. |
| May 13 | Eid al-Fitr (Islam) Festival of Fast Breaking | Celebrations occur during the fast break period which will feature lamb products. | Weaned market lambs 60 – 90 lbs liveweight. Lower demand for heavy lambs. | A moderate market factor for the week leading into Ramadan. |
| July 20 to 23 | Eid al Adha (Festival of Sacrifice, Eid) (Islam) A peak sale period in year. | Eid, the festival of sacrifice, is one of the most important observances in the Islamic faith. (This may be referred to as Qurbani, though this refers to the actual act of animal processing.) | Lambs (70 – 110 lbs live weight) Desired weight differs across different communities. Lambs should be under a year of age and be unblemished. Blemishes may include open wounds, torn ears or other physical unsoundness. Wethers and lambs with docked tails may not be acceptable to some buyers. | High market demand in period leading up to holiday. Peak demand is in week preceding holiday. Note: There is a high activity level of private holiday sales sought by families for this important celebration period. |
| August 10 | Muharram (Islamic New Year) | The Islamic New Year is the first day of the Muslim calendar. Mutton is often served as the main course for this holiday meal. | There is no preferred weight for this holiday, although animals should appear healthy. | Steady market. A limited influencer. |
| September 7 to 8 | Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year | Lamb is a tradition or symbol of a new beginning. | Forequarters from weaned market lambs (60 – 109 lbs live weight) | Steady market. A limited influencer. |
| October 11 | Thanksgiving | Lamb is an alternative to turkey. | Steady demand with slow year over year consumer demand increase. | Steady market. A limited influencer. |
| November | | Stew/casserole are growing in seasonal popularity | Lower but steady demand during transition from Thanksgiving into Christmas period. | Lower market volumes. |
| November 29 to December 6 | Chanukah (Festival of Rededication) (Jewish) 8 days | Traditionally must be processed according to Kosher law. | Healthy heavy lambs. (up to 100 lbs live weight) | Usually occurs close to Christian Christmas which leads to high demand. |
| December 25 | Christmas Day to New Year (Christian) A peak sale period in year. | Lamb is a feature at Christmas parties (lamb-pops, spiedini, roasts). Leg of lamb, stews and curries are food staples. | Lambs should be freshly weaned (milk fed), up to 80 lbs, and not older than 3 months of age. Out-of-season breeding is required to produce the favoured type of lamb for this market. Cull sheep are popular for stew and curry. | Higher market demand in 2 to 3-week period preceding holiday. |

This calendar is also available on the OSF website at <https://www.ontariosheep.org/religious-ethnic-market-calendar>.

Crossroads – The Leadership Challenge

By Michael Keegan & John Snobelen

We would like to thank you for the time and thought that you have put towards the Crossroads Challenge. We were hired to conduct the Crossroads Challenge and help craft OSF's next strategic plan and through this process we have been captivated by all of you, Ontario's sheep farmers. We have characterized Sheep farmers by confidence in your product, care for your animals and a no-nonsense approach to business. We found your directness and candor both refreshing and informative.

To take on the task of developing a strategic plan, with a focus on input from farmers, during a pandemic, is no small feat. We would like to acknowledge and celebrate the leadership of the OSF board of directors and staff.

The Crossroads Challenge is an initiative undertaken by OSF to look at the future of your industry and ensure that OSF, as an organization, is situated to help sheep producers succeed.

As we have engaged in ongoing conversations with Ontario sheep farmers we have seen several core issues emerge. You have told us that you are feeling optimistic about the industry's future with most of you intending to grow your flocks over the next five years. Larger producers are positioning their business growth to take advantage of efficiencies of scale; smaller producers are planning for increases that would allow for full time farming. Most everyone is buoyed by strong demand and market conditions.

Confidence in the sheep sector is tempered though by several risk factors including access to capital, the cost and availability of land and building materials, processor capacity and other constraints. In other words, Ontario sheep farmers want to grow, but they need access to the right tools and the right information to do so successfully, including for example, market information, constructive relations with the value chain, access to the latest production research and mentorship opportunities.

From our extensive interviews, townhalls, surveys and one-to-one conversations it is also clear that much of the critical work undertaken by OSF, such as government advocacy and stakeholder relationships, is invisible to most sheep farmers. Developing productive relations with governments and other key stakeholders is a core function for OSF that is not currently top of mind for farmers – this is a good thing, but it is important for sheep farmers to understand that this is a critical set of functions for OSF even if it is difficult to put a value on all the trouble you didn't get into!

Farmers have also been very clear that you value the education, training and mentoring services provided by OSF.



The Master Shepherds program in particular received praise from several farmers.

The bottom line is simple, you want to grow and there are actions OSF can and should take to help you. The challenge is to ensure that OSF values, principles and programs are aligned with the intentions and aspirations of Ontario sheep farmers and that the leadership model for the sector provides effective representation for the range of production.

Values and Principles

For the past few years OSF has been on a journey to build a more professional organization that reflects the best of the Ontario sheep sector. That journey has led to, for example, appointing an ombudsperson to help guide the activities and relationships within the OSF and across the sector – this is an agri-food industry first. These efforts aimed at cultivating more organizational professionalism are also the driving force behind the strategic planning process.

In the past sheep production has been looked down upon, it was seen as an industry somehow less sophisticated than other agriculture sectors. However, OSF has embraced this historic difference and turned the diversity of the industry into a unique advantage. For example, multiple production methods, wide genetic profiles and multiple market access points have sometimes been challenging but they have also provided a solid base for growth and have been an important foundation for resiliency through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have identified six core values to further support current industry strengths and future successes:

1. Integrity – the alignment of actions and stated intentions (meaning what you say).
2. Effective – advancing professional standards.
3. Diversity – inclusion of, and respect for, a broad spectrum of experience and perspective.
4. Contemporary – forward focused, advanced.
5. Resourcefulness – efficiency and focus.
6. Reputation – appreciation for the perception of the organization, sector, and individuals.

These values are a good fit with the people OSF serves and represents.

Leadership and Governance

The challenge for OSF is to provide meaningful support for a sector that has growth potential, building on the confidence of Ontario producers and an expanding market.

Meeting this challenge requires leadership from the provincial board table, to the district meeting halls and across the value chain. Accordingly, it seems prudent to examine the leadership structure as OSF plots a path forward and ensure that leadership and governance structures are aligned to support the aspirations for the future.

Diversity is an industry strength, but it can also be a leadership challenge. Representing the spectrum of activity and interest in the sheep sector is a daunting task.

OSF, in its current configuration, is a product of provincial regulation that is decades old. It is based on a relatively large board (11 members) elected from geographic districts. The districts themselves are governed by locally elected boards with little authority other than the election of a provincial director.

This governance structure is common in agriculture but is lagging other sectors that are, or have, transitioned to skills-based boards. Additionally, as Ontario (hopefully) emerges from the pandemic, most businesses and organizations are examining their processes. Will remote meetings continue when we are able to meet physically?

Inside this context, then, is the current leadership/governance structure the right one for the future? We thought this was a question worth taking to sheep farmers.

In a series of townhall meetings, direct outreach, and a governance specific survey we asked sheep farmers three basic leadership questions:

- What structure (geographic, production method/size, skills based) best represent your interests,
- How well are you served by the current governance model, and
- How to encourage and develop leadership from the provincial table to the districts.

While the volume of responses to those questions was surprising (even during a “one dose summer” we didn’t expect many people would engage in the discussion), the thoughtful comments we heard from Ontario sheep farmers was in keeping with earlier townhalls. For example:

- Farmers were split on the question of best representation. Some felt that they were best represented by someone from their sector of the industry, others felt more comfortable with someone from their region.
- A large segment thought the social touch point of districts had been an important component of governance and wondered how in person meetings would continue post-pandemic.

- There is also strong agreement that close relations with the value chain (processors and retailers) is important, however there is not agreement to consider value chain representatives on the board of directors.
- Several farmers expressed surprise at the number of committees of the board and there was a consensus that the utility of committee and district structures could be enhanced to improve input from processors, retailers, and consumers.
- Encouraging leadership was also an area of interest for the producers we spoke with. While leadership at the provincial table deservedly receives a lot of attention, many expressed concern with increasing the level of engagement at the district level.
- Recognizing contributions from individual sheep farmers, providing leadership mentoring, and inviting people to participate were generally agreed as positive steps to enhancing leadership.

The comments from farmers reinforced earlier observations that sheep farmers generally are receptive to education and mentoring and enjoy being part of a confident, growing community. These are strong, positive features of the sector that speak well for future leadership.

What did we learn from our leadership/governance inquiry?

First, Ontario sheep farmers care about leadership. They value relationships with other sheep farmers. They want meaningful input from non-producers but want to be represented by people with “skin in the game.”

Going forward, effort is required to communicate the work of OSF (the importance of government relations is a good example). The role, charge, and output of committees and, significantly, the role for and support of districts need clarification and focus.

Most importantly for an organization that depends on volunteer leadership from the districts through to the board table, recognition of the contribution of individuals is essential.

These considerations and observations will be helpful as we enter the final stage of the Crossroads Challenge. And while this specific initiative will come to an end over the next couple of months the passion, confidence and leadership from you, Ontario’s Sheep farmers, will be critical to the success of your own business and the success of the sector.

Thank you for your continued participation and commitment to making your industry an even greater success story for the future. **OSN**

2021 Ontario GenOvis Winners

GenOvis and the Ontario Sheep Farmers are proud to announce the winners of our first edition of the Ontario GenOvis Recognition Awards.

We thank all GenOvis participants who recorded proper data and used breeding values to improve their breeding selection.

Prolific Breed Category:

In third place: Craigmere Farm, Rideau and Romanov breeder

In second place: Tulach Ard Farm, Rideau breeder

And the winner is: Lamb Lady Farm, Rideau breeder
Congratulations!

Maternal Breed Category:

In third place: Cursio Farms & Arkell Valley, Dorset breeder

In second place: Jim & Wendy Driscoll, Dorset breeder

And the winner is: Rising Oak Farm, Dorset breeder
Congratulations!

Terminal Breed Category:

In third place: Todd Sheep Company, Hampshire, Ile-de-France, Southdown and Suffolk breeder

In second place: Cedar Creek Charollais, Charollais breeder

And the winner is: Codan Suffolks, Suffolk breeder
Congratulations!

Crossbred Productivity Category:

In third place: Meadow Brook Family Farm (commercial producer)

In second place: Fare Vewe Acres (commercial producer)

And the winner is: Brubacher Ovine (commercial producer)
Congratulations!

Thank you for participating in our first edition of the Ontario GenOvis Recognition Awards. Congratulations to all the winners and finalists!

A special thanks to all sheep producers for supporting the GenOvis program and including breeding values in their breeding selection!

Join us next December for the Canadian Grand Finale where the best breeders of each province will compete again! **OSN**



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Creepfeeder 2.45 mtr + 1.25 mtr with safety hurdle



2021 Ontario Sheep Annual General Meeting

Plans are underway to have a virtual 2021 Annual General Meeting. The details for this year's Annual General Meeting will be announced in the weeks to come. It will follow a similar format to the first OSF virtual AGM held online last year due to the onset of Covid-19. Please watch for updates in The Messenger, Ontario Sheep News, and social media. **OSN**



ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

PUREBRED SHEEP BREEDERS OF ONTARIO

Joan Finlay, Box 364 Lucknow ON N0G 2H0 • 519-528-2620 • email: psbo.secretary@gmail.com

PRODUCER/SHEEP OWNER LICENCE FEE REMITTANCE FORM (PRIVATE TREATY SALES)

Ontario's 3,000 sheep producers are represented by the Ontario Sheep Farmers organization. With a focus on profitability and sustainability, the organization works in the areas of advocacy, industry capacity, research and market development. The organization is funded through a check off (or licence fee) on lamb and sheep marketed in Ontario. Representing the sheep, lamb and wool industries, it was established in 1985 under the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Act. A compulsory check off (licence fee) of \$1.80 per head sold or slaughtered in Ontario is payable to the Ontario Sheep Farmers to fund projects and operations supporting the Ontario sheep marketplace. Visit our website (www.OntarioSheep.org) to see your licence fees at work.

Auction markets, livestock agents, and processors are to deduct the check off fee from the proceeds payable to a seller, and processors must also assess the licence fee in addition to the slaughterer fee. This fee is applicable to each sale or slaughter transaction.

Private sales (i.e. a sheep owner to sheep owner sale, sales not done at an auction market, nor to an agent or processor) require licence fee self-assessment and reporting through this remittance form.

Ontario Sheep Farmers 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1B1

SHEEP/LAMB: FEE IS \$1.80 PER HEAD PLUS 13% HST

Producer # _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date of Sale: _____ Date Remitted: _____

of sheep/lamb sold: _____ Lic. Fees (x \$1.80=) \$ _____

PAY BY PHONE USING VISA OR MASTERCARD

519-836-0043

HST# 107800823

Plus 13% HST \$ _____

TOTAL REMITTED \$ _____

Genetic and Health Program Enrollment Listing

If you have questions, concerns, or would like more information about these programs please contact the Ontario Sheep office at (519) 836-0043 or email general@ontariosheep.org.

CURRENT PRODUCERS ENROLLED IN THE GENOVIS PROGRAM (AS OF JUNE 2021)

4S Maple Lane Farm • Kimberly Schneider • (905) 404-7811
5-Star Livestock and Farm Services • Jen & Chris Vervoort • (519) 993-6413
Allinbrook Farms • Neil Allin • (905) 983-5791
Breezy Ridge Farm • Philip & Elizabeth Smith • (905) 478-4280
Brubacher Ovine • Earl Brubacher • (519) 323-4152
Cedar Creek Charollais • Ted & Joanne Skinner • (905) 263-2102
Cedar Grove Farm • Quintin Mc Ewen • (519) 949-4130
Century Lane Farm • Robert & Shirley Graves • (613) 791-2656
Circle R Livestock • Ryan & Romy Schill • (519) 669-4146
Codan Suffolks • Bill & Lynne Duffield • (519) 899-2663
Craigmore Farm • Wayne Krekiewicz • (416) 892-0664
Cursio Farms & Arkell Valley • Frank & Ned Cursio • (519) 766-3378
DP Farms • Neil Post • (519) 820-2810
Ewenique Farm • Nathalie Labelle • (613) 290-5405
Fare Vewe Acres • Mark & Betty Beringer • (519) 323-1760
Jim & Wendy Driscoll • (519) 638-5703
G & L Brien • Gary & Luanne Brien • (519) 674-3846
Gollan Sheep • Tania Gollan • (226) 622-0887
Hutchings Farms • Kevin & Sandra Hutchings • (705) 437-4441
J & J Farms • Ross & Clementine Savasi • (705) 652-7477

Kettle Crest Farm • Art & Sandra Alblas • 519-317-9988
Lamb Lady Farm • Shelagh Finn • (647) 932-7102
Leahy Hill Farm • Clara Leahy • (705) 927-3545
Madertone Farm • Courtney Mader • (705) 313-5882
Maple Meadow Farms • Colleen Acres and Dwayne Bazinet • (613) 826-2330
Meadow Brook Family Farm • Steven A. Ernewein • (519) 392-8624
Our Farm CSA • Katie Ward • 613-797-0601
Prolific Acres Sheep Farm • Charlie Renaud • (705) 322-2140
Rising Oak Farm • Laura Gratrix • 705-305-9275
Schuyler Farms Ltd. • Brett Schuyler • (519) 427-9696
Shepherd's Fold • Bethanee Jensen • (519) 887-9948
Sheperd's Grove • Harv & Christine Breman • (519) 879-6579
Shillalah Farm • Florence Pullen • (519) 233-7896
Sloan Brothers • Jacob Sloan • (519) 379-1966
Stonehill Sheep • Paul Dick • (519) 794-3732
Todd Sheep Company Inc. • Keith Todd • (519) 528-2650
Tulach Ard Farm • Sean McKenzie • (905) 786-2476
Woodhurst Farm LTD • Tom Wood • 519-281-9829
Wooldrift Farm • Chris Buschbeck & Axel Meister • (519) 538-2844

CURRENT PRODUCERS ENROLLED IN ONTARIO SHEEP HEALTH PROGRAM (AS OF JUNE 2021)

Asphodel Sheep Company • Todd & Jennifer Payne • (705) 875-5904
Circle R Livestock • Ryan & Romy Schill • (519) 669-4146
The Greenhill Farms • Wietze & Leny Raven • (519) 928-2705

ITSA Breeze Farm • Tammy Trinkwon • (519) 843-4222
Kettle Crest Farm • Art & Sandra Alblas • (519) 637-0050

FLOCKS WHO HAVE ACHIEVED EITHER "A" OR "MONITORED, LOW RISK" STATUS ON THE MAEDI VISNA PROGRAM (AS OF JUNE 2021)

Allinbrook Farms • Neil Allin • (905) 983-5791
Anchor A Farms • Tim Thomsen & Allison Lange • (506) 538-2835
Cedar Creek Charollais • Ted & Joanne Skinner • (905) 263-2102
Century Lane Farm • Robert & Shirley Graves • (613) 831-2656
Cleon M. Martin • 519-323-3519
Hunterdown Farm • Gerald & Joanne Hunter • (613) 283-7565
Mark Martin Dairy Sheep • Mark & Rosena Martin • 519 638 3644

Orchardview Farm • Gordon Walker • (519) 287-5085
Rider Ridge Ranch • Jill & Tim DeClark • (519) 644-0766
Robert Pennie • (705) 859-2671
Sisson Sheep Farm • Perry Sisson • (705) 277-1866
Stonehill Sheep • Paul Dick • (519) 794-3732
Howard & Denise Wideman • (519) 335-6124

FLOCKS WHO HAVE ACHIEVED "B" STATUS ON THE MAEDI VISNA PROGRAM (AS OF JUNE 2021)

4S Maple Lane Farm • Kimberly Schneider • (905) 404-7811
Brenda McLean & Martha Kuepfer • (519) 363-3207
Cursio Farms and Arkell Valley Suffolks • (519) 766-3012

Kettle Crest Farm • Art & Sandra Alblas • (519) 637-0050
Shepherd's Flock • John Stoltzfus • (519) 773-9569

FLOCKS WHO HAVE ACHIEVED "ENROLLED NEG" STATUS ON THE MAEDI VISNA PROGRAM (AS OF JUNE 2021)

Anthony Numan • (519) 955-2466
Brian Atkinson • (705) 924-3043
Bojudabrook Farms • Robert & Judy Pringle • (519) 794-2579
Creekdale Lamb & Wool • Josh & Ashtyn Bruton • (519) 807-6978

Maderstone Farm • Chad & Courtney Mader • (705) 313-5882
Mountain View Acres • Carleen & Steve Doerksen • (204) 215-2450
Rodney Weber • (519) 291-8801
Shepherd's Fold • Bethanee Jensen • (519) 887-9948

SHEEP PRODUCERS ON THE SCRAPIE PROGRAM (AS OF JUNE 2021)

Century Lane Farm • Robert & Shirley Graves • 1 Certified
Codan Suffolks • Lynne & Bill Duffield • 1 Certified
DP Farms • Lorraine & Neil Post • 1 Certified
Lamb Lady Farm • Shelagh Finn • 1 Certified

Oak Glen Farm • Bridget & Peter Misener • 1 Certified
Our Little Flock • Jaime Neeb • 1 Certified
WoolDrift Farm • Axel Meister • 1 Certified

For more information visit scrapiecanada.ca/vsfc/vsfc-enrolled-producers/.

Auction Markets and Abattoirs

| ABATTOIRS | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| NAME | CITY | PHONE NO |
| Abattoir LeFavre Inc. | Lefavre | (613) 679-4698 |
| Afghan Halal Meat Suppliers | Schomberg | (416) 894-1802 |
| Agram 2005 Meats Inc. | Georgetown | (905) 877-6082 |
| Al Madina Halal Meat Packers | Brinston | (613) 652-1301 |
| Aman's Abattoir | Wellington | (613) 399-2173 |
| Bachert Meats | Walton | (519) 887-9328 |
| Belle Vallee Meats & Abattoir | Belle Vallee | (705) 647-7419 |
| Bentfinck Packers Ltd. | Hanover | (519) 364-3538 |
| Beverly Creek Farm | Hamilton | (905) 690-8111 |
| *Bilal Farms Inc. | Clarence Creek | (613) 488-2268 |
| Birch Lake Abattoir | Massey | (705) 865-3395 |
| Bluewater Meat Packers | Wyoming | (519) 885-9999 |
| Brian Quinn's Meats Ltd. | Yarker | (613) 377-6430 |
| Burt Farm Country Meats | Gore Bay | (705) 282-0328 |
| Caledon Halal Meat Packers | Bolton | (416) 999-9999 |
| Charles Quality Meats Ltd. | St. Agatha | (519) 886-7931 |
| Cloverbelt Country Meats Co-operative | Oxdrift | (807) 937-6716 |
| Cole Bros. Meat Processing | Pictou | (613) 476-6955 |
| Country Fresh Packers | Tilbury | (519) 682-2222 |
| Creative Meats | Warren | (705) 967-2006 |
| Desormeaux Slaughter-house & Meats Inc. | Crysler | (613) 987-2148 |
| Dresden Meat Packers Ltd. | Dresden | (519) 683-2585 |
| Elora Road Meats | Mildmay | (519) 367-2261 |
| Ewe Dell Family Farm | Woodslee | (519) 723-4456 |
| Farmersville Community Abattoir | Athens | (613) 924-0400 |
| FGO Organic Processing Ltd. | Ingersoll | (519) 236-7717 |
| Gord's Abattoir Ltd. | Leamington | (519) 326-2503 |
| Green's Meat Market & Abattoir Ltd. | Wingham | (519) 357-2912 |
| Grey County Meats | Maxwell | (519) 922-2400 |
| Hank De Koning Ltd. | Port Dover | (519) 583-0115 |
| Hanson Meats | Cayuga | (905) 772-5053 |
| Harriston Packing Company Ltd. | Harriston | (519) 338-3330 |
| Hastings Meat Market | Stirling | (613) 395-0505 |
| Hay's Custom Cutting Ltd. | Campbellford | (705) 653-3388 |
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| Windcrest Meat Packers Ltd. | Port Perry | (800) 750-2542 |
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| D.H. Hickson Ltd. | 2508 County Road 8, RR 5 | Campbellford | (705) 653-3660 |
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| Embrun Livestock Exchange Ltd. | 1643 Salebarn Road, | Greely | (613) 821-2634 |
| Hagersville Auction Centre | 97 First Line, RR 6 | Hagersville | (905) 768-5601 |
| Kawartha Lakes Community Sale Barn Inc. | 580 Woodville Road, RR 3 | Woodville | (705) 439-4444 |
| Keady Livestock Market Ltd. | 117012 Grey Road 3, RR 4 | Tara | (519) 934-2339 |
| Ontario Livestock Exchange Inc. | 856 Weber Street N, | Waterloo | (519) 884-2082 |
| Ontario Stockyards Inc. | 3807 Highway 89, | Cookstown | (705) 458-4000 |
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2021 OSF Provincial Director Elections



Elections for provincial directors for the OSF Board of Directors will take place in districts 1,4,7 & 10 in 2021.

The provincial directors are elected to three-year terms on the OSF board to directors. The role of the provincial director is to promote the best interest of Ontario's sheep industry and work to fulfill the mission statement of the OSF.

Those interested in becoming a Provincial Director should have significant experience in sheep production and be familiar with the major issues affecting Ontario's sheep industry. Director's must be active licence fee paying members in good standing of the OSF. Previous involvement in district association activities or in other sheep industry organizations would be helpful.

- 1) Contact Jennifer MacTavish at the OSF office by emailing jmactavish@ontariosheep.org or call 519 836 0043
- 2) Contact your district secretary (listed on page 30 of this issue)

Nominations must be received no later than 15 days prior to the district annual meeting. District AGM dates can be found on the OSF website are underway to have a virtual 2021 Annual General Meeting. The details for this year's Annual General Meeting will be announced in the weeks to come. It will follow a similar format to the first OSF virtual AGM held online last year due to the onset of Covid-19. Please watch for updates in The Messenger, Ontario Sheep News, and social media. under the events page. **OSN**

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2021 OSF PHOTO CONTEST

If you've got an eye for capturing great moments in a photo this contest is for you. Entries are now being accepted for the 2021 Ontario Sheep photo contest.

We're looking for photos of your flocks, activities around your sheep farm and you, Ontario's sheep farmers. This contest is open to everyone. You do not have to be a member of Ontario Sheep Farmers to be eligible to enter.

Winners of the contest will be announced in November, after the Ontario Sheep Convention.



CATEGORIES

- **Flock shots** – a minimum of 20 sheep must be in the photo
- **Around the sheep farm** – farm landscapes, outside/inside your barn or pasture, shearing day and more
- **Sheep farmers** – farmers at work, farm family life
- **All about wool** – Showing off Ontario Wool

PRIZES

A \$100 cash prize will be awarded to the top photos in each of the categories. An overall grand prize award of \$250 is also available. All photo entries will be eligible to win the fan favourite cash prize of \$100. Entries will be voted by attendees of the Ontario Sheep Convention this fall.

SUBMISSIONS

Send pictures electronically to general@ontariosheep.org in a jpeg format with the subject line 2021 photo contest. Photos submitted must be at least 200 dpi and a minimum of 1 MB in file size.

The deadline for entries is September 14th, 2021.

Include the following information with your submission:

- Title of the photo (optional)
- Mailing address, phone number, and email address
- Name of the photographer if different than the person submitting the photo.
- The category you are submitting the photo for (see above for criteria and a list of categories)

CONTEST RULES

Any photos received become the property of Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) and will not be returned. OSF reserves the right to use and/or reproduce the photos. Where possible, the credit will be given to the photographer.

If the person who submits the photo to the contest is not the person who took the photo, the name of the photographer needs to be included with the submission.

Only two (2) entries per photographer, per category, will be accepted.

Entrants do not have to be involved in the sheep industry to be eligible to enter.

