



Annual Review 2022/2023

For over thirty years, Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) has been an advocate for Ontario sheep farmers. As an organization, OSF uses license fees to support programs and deliver services that help sheep farmers, and to provide solutions to issues affecting the sheep industry.

Bringing passion and wisdom to the business of providing a voice for 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.

OSF moved forward with several industry-leading initiatives including:

- Advocated for the Risk Management Program with our partners in OASC – discussion about Treasury board limits, alternatives to funding model to share with other groups if money increased to \$250 million
- Worked with Foodland Ontario to start ongoing market research study
- Commitment of funds to update the 4H Sheep manual – work to begin in fall 2023
- Engagement with the membership through three member surveys – the Veterinary Act, the Wool Plan and Research Priorities (132 total responses)
- Continuing to implement the Building Strength for a Better Future, OSF Strategic Plan
- Ongoing partnership with Scotiabank Yield More Financing TM Program for sheep, which offers approved OSF producer members access to a \$50,000 line of credit to expand their flock by purchasing ewes

Moved forward this past year with several industry-leading initiatives further supporting the OSF Strategic Plan including:

Community:

- Ongoing engagement with the Ontario Minister of Agriculture – D2 Lamb Banquet, D11 Earlton Farm Show, LRIC dinner, Grow Ontario Food Summit, Provincial Policy Statement meeting etc. Events/Shows OSF participated in – Ottawa Valley Farm Show, Midwest Co-op Sheep & Goat Day, Grey/Bruce Farmers' Week
- Used member surveys to set research priorities, respond to the provincial veterinarian act consultation and create a plan for wool, then apply for a grant to accomplish the plan
- Worked with other commodity groups to provide comments on Bill 97 and proposed provincial planning statement
- Participated in consultations regarding amendments to the PAWS Act

- Actively involved on Bill 97/Provincial policy Statement advocacy with OFA/CFFO/NFU
- Provided comments on provincial Bill 102 Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act
- Participated in the public consultations and provided comments on the proposed amendments to Part XV of the *Health of Animals Regulations* (Identification and Traceability)
- Lobbied for provincial budget to commit to increase the number of veterinarians in Ontario Supported new research project with Emma Borkowski University of Guelph to gain a clearer understanding of the CarLA antibody response to adapt the CarLA Saliva Test for use in genetic selection of Ontario sheep with superior gastrointestinal nematode (GIN) immunity
- Handed out Guardian Dog Information at the 2023 Ontario Association of Municipalities Conference
- Continued ongoing support of OSF District Executives by improving the OSF Director and OSF District Executive Portal to further support OSF Districts with resources
- District Chairs Committee met consistently all year, every 6 weeks on the Monday after the board meeting, to provide input into the issues of the board and engage with their district committees and members on the ongoing work of the OSF
- Tribunal – ongoing process – participated in 2 pre-hearings, hearing dates set for early October and November
- Ongoing work with Sheep and Goat committees
- The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association is leading a Living Lab project to accelerate the adoption of BMPS that sequester carbon, mitigate GHG emissions and support environmental co-benefits such as water, soil, air, and biodiversity, though the process of co-development and testing on real farms. Ontario Sheep Farmers is a partner in the project and an active participant in the grazing aspects of the program to 1. determine the effect of grazing intensity on total pasture yield, forage quality and carbon sequestered, and 2. evaluate the impact of cover crop grazing after winter wheat and before corn.
- Successful grant application to the Soil Health fund – grazing for hire project
- Lifecycle Analysis project completed. The project i) Reviewed the state-of-the-art life cycle modelling of sheep farming, ii) Created a ‘cradle-to-farmgate’ parametric lifecycle analysis (LCA) model for sheep production, iii) estimated the range of life cycle impacts through the LCA model using the collected data, and iv) created a framework for making environmental claims on sheep products through LCA.
- New district meeting/communication template designed by a producer going into effect in September 2023
- Promoted Municipal Resources by OSF to Municipal Leaders at the 2023 Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) Conference
- Continued with the ongoing updates to the OSF membership database
- OSF has been and continues to be actively engaged in a range of issues and supports its membership in the following ways: Advocating on federal and provincial sheep related issues and initiatives, Policy planning, Development of industry programs and services, Industry and environmental sustainability, Market information and analysis, Production and marketing research, Promotion of lamb, Industry communication through various mediums, working to start new marketing plans including both a lamb and wool plan, Ongoing development of educational resources and programs within the Sheep Institute, Research and Innovation, Increased collaboration provincially/nationally and internationally, Addressing our data needs, Investing in our people

Prosperity:

- Ongoing improvements and updates to the price & profit predictability tools for Ontario sheep producers. This includes continuing to work with OMAFRA on updates to the Ontario Sheep Farmers Profit Predictability Tool with the aim to make it easier and more accurate for producers
- Made revisions and improvements to the Maedi Visna program
- After 13 years with no change to license fees, the Ontario Sheep Farmers has increased the license fee amount by \$0.40 from \$1.80 to \$2.20, plus applicable taxes, per live animal sale, effective October 1st, 2023. Most of OSF’s strategic goals require collaboration within the agricultural sector and throughout the value chain. All organizations that OSF financially supports are looking for increased sponsorship due to rising costs.

The increase in license fees will allow us to continue working with our valued partners and further support the growing Ontario sheep sector.

- **Successful Dairy Sheep Symposium.** There were 48 participants and 18 tradeshow exhibitors (15 paid). Overall, the event will return a few hundred dollars back to the Dairy Sheep Committee (final numbers TBD) and they will use the money to plan a future event, hopefully a farm tour this summer. There were presentations from Rex Crawford, Cathy Bauman and Marlene Paibomesai as well as a panel of experts for a Q&A. Ruth Klahsen from Monforte Dairy showed the producers how to make sheep cheese and Amelie St-Pierre demonstrated the GenOvis program. Feedback from the exhibitors was positive and the participants were very engaged throughout the day. If you would like any of the presentations, let me know and I will email them to you. The GenOvis presentation was recorded and posted to the OSF YouTube

Mastery:

- OSF presentation to researchers from around the world about parasites in sheep
- Master Shepherd's Course was offered again in 2022-23. Fourteen farmers enrolled in the full while an additional twelve participated through single module registrations. Sixteen farmers who enrolled in the previous offering, participated in the necessary modules to complete the course in the current offering
- Provided updates to the Introduction to Small Ruminant Production course
- Continued to host the Fall Speakers Series webinars which covered Direct-to-Consumer Marketing, Improving Conception Rates to Lower Cost of Production, Ontario Market Outlook, and Cost Share Funding
- Hosted and facilitated webinars for producers on topics such as: CFIA Export Requirements to USA and Mexico, Future of Parasites Control in Canada, Canadian Genetic Evaluation Program for Dairy Sheep and promoted other webinars or interest to producers
- Supported the Grazing Cover Crops webinars with OMAFRA and Beef Farmers of Ontario
- Continued with ongoing updates to the online producer education courses namely Parasite Management and Introduction to Small Ruminant Production Course as well as other Producer Education Courses offered by OSF
- 7 producers attended the online Parasite Management Course
- 57 participants completed the online Introduction to Small Ruminant Production
- Hosted Dairy Sheep Symposium in early spring of 2023 to support Ontario Dairy producers
- Invested over \$16,000 memberships with industry organizations
- Invested over \$48,000 in industry focused research projects
- Continued to sponsor the Ontario Forage Council and other grazing and pasture management initiatives such as OMAFRA Grazing Cover Crops webinars
- Continued to provide staff support for the Ontario Soil Network #letstalksoil and timing matters campaign to further promote best practices for manure management

National Level:

- NSN – navigated the sale of SunGold (information sharing about aspects of the sale that impacted Canadian producers)
 - LEOQ is working on a marketing information website that will combine all the known data sources for pricing data from across Canada. The website will provide producers and processors with market information and commentaries when it is complete on a subscription basis
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By the Numbers:

- Issued more than 50 market reports which are available on website and tapeline recordings
 - Improved the market reports provided in The Messenger with more details
 - Ontario Sheep News (OSN) circulated to over 2,800 individuals four times per year
 - The Messenger circulated to over 1,529 subscribers
 - @OntarioSheep has over 2,659 followers
 - @OntarioLamb has over 1,135 followers
 - Directly processed over \$549,000 in Yield More Financing payments since the program launched assisting producers in expanding operations
 - Offered webinars reaching over 450 people across Ontario, Canada and internationally
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As we begin the 2023-2024 year the Board of Directors will focus on:

- Continuing implementation of the new OSF Strategic Plan
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Communications:

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

- Ongoing updates to the OSF consumer website www.lambrecipaes.ca
 - Continued to provide weekly (since Covid-19 Pandemic) digital circulation of The Messenger (OSF's digital newsletter)
 - Provided updates to the OSF info phone line where producers may call the OSF office and hear a recording of industry news and upcoming events
 - Continued updates to the new producer and mental health pages on the OSF website resource pages including updates to the new producer page on the OSF website and new producer package
 - Continued to support and update online professional development programs offered by OSF
 - Added a Producer testimonial page to the OSF Leadership page on the OSF site to assist in producer requirement
 - Created and posted additional content for OSF YouTube channel for producers
 - Explore options for other communications activities such as pod cast to better support producers
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