



Ontario Launches Improving Access to Veterinary Care in Underserved Areas at Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) 2023 Convention

October 30th, 2023 (Guelph) During last week's Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) Convention the Ontario Minister of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, Hon. Lisa Thompson announced in her remarks province's plans for the Veterinary Incentive Program.

This project will encourage newly licensed veterinarians to better practice in northern and underserved communities in the province. The intake window opens today and provides grants of up to \$50,000 over five years to veterinarians who provide care to livestock and poultry in these communities. The news of this announcement was met with applause from the attendees at today's in person convention and was welcomed news by the Minister.

"We know that Veterinary services is a necessary requirement to being a successful sheep farmer. This announcement will help address concerns and some long long-standing issues that OSF has advocated for on behalf of our membership for many years," said John Hemsted OSF Chair.

Through this program, up to 100 newly licensed veterinarians will be incentivized to provide specialized care to animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry in underserved locations of the province. It is being delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC). Program details, eligibility requirements and information on how to apply will be available on the [AAC website](#).

This program builds on other measures Ontario has taken to increase access to veterinary care. In November 2022, the government launched consultations to explore opportunities to modernize the [Veterinarians Act](#). A discussion paper on the proposed amendments was posted on the [Regulatory Registry](#). OSF actively participated in these consultations and discussions currently being reviewed.

The Veterinary Incentive Program and the new Collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program were announced in the [2023 Budget, Building a Strong Ontario](#) to help address the veterinary capacity shortage and attract new talent to veterinary medicine. This program is designed to make it easier for farmers and large animal owners to access veterinary care where and when they need it, encourage newly licensed veterinarians to find rewarding work, and open the door for veterinarians to practice in northern Ontario and rural communities.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Erin Morgan
OSF Executive Director
emorgan@ontariosheep.org



OntarioSheep.org