

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Ontario Sheep Farmers welcome Minister Thompson as the new Ontario Minister of Agriculture

**June 21, 2021, Guelph, ON** – Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) welcome Minister Lisa Thompson who was recently named Ontario’s Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs by Premier Ford in last week’s provincial Cabinet shuffle. Minister Thompson brings a deep understanding of Ontario’s agri-food industry and rural communities, especially her knowledge of the small ruminant livestock sector, which is an asset to this portfolio.

“We look forward to working with Minister Thompson on behalf of more than 3,000 Ontario sheep producers,” says Marc Carere, Ontario Sheep Farmers Chair. “Our immediate focus will be to ensure that the suite of business risk management programs, including the provincial risk management program, will work for sheep farmers.”

Ontario Sheep Farmers will also be addressing the industry’s significant growth potential, challenges like processing capacity and labour issues, and highlighting the key role the sheep industry plays in climate change and environmental solutions.

“As we welcome Minister Thompson, we also thank Minister Ernie Hardeman for his leadership and dedication while he served our sector,” says Carere, especially as we faced the COVID-19 pandemic. “The sheep industry also appreciates the addition of \$50 million to Ontario’s Risk Management Program and the development of the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*, which happened during Hardeman’s tenure.”

Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) is a producer-run organization established in 1985 and represents the province’s 3,000 sheep farmers who contribute over \$530 million to Ontario’s economy. Ontario is home to the country’s largest sheep flock and processes over 50% of the sheep and lambs born in Canada. We believe passionately that sheep farming is an agricultural business sector that is profitable, contributes to the well-being of our communities and our province and offers unique opportunities to develop new markets, provide needed environmental benefits and grow both our domestic and international markets.

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#### For Media Inquiries, Contact:

Jenn MacTavish  
General Manager  
jmactavish@ontariosheep.org



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