

National Sheep Network
September 29, 2022

LEOQ communicated that they had their cost of production meeting with their provincial government where they reviewed the cost production government study, which is done every 5 years. The government presented the data they collected, and it was encouraging to see that they keep improving year after year, with more money on the farm gate.

The formula of the price for their farmers is \$2/kilo more than is currently being offered in Ontario. LEOQ is working towards having a more even and predictable price throughout the year. Their buyers are pleased with the way the formula is set right now, and by having a predictable price, they in turn know the supply and what they will be paying for it.

On Monday, September 26, 2022, the OSF welcomed their new Executive Director, Erin Morgan, to the organization. They conveyed that their producers were still concerned about the low market prices, increased interest rates, feed costs etc. The OSF shared that they are continuing to ramp up lobbying efforts with their provincial government to invest more money into their Business Risk Management programs available to producers, especially given the low market prices.

Producers in Alberta have continued to reach out to the ALP office to express their concerns with the uncertainty surrounding NALCO/Sungold filing for credit protection in August (only federal processing facility in Western Canada). Producers are also struggling with the high cost of production and record low marketing pricing.

The ALP Board made the difficult decision to cancel their in-person conference that was to be held in conjunction with the AGM at Olds College this year due to low registration numbers. Instead, ALP pivoted to host a hybrid AGM model, offering both in-person or virtual attendance for producers to attend.

The NSN board discussed making a monetary contribution towards the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's proposed Study of Canada's Research Ecosystem. This proposed study would include:

- Gap Assessment: Are the priorities of the agriculture and agri-food industry adequately supported?
- Policy Coordination: Are existing programs sufficiently coordinated, communicated, and aligned to optimize effectiveness?
- Industry awareness and uptake: Are industry stakeholders leveraging existing research and innovation supports and programs?
- Provincial Engagement: What role do the provinces play in agriculture and agri-food research and innovation programming and what commitments are they making?
- Commercial and Public Benefit: Is the scale of public investment sufficient for the scope, scale and opportunities for this sector?

There is also interest in adding an additional component of an international comparison to analyse how Canada's agricultural research funding stacks-up against other countries.

The NSN made the decision to show their support of the project by making a \$1,000.00 monetary investment. The cost of the investment will be shared amongst the member provinces, with ALP paying the upfront cost and invoicing the OSF and LEOQ for their one-third portion.

There was also discussions surrounding appointing an NSN CLT Advisory Committee representative. After the discussion, it was decided that LEOQ would provide the NSN rep who would sit on this committee on the NSN's behalf.

Due to the turnover in staff at the OSF, the NSN will need to split the administration/secretarial tasks for the NSN among ALP and LEOQ. When the OSF's new Executive Director is ready and more comfortable in her role, we can adjust who is responsible for which tasks.

The AgroLedger/Traceability Program was brought up for discussion this evening as ALP was notified by CCIA that they would no longer be the responsible administrator for the sheep industry. They also shared with ALP that they were told CCIA just received the news that the transition was getting close and therefore we should be reaching out to the CSF to get producers familiar with their system (AgroLedger) instead of the CLTS. There has never been any consultation with the NSN member provinces and there were several questions that arose when it was discussed. The NSN decided to send a letter to the CSF to try and get some more information on the program and to connect with CFIA to discuss concerns with the traceability program for our industry.

The CMC Technical Symposium was brought up for discussion to see if anyone from the NSN was interested in attending. LEOQ agreed to share the meeting agenda and any additional information they have with the OSF in regard to the content and if there is value, OSF's E.D. will attend on behalf of the NSN.

The NSN also discussed their involvement with the Animal Health Canada committee and decided to keep an eye out for more information to come and decide how they want to show up there.

During the meeting, the NSN rep for the CFA shared that they're looking to create an Agri-Food Common Interest Group and a Cost of Production committee with its members. The NSN reviewed both opportunities and chose to proceed with joining the two committees, so our industry can have a voice at the table.

Lastly, the NSN provided their sincere thanks to Jennifer MacTavish, for all her work done for the NSN and the industry as whole. This was her last meeting as she resigned from her position as General Manager with the Ontario Sheep farmers.