

Canadian Sheep Federation Executive Director’s Report Summer 2022

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Action Items from summer 2022 Board meetings

- 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 hosted 3 ultrasound scanning training events over 5 days in August.
- The CSF’s 2022-23 annual budget was approved. The budget maintains all membership and program fees at the same cost.

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

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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 CSIP summer and traceability updates:

- Tag supply shortages experienced by some sectors have cleared up through the summer. The sheep sector outside of Quebec was fortunate not to have experienced difficulty getting enough tags courtesy of Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers efficient management of tag inventories.
- Over the course of the summer, CSF's IT staff worked on refining the facial recognition technology developed during the past year. In August, the team was able to successfully identify individual animals by way of livestreaming a video feed. We're told this is the first time this has ever been done on sheep (maybe even any livestock?) anywhere in the world. Through development of the technology, the team worked with videos and photos to demonstrate the technology's ability to successfully pick identified animals out of a flock, which is an accomplishment onto itself. But August's trial run of using a live video stream to identify sheep registered in the system proved that we can indeed use a simple mobile device with a connection (and only a half-ways decent one at that) to pick out identified animals. Here's how it worked:
 - 5 separate animals were registered in the system by using a photo of each animal to add them to the 'library', cross-referencing their face with their CSIP tag. Photos were taken with a cell phone while the animals were in a crate being scanned.
 - Photos were taken at relatively close range (they didn't have to be, but the setup left few other options) and face-on.
 - The 5 sheep were returned to a pen of 65+ ewes.
 - Some time later, the pen of animals was scanned using a cell phone camera, by walking along the front aisle of the pen. The phone's camera had to angle downwards slightly as the aisle was elevated, and sheep ranged from 2 feet away from the camera with their heads buried in the feed bunk to 15 feet away at the back of the pen. All were facing the camera at different angles.
 - The live feed was able to pick out the 5 registered sheep from among the 65+, repeatedly and without error despite questionable cell reception, proximity of the animals to the camera and camera angle. Exciting stuff!

When incorporated into AgroLedger's reporting functions, users will be able to use the technology through a live feed, stored video or still photo (captured when offline) for animal identification. The option of reading CSIP tags and uploading csv files from readers or management software programs will also be available. The goal of this work is to make traceability reporting fast, easy and accurate. The vision is for users to be able to simply open their device camera and capture each animal's ID with a video scan.

Thank you to Twin Shores Farm for allowing us to use your farm and your sheep for this first ever event. You saw it first!

- The CSF was invited to present its work on facial recognition as a form of animal identification at the ICAR 2022 Annual Conference held in Montreal in early June. Presenting at the Animal Identification – New developments and future possibilities session Chaired by Jo Quigley, the CSF spoke about the role of emerging technologies in modernizing traceability.
- The Canadian Sheep Federation submitted a proposal to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency this summer, to become recognized as the Responsible Administrator for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program. This is an important step towards ensuring the sheep industry is able

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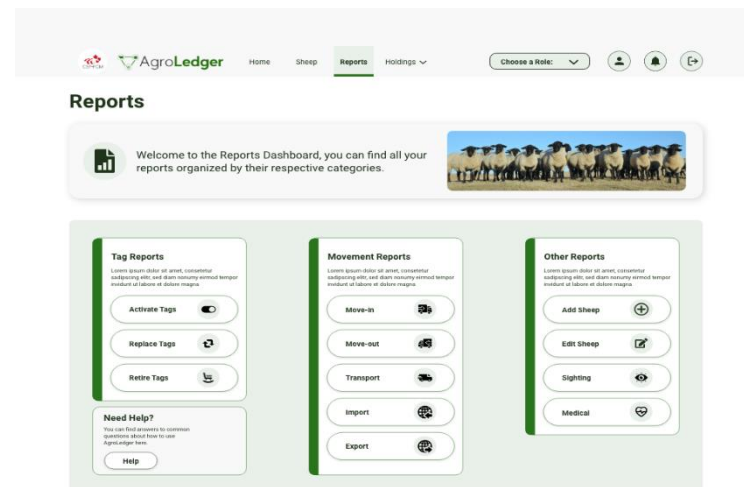
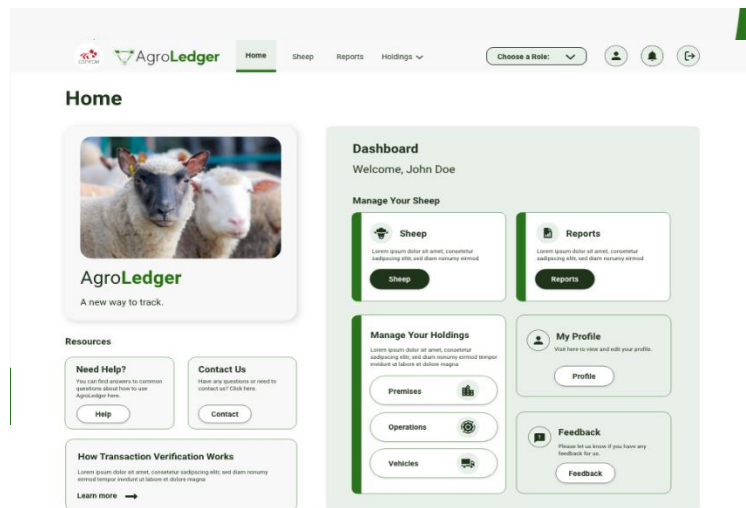
to manage its own traceability system. Doing so allows the industry to make decisions about identifiers, regulations, policies and management of the program tailored to the sector's needs.

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's some of the work we did with AgroLedger this summer:

- The CSF had 12 summer staff working on refining AgroLedger and getting ready for early adopters, slated to start using the system in September. They did a fantastic job of putting final touches on the user interface (the look and feel), creating a wireframe for the new tag module that will manage tag distribution, and building a new private AgroLedger blockchain. Here's a sneak peek:



Interested in becoming an AgroLedger early adopter? There's still time to get involved. Here's what we're looking for:

What will early adopters do?

Use AgroLedger as though future regulations were already in place.

- Set up user account.
- Define your operation(s).
- Identify your premises.
- Create your animal inventories, by premises.
- Report tag activations and tag replacements.
- Report tag retirement/carcass disposal events.
- Report animal movements onto and off your premises, including movement documents.

Provide constructively critical feedback on your user experience:

- Technical issues
- User experience, including suggested improvements
- Ideas for future development

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- Report animal movements onto and off your premises, including movement documents.

What should early adopters expect?



EARLY ADOPTERS WILL BE ASKED TO SIGN AN NDA THAT COVERS THE TESTING PERIOD.



EXPECT TO BEGIN IN EARLY SEPTEMBER AND LAST UNTIL DECEMBER. YOU CAN CONTINUE TO USE AGROLEDGER ONCE TESTING HAS CONCLUDED.



AGROLEDGER WILL REPORT CURRENTLY REGULATED DATA ON BEHALF OF EARLY ADOPTERS.



USERS WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE REGULAR FEEDBACK, HOW AND WHEN TBD.



A STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK REPORT, INCLUDING YOUR FEEDBACK, WILL BE PRODUCED FOLLOWING TESTING.

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 summer:

- The U.S export certificate has been finalized and the accredited vets manual updated to allow vets to be trained for the export function.
- Exporters, especially those transporting their own exports, may want to visit the USDA [website](#) for US import requirements.
- The USDA has issued a request for CFIA to validate the disease status for all farms of residency of animals destined for export under the new rule, where a permit is requested for animals of scrapie resistant genotypes. The regulation does allow for a case-by-case review of permit requests where genetically resistant animals are destined for export (as opposed to SFCP Certified Plus animals) and the first instance has led to additional documentation requests. The USDA is asking CFIA to issue a letter verifying that any farm that any exported animal has ever resided on has not been part of a scrapie investigation. Without a reliable and easy way of listing all farms of residency of animals going for export, the CFIA has agreed to only issue such a letter for animals being exported from their farms of origin. Once adopted as the database for traceability, AgroLedger will easily be able to provide a list of farms of residency for all animals included in an export, allowing CFIA to validate each farms disease investigation status. There is an opportunity for exporters to become early adopters of AgroLedger to get a head start on meeting USDA requirements for these exports.

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-

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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**?

Canada's Small Ruminant Ultrasound Pregnancy Assessment Training and Certification Program

Committed to improving producer access to ultrasound scanning services, the Canadian Sheep Federation hosted a series of ultrasound training events this summer. These included a 3-day beginner scanning course, 1-day producer information session and 1-day advanced/refresher training course. Here's a snapshot of how the series unfolded:

- Beginner course: 9 participants, 3 days, 2 farms, 320+ sheep scanned
- Producer information session: not widely attended but hands on and a good break between training sessions
- Advanced/refresher course: 4 participants, 1 day, 100+ sheep scanned
- Waiting list for next course: 15 beginner, 9 advanced

Thank you to Duncan and David Kennedy from Progressive Animal Services for making the trip from Scotland to help our participants become better at scanning. It is a service that needs to be more accessible and more proficient in Canada, in support of our producers. You cannot be supportive of the industry if you're arguing that point.

Thank you to IMV Imaging for providing 3 scanning units, each valued at approximately \$24,000 (!), for participants to use for training. There simply were not enough units available in Canada for us to have done this without IMV's generous support. An extra bit of thanks for letting us hold on to one unit for a while, for our trainees to use for practice over the coming weeks.

Thank you to Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers Ltd for special ordering and supplying the scanning crates just for this event. Managing without them would have been nightmarish! Crates that haven't already been spoken for are available from CCWG at a discounted price. Call them in if you're interested in one.

Thank you to Fred Baker, Chair of the Ontario Lamb Producers Caucus for organizing the host farms, hauling equipment and handling sheep. And thank you to Canadian Sheep Federation Chair Allan Ribbink for hauling equipment and people, and wrangling sheep for the week. Fred and Allan were the visionaries of this series of training and educational events, determined to make pregnancy scanning mainstream in Canada.

Thank you to our host farms Zac Baker, Twin Shores Farm and Craigmores Farm for providing fantastic training spaces, sheep for us to use, and for putting up with our intrusion. We really appreciate your hospitality and your patience!

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And finally, thank you to our participants. We appreciate your enthusiasm for the sheep industry and your commitment to making the sector a better place. It was a pleasure getting to know you all! Thank you.



It is important to keep in mind that currently, only veterinarians or technicians under veterinary supervision are permitted to scan commercially, anywhere in Canada. Producers are permitted to scan their own sheep but scanning equipment costs (an ultrasound machine is estimated to cost \$33,000 CDN) keep this option out of reach of many. Conversely, independent technicians are permitted to operate in most major sheep producing countries around the world. The Canadian Sheep Federation is committed to influencing policy change in favor of permitting independent scanners to work in Canada. The following is our position statement from 2020, which we continue to pursue:

It is the position of the Canadian Sheep Federation that pregnancy in small ruminants is not an illness needing to be diagnosed but part of the continuous cycle of normal farm practices that allows farms to be productive and profitable. Knowing whether a ewe or doe is

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pregnant or open is increasingly important to flock/herd management and access to accurate and affordable trans-abdominal ultrasound is becoming an important management tool for making that assessment. Trans-abdominal ultrasound scanning is a safe, humane and non-invasive process for providing pregnancy assessments.

It is important that anyone involved in providing a pregnancy assessment service in small ruminants be fully trained and competent in the use of fully functioning, well maintained equipment and be certified by a national, industry led certifying body. It is important that farm operators have confidence in the abilities, accuracy and affordability of independent technicians, veterinarian technicians and/or veterinarians performing pregnancy assessments.

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:

- The CFIA carried out an audit of the CSF's administration of the CWD HCP program over the course of the summer. Program audits have historically been carried out annually but had been suspended due to COVID. This summer's audit included files from the 2019-2021 program years.

Other Updates and Working with Industry Partners

- Two Global Sheep Producers Forum working groups are undertaking ambitious bodies of work in 2022, with the CSF contributing to both.
 - The Next Generation WG is hosting a series named *Next Generation 2022 – Showcasing Success Stories in the Sheep Industry*. Once a month, two countries will partner, one as host and one as guest, in delivering a webinar on one of a number of suggested topics. Each month will see a different pairing of countries and a new topic, all aimed at encouraging and inspiring you people to get into and stay in the sheep industry. The hope is to spark new ideas, share experiences and network globally. Learn more by visiting the Global Sheep Forum Next Generation [website](#).

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- The Global Sustainability Framework WG has a lot of work ahead of them, developing a sustainability framework for the global sheep industry. The group has pulled together guiding principles (flexible, trustworthy, ambitious, collaborative) and goals (environmental sustainability, animal welfare, responsibility for the health of rural communities) as important first steps. Work is continued to carry on over the next 1-2 years.
- The next Global Sheep Producers Forum meeting will take place in-person in November of this year, in conjunction with the Royal Winter Fair's 100th Anniversary.
- The CSF was fortunate enough to once again receive Canada Summer Jobs Program funding, hiring 12 students each for 8-week summer terms. We were able to extend work terms for 4 of the 12 students courtesy of project funding from the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council's AgriTalent Program.
- Over the course of the past year, a group of producers from across the country, supported by the organizations that represent them, launched a challenge of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency's (OSMA's) license fee collection practices. The challenge followed multiple requests made to OSMA staff to have license fees collected on sheep and lambs originating from provinces outside of Ontario refunded on the basis that OSMA is exceeding their delegated authority to license Ontario producers by applying license fees to producers from other provinces, by way of fees collected on sheep and lambs. When the refund requests were denied, the group of producers rallied together to engage legal counsel to pursue a formal resolution to the issue. The group's legal counsel made a formal request to the OSMA Board of Directors to issue written notice to every person, including brokers/dealers, auction markets or processors to immediately stop deducting the license fees from the sale proceeds payable to out-of-province producers. The request was made on the basis that the application of OSMA's regulations to non-resident producers goes beyond the legislative authority of the Ontario legislature and the regulatory authority of the OSMA.

The OSMA Board declined the producer group's request, noting their intention to continue collecting license fees as usual. The producer group requested a formal hearing for the OSMA Board to consider a request to appeal their decision, and the hearing was held in late spring. The expectation was that the OSMA Board would maintain its position, and it did, but it was a required prerequisite to the producer group filing an appeal of the OSMA decision to the Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal (AFRAAT). The producer group is now preparing to file for an AFRAAT hearing on the issue.

Should the producer group receive a positive outcome from the AFRAAT hearing, where OSMA is required to discontinue its collection of license fees from the sale of out-of-province sheep and lambs in Ontario, the producers leading the challenge would be entitled to a refund of all license fees collected from them. This would also set a precedent against which other producers not currently involved in the challenge could individually or collectively pursue reimbursement of past license fees paid to the OSMA.

This summer's meetings

- Summer Student morning standups X 63
- ICAR Annual Conference – Montreal
- Veterinary Drug Directorate
- CSF Board of Directors X 3
- CSF Audit & Finance Committee X 3
- OSMA District 10 Field Day
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency X 5
- Animal Health Canada Finance Committee X 3
- George Brown College X 6
- Animal Health Canada AMU/AMR Committee
- Market Access Secretariat X 3 – Voluntary Product of the USA labeling (vPUSA)
- Canadian Livestock Transport Advisory Committee
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Canadian Verified Sheep Program 18-month review of changes
- Health Canada
- Food Advisory Committee
- All-Canada Classic – trade show
- Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System (CAHSS) Small Ruminant Network
- University of Waterloo – Co-op Program
- University of Saskatchewan X 2
- Royal Winter Fair
- Ohio University
- Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council – AgriTalent
- CSF Staff Advisory Committee
- Animal Health Canada Working Group
- RMIT University (Australia) X 2
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency X 4– Export Certificates
- Farm Health Guardian
- Global Sheep Producers Forum Sustainability Working Group
- Government of Australia – AgroLedger