

Canadian Sheep Federation Executive Director’s Report Fall 2022

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Action Items from fall 2022 Board meetings

Are you looking for up-to-date information about the Canadian Sheep Federation’s current initiatives? Our Board of Directors are briefed monthly on our key activities. Reach out to your appointed CSF Director with questions.

- The Canadian Sheep Federation submitted the Board-approved proposal to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency requesting Responsible Administrator Status for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program.
- The CSF submitted comments to the Government of Ontario’s pre-consultation on modernizing the Veterinarian’s Act of Ontario.
- The national Committee representing stakeholders challenging Ontario’s license fee collection policy submitted a formal request for an AFRAAT hearing in December.

Program Updates

Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) and Traceability

The [Canadian Sheep Identification Program \(CSIP\)](#) is Canada's mandatory, national sheep identification program. First introduced into regulations in 2004, CSIP was the first step in the development of a traceback system that will lead to a full-scale traceability system. A fulsome traceability system will help mitigate the spread of livestock diseases, support rapid disease response, address producer concerns about sheep health, provide valuable management feedback to producers, and meet consumer expectations for quality assurance and food safety. CSIP requirements for identifying sheep and recording and reporting certain animal movement/disposal information have remained largely unchanged since they were first introduced in 2004. New technologies in animal identification have been incorporated into the program over the years as we work to modernize the system. The next round of traceability regulations has been in consultation since 2013. These incoming regulations will include requirements that track sheep, premises where sheep reside, and vehicles that transport animals as sheep move through the value chain. Not only will these regulations increase the amount of work required by farms to collect and report data, but they will also expand the scope of those involved in traceability reporting. The Canadian Sheep Federation is the national industry lead for traceability. We remain committed to ensuring that CSIP and future traceability regulations are affordable, flexible, and effective. To stay up to date on CSIP requirements and incoming traceability regulations, be sure to visit our website at www.cansheep.ca and follow our Facebook page @cansheep.ca.

Here are your fall CSIP and traceability updates:

- The CSF submitted a project proposal to AAFC's AgriAssurance National Industry Association funding stream, focused on traceability readiness assessment. The project would see 3 key activities; AgroLedger early adopter testing, national consultation on the CSF's Responsible Administrator Proposal made to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and the development of a consultation framework to be implemented when proposed traceability regulation amendments are published in the coming months. The project will see a dedicated manager oversee activities and seek to engage member and non-member sheep organizations alike.
- A series of meetings leading up to and including a fall IGAC (Industry-Government Advisory Committee on traceability) took place through the fall. The goal of these meetings was to determine industry support for moving forward with proposed amendments to livestock traceability regulations. With industry endorsing a path forward, in general, CFIA has confirmed its commitment to move regulations to Canada Gazette I for comment.
- Shearwell has signalled an expected tag price increase in the coming year, citing increased production costs. The timing and amount of the increase has yet to be determined but we will communicate more precise information when it becomes available.

AgroLedger

The Canadian Sheep Federation developed AgroLedger to serve as the information management system for the sheep industry traceability program. The message from Canadian sheep farmers and ranchers was clear; if traceability is to become a reality in the sheep industry, it must give value back to its users. If we think of traceability solely in terms meeting regulations, the systems that manage them are nothing more than

black holes into which farmers throw data and dollars. Canada's sheep farmers deserve better. The CSF set out to find a traceability solution that fits both future trace regulations and user needs without breaking the bank. We didn't have a lot of luck finding the kind of technology we needed so we built a custom system...we built AgroLedger. With the second phase of AgroLedger development complete, we have a program that can support traceability reporting for incoming regulations AND that provides some added value to users. Right now, AgroLedger lets you share animal records like registrations and performance indexing records, as well as vaccination and treatment records, with future animal owners. Want to scan a new animal's tag and know if it has been vaccinated? There's an app for that! And there is a lot more to come as we move to the next phase of development in 2022 and create even more value for AgroLedger users.

Here are some fall AgroLedger updates:

- The CSF partnered with 9 student groups from 7 universities in 3 separate countries through the fall of 2022. Among these was a very successful collaboration with RMIT University from Australia and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The CFIA contributed its FMD (Foot and Mouth Disease) models to the project where RMIT graduate students developed a program that will integrate with AgroLedger to conduct real-time disease tracking. Now, in 30 seconds or less, our new trace system can identify every animal, premises, conveyance vehicle and region that would be at risk in an FMD outbreak and provide alerts directly to users. This latest development will give the sheep industry a fast track to disease response in the case of an outbreak.

Scrapie and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)

The SFCP is a national flock/herd scrapie risk management program for the Canadian sheep and goat industries and is available to any sheep or goat producer who agrees to meet the program's requirements. The primary benefit to participating producers is the individual risk protection against scrapie in their flock/herd. Over time, producers will have their flock/herd recognized as being at a much lower risk for scrapie than the rest of the farms in the national flock and herd. This recognition can increase trade opportunities within Canada and considering the recent announcement about the U.S small ruminant rule, allows SFCP Certified Plus farms to export breeding stock to the United States. The long-term goal of the SFCP is to eradicate scrapie from the national flock and herd and to help open market access for export. The SFCP's National Standards (rules) are maintained by the CFIA, and the program is administered through Scrapie Canada, a division of the Canadian Sheep Federation. You can learn more about scrapie and the SFCP on the Scrapie Canada website, www.scrapiecanada.ca.

What's new with scrapie and the SFCP this fall:

- A modified import Option 2C, with conditions for importing male small ruminants from the US for breeding or captive purposes has been (re)instated until December 31, 2022. Prospective importers have until the end of December to apply for import permits and until March 31, 2023, to complete imports based on permits issued on or before December 31st. SFCP-enrolled producers who need to complete their annual submission in order to qualify for an import permit are encouraged to do so by early December to ensure enough time to complete applications in time.

Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP)

The Canadian Verified Sheep Program is Canada's quality assurance program for sheep farms. Developed by the Canadian Sheep Federation with support from Canadian farmers and input from veterinarians, industry stakeholders and government, this voluntary program helps farmers and ranchers implement, demonstrate, and validate exemplary food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity management practices. With the help of the CVSP's **FREE** training, you will have the tools to help reduce on-farm food safety, biosecurity, and animal welfare risks.

The steps to implementing the Canadian Verified Sheep Program are straight forward. The Canadian Verified Sheep Program Manual has everything you need to implement the program on your farm. The steps for implementation are:

1. Participate in a producer training session either online or in person. In person sessions are delivered by trained trainers, usually associated with provincial sheep organizations. You can start your **FREE** online training by visiting the CVSP website at fsfp.cansheep.ca
 2. Review the CVSP Producer Manual which contains all the practices and record keeping requirements for the program.
 3. Adapt the material in the manual to fit your operation. While there are various "must do" good production practices in the program, they may not all be applicable to your farm.
 4. Utilize the good production practices and records on your farm, and train workers to follow practices.
 5. Record mishaps when they happen and keep notes on how they were corrected.
 6. After completing steps 1-5 for one full production cycle, you can apply for an audit to become fully Certified on the program.
- Did you know that the CVSP is recognized by the CFIA's Food Safety Recognition Program? And this summer we successfully completed our 18-month review of changes, ensuring the program remains recognized by the CFIA. The [Food Safety Recognition Program \(FSRP\)](#) is a program led by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), with the participation of provincial and territorial governments, that provides government recognition of on-farm and post-farm food safety systems developed and implemented by national industry organizations. The FSRP is a multi-step process that consists of a review, an assessment, the recognition and ongoing monitoring of the technical soundness and administrative effectiveness of national industry organizations' implemented food safety system.
- If you haven't taken the CVSP training program, you should. The material is helpful for managing on-farm food safety, biosecurity, and animal welfare risks. The record keeping documents help you organize critical information, and the training is completely, **100% FREE** courtesy of the Canadian Sheep Federation. Did we mention training is **100% FREE**?

What's new with the CVSP this fall:

- The CFIA released its 2022 report on the Review of the CFIA's Food Safety Recognition Program (FSRP), under which the CVSP has achieved Technical Review Part 2. The report's primary recommendation was *"To maintain its relevancy, the FSRP should expand its scope to include other assurance programs including biosecurity, traceability, sustainability, and animal welfare in one overall program, and secure additional resources for the program's expansion and continuance."* As a result, the CFIA has started its modernization of the FSRP, an activity to which the CSF is actively contributing.

Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program (CWD HCP)

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a progressive, fatal nervous system disease that affects cervid species. It is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy, or prion disease. It is contagious amongst cervids, like scrapie in sheep. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) belongs to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), or prion disease. Though it shares features with other TSEs, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle and scrapie in sheep and goats, it is a distinct disease only known at this time to naturally affect members of the deer (cervid) family. In 2002, the CFIA established national standards for a Voluntary Herd Certification Program (VHCP, now the HCP) to provide cervid owners with tools to help mitigate the risk of developing CWD and the opportunity to have their herds identified as minimal risk with respect to CWD.

The Canadian Sheep Federation began administering the CWD HCP in Ontario back in 2009, because both its National Standards and the program's administration closely mirrored the Scrapie Flock Certification Program. Now the CSF serves as CWD HCP Regional Administrator and Status Assessor for cervids farms located in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.

What's new with CWD:

- Following the release of its *Feed as a Source of Introduction of Chronic Wasting Disease* report and summary report of 2021 CWD cases in farmed-cervid, the CFIA has announced that it can no longer endorse the Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program in its current state. CFIA's ultimatum to industry was either the program would have to undergo significant revisions with respect to biosecurity (specifically feed sources and exclusion fencing) or lose CFIA endorsement. The cervid industry was asked to consider its path forward with the program and advise CFIA of its decision. Although the CSF delivers the program in several jurisdictions, it leaves advocacy to the cervid industry. We remain on standby to support cervid producers with their decision.

Other Updates and Working with Industry Partners

- We heard from the NPAC debrief that the next round of agricultural funding will focus heavily on sustainability measures and in some cases BRM programming will be linked to sustainability best management practices (BMPs). It has been confirmed that the next round of funding will be called SCAP, Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. With CAP funding wrapping up March 31st, 2023, SCAP will become available April 1, 2023.
- Agriculture Canada's new round table model will consist of Sector Advancement Tables and Thematic Tables. Some of these tables have started their work, with work plans for Thematic Tables largely sketched out. The Animal Protein Table, which pulls together what was previously the livestock Round Tables, met virtually for initial planning through the fall and plans to meet in-person early in 2023 to finalize its strategic priorities.

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- 2023 marks the 10-year rewrite for the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep. The CSF Board of Directors signalled its intent to the National Farm Animal Care Council to partner on a full review of the Code in 2023, and NFACC is currently scoping the work into their next round of Code funding. Once the project is approved, we can expect to see work underway to set up project governance and select a Code Development Committee in keeping with the NFACC process.
- An ad hoc group of livestock industry representatives, including the CSF, has formed to advocate for flexibility in new transportation regulations as they relate to ELDs and Hours of Service. The concern is the lack of flexibility in hours of service for livestock haulers in case of trip delays, when stopping for hours of service limits leaves animals on trailers exceeding FWR maximums. The group met with staffers for Transport and Agriculture, along with the Ag and Transport Critics and Chair of the House Ag Committee. The ask was for equivalency with U.S., which is an exemption for livestock haulers when they are within a 150-mile radius of their final destination.
- What started as an ad hoc group of livestock industry representatives sharing concerns about access to veterinary drugs, has turned into a Committee that meets regularly with federal government agencies to discuss how best to ensure continued access to veterinary drugs and biologics essential for livestock producers.
- Livestock industry organizations, including the CSF, are closely following rumours that the U.S. will propose changes to the voluntary 'Product of USA' labelling regulations. Although mandatory country-of-origin labelling requirements remain in place for sheep and lamb, any changes to voluntary labelling could lead to revisiting a regulatory challenge.
- The CSF was asked by Western members to intervene wherever possible with the disposition of NALCO assets in an effort to retain lamb processing in Alberta. The CSF issued expressions of concern to key Canadian-based NALCO creditors, and met with financial organizations to express the sheep industry's interest in ensuring the Innisfail plant continued to process lamb. Similarly, CSF provided help where it could for proposals to purchase the plant that included sheep and lamb processing. The CSF was pleased to see that the final sale of the facility, along with feedlots, awarded to a company committed to supporting the Canadian sheep industry.

This fall's meetings

- University student projects x 48
- CSF Board of Directors x 4
- CSF Audit & Finance Committee x 3
- CSF Annual General Meeting
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency re TRACE
- AAFC Animal Protein Table x 2
- Canadian Livestock Transport Advisory Board x 2
- Agricultural Trade Negotiation Consultative Group
- National Farm Animal Care Council Board meeting
- Manitoba AgEx

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- Animal Health Canada Working Group x 3
- Environment and Climate Change Canada technology showcase
- Global Sheep Producers Forum – Toronto
- Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council
- Canadian Global Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database (CgFARAD) Advisory Board
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada AgriAssurance
- Animal Health Canada Finance Committee x 2
- Transport Hours of Service Working Group x 3
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency Food Safety Recognition Program
- Goat industry meeting
- Ontario Sheep Farmers – TRACE presentation
- National Policy Advisory Committee debrief.
- Cervid Health Team
- Canadian Cattle Identification Agency Board of Directors – Calgary
- Pest Management Residue Agency modernization consultation
- Transport Hours of Service Working Group meeting with senior Minister of Agriculture staff
- Inter-provincial license fee challenge Committee
- Vet Drugs Multi-Sector Group x 2