

National Sheep Network

April 27, 2023

The board discussed the meeting with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) that was attended by staff. At the meeting, staff were advised to put all questions about sheep traceability into a letter to the Canadian Sheep Federation. Information was provided at the meeting about the delivery of traceability programming for sheep in Canada and the role of the Responsible Administrator.

Ontario Sheep Farmers' (OSF) chair attended the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's National Farm Animal Council presentation on the code of practice for livestock transportation. There is no national oversight for animal transportation regulations which will pose a problem with proposed changes to national traceability guidelines.

The website design layout is complete for the new marketing platform under development by LEOQ. The data will be merged onto the new platform and LEOQ plans to hire a project manager to complete the project.

LEOQ is still searching for a General Manager but hope to have someone in place soon. Prices for heavy lambs are good but 20-25% below 2022 levels. They have experienced a couple of weeks of high volume that have settled back down to typical volumes for this time of year. LEOQ is also reviewing their classification grids to align with Ontario.

OSF had a board meeting in mid April that concentrated on wool marketing. There is an interest among Ontario producers in developing new wool markets including pelleting wool for fertilizer. This pellet idea is also in development in Quebec and Alberta and there are some questions whether federal law requires wool pellet companies to register with the CFIA. Staff will find more information on the requirements to register before the next meeting.

ALP has been following the development of the Western Lamb Co-operative that recently formed in Alberta. They have shipped their first load of lambs direct to an Ontario processor and have another load planned for May.

There was an update on Westfine Meats. After ALP circulated a statement from the processor in March to producers to clarify what took place and to also confirm they didn't have firm contracts in place with producers, Westfine Meats have tried to accommodate as many producers as possible by pushing back the processing of their own animals. Since then, the original concerns seem to have been addressed and the topic has been quiet for the last month.