

OntarioSheep
FARMERS

2025 Federal Election Priorities



Industry Overview

Ontario Sheep Farmers

is a producer-led organization representing and advancing the sheep, lamb, and wool industries in Ontario. For 40 years, OSF has served as the unified voice for the province's sheep farmers, advocating for their interests and promoting industry growth.

Our Vision

is to enable Ontario sheep producers to be the suppliers of premium lamb and sheep products.

Our Mission

is to educate, innovate, and strategically advocate on behalf of our membership, while maintaining high standards of professionalism and leadership.

OSF enhances marketing efforts through producer education, promotional campaigns, and raising consumer awareness. Originally established in the 1970s as the Ontario Sheep Association, OSF continues to evolve to meet farmers' needs and strengthen the sector.

Economic Impact

3,000
sheep farmers

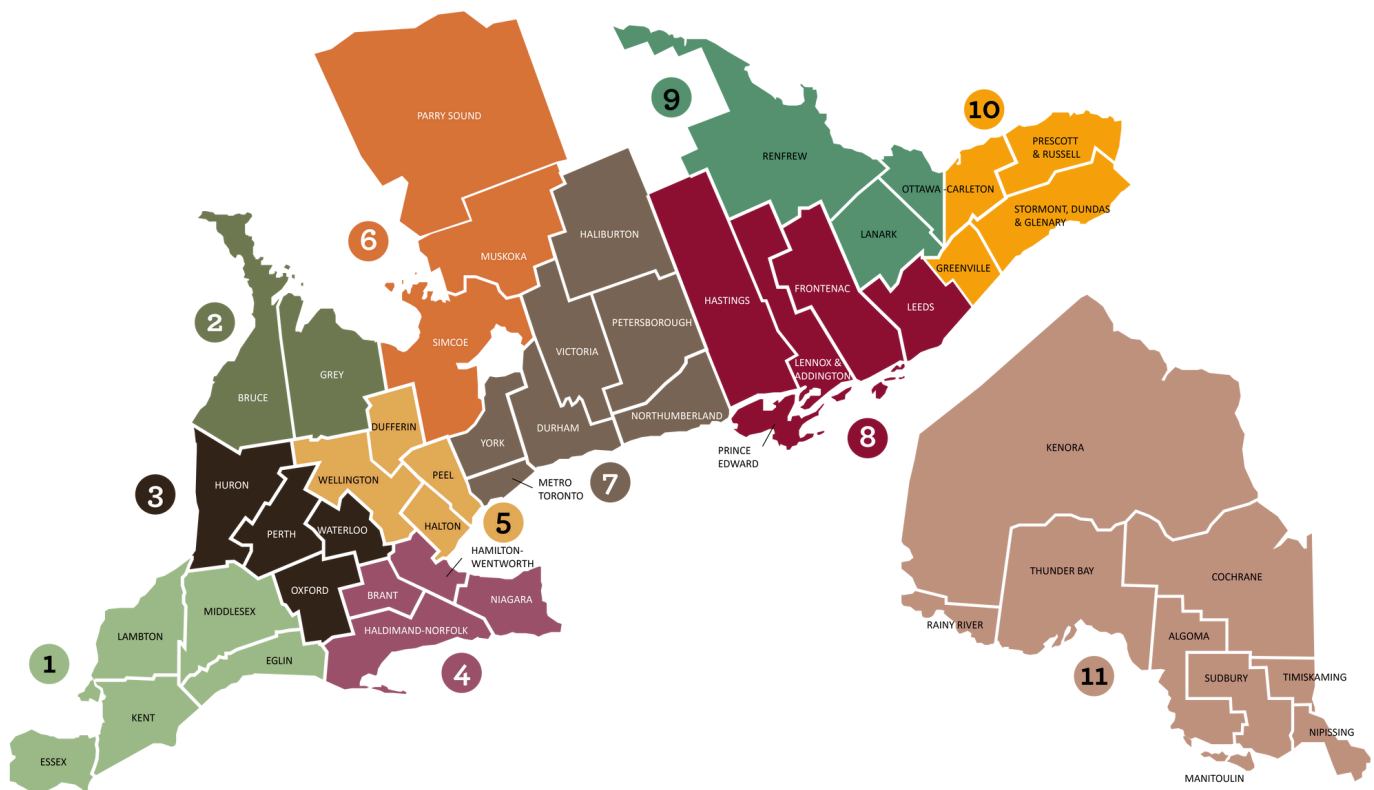
285,000
lambs marketed

\$100 million
farm cash receipts

3,600
jobs created

\$200 million
contributed to Canada's GDP

Source: Statistics Canada



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1. Access to Veterinary Tools and Care

Veterinary product access and veterinarian availability are at a crisis point.

Canadian sheep farmers have signed on to the white paper authored by organizations representing Canada's farmed animal producers that was prepared for the federal government in August 2024.

OSF endorses the white paper titled, "Improving access to veterinary pharmaceuticals, veterinary health products, livestock feeds and veterinary biologics in Canada," and recommends the federal government adopt the nine solutions detailed within the paper.

The availability of small ruminant animal veterinary care in Ontario has reached a crisis point in Ontario. This deficit is continuously growing as large animal veterinarians retire without replacements.

OSF recommends the federal government monetarily support the provincial government's efforts to increase the number of veterinary students in Ontario for those wanting to pursue large animal practices and increase incentives for small ruminant veterinarians to increase capacity across Ontario.



Exciting Market Opportunity for Ontario Lamb

Ontario is the third largest market for lamb processing in North America, processing over 50% of the sheep and lambs born in Canada. Ontario is also home to the country's largest sheep flock that contributes over \$200 million to Ontario's GDP.

Today, Ontario's 3,000 sheep farmers are fulfilling 30% of our domestic demand for lamb. As a result of increased immigration, domestic consumption of lamb per capita is increasing at a rate of 5.7% annually. The market opportunity for Halal lamb and goat meat is projected to grow from \$214 million to over \$300 million in the next five years. The first choice in meat for a significant number of new immigrants is lamb.



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2. Interprovincial Trade

OSF commends government for taking steps toward interprovincial trade for meat within Canada.

Recommendations:

- OSF encourages the government to begin border pilots in 2025 for eastern and northern regions of Ontario and Quebec.
- For the 'Ready to Grow Pilot,' OSF supports the initiative for Ontario plants and supports expansion of the pilot program to plants in other provinces that meet or exceed Ontario's processing standards.

3. Advanced Payment Program

The Advanced Payment Program (APP) is a critical tool for farmers, particularly new entrants and young farmers, that helps farm operations manage cash flow demands amid rising market volatility and high debt servicing costs.

Recommendation:

- **Increase the interest-free portion under APP to \$350,000 to mirror the recommendations by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food in report entitled Grocery Affordability: Examining Rising Food Costs in Canada.**

4. Research Investment

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance between OMAFA, U of G and ARIO funds significant agricultural research in the province. Funding is decreasing annually as costs continue to rise.

Investments in research drive economic development, protect animal health and welfare and support sustainable, homegrown food.

Recommendation:

- **Increase investments in the Alliance to a level that fulfills the goal of Canada as a world leader in agricultural research.**

5. Business Risk Management

Agriculture is a high-risk business that faces volatile prices, unpredictable weather, and a global market influenced by government supports to competing producers in other countries. In order to maintain its economic growth and continued innovation, Canadian agriculture must have a stable economic foundation from which to address shifting global and domestic market opportunities. For those risks that cannot be addressed through on-farm management practices, access to effective risk management programs provides Canadian producers with the income stability they need to continue investing in innovative technologies, to adapt to evolving market demands, and maintain long-term economic growth.

Recommendation:

- **Effective production insurance for commodities that are not adequately covered by traditional crop insurance**
- **AgriStability must provide funding on a timely basis to ensure that the short-term impacts of significant income losses are mitigated and payments must be calculated in a transparent and straightforward fashion that allows producers to predict and bank upon impending payments.**
- **The AgriInvest program must match producer contributions up to 1.5% of allowable net sales and the government-matched contribution limit must also be amended to allow for matchable annual contributions up to \$100,000.**
- **The AgriRecovery framework must define clear and precise rules such that it can respond quickly to exceptional events and take into account all losses not covered by programs such as AgriStability and AgriInsurance.**



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Questions for Candidates

Veterinary Access

- Livestock producers in Ontario are at a competitive disadvantage to other countries that have access to more veterinary tools like vaccines, medications and dewormers. How does your party suggest we improve access to veterinary pharmaceuticals?
- How does your party intend to address the shortage of large animal veterinarians in Ontario?

Interprovincial Trade

- Does your party support the rollout of planned Interprovincial Trade Border Pilots and the “Ready to Grow” Pilots in 2025 for Ontario?

Advanced Payment Program

- Does your party support the increase of the interest free portion of the Advanced Payment Program from \$100,000 to \$350,000?

Research Funding

- Government contributions to significant agricultural research in the have decreased annually as costs continue to rise. Does your party support an increase to investments in agricultural research to fulfill the goal of Canada as a world leader in agriculture?

Business Risk Management

- The Canadian government continues to erode its investment in the suite of Business Risk Management programs to the detriment of producers as world markets are becoming increasing more volatile and unpredictable. How do you plan to improve BRM programs to support producers in these times of ongoing trade threats and input cost volatility?

