

National Sheep Network

May 25, 2023

The board discussed the request from Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) for a meeting with Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) and Alberta Lamb Producers (ALP) on May 10. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the CSF's request for sponsorship to become the Responsible Administrator for national sheep traceability and answer questions from the two boards. The date was shared with short notice, so the meeting was rescheduled for June 7, 2023.

LEOQ reached out to Attestra for more information on the role of Responsible Administrator for traceability in Quebec. It was learned Attestra has many people on staff and a significant budget because the data management and computer power required to run traceability is very large.

ALP will send staff to the upcoming Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) summer meeting in New Brunswick that is scheduled to coincide with the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Agriculture Ministers' meetings. Since Pierre is unable to attend the CFA board meeting, John will attend the meeting virtually in his place.

LEOQ continues to work on the marketing website. The lamb information micro website layout is in production and they are working on the subscription models – both free and paid options. When complete, there will be projections for volume of sales and pricing modelling behind a paywall for farmers, sales agencies and abattoirs.

LEOQ dealt with a grading error in April that has affected pricing on approximately 10,000 lambs. The issue will be addressed over the next few weeks. Their board is expecting prices to go down end of June, but their pricing formula should keep their price high enough to offset the lower prices received by Quebec producers in February and March.

Quebec has a new program to help producers when their cost of production is below the market price. Producers qualify for a 10-year loan with low interest rates in the first few years to help with farm liquidity. LEOQ is also working on a 5-year plan with all Quebec sheep organizations on research that prioritizes reducing feed costs – the number one cost of production is feed.

OSF is involved in many political consultations right now – Veterinarian Act, Traceability, review of the PAWS Act. The board has created a new entrant committee encouraging new producers in the sheep sector. Wool was the topic of the April board meeting – enhancing the value of Canadian wool. The demand for lamb has been good over the last month.

The ALP board has been preparing for the meeting with CSF on traceability.