


ONTARIO SHEEP NEWS

Vol. 39 - Issue 3 September 2021

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF MATURE WEIGHT ON EWE EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY



Somatic Cell Count Impacts
on Milk Production
2021 Ontario Sheep Farmers
Annual General Meeting
Will Lamb Prices Stay High?

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WE NEED YOUR INPUT

U of G ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY

Ontario Sheep Farmers is working with University of Guelph researchers to develop a new model for estimating the environmental impacts of the sheep sector in Ontario. We are looking for producers to participate in this life cycle analysis project this fall.

- Requires 3-4 hours to complete in-depth questionnaire about on-farm practices
- OSF will compensate producers who provide completed questionnaires by November 30, 2021
- Your input may help support environmental claims for Ontario's sheep industry



To participate, contact the
OSF office by October 15 to
request a life cycle analysis
questionnaire:

admin@ontariosheep.org
or call **519-836-0043**.

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Publications Mail Registration Number:
40033529 ISSN 0844-5303

SEPTEMBER 2021
Date of Issue: September 2021

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: Ontario Sheep Farmers

DESIGN & LAYOUT:
Prism Studios Advertising & Design Inc.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING TO ONTARIO SHEEP NEWS:
March Issue - February 3rd • June Issue - May 4th • September Issue - August 3rd • December Issue - November 2nd

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Time for Reflection

A lot has happened in the near decade since I began my role as provincial director, and as our organization shifts gears to implement a new strategic direction, the timing couldn't be better for me to step back into more of a supporter role.

Serving our provincial sheep industry has been a rewarding experience for me. I encourage producers to become involved in their Districts, take the opportunity when you can to join your District committee and executive. Aside from having input and gathering information this will develop the foundation for those of you that become interested in joining the OSF board of directors.

As I write my last column as Chair, I've been reflecting on my experiences at the provincial board level and would like to take this opportunity to share some of my reflections.

The importance of governance is paramount. I've seen firsthand how setting a structure and defining operations can make a difference. Governance gives us structure and processes to follow, holding us accountable for our decisions, while at the same time, providing a professional setting to make informed decisions. Good governance is a skill and, like all skills, requires practice and coaching. I'd like to thank Deb Stark, our board advisor, for being our coach and ensuring we follow processes and continue to hone our skills.

I must confess, I used to despise strategic planning. It was often an uninspired process of sitting in a board room with board members putting sticky notes on the wall, lacking industry engagement. But with Crossroads we chose to strategic plan differently. We engaged with and took the time to listen to the industry. And, this time, the process was interesting and, yes, at times it was even fun. The strategic plan that we will be releasing is responding to what the industry has told us they need and will set the course of the OSF over the next few years, allowing the board and staff to align resources with strategic objectives and deliver results. Thank you to all our members and industry representatives who took the time to participate. This is your strategic plan. This process would not be the success it is without the skills and disarming demeanour of Michael Keegan and John Snobelen. Thank you for walking us through the process and ensuring we get this right. We could not have done this without you.

One of the most important observations over my time serving on the board is that attitude is everything. A good dose of humility and willingness to learn is always a good place to start. I've learned the ability to come to the table with an open mind and learn from your fellow producers is what makes being part of a group like the OSF board of directors so meaningful. A willingness to be surprised also goes a long way too. This allows individuals to listen with an open mind, especially to issues or discussions some may be hearing or seeing for the

first time. Leadership positions offer so many opportunities if you allow your beliefs and ideas to be challenged and open your mind to change. Believe me, you will be rewarded.

My last thought is really kind of ironic - there's so much more to the Ontario sheep industry than producing lamb. We don't always realize or understand all the moving parts of our sector. The reality is, we work in, and are a key part of a complex environment where there is a need to be nimble, to take in and think about not just what's happening on our own farms, but what's going on with our processors, retailers, and other commodity organizations. We are part of a bigger picture. And remember, there is plenty we can all learn outside of agriculture too. Given how complex issues inside and outside of agriculture are, we can all benefit from having diversity around the OSF board table and inviting people with varying degrees of skill and knowledge to sit around the table.

How do you say thank you, when thank you is not enough?

To the OSF staff, for their commitment and dedication to their work, and to our producers for their interest and commitment to our industry

To the OSF board, it has been a pleasure to work alongside you this past year I appreciate the frank and open discussions we've had with a focus on building an exciting future for the industry.

Leadership is a team effort. It has been a particular pleasure to share the challenges and successes with the executive team. The added workload and pressure that come in these roles needs to be recognized. Vice Chairs John Hemsted and Ed Post; thank you for your thoughtful calm, reasoned approach. The industry is well served with your knowledge and participation.

I would be remiss if I did not specifically mention our General Manager Jenn MacTavish. I have had the pleasure of working alongside Jenn for 9 years and very closely for the last three. I can attest that Jenn's knowledge of and commitment to our industry is second to none. Always prepared, organized, enthusiastic and professional she sets the bar high and keeps us all, and me more specifically, prepared, informed, and focused. I recently had an executive member of another organizations tell me "You have a real gem in Jennifer". I couldn't agree more. Thank you Jenn.

When I reflect on the above I recall the saying that "the sum of the parts are greater than the whole." In my mind that what makes OSF the respected organization that we are and can all be proud of.

In closing, it has been a pleasure to play my part and as Chair of this organization for the past three years. I offer my most sincerely and humble thank you for the opportunity and your support. I wish you all continued success. **OSN**



Taking the Opportunity to Invest in Ourselves

The ongoing waves of the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted a lot of challenges within our industry. At first, our food supply chain was tested, then the spotlight was shone on our labour shortage. But challenges also bring opportunities. And as a result of the pandemic our agri-food system has had the opportunity to upgrade our health and safety protocols, heighten consumer awareness of our safe and reliable food supply, and increase the overdue respect we owe to everyone who works in the food supply chain.

As a result, we've seen increased investments in our industry, like new consumer campaigns supporting local food, programs for agricultural workers, and upgrades in healthy and safety gear in many workplaces. Ontario Sheep Farmers is following suit, focusing on investing in our farming members.

No, it didn't take a pandemic for us to recognize the value of our members, but it was the pandemic that resulted in a higher-than-expected fiscal surplus for our organization. An influx of revenue from higher than anticipated lamb sales in the province, coupled with cost savings due to the inability of the OSF board of directors to meet in person, resulted in an unexpected surplus.

We can't expect a surplus like this every year, that's why the OSF board has taken the opportunity to strategically re-invest our fiscal surplus in activities that will directly benefit our farming members and advance our sector overall. Here's a breakdown of our recent investments in the Ontario sheep industry.

- Phase two of the chute-side pregnancy and litter size test. The first phase of this program demonstrated that ewe pregnancy can be identified at day 50 of gestation using biomarkers and that these same biomarkers were able to confirm ewes carrying multiple lambs. The second phase of this project is expected to provide a comparatively accurate, accessible and affordable device to allow for pen-side detection of pregnancy. This program will benefit farmers who are unable to access qualified ultrasound technicians.

- Revamping the lambrecipes.ca website. This will include translation, enhancements to the lamb locator and transferring some of the consumer-focused material from the ontariosheep.org website. For more details, read From the Editor's Desk report on page 6.
- Barn Door Communications for communications support. One of the key messages we heard from our farmers during the Crossroads Challenge is that the OSF does good work, but we could do a better job of communicating that out to the industry. Taking this to heart, OSF has contracted out some communication services to Barn Door Communications. Their role will be to help the OSF staff build a communications strategy to keep everyone informed on what we're doing, as well as supporting the implementation of the OSF's new strategic plan.
- Hosting the price predictability tool on the ontariosheep.org website. The University of Guelph will no longer host this tool, so it will be moving to OSF and will supplement the market information currently provided. Additional funding has also been added to facilitate access to market information from auction barns.
- MK&A retainer. This will enable continued strategic advice and support on core public policy priorities, including upcoming elections, ongoing upheavals in pandemic management and recovery and the next policy framework discussions.
- Governance training for OSF districts committee members. This investment will benefit members regionally, providing a professional development opportunity for all districts.

We're excited about the new opportunities this surplus has provided. OSF is hopeful the benefits from these new investments in our industry, organizational activities and in our member, farmers will continue to pay off this year, and in the future. **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.



OSF Revamping Consumer Website To Further Promote Ontario Fresh Premium Lamb and Reach More Customers

Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) has recently decided to update our consumer website. Once this project is complete, the new site will replace the current lambrecipes.ca website. The existing website has served our industry well, however like anything in the digital sphere, updates are necessary and when doing updates, we might as well take the time to make needed improvements.

Let me tell you a little about the proposed improvements. This project is planned to be completed in late winter/early spring 2022. It will have a new fresh look, along with the addition of some new and inspiring recipes, including some from our friends at Foodland Ontario. It will also host updated cooking and handling resources to further encourage and support those cooking with Ontario Lamb, for the first time or as an experienced cook.

The most notable change is the addition of translated content on the main pages. Since we know that the growing demand for Ontario lamb is largely being driven by immigration trends, OSF felt it was necessary to provide some information on where to locate, buy and how to prepare/cook Ontario lamb in several languages. By doing this we will better reach our diverse consumers which include new-Canadians.

The new and improved site will continue to assist in connecting business and consumers virtually with the ever popular, and well used product locator tool used to source local lamb products. The lamb locator tool will be prominently featured and allow consumers the ability to enter their postal code and find local retailers. This product locator tool will continue to give retailers the ability to connect with consumers looking to make a local meat protein purchase.

Lastly, we know that many consumers today are looking to make smart and environmentally responsible choices, and Ontario Sheep has a great story to tell. This new consumer site will profile some of the producers behind the production, and further tell the story of how sheep are mitigating climate



change as well as the environmental benefits of raising sheep. We want people to leave the site understanding who we are as an industry, how we care for our animals and each other, and how including lamb in your diet is a good thing!

In closing we hope that you enjoy the many articles, advertisements, and updates in the September publication of Ontario Sheep News. Take care of yourself and each other! **OSN**



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ARE WELCOME

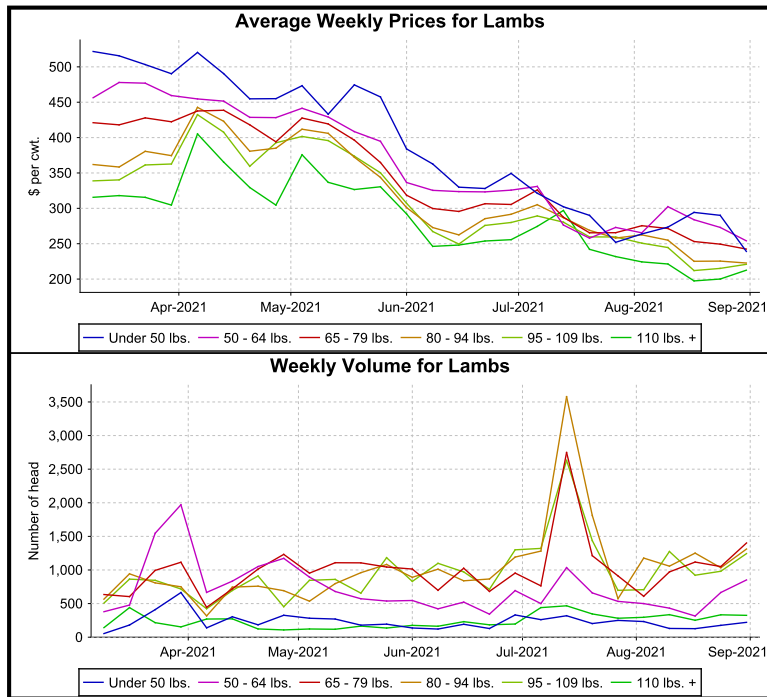
The OSN welcomes letters to the editor.

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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ONTARIO SHEEP FARMERS CONTINUES TO BE PROUDLY DIFFERENT!

Annual Review 2020 - 2021

ONTARIO SHEEP FARMERS - BY PRODUCERS, FOR PRODUCERS

For over 30 years, Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) has been an advocate for sheep farmers in Ontario.

As an organization, OSF uses license fees to support programs and deliver services that help sheep farmers and provide solutions to issues affecting the sheep industry.

Bringing **passion** and **wisdom** to the business of providing a voice for the 3,000 plus Ontarians raising sheep and lambs for a growing market.

Embracing **diversity** with a broad industry cross-section representation around the board table.

Progressively, finding new ways to help Ontario sheep farmers prosper. Nurturing great **partnerships** to help grow our market.

Tenaciously, embracing the challenge of leading in a time of change.

2020 – 21 was, well, different! Just like thousands of sheep farmers who met the challenges of COVID-19, OSF acted quickly on several fronts to continue to be able to support our farmers:

- We switched to online webinars and kept the MSC course going.
- We brought our district executive together (virtually) and worked with them to make district meetings better.
- And we didn't wait for things to get back to "normal" to move forward with a new strategic plan. We reached out to hundreds of Ontario sheep farmers to help shape the future for OSF.

- It hasn't been an easy year for anyone. But for OSF it's been a year of growth, learning and accomplishment that will serve us all well in the years ahead.

Ontario Sheep Farmers moved forward with several industry leading initiatives such as:

- Thank you to the approximately 500 individuals who participated in the Crossroads Challenge through three surveys, six townhalls, emails, individual conversations, and meetings with district chairs.
- Successfully lobbied for the Risk Management Program (RMP) to include replacement
- Reviewed regulatory proposals and provided feedback on proposals such as Canadian Sheep Identification Program, Bill 156 Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety, government budget consultations, simulated meat, endangered species, Drainage Act, and the Next Policy Framework.
- Continued lobbying for a review of the national business risk management suite of programs.
- Active member of the Minister's Livestock Processing Capacity Working Group
- Member of the Ministry of Solicitor General's Outdoor Dog Technical Table
- Continued partnership on the Timing Matters Nutrient Management awareness campaigns and initiatives supporting the Lake Erie Action plan.
- Developed new biosecurity resources that include the latest on farm innovations featuring geofencing and contract tracing to monitor farm visits and prevent animal disease transmission.
- Develop additional online resources for on-farm technologies showing the latest innovative technologies and safe health practices for farm business operations.
- Worked with Beef Farmers of Ontario to roll out the Northwestern Livestock Emergency Initiative program ensuring that sheep farmers impacted by the drought were able to access support
- Created additional resources including Animal Protection Zone signage required (where needed) to meet the Security from Trespass and Food Security Act.
- Committed to yearly sponsorship and resources to 4-H Ontario

- Continued supporting online Producer Education programs to assist with professional development and offer self-guided learning opportunities for producers.
- Developed new recipe cards such as Cranberry Orange Lamb Chops, Ginger Stir Fry and Shankled Braised with Stout Beer and Root Vegetables for point-of-sale promotion.
- Continued support of industry programs – GenOvis, the Ontario Sheep Health Program and the Ontario Maedi Visna Flock Status Program with 54 Ontario producers on the program. This work also included a complete program review of the MV program.
- Continued partnership with Farm and Food Care (FFC) on the Real Dirt on Farming and Faces behind Food.
- Continued updating the OSF data base to ensure we have current information on producers.

Looking Forward

As we begin the 2021-2022 year the Board of Directors will focus on:

- Implementation of the new OSF strategic plan
- Providing Governance and Leadership, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for the board and district committee members
- Re-vamping the www.lambrecipes.ca website

2020-21 By the Numbers

- Issued more than 50 market reports by tapeline recordings, through the OSF website. Links to the market reports are also provided in The Messenger (electronic newsletter).
- Ontario Sheep News circulation over 3,000 four times per year.
- Messenger circulation to approx. 1,142 people every week.
- @OntarioSheep has over 2,502 followers.
- Invested over \$15,000 in memberships with industry organizations.
- Invested over \$31,000 in industry focused research projects.
- 29 farmers enrolled full time and 22 enrolled parttime in the Master Shepherd's Course.
- 36 producers attended the online Parasite Management course.
- 144 participants attended the online Introduction to Small Ruminant Production Course.

Communications

On the communications front, Ontario Sheep Farmers is working hard to find and develop news way to stay in touch including Ontario Sheep News and @OntarioSheep

- Continued weekly digital circulation of The Messenger OSF's digital newsletter.
- Ran several advertorials and recipes promoting Ontario Sheep/Lamb in Global Hero's publication and Condo nest reaching over 370,000 readers in print copy and over 343,289 in digital promo including online ads.
- Updates to the new producer and mental health pages on the OSF website.
- Provided updates to the new producer page on the OSF website and new producer package.
- Continue to support and update online professional development programs offered by OSF.
- Continue the transition of OSF in digital format in addition to hard copy.

Hosted a series of webinars for producers on topics such as: Are you getting the most from genetics? How to make your next ram purchase, Genetics Coffee Break Webinar, How to Improve Flock Genetics – right now! Fall Speakers Series, Campaign for Wool Webinars, Animal Health and Emergency Management Webinars, Accessing Capital reaching with over 459 registrants.

- P r o v i d e d updates to the online producer education courses such as the Parasite Management and Introduction to Small Ruminant Production.
- Continue to update our OSF student/teacher resources page on the OSF website. **OSN**

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Somatic Cell Count Impacts on Milk Production

By Marlene Paibomesai, Dairy Specialist, OMAFRA

Somatic cell count (SCC) is used as an indicator of udder health and milk quality status in the dairy cattle industry for years. Somatic cell count can also be determined for sheep milk, but what is considered normal and how does it impact milk production?

What is a somatic cell count (SCC)?

Somatic cell count, often shortened to SCC, is a count of white blood cells and epithelial cells in milk, expressed as cells per mL of milk or as a linear score. White blood cells are a part of the immune system and the defensive force that helps control infections. White blood cells are present in the udder to detect and control udder infections. If an infection

is present the number of white blood cells entering the udder will increase. Epithelial cells are the cells that make up the lining of the udder and are important in maintain the integrity of the udder. These cells are routinely sloughed in the udder which occurs at a higher rate in small ruminants compared to cows during milk synthesis.¹

Somatic cell counts can be determined both at an individual and flock level through laboratory testing. Elevated somatic cell count can impact the quality of the milk, cheese making yield, udder health issues and impacts the taste and consumer experience of the product. This makes it an important measure for ensuring product quality and safety.

What impacts somatic cell count?

Mastitis is the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about what impacts SCC. Elevated SCC is a key indicator of udder health issues. Stage of lactation of the ewe and genetics can also impact SCC.

Mastitis is defined as the inflammation of the udder. During an infection of the udder, white blood cells will enter the udder to control the pathogen, inflammatory response often increases sloughed epithelial cells, increasing SCC in the process. Mastitis can be costly due to loss of milk, treatment costs, and increased rate of ewes exiting the herd.¹

The end of lactation can bring an increase in SCC due to the udder preparing for drying off. Genetics can also impact SCC with a heritability 0.04 to 0.30 in sheep.¹ SCC has been included in the genetic improvement programs in France and could be the future of selection in North America for dairy sheep. There would be a need for more information and collective effort to obtain SCC data at an individual ewe level.

Ontario Sheep FARMERS

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Somatic Cell Count Impact on Milk Yield, Fat and Protein %

Italian researchers, Sutera, et al. 2018, investigated the impacts of SCC on ewe milk yield, fat and protein in the local Italian breed Valle del Belice dairy sheep from 15 farms representing 2418 ewes.² The average somatic cell count of these ewes was 1,544,000 cells/mL with an average milk yield of 1.13kg/day, 7.25% fat and 5.80% protein. The researchers categorized SCC count into 5 categories: $\leq 500,000$ cells/mL, 500,001 - 1,000,000 cells/mL, 1,000,001- 1,500,000, 1,500,001- 2,000,000, and $>2,000,000$ cells/mL.

The study showed a 16% decrease in milk yield with increasing SCC values. Ewes with a SCC of $\leq 500,000$ cells/mL had the highest milk yield at 1.05kg per day, while ewes with SCC $>2,000,000$ cells/mL had a daily milk yield of 0.883 kg per day. This study showed fat and protein% increased with increasing SCC.² Caution should be taken in this interpretation as this relationship is not conclusive in the literature. Some evidence suggests increased inflammatory factors can increase total protein and change milk fat composition. If there are number of ewes with elevated SCC this could result in economic losses due to loss of milk yield and changes in milk composition.

Goals for SCC on Dairy Sheep Operations

Monitoring bulk tank and individual ewe somatic cell count can help with early detection of elevated SCC and ensure milk quality. The Guide to Udder Health for Dairy Sheep lists some goals for dairy sheep producers to strive for:

- Bulk-tank SCC Goal: $\leq 500,000$ cells
- Individual Ewe SCC Goal: $\leq 400,000$ cells.¹

The guide indicates that an individual ewe with $>400,000$ cells could have subclinical mastitis and ewes with individual SCC of $>1,000,000$ cells/mL often have clinical mastitis. If you receive monthly bulk-tank or individual ewe SCC, how do your numbers compare to these values? Controlling mastitis goes a long way to improving SCC in the flock. It is important to review your farms milking procedure, milking equipment, and monitor for mastitis on a routine basis. Overall, increased SCC may not only be impacting your milk quality, but also impacting the operations bottom-line.

For more information on udder health and mastitis, check out the Udder Health for Dairy Sheep in the Resource section of ontariosheep.org. **OSN**

Sources:

1. A Guide for Udder Health for Dairy Sheep. 2013. <https://www.ontariosheep.org/AnimalHealth>
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Will Lamb Prices Stay High?

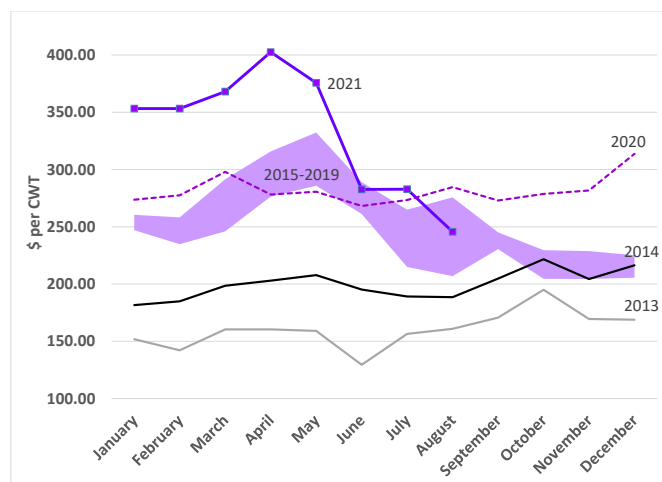
Delma Kennedy, Sheep Specialist OMAFRA

Your guess is likely as good as mine. There are many unknown factors, but we can examine some of the factors that might affect lamb price.

Price

What is a high price? If you have been in the sheep industry for almost a decade you will realize that price has went from high, to higher than was thought possible, to the current fall in prices. Figure 1 shows the average price of 80-94lb lambs between 2013 and August 2021. The last major price disruption started in June 2012. The consequences can be seen in the gray and black lines on the graph for 2013 and 2014. The average price range for the years 2015 – 2019 is represented by the shaded area on the graph. In this period, price generally followed a predictable pattern and a regular seasonal curve. At the time, these were some of the highest prices ever seen for Ontario lamb.

Figure 1. Average price of 80-94lb lambs sold at auction in Ontario 2013-2021.



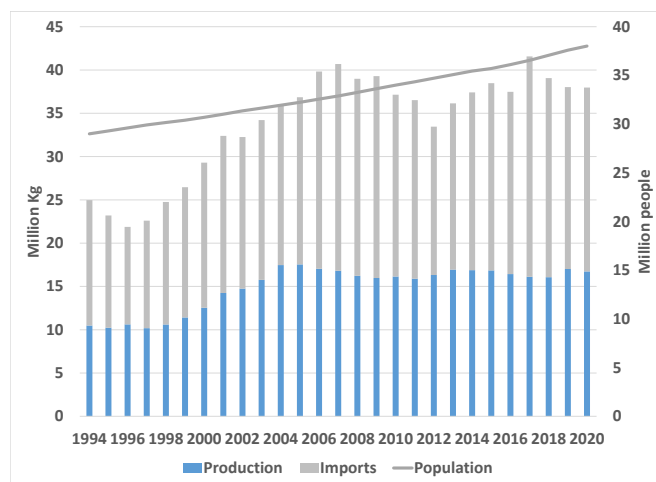
Source: Agriculture Canada Red Meat Weight average price report. Note: August avg price as of 08/27/2021.

There is currently a price disruption. The year 2020 started above the 5-year shaded average. The start of the pandemic in 2020 saw prices fall to just below the 5-year average in April, May and early June. Prices received last fall and in early 2021 were the highest ever seen for lamb in Ontario. As in the previous price disruption, average price didn't follow the normal seasonal curve. This summer, prices fell back into the last 5-year range. Maybe the disruption, this time positive, is over.

Lamb Supply and Demand

What about lamb supply? Figure 2 shows approximate supply of lamb by year. The blue part of the bar is estimated Canadian production per year and the gray part of the bar is imported product in millions of kilograms. The line is millions of people. When the bars are higher than the line, there is more than a kilogram of lamb and mutton available per person. Note that estimated production has been relatively the same since 2004 and supply variation comes from imported product. This means, Canadians eat more lamb when there is more lamb imported.

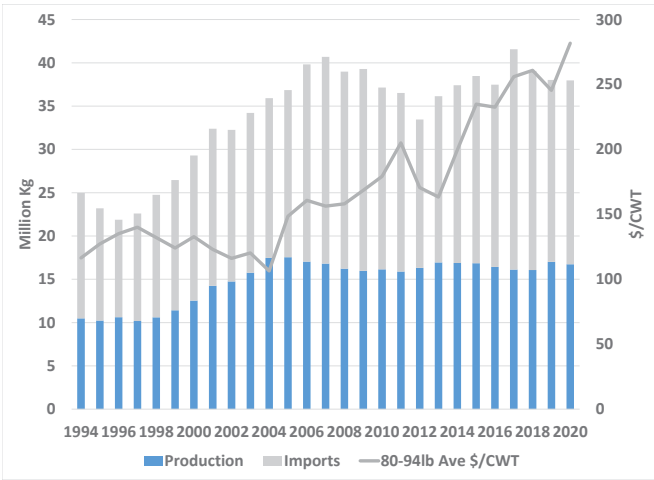
Figure 2. Supply of lamb and mutton in Canada by year compared to overall population.



Source: Statistics Canada, Supply and disposition of food in Canada and Population estimates July 1, by age and sex.

Basic economics says when demand is higher than supply, price goes up and when supply is greater than demand, price goes down. Figure 3 again shows lamb and mutton supply, but instead of population, the line on the graph is average price per year for 80-94lb lambs at live auction. Average price per year drops from 2000 – 2004 while supply is going up. This makes sense, but from 2004 to 2007, price rises while supply continues to go up. In 2012, price goes down and so does supply. Then, another period where price goes up and so does supply. This means that changes in price are often not simple and may not be related to overall supply.

Figure 3. Supply of lamb and mutton in Canada by year compared to average price 80-94lb lambs.

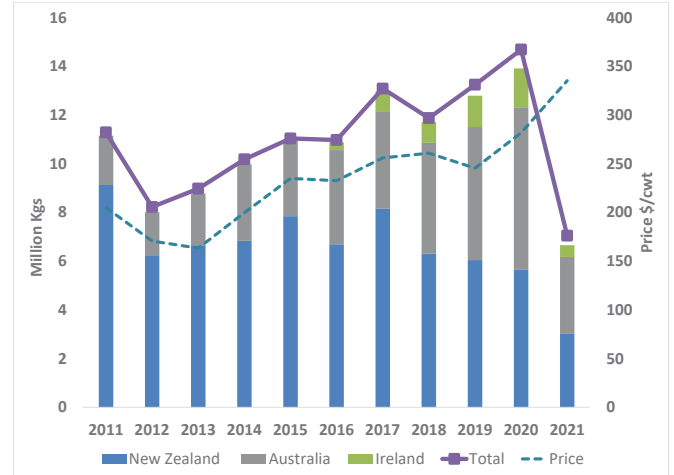


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0053-01 Supply and disposition of food in Canada and Agriculture Canada Red Meat Weighted average price report.

What about Ontario? Figure 4 provides a closer look at Ontario imports and average auction price. This graph is similar, but shows total imports (solid line), to Ontario by major importing countries (the bars), compared to average price of 80-94 lb lambs (dotted line) at auction in Ontario. Ten years ago, most product came to Ontario from New Zealand. In recent years, most product comes from Australia.

The year 2021 only contains data to June 30th. Year 2021 import volumes are on target to be similar to 2020. Again, there are no simple supply and demand consequences shown here. More often, supply tends to go up when price is up instead of down.

Figure 4. Total kilograms of lamb and mutton imported to Ontario 2011-2021 compared to average price for 80-94lb lambs at auction in Ontario.



Source: Canadian International Merchandise Trade Database and Agriculture Canada Red Meat Weighted average price report. (Note: 2021 import values are as of June 30, 2021 and 80-94lb price as of August 20, 2021.)

Continued on page 14.

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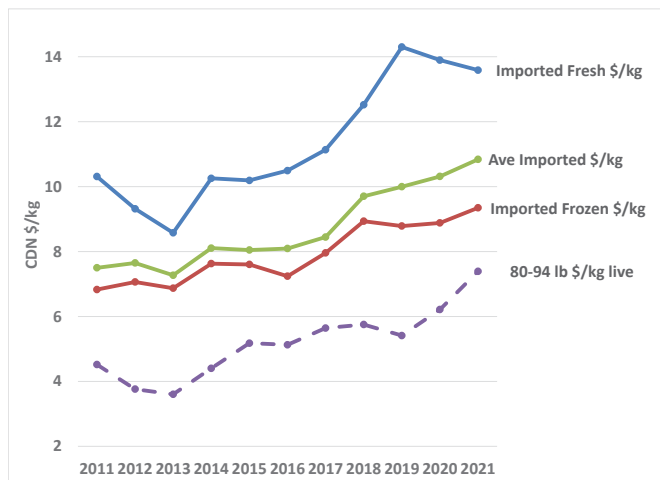




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Another thing that we can look at is value of imports. Figure 5 shows the average value of fresh imported product, frozen imported product and the average value of all imports along with the average price per kg of 80-94lb lambs at auction. The Ontario auction price is a live price converted from lbs to kgs. The imported price is the average declared value upon import and includes whole carcasses, bone in cuts and boneless cuts. This means that these prices are not directly comparable, but the trends can be compared.


Figure 5. Average yearly value of fresh and imported product compared to average yearly price 80-94lb lambs at auction in Ontario in dollars per kilogram.



Source: Canadian International Merchandise Trade Database and Agriculture Canada Red Meat Weighted average price report. Note: 2021 import values are as of June 30, 2021 and 80-94lb price as of August 20, 2021.

The average imported price line is close to the imported frozen price line. This means that most of the imported product is frozen, usually about 80%. Notice since 2018, the average price line is moving toward the fresh price line, this means that the percentage of fresh product has been increasing. Fresh imported product was 29% of imports to Ontario in 2020. Although there are differences in how the Ontario price line moves compared to the imported value lines, in general, price has increased over the last decade.

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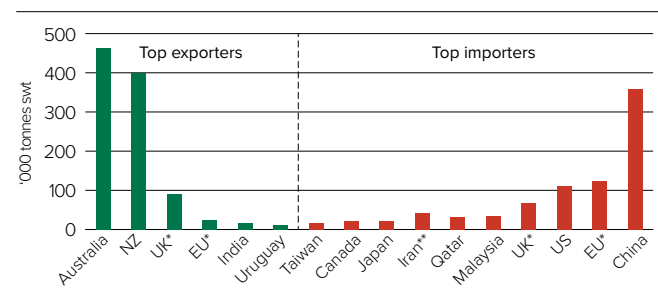
Total Livestock Marketing

Ontario prices are influenced by global price and availability of lamb. Local product sits on the grocery shelf next to imported product and retailers choose product from importers and local wholesalers. As a result, as long as price is a factor in consumer decisions, Ontario price will be impacted by imported product price because we supply less than 50% of the market. Most of our imported product is from Australia and New Zealand and the amount of product coming to Ontario and Canada fluctuates, not according to just our price, but with global market trade commitments, opportunities and global prices.

Global Price Outlook

Since 2012, China's importation of lamb and mutton has increased sharply from approximately 125 thousand tonnes (million kg) to close to 400 thousand tonnes (million kg) with most of this product coming from New Zealand and Australia. Figure 6 shows the top exporting countries and the volumes exported, as well as the top importers and the volumes imported. Although Canada is shown, the volume imported is a fraction of what is imported by China, the European Union and the United States.

Figure 6. Top Global sheepmeat exporters and importers.



Source: IHS, DAWR (Australia) 2018-19.
 *EU only includes external trade but UK includes trade within and outside the EU.
 **Due to data availability import data to Iran is for the FY ending April.

Source: MLA Global Snapshot Sheepmeat January 2020

As a result, our market is not at the top of major exporters' priorities. A change in supply from Australia and New Zealand or demand from China, the EU, US or UK could create the potential for disruption in the small Canadian market. Many factors can affect global trade. For example, global shipping prices have risen during the pandemic and there is no sign that prices will improve prior to 2023. Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom publish extensive sheep meat market outlook documents examining factors affecting global trade. Australia's market outlook published in February 2021 does not expect significant changes. The UK market outlook published in July 2021 states that there are signs that the global price for sheep meat is decreasing, but that very high prices could continue in the UK through the rest of 2021 with prices returning to pre-pandemic levels in 2022.

Conclusion

What will price do next? Your guess really is as good as mine. Although we have only examined some of the factors involved, I think that based on the market outlooks from some of the major exporters, we can expect that prices will remain relatively high. Likely remaining in the price range received in 2015-2019 as seen in Figure 1, unless there is an unexpected disruption. **OSN**

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Konings J., Luman R., June 7, 2021. 5 reasons global shipping costs will continue to rise. Accessed 08/25/2021. <https://think.ing.com/articles/the-rise-and-rise-of-global-shipping-costs>

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2021 Ontario Sheep Farmers Annual General Meeting

Continuing Virtual in 2021



AGM Details

Due to the on-going Covid-19 situation Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) Board of Directors made the difficult decision to cancel this year's in-person Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Convention and proceed with a virtual event similar last year's annual meeting.

- This year's AGM will be held virtually over Zoom on Friday October 29th at 1pm.
- Registered attendees are asked to start logging in at 12:30pm as the meeting will start promptly at 1pm and last approximately 2 hours.

OSF will be taking resolutions at the virtual AGM however, also as reminder resolutions are welcomed at any time during the year and may be sent to the OSF board via the district choosing to send them.

For more details visit www.ontariosheep.org/ontario-sheep-convention. Other information and updates will be shared on the OSF website or via The Messenger/social media. **OSN**

Ontario Sheep Farmers 2021 Fall Speakers Series

Even though this year's AGM was moved to an online format, the board still wanted to provide an opportunity for producers to take part in a variety of educational sessions. A decision was made to replace the convention component of the AGM again this year with a webinar series of speakers held weekly starting in November, with some sessions in the afternoon and evening.

At the time of putting together the September issue of this publication those details were still being finalized. Final details for the 2021 Fall Speaker Series will be announced over The Messenger, and on social media in the weeks to come.

A special thanks to all the OSF Sponsors for supporting the Ontario Sheep Sector and making events like this possible and a special Shout out to OSF's Guardian Sponsor Huber Ag Equipment Ltd. for being the key sponsor of the Fall Speaker Series. **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 one year to complete the course.

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

Online Parasite Management Course

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.

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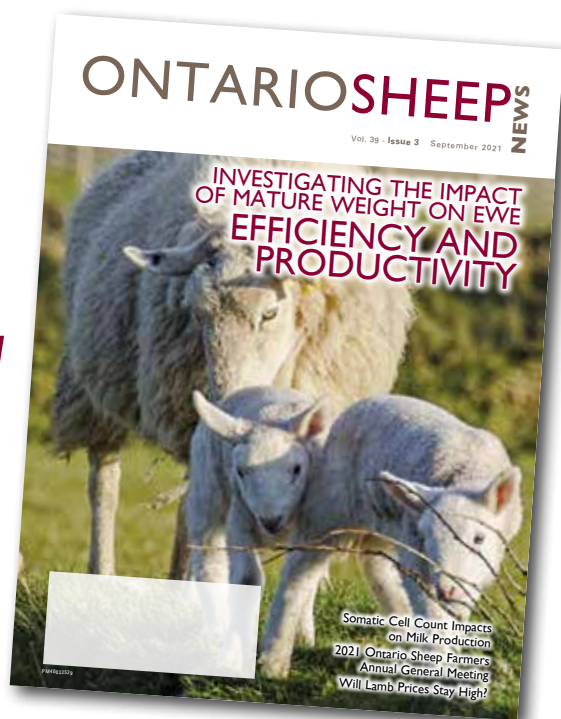
Ontario Sheep News is the official publication of Ontario Sheep Farmers, with a circulation of 3,500 copies. It is mailed to every registered sheep farmer in Ontario. Features include industry profiles, production information, industry news, classifieds and more.

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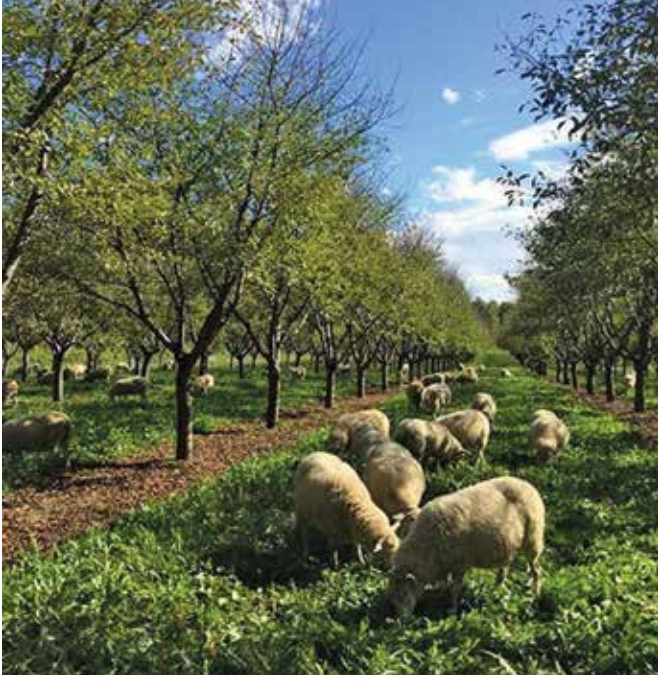
Our next publication comes out in March. Booking deadline is February 1st 2020 and submission deadline is on or before February 14th 2020.

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For additional information please visit www.ontariosheep.org/ontario-sheep-news-magazine



Master Shepherds 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, Marketing and wool, and Business Plan presentations.

Full course applications will continue to be accepted. This new policy enables students to enter the course at any time and complete the course in the following offering. The next module (Module 10, Lamb Feedlots and Dairy) begins on Tuesday, October 12th, 2021.

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

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

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



Fall wellness check-in

As you prepare for breeding and weaning season, OFA would like to remind Ontario sheep farmers to prioritize their mental health and wellness.

Think of mental health and wellness as a dashboard using these helpful tips:

- ✓ **Check your own levels** - are you close to 'empty' on energy, patience, sleep, hydration... or cruising close to burnout?
- ✓ **Find ways to recharge** - hobbies, staycations, breaks from everyday farm tasks.
- ✓ **Do a circle check of your network** - check in on neighbours, friends and family. When you ask how they are doing, really listen.
- ✓ **Don't hesitate to reach out for help** - some issues need outside expertise. Look for help from a specialist if the situation is overwhelming.

Just as you look out for the well-being of your flock, remember to look out for yourself and your community. For mental health resources and help lines, visit ofa.on.ca/mental-health.

Is Bigger Always Better: Investigating the Impact of Mature Weight on Ewe Efficiency and Productivity

By: Faith Emiry, Small Ruminant Assistant, OMAFRA
 Erin Massender, Small Ruminant Specialist, OMAFRA
 Delma Kennedy, Sheep Specialist, OMAFRA

Increasing production efficiency is a continuous goal for many commercial sheep operations. The profitability of the flock depends on the balance between the revenue from marketed product and the costs associated with maintaining the breeding flock. Efficient production aims to maximize the amount of marketable product (market lambs, breeding stock etc.) while minimizing the associated resources and costs. This article summarizes preliminary on-farm and literature research on Mature Ewe Weight (EWT) and its relationship with other productivity traits.

Breeding for Efficiency

There are two main ways to increase production efficiency in the ewe flock: 1) increase the amount of marketable product per ewe or 2) maintain production level while reducing resources used. There has been considerable focus on selection for improved ewe productivity (e.g., reproduction and lamb growth). However, less attention has been given to reducing ewe flock expenses from a breeding perspective. Feed costs make up about 41% of all production costs in sheep operations (Molenhuis, 2012). Therefore, the ability to decrease feed costs while maintaining ewe productivity would increase overall production efficiency.

Internationally, a few countries have started to select for ewe efficiency traits and some literature results are

summarized below. Additionally, a pilot project investigated these traits in Ontario using EWT and body condition score (BCS) data collected at breeding from a commercial flock on an accelerated production system. GenOvis records were used to match EWT and BCS measurements with the ewe's own growth and productivity. A summary of this data is shown in Table 1.

Relationship between Mature Ewe Weight and Body Condition Score

Since EWT is reliant on a variety of factors (e.g., frame size, BCS, gut fill and breed) there can be a wide range across the flock. Maintaining an appropriate BCS is important to ewe health and productivity, but there is a misconception that ewes that are heavier must have higher BCS. Although a small positive relationship between EWT and BCS can be observed, there is a considerable range in EWT at a constant BCS. This means that even with the same management, age, and BCS targets, some ewes will be larger and heavier than others. For example, at an optimal breeding BCS of 3 (Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep, 2013), the ewes in this Ontario flock varied from 35 to 90 kg, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Variability of Mature Ewe Weights by Body Condition Score and Age.



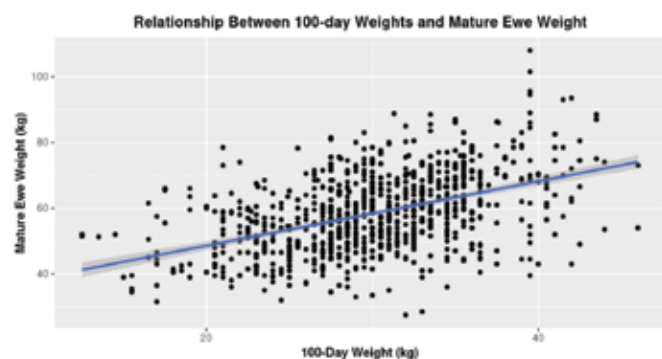
Impact of Selection for Lamb Growth on Mature Ewe Weight

For decades, producers have been selecting to improve lamb growth. Correlations between 100-day weight and EWT are positive, meaning that ewes who have greater 100-day weights are likely to be heavier mature ewes. Due to selection

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for ewe productivity traits.				
Trait	Records	Min	Max	Mean \pm Standard Deviation
Body Condition Score (BCS)	694	1.0	4.0	2.8 \pm 0.6
Mature Ewe Weight (EWT)	902	27.5	108.0	58.5 \pm 11.8
Number of Lambs Born (NLB)	512	1.0	6.0	2.8 \pm 1.1
Number of Lambs Weaned (NLW)	508	1.0	6.0	2.4 \pm 0.9
Total 50-Day Weaning Weight (TWW)	322	5.6	63.5	35.3 \pm 10.1
Total 100-Day Post-Weaning Weight (TPW)	322	13.9	158.6	85.4 \pm 26.5

for growth traits, the average size of ewes will continue to increase – consequently increasing feed costs – unless EWT is incorporated into the breeding goal. It has been reported that the average weight of Australian ewes has increased 15 kg from 1990 to 2010 (Graham, 2017). Figure 2 shows the relationship between 100-day weights and EWT from on-farm data, where a significant phenotypic correlation of 0.47 was observed. Recognizing that having heavier ewes may not be optimal, both Australia and New Zealand have started to select against increased EWT in their national maternal selection indexes (Sheep Improvement Limited, 2017; Sheep Genetics, 2020).

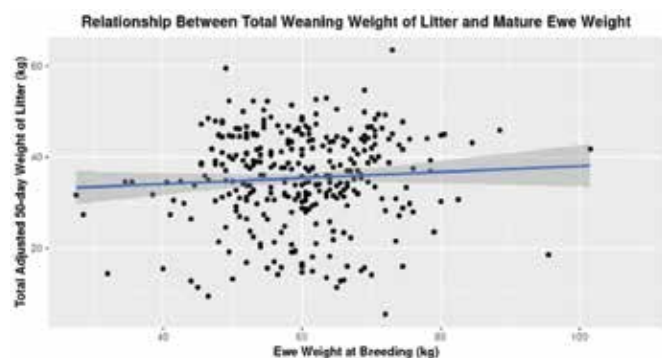
Figure 2: Relationship Between A Ewe’s 100-Day Weight as a Lamb and Weight at Breeding.



Relationship between Mature Ewe Weight and Productivity

Since feed costs are the greatest input cost on Ontario sheep farms, larger ewes need to be more productive to compensate for increased feed consumption. Data from the pilot study demonstrates that larger ewes are not always more productive. As shown in Figure 3, there is not a significant relationship between EWT at breeding and total 50-Day Weaning Weight (TWW) of the corresponding litter. This means that smaller ewes have the potential to be as productive as larger ewes, while they will likely consume less feed.

Figure 3: Relationship Between Mature Ewe Weight at Breeding and Total 50-Day Weaning Weight of the Corresponding Litter.



Conclusion

Selection to increase lamb growth is likely to select for increased average EWT of the flock. Unfortunately, higher average EWT does not necessarily mean increased ewe productivity. Producers should be mindful of this, as selecting ewes of smaller size may be beneficial to increase production efficiency, by decreasing feed costs without compromising productivity.

To begin evaluating ewe efficiency it is important to understand average EWT in the flock. This allows you to set benchmarks for the average kilograms of lambs weaned per kilogram of ewe in the breeding flock. A general rule of thumb is that a ewe should produce at least 50% of her own weight in lambs by weaning and at least 100% of her weight in lambs by market age. However, recording individual measurements of ewe and lamb weights provides a better indicator of ewe efficiency and enables culling of inefficient ewes. In the future, genetic evaluations for EWT may be implemented to optimize selection for ewe productivity and efficiency. **OSN**

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Letter to the Editor

Tales of the Shearer

Dear Editor:

My Journey into Sheep & Shearing. Glenville Farms outside of Newmarket where I grew up had always had sheep and by the time I was 10 and starting to read. The Ridgeway Agricultural College had done some research that was designed to give small mixed farms a system where they could set up a sheep unit of 50 ewes for a small mixed farm. It was written up in the Farmers Advocate which did not fold until 1968 I know because they came to University of Guelph and I was interviewed for a writing job but turned it down to go overseas with Canadian University Services (CUSO) but in the days of the early 1950's when after the second world war 95% of the rural farms were single families on 100 acres. The families lived on the proceeds of shipping cream, the pigs paid the mortgage and the sheep paid the taxes. The premise of the article was that the new barn would house 50 ewes and if you wanted more sheep you would build a second barn. To a ten-year-old kid it was an interesting idea. At Glenville the sheep were sheared by an old man called Dalt who came yearly with his old brown Stewart Sunbeams and as a teenager I can remember asking to try but somehow I always ended up not being able to touch his gear. Through my teenage years I always had this dream of raising sheep but life got in the way and I was 29 before my wife and I bought a 16-acre farm outside of Rostock Ontario and I purchased some sheep. About 1976 I purchased a few sheep and acquired a Sunbeam Shearman and made my first attempts. Eventually I found out what I did not know about sheep and it was suggested that Russell Dow was someone who might be a person to work at the RAWF. I had grown up on the dairy side with purebred Guernsey cattle. Approaching Russ at a Sheep Sale in Ancaster, he asked me to write a letter and the next Royal I worked for him fitting and looking after sheep under Cy Lowden. At the same time, I met and became friends with Gerald Comfort, Lloyd and Boyd Ayre, Bill Duffield, Bill McTaggart, & numerous others of the Sheep World that were part of the many purebred sheep worlds. Sitting on the tack boxes these old mentors had a lot of stories and information that I was able to absorb. I would eventually learn that in every endeavor that you would go to become part of your vocabulary there are 400 things to know. You only hear one and you have to hear it three times from three different people or sources before it becomes part of your vocabulary.

The first proper shearing that I saw done was by Cliff Methers doing demos at the Canadian National Exhibition and while he wanted to teach me I did not know what I was looking at and in later years as he became the top Canadian Shearer in Canada and represented Canada on the world stage I could only kick myself for not paying more attention. In the early 1980's the local sheep zone had a shearing night

discussion and demo where Doug Kennedy, Irwin Jackson and I think Len Hilderly did demos and talked shearing. After I approached Doug and he tried to teach me his system but it did not catch. In later years we would become close and very good friends. It would be many years later that I would find myself at Kemptville Agricultural College. The Canadian Coop Wool Growers paired 16 professional shears with three students each and Russ Dow brought in 207 cull ewes from Alberta. I was put under Gavin Wright an Australian immigrant who had even more ego than I did but he did have a lot to teach me and I soaked it up. I also met Les Jones, Neil Methers, Ron Holt as many others of the shearing fraternity at the time and the CCWG which stood me in good stead for my future in sheep.

Let's write about shearing in Canada or Ontario as I saw it when I entered the profession. So we will begin with setups. The first thing I will say is that for the most part there were not any. You would enter a barn and generally it had not been cleaned out so it was not level. It had a low ceiling where you could not hang your machine high enough that it would hang properly. There was no catch pen. There was no race. There were no gates. There was no help and the sheep had not been handled since the last time a shearer had been there except for possibly at lambing. They might have been wormed but it was doubtful. You could walk into a barn with a 40-foot by 40-foot pen with 5 to 15 sheep in a back corner and the owner would want to disappear and leave you and come to the house to be paid. When I started 90 percent of the flocks in the late 1980's was less than 15 head and by the end of the 1990's the government came out with programs to encourage people to try and get their numbers up to 40. Sheep farmers would spend a lot on sheep but very little on handling systems. It would be almost 30 years before beginning sheep fanciers would try to find sheep from farms that had a health protocol so that they were buying healthy breeding sheep. Most sheep were bought out of culls at sales barns. In the late seventies cull sheep out of the west off range conditions were brought in culled through and sold on and this went on through the eighties. For three years I would go in with Len Hilderly and Clive Smith and shear and cull and they would be sold on to Mennonites that were able to get two or three lambings out of them and they would produce lambs for the Ontario Market.

Sheep farmers always bragged about averaging 2 lambs per ewe and most did not know how to calculate it properly. It was to divide the number of lambs by the number of ewes put to the ram and the number generally came up to 1.29 and was more likely closer to 1.10

I have felt for a very long time that the Purebred breeders almost destroyed the sheep business in Ontario and in Canada

for that matter as they were producing animals for the show ring and not animals that would make a commercial sheep farmer any money. The government of Canada recognized this and developed three different lines of the Arrcot Breed, the Rideau (which became the most popular), the Outaouais, both mother breeds and the Canadian which was a terminal sire line. They were developed to increase the number of lambs per ewe and they did find a place in Canada for the sheep and now there are many successful Rideau sheep flocks.

Back to the issue of setting up for shearing. I put up with the no setups for a long time until I began to realize that I was subsidizing their hobby farmers' sheep production and I felt something had to be done. I purchased a trailer to carry my shearing equipment and it included a shearing platform six-foot square which was in two pieces and a shearing catch pen and a saloon style catch gate. If I unloaded these I charged for their use as well as mileage to the job and home. I also carried a bagger, shearing machine and blades which I did not charge for.

Biosecurity became an issue and while I did not really wash my equipment as often as I should, I always entered new premises with clean clothes and clean blades. They could purchase new sacks from me but I did have used sacks from the Canadian Coop Wool Growers.

Many times I have entered a farm and the sheep were wet and I would leave and come back another day because you cannot shear wet sheep. All dirt on a sheep is water soluble and to get this through your clothes on sweaty open pores leaves you open to getting infections (hives) that are very sore for 6 to 7 weeks. I did shear wet sheep once for my daughters grade one class but I have and will never do it again.

The other issue I will touch on here is the issue of not feeding sheep for two days before you shear. I have always found that this is a huge issue that it is very hard to get across to new sheep farmers as they are too tender hearted. Talking with Australian and New Zealand sheep farmers I have been told that even if they have lambs at foot they will not be hurt being pulled off feed for two days.

I generally handled the wool in one of three different ways. The farmer paid for the sack and took the wool where he wanted. The farmer paid for the sack and trucking and I delivered it to a wool depot. The farmer gave me the wool and I paid for the sack and trucking which I delivered to the Wool Coop. Being fair if it was good quality wool I always suggested that the wool go to the Coop under their name.

The joys of life continue!

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On-Farm Technology Resources for Ontario Sheep Farmers

Identifying products to best fit producer's needs.

Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) continue to provide farmers with information and resources on the latest innovative technologies and safe health practices for their farms. We encourage producers to visit the OSF resource page on technology found at www.ontariosheep.org/Technology for key decision-making tools to enhance on-farm management.

The decision-making Tools include the following:

- **In The Chute Technology** - What's next for on-farm technology? Learn about five futuristic innovations that sheep farmers should watch for.
- **Hardware Comparison** - With so many weigh scale and livestock data collecting software options, this chart compares the latest hardware selections to help farmers invest in the right tools for their farm.
- **Health Tools for Today** - This resource summarizes the latest on-farm health tools and innovations for small ruminant animals, including health, disease prevention, record keeping and animal handling.
- **EID Reader Comparison** - This resource offers farmers an easy-to-read comparison chart to help select the best EID/RFID reader for your farm.

- **Geofencing Comparison** - The latest biosecurity innovations feature geofencing and contact tracing to monitor farm visits and prevent disease transmission. This resource compares software selections currently available to farmers.
- **Electronic Record-Keeping Comparison** - Everything you need to know to compare electronic record-keeping software options is all in one place. This resource clearly organizes the latest software options and features to provide farmers with an easy-to-use decision-making tool.

With so many different EID/RFID reader options on the market today, it can be a daunting task to narrow down what handheld reader solution is best for collecting the data you need on farm. OSF has taken the guesswork out of identifying what handheld reader would integrate best on your farm according to your needs visit <https://www.ontariosheep.org/Technology> for the On-Farm Technology Questionnaire forms including 1. Handheld RFID/EID collecting solutions – find the right handheld reader tool for your farm 2. Integrating hardware on your farm – identify the right data collection tool to fit your farm. **OSN**

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SheepBytes ration balancer is web-based software designed for effectively managing nutrition for all types of sheep. Breeding flock owners, feedlot managers and nutritional consultants, across Canada, and internationally, are using SheepBytes to take the guesswork out of balancing cost-effective rations.

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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>.

Pilot Project Creates Conversations About Wool

By Jeanine Moyer

What's trending in interior décor? Wool.

The versatility, sustainability, availability and beauty of natural wool fibres is making a statement in interior décor applications, opening new opportunities for Canadian sheep farmers and the wool industry.

Carol Sebert, says many of her clients are trendsetters, and right now they've got their eye on wool. Sebert is the founder of Creative Matters Inc., a custom wallcovering, rug and carpets designer and manufacturer in Toronto, who works with high-end customers around the world, creating unique décor for hotels, homeowners and the hospitality industry.

Putting Wool on a Wall

"The panels are designed to be attractive, conversation pieces," says Matthew Rowe, Chief Executive Officer, The Campaign for Wool in Canada. "They kind of resemble felted wallpaper. But they offer amazing benefits and properties because they are made from one of the most sustainable products, wool."

The wall coverings, or panels, are designed by interior designer, Dimitri Chris and created by Creative Matters Inc. The wool is sourced from a flock of Shetland sheep from Chassagne, owned by Carole Precious of Puslinch, ON. "We're using the natural colours of the wool, and they are beautiful, offering hues of honey, umber, dark charcoal, cream, greys and blacks," says Sebert. "And the wool is a dream to work with because it's so soft."

The result resembles a mural, boasting rich colours and a unique texture thanks to the depth of the wool. The panels are 4' wide by 10' long and were custom designed for a home in Toronto. Sebert says she's created unique wall panels using polyester, but working with wool is new to her. She credits the designer, Dimitri Chris for his understanding of how to work with wool to design such unique décor.

"I have worked in interior design for over a decade, so this was not my first time working with wool. In fact, I have used this material as my go-to fabric of choice for drapery and upholstery for many years now," says Chris. "Simply put, there's just a certain elegance, weight and effect to this material that others don't have."

The wall coverings are designed and assembled by hand, made of four to six layers of wool batts that are layered, flattened and hand needled to create the ¼" thick panel. Each panel is site specific, created to fit individual walls and customized designed for the space.

Once the panels are mounted on interior walls, they offer sound absorption and air cleaning abilities. Rowe explains that the natural compounds of the wool trap chemicals circulating in the air, offering one of the most unique qualities of an interior design project. "And it's a really neat way to get wool on your walls," he says.



The growing global interest in using wool for interior design pairs nicely with The Campaign for Wool in Canada's latest project, creating home décor wall panels. "There's a growing interest in using the natural colours from wool in interior design," explains Sebert. "Last year we supported The Campaign for Wool's custom Canadian wool rug collection and this year we're proud to promote wool again by creating unique wall coverings made from local wool."

Chris notes lining wall panels in wool for added warmth and sound absorption is a common practice in interiors. “Now, we can most definitely expect to use actual wool wallpaper instead of those panels. Better yet, it will be Canadian wool. What can I say, there’s something about natural fibres that synthetics just can’t match,” he says.



Working with Canadian wool

While Chris has had experience working with wool, he says this was his first time working with wool in such a pure form. “It’s pureness and natural colours impressed me the most and from that moment of discovery, I knew I absolutely wanted to keep it natural, undyed and in its purest form – simply gorgeous,” he says.

The wall panels are one of the 2021 Campaign for Wool in Canada projects, demonstrating how wool can be used in interior design and incorporated into everyday uses. Rowe says the interior panels are prototypes for what could be a line of interior wool coverings.

Continued on page 30.



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After working with The Campaign for Wool last year, creating a Canadian wool floor covering collection, Sebert was thrilled to be asked to participate in this year's interiors project. "I didn't even know Canada had a carpet wool industry," she says, "I've learned so much about this niche market that is really gaining traction." She explains that, while the wool is sourced in Canada, the manufacturing location varies depending on the product and technique used. The new Canadian wool wall coverings for example are hand needled in Toronto and machine finished in upstate New York. Tufted rugs can be made in Canada while hand-knotted flooring is outsourced overseas to fair-trade facilities in Nepal and India where wool from New Zealand and Tibet is more commonly used. "The feedback from our manufacturers has been nothing but praise for Canadian wool, noting the beautiful textures and ease to work with. This is high praise for Canada."

Shetland sheep shepherdess, Precious is pleased with the feedback from her flock's wool, but isn't surprised. She's worked hard to breed for animal and wool quality, building on the flock's unique status as Canada's original flock of Shetland sheep, sourced directly from the Shetland Isles in 1980. "Shetland wool offers 11 natural recognized colours and is prized for being one of the finest in the world," she says. Precious notes the fleece offers so many functional uses, and was thrilled to work with Rowe and his design and manufacturing team on this interior design project. She's been a supporter of The Campaign for Wool in Canada, showcasing her flock at promotional and educational opportunities over the past few years to support the campaign. "The project has been a true team approach, members of the Creative Matters group attended our shearing day to select fleeces and see for themselves the process of producing fibre. It's been a unique educational opportunity for our value chain," she says.

Endless potential

Precious says she's encouraged by the direction wool is going, growing in popularity again, and being recognized as a viable and sustainable option with so many uses like design, industrial applications, home insulation and so much more. Sebert agrees, saying now that she has a greater understanding of Canada's wool industry, the sustainability of the product and the quality available, she believes wool products like the interior décor panels will grow with global demand. "Canadian sheep farmers need to realize they have a viable, beautiful product that offers plenty of opportunities," says Sebert.

Its clear wool is expected to have a stronger presence and role in interior design. "Once more and more people discover just how good it looks, how well it ages and how easy to work with it is, they will eventually start using it more," says Chris.

For more information on The Campaign for Wool in Canada, visit campaignforwool.ca. **OSN**



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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 slaughter 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.

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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 SEPTEMBER 2021)

4S Maple Lane Farm • Kimberly Schneider • (905) 404-7811
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Allinbrook Farms • Neil Allin • (905) 983-5791
Breezy Ridge Farm • Phillip & 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
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Ewenique Farm • Nathalie Labelle • (613) 290-5405
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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
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Hunterdown Farm • Gerald & Joanne Hunter • (613) 283-7565
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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
Shepherd's Flock • John Stoltzfus • (519) 773-9569
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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
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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
Highgate Tender Meats Ltd.	Highgate	(519) 678-3383
Highland Packers Ltd.	Stoney Creek	(905) 662-8396
Hilts Butcher Shop Ltd.	Norwood	(705) 696-2172
Hunter's Dressed Meats	Dunnville	(905) 774-5900
J.J. Meat Distributing Inc.	Schomberg	(905) 859-1540
Joe Savage & Fils Abattoir Inc.	St. Albert	(613) 987-2070
Johnson Meats	Aylmer	(519) 773-9208
Julius Meat Packers Inc.	St. Anns	(905) 957-7162
Kawartha Meats	Little Britain	(855) 786-9970
Ken R. Mogk	Tavistock	(519) 462-2280
L & M Meat Distributing Inc.	Beeton	(905) 729-2771
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McGarroch of Micksburg Custom Butchering	Pembroke	(613) 732-7181
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Miedema's Meat Market Ltd.	Embro	(519) 475-4010
Millgrove Packers Ltd.	Waterdown	(905) 689-6184
Mr. Beef Inc.	Pakenham	(613) 624-5222
Mount Brydges Abattoir Ltd.	Mount Brydges	(519) 264-1873
Newmarket Meat Packers Ltd.	Newmarket	(416) 364-2671

ABATTOIRS		
NAME	CITY	PHONE NO
Northern Meat Packers and Abattoir Ltd.	Trout Creek	(705) 723-5573
Norwich Packers Ltd.	Norwich	(519) 468-3617
Ontario Halal Meat Packers Inc.	Milton	(905) 875-0270
Otonabee Meat Packers Ltd.	Peterborough	(705) 743-8547
Palmateer's Abattoir Ltd.	Tweed	(613) 478-3801
Parkhill Meats	Parkhill	(519) 293-3000
Peel Sausage Abattoir	Drayton	(519) 638-3446
Penokean Hills Farms	Bruce Mines	(705) 782-4224
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On behalf of all producers the Board of Directors would like to publicly acknowledge the work of our staff. We recognize and deeply appreciate their ongoing effort and dedication especially given the circumstances this past year.

Jennifer Johanson	Executive Assistant/Bookkeeper
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