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Vol. 40 - **Issue 3** Fall 2022



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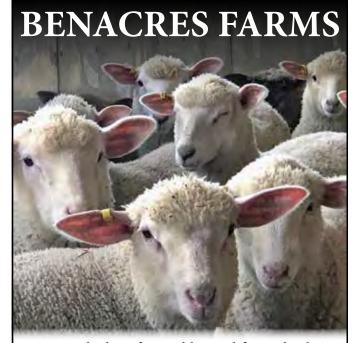
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**COVER PHOTO:** Ontario Sheep Farmers

**DESIGN & LAYOUT:** 

Prism Studios Advertising & Design Inc.

#### **DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING TO ONTARIO SHEEP NEWS:**

March Issue - February 3rd • June Issue - May 4th • September Issue - August 3rd • December Issue - November 2nd

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#### **ONTARIO SHEEP FARMERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

<b>Provincial</b>	Directors	Telephone
District 1	Art Alblas	(519) 637-0050
District 2	Jay Lewis	(519) 323-7439
District 3	Keith Todd	(519) 528-2650
District 4	Marusha Kostuk	(519) 865-6874
District 5	Heather Little	(519) 843-1675
District 6	John Hemsted	(705) 487-2466
District 7	Ken Lamb	(905) 985-4247
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District 9	Reggie Campbell	(613) 257-7524
District 10	Lee Brien	(519) 809-5332
District 11	Colleen Alloi	(705) 248-3287

ONTARIO SHEE	P FARIVIERS STAFF
Erin Morgan	Executive Director
	emorgan@ontariosheep.org
Jennifer Johanson	Office Manager / Bookkeeper
	jjohanson@ontariosheep.org
Anita O'Brien	On Farm Program Lead
	aobrien@ontariosheep.org
Tom Lewis	Industry Relations Specialist
	tlewis@ontariosheep.org
Jan Smith	Administrative Assistant
	ismith@ontariosheen org

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

#### **ONTARIO SHEEP FARMERS**

130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1B1

Phone: (519) 836-0043 Fax: (519) 836-2531

E-mail: admin@ontariosheep.org Website: www.ontariosheep.org

www.lambrecipes.ca Market Line: (519) 836-0043 Ext. 4

Publications Mail Registration Number:

40033529 ISSN 0844-5303

**FALL 2022** 

Date of Issue: Fall 2022

Photo submissions for use in publications (magazine, promotional/ education materials). Photo submissions are welcomed. Include the following information with your submission: name, mailing address, phone number, email address, expressed consent for Ontario Sheep Farmers to use the photo. If there are individuals in the picture, they should be identified and permission to print their picture must be secured either directly (if adults) or (if children) from a parent/guardian). Emailed photos must be a minimum of 300dpi and each photo should be clearly identified with the required information as outlined above. Photos will not be returned, and all submissions become the property of Ontario Sheep Farmers to be used or reproduced at the organization's discretion. Wherever possible, credit will be given to the photographer if used.



## Price of Lambs a Top Concern for Many Producers

The price of lambs has been top of mind for producers lately. The seasonality of lamb prices speaks to some of the reason why prices are dropping and, this year, there has been concern that the North American Lamb Company entering creditor protection means that more lambs are coming east, impacting prices.

With prices trending below the five-year average since July a number of farmers are nervous about how low prices may go and how much longer low prices will last. For those of us who have been in the industry for awhile, we've seen this before (notably 2013) and we had been wondering

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how much longer prices could stay so high. While this is of little comfort to those of us struggling to make ends meet at a time of increasing costs of production, I would like to offer these observations:

Lamb prices are not just influenced by lamb supply but are also cyclical driven and demand. holiday If you look at the market graphs on page 7 you'll see that our prices rise we approach Christmas, Easter, Passover, Ramadan and Eid.

There has been a gradual shift of the major ethnic feasts to earlier in the year (50 days in the past five years). As this shift continues over the next few years, inevitably the major ethnic feasts will fall at the same time as Christian easter. This will drive up demand at a time of year when there are not enough market-ready lambs. All of this to say, we can expect that prices will continue to be high during the first part of the calendar year and drop off through the summer and early fall.

Other issues that are also influencing prices include the buying habits of consumers as their cost of living goes up. Food prices rose by 9.7 per cent in June of this year<sup>1</sup>. With discretionary spending decreasing, lamb may now be viewed as a luxury item with some consumers shifting to purchasing lower priced protein.

And, just like you, our processors are facing increasing costs of production and labour issues that are impacting their businesses. The pressures they are facing may impact what they are able to pay for sheep and lambs.

During this time of price uncertainty, I would encourage all of us to spend time reviewing some of the things we do have control over. Top of the list is our cost of production and reviewing /finding ways to save on input costs. The OSF does have resources available on options during periods of high feed costs, the price and profit predictability tool and the benchmarking and budgeting tools. All available on OSFs website www.ontariosheep.org. I would also encourage you to speak to your banker about financial and line of credit options that may be suitable for your operation. **OSN** 

1. Hogan, Stephanie. How the rising cost of food adds up in your grocery cart. CBC News. June 24, 2022

Editorial policy: Ontario Sheep Farmers welcomes and encourages letters to the editor and article suggestions from farmers and industry partners as a means of communicating with the Ontario Sheep Farmers board of directors and other farmers on issues of importance. Letters may be on any sheep industry topic, including Ontario Sheep Farmers' policies, programs and procedure. Letters may address previous articles or letters to the editor, and the editor may comment on the accuracy of the information in letters. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for style and grammatical errors. When submitting a letter, please include the name of the author, address, phone number and/or email address (for verification purposes). Printed letters will include the author's name. Potentially defamatory or libelous material, or personal attacks on individuals will not be permitted. If an author feels that the editor has inappropriately edited or not print a letter, a written request can be submitted to the board of directors for review to determine if there has been a violation of Ontario Sheep News' editorial policy.

#### **Executive Director Report**



## Looking Forward to Joining Ontario Sheep Farmers

am so excited to be joining Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF).

As my first editorial for Ontario Sheep News, I thought this would be a great opportunity to tell you a little bit about myself.

I have spent the last six years working for the Ontario Co-Operative Association and deciding to leave was difficult. I'm leaving behind a great team and so many incredible people who have had a profound impact on my approach to life and work. I am immeasurably proud of what I was able to accomplish during my tenure there. Most notably, membership in this Association grew from 15 co-operative members to 50 and we moved from managing the day-to-day to partnering on co-operative solutions to the province's biggest challenges.



I am, however, thrilled to be coming back to agriculture, and joining a livestock commodity organization. While I grew up in Don Mills (what was once a suburb of Toronto, and is now a part of Toronto), my journey in, and passion for, agriculture started while completing my Agricultural Science degree at the University of Guelph (OAC '99 Bulldogs!).

My career journey started with Farms.com and I then transitioned to Organic Meadow (my first co-operative experience), followed by SunOpta during the growth in the organic sector. At Organic Meadow and SunOpta I had the pleasure of working with farmers and processors to develop product lines for organic milk, chicken, and pork.

My next career move took me to the Ontario Wheat Board, into a newly developed Stakeholder Relations role. Here, I was given leeway to define my job as the needs of the sector arose. So, I started a magazine for the organization, supported government relations, met our farmer members at district meetings and participated in the transition of this organization into the Grain Farmers of Ontario. This job was the beginning of my love for advocating on behalf of farmers.

When the Ontario Wheat Board transitioned into the Grain Farmers of Ontario, I was fortunate to become the Communications and Public Affairs Manager. It was here where I had the great privilege to work for Barry Senft and Jaye Atkins, both of whom taught me a lot about how to lead an organization. Most especially that building teams on the foundation of fun, and hard work, will enable you to build a powerhouse farmer-focused organization.

And we did just that. We built an organization that didn't just advocate for producers provincially, we created an alliance with Quebec to advocate on the federal stage because Ontario needed and deserved stronger representation. I must give so much credit to my creative and energetic team of professionals at GFO who made it possible to keep innovating and achieving on behalf of its members.

It's this level of enthusiasm I am bringing to my work here with OSF! I'm inspired by the amazing ideas I have already seen and your enthusiasm for the sector. I can't wait to get started.

By now you may be wondering what I do in my spare time. I'm a mother of four children ranging in age from 3 to 17. And then, in the spare moments between work and being a mom, I manage to eke out a CrossFit class here and there and have a personal fitness goal of doing the CrossFit Open Rx'd this year. **OSN** 

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#### From the Editor's Desk



## OSF Asks Producers to speak with Municipalities about By-Laws Affecting Livestock Guardian Dogs

The past issue of Ontario Sheep News (OSN) provided an update on Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) involvement with the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN) on the updated Standards of Care for Outdoor Dogs. These new standards took effect on July 1st, 2022. Further information can be found by visiting the OSF resources page located at www.ontariosheep.org/Working/Guardian%20Dogs.

Since the development of the new Standards of Care for Outdoor Dogs OSF staff have corresponded with Ontario Municipalities regarding by-laws affecting Livestock Guardian Dogs(LGDs)requesting that they take into consideration the use of Livestock Guardian Dogs in predation management when creating or updating their policies with respect to their dog by-laws. The response from many Municipalities has been positive, with some indicating they will add provisions for the use of LGDs, OSF is now asking Ontario Sheep producers to have individual conversations with Municipal Candidates and their local Municipal staff this fall. It is important that they see the need for fair and balanced by-laws.

Livestock Guardian Dogs (LGDs) provide protection to livestock by patrolling pastures, marking the perimeter of their territory, and bark, run at, or try to intimidate any threats to the livestock they are protecting. At times municipal by-laws can prevent or negatively impact sheep farmers using LGD's to provide protection to livestock against predation. OSF believes that by-laws should carefully consider the role of LGD's in predation prevention.

Problem predators continue to be a challenge and cost for Ontario sheep farmers. The financial burden of predation not only costs farmers, but it also costs Ontario taxpayers both locally and provincially from payouts and administration of the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ARE WELCOME

The *OSN* welcomes letters to the editor.
Please email: tlewis@ontariosheep.org or mail to:
Ontario Sheep News, 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph ON NIK 1BI.

Livestock guardian animals including LGD's are one of the most common forms of predation prevention control used by Ontario livestock farmers. There have been instances when municipal by-laws hinder the efficient use of LGDs on farming operations as the by-laws are intended primarily for dogs kept for companionship, breeding, or non-working purposes.

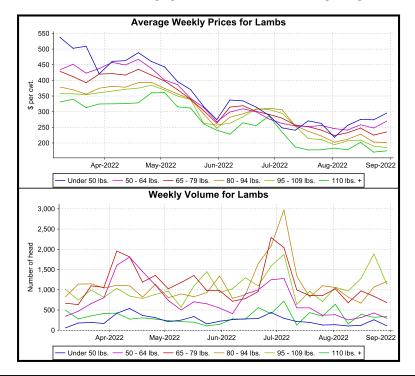
OSF is asking producers to proactively help on this issue by asking your municipality for the following additions when local dog bylaws are updated:

- added definition of Livestock Guardian Dogs and herding dogs to by-laws. Those definitions could be "Livestock Guardian Dog" defined as a dog that works and/or lives with domestic farm animals to protect them while repelling predators and is used exclusively for that purpose. "Herding Dog" means a dog that has been trained and is actively being used in a bona fide farming operation for the purposes of controlling livestock on the farm.
- Exempt LGDs and herding dogs from annual license fees to decrease potential significant cost for livestock producers.
- Exempt LGDs and herding dogs being actively used in farming practices from the requirement for dogs to wear a collar and tag, provided that the owner uses an alternative means of identification.
- Allow persons to keep more than three dogs at a premise without obtaining a kennel license, providing they meet certain agricultural criteria such as keeping livestock, agricultural or rural land zoning, and that the dogs are LDGs and/or herding dogs.
- Exempt LGDs and herding dogs from barking restrictions if actively engaged in guarding livestock against predators.

This fall municipal elections are happening across Ontario and a great opportunity to ensure that issues like this are taken into consideration. If anyone needs a copy of the materials that was sent to Municipalities call the OSF office. **OSN** 

#### The Ontario Market Report

"Market Information" The graphs here show the trends in pricing and volume of the last six months in Ontario. **OSN** 



You can also listen to the weekly information by calling 519-836-0043 and press 4 to go to the market line.

Market information for OLEX, the Ontario Stockyards, Brussels and Embrun are recorded every week. You can also find archived weekly summaries on the Market page.



THE 2022 ONTARIO LAMB MARKET CALENDAR				
Year	Holiday	Consumption Preferences	Market Processor Needs	Public Auction Market Impact
January 6	Epiphany (Christian)	Lamb is featured in many celebration meals.	Recently weaned and milk fed lambs are preferred.	Lower market volumes generally.
February 1	Chinese (Lunar) New Year	Both mutton and lamb are used in a variety of dishes and is a favorite ingredient in hot pots.		Lower market volumes.
March			Easter holiday inventory buildup.	Growth in supply following winter, with Easter demand increase.
April 15 to 23	Passover (Jewish) 8 days	Traditionally must be processed under Kosher laws.	Healthy finished lambs. (up to 64 lbs live weight; ideally milk fed and fat)	Steady market. A limited influence.
April 17 April 24	Western Easter  Eastern Orthodox Easter  A peak sale period for in the year.	Roast lamb is a main festive meal for European (Italian, Portuguese, and Greek) heritages.	Healthy young lambs. (under 60 lbs live weight; ideally milk fed and fat) Numbers of lambs under 65 lb begin to increase in three weeks before Easter, and peaks during the week before Easter. Numbers of 65-79lb lambs will increase during this time as well.	Higher market demand in 2 to 3-week period preceding holiday. Hint: check local auction schedules for 'special' Easter sale dates.
Apr 2 to May 2	Ramadan (Islam) 1 month (daylight fasting)	Some celebrations will occur prior to start of Ramadan.	Weaned market lambs (60 – 90 lbs live weight)	A moderate market factor for week leading into Ramadan.
May		Start of barbeque season which more frequently featuring Ontario lamb.	Mod demand. Processors see an increase in BBQ lamb demand from May to August.	Commonly higher supply and slightly higher but still moderate demand.
May 3	Eid al-Fitr (Islam) Festival of Fast Breaking	Celebrations occur during the fast break period which will feature lamb products.	Weaned market lambs 60 – 90 lbs liveweight. Lower demand for heavy lambs.	A moderate market factor for the week leading into Ramadan.
July 9 to 10 The Hajj is July 7 to 12	Eid al Adha (Festival of Sacrifice, Eid) (Islam) A peak sale period in year.	Eid, the festival of sacrifice, is one of the most important observances in the Islamic faith.  (This may be referred to as Qurbani, though this refers to the actual act of animal processing.)	Lambs (70 – 110 lbs live weight)  Desired weight differs across different communities.  Lambs should be under a year of age and be unblemished. Blemishes may include open wounds, torn ears or other physical unsoundness. Wethers and lambs with docked tails may not be acceptable to some buyers.	High market demand in period leading up to holiday. Peak demand is in week preceding holiday.  Note: There is a high activity level of private holiday sales sought by families for this important celebration period.
July 29	Muharram (Islamic New Year)	The Islamic New Year is the first day of the Muslim calendar. Mutton is often served as the main course for this holiday meal.	There is no preferred weight for this holiday, although animals should appear healthy.	Steady market. A limited influencer.
September 25 to 27	Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year	Lamb is a tradition or symbol of a new beginning.	Forequarters from weaned market lambs (60 – 109 lbs live weight)	Steady market. A limited influencer.
October 10	Thanksgiving	Lamb is an alternative to turkey.	Steady demand with slow year over year consumer demand increase.	Steady market. A limited influencer.
November		Stew/casserole are growing in seasonal popularity	Lower but steady demand during transition from Thanksgiving into Christmas period.	Lower market volumes.
December 18 to 26	Chanukah (Festival of Rededication) (Jewish) 8 days	Traditionally must be processed according to Kosher law.	Healthy heavy lambs. (up to 100 lbs live weight)	Usually occurs close to Christian Christmas which leads to high demand.
December 25	Christmas Day to New Year (Christian) A peak sale period in year.	Lamb is a feature at Christmas parties (lamb-pops, spiedini, roasts). Leg of lamb, stews and curries are food staples.	Lambs should be freshly weaned (milk fed), up to 80 lbs, and not older than 3 months of age. Out-of-season breeding is required to produce the favoured type of lamb for this market.  Cull sheep are popular for stew and curry.	Higher market demand in 2 to 3-week period preceding holiday.

 $This \ calendar \ is \ also \ available \ on \ the \ OSF \ website \ at \ https://www.ontariosheep.org/religious-ethnic-market-calendar.$ 





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## Protect Your Feed Supply From Corn Rootworm

By Christine O'Reilly, OMAFRA Forage & Grazing Specialist

orn rootworm is a serious pest of continuous corn. For 16 years, producers growing corn-on-corn have relied on hybrids with rootworm Bt traits (Bt-RW), sometimes called "belowground protection", to minimize crop damage. Since 2019, populations of corn rootworm with resistance to Bt-RW were identified in Ontario. Sheep producers who grow corn for grain or silage to feed their flocks need to be proactive about how they grow corn going forward to protect their feed supply and mitigate rootworm resistance.

Corn rootworm larvae hatch in early summer and feed on corn roots. Root damage prevents the crop from taking up enough water and nutrients to reach full yield potential. In addition, this root clipping makes the corn more likely to lodge during high winds or thunderstorms. Lodged corn is difficult to pick up with the harvester and increases the risk of soil contamination in silage. Soil elevates ash levels and may introduce bacteria that can cause listeriosis, leading to illness, abortions, or death in sheep. Adult corn

rootworms are beetles that feed on corn silks, which could impact pollination and kernel set, and reduce grain yields and the starch content of silage. The adults then lay their eggs in corn fields, where the eggs overwinter in the soil. If corn is planted in the same field the following year, the cycle continues, and the corn rootworm population builds.

Significant yield loss occurs before symptoms are even noticed. For every root node clipped, there is a 15 to 18% grain yield loss. While the impact of corn rootworm damage on silage yields has not been thoroughly documented, the impact is expected to be equal to or greater than in grain, because both quality and yield are affected. Additional crop loss occurs when portions of the field lodge due to this root clipping, making harvest difficult or impossible.

While many seed companies carry hybrids with Bt-RW traits, switching hybrids does not solve this problem. All the Bt-RW traits available have similar modes of action, and the Bt-resistant corn rootworm populations have resistance to all of them. Other management techniques are required to keep corn rootworm populations low.

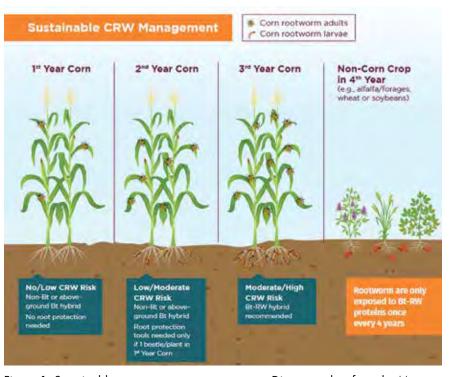


Figure 1. Sustainable corn rootworm management. Diagram taken from the Manage Resistance Now Factsheet "Managing Corn Rootworm in Bt Corn in Continuous Corn Fields." Note: above-ground Bt targets other pests, like European corn borer and western bean cutworm, and does not impact corn rootworm.

#### **Crop Rotation**

Crop rotation is the most effective and least expensive way to keep corn rootworm populations low. Larvae live in the soil and don't move around much, so if they don't find corn roots where they hatch, they starve to death. Corn rootworm larvae do not feed on legume roots, so implementing an alfalfa-silage corn (without Bt-RW) rotation is an excellent way to break the corn rootworm lifecycle. In situations where rotating out of corn is more difficult, there is room for up to three years of corn-on-corn. By rotating a field out of corn, populations crash and take at least two to three years to build back up enough for the crop to need protection again. That means first- and second-year corn won't need – and shouldn't be using – Bt-RW hybrids. Save the Bt-RW hybrids for third-year corn, then rotate out of corn again (Figure 1).

Another forage option for taking a field out of continuous corn is to double crop a winter cereal and sorghum-sudangrass. Fall rye or winter triticale can be successfully established after silage corn harvest. Seed at a rate of 110 kg/ha (100 lbs/acre) and at 2.5 cm (1 in.) depth, or deeper to

seed into moisture. For fertility guidelines, see Chapter 4 of OMAFRA Publication 811: Agronomy Guide for Field Crops. Apply 55-80 kg/ha (50-75 lbs/acre) of nitrogen at green-up in the spring to encourage tillering and increase forage yields. Cereals should be harvested between flag-leaf and early boot stage for high-quality forage. Cut the crop at the optimum maturity stage and wilt to the target moisture for ensiling or baleage. If the cereal shows signs of regrowth, a burndown to terminate the crop will prepare the field for seeding sorghum-sudangrass.

Sorghum-sudangrass requires soil temperatures above 12°C to germinate, so conditions to seed generally occur in the last week of May or early June in southern Ontario. Seed at a rate of 33-44 kg/ha (30-40 lbs/acre) and at 2-4 cm (0.75-1.5 in.) depth. Use the phosphorus and potassium guidelines for corn (see Chapter 1 of OMAFRA Publication 811: Agronomy Guide for Field Crops). Apply 80-100 kg/ha (90-110 lbs/acre) of actual nitrogen up front, and 50 kg/ha (45 lbs/ acre) after first cut. Sorghum-sudangrass is a two-cut crop. It should be harvested before heads emerge, which is typically about 60 days after planting. To encourage regrowth, leave 10-18 cm (4-7 in.) of stubble when harvesting. A second cut is typically ready 30-35 days after the first cut. Ensure that the crop is at least 65 cm (26 in.) tall before cutting. Wait for some regrowth, then terminate the sorghum-sudangrass with glyphosate to prepare the field to go back into rye.

#### Insecticide

Soil-applied insecticides have been tried in the U.S., where Bt-resistant corn rootworm is already widespread. Corn rootworms are so adaptable that within a couple of years of applying insecticides to Bt corn, U.S. producers had rootworm populations resistant to both Bt and insecticides. While insecticide could be used on its own with a non-Bt hybrid in second-year corn, after-market installation of an insecticide box to the corn planter is expensive.

#### Scouting

Bt-resistant corn rootworm poses a major threat to sheep farms who use grain and silage corn for feed. If you haven't checked your Bt-RW hybrids in continuous corn fields yet this month, do so. Report any unexpected damage, like lodging and goosenecking, to your seed provider and Tracey Baute, OMAFRA Field Crops Entomologist and Chair of the Canadian Corn Pest Coalition (tracey.baute@ontario.ca). As you prepare to order corn seed for 2023, talk to your seed supplier or agronomist about implementing a crop rotation to manage corn rootworm without Bt traits. **OSN** 





## Ontario Sheep Farmers Annual Review 2021-2022

ntario Sheep Farmers moved forward with several industry-leading initiatives such as:

- Launched the Building Strength for a Better Future OSF Strategic Plan
- In partnership with Scotiabank, launched the Yield More Financing TM Program for sheep which offers approved OSF producer members access to a \$50,000 line of credit to expand their flock by purchasing ewes
- Provided input to the federal and provincial governments on the development of the Next Policy Framework
- Actively participated in the Livestock Guardian Dog Standards of Care development with Ministry of Solicitor General which developed Standards of Care for Livestock working dogs.

Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) moved forward this past year with several industry-leading initiatives supporting the OSF Strategic Plan such as:

#### Community

- Supported a Joint statement along with many other commodities recognizing National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Advocated for the new Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund (\$25m) earmarked to support projects that will enhance processing capacity and food security
- Supported OSF District Executives by improving the OSF Director and OSF District Executive Portal and offering additional training courses
- Supported the Ontario Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program to keep our agri-food workers safe

#### Prosperity

- Continued working with to assist with the Northwestern Ontario Drought Assistant Initiative and the Northwestern Ontario Livestock Emergency Assistance Initiative to ensure impacted sheep producers had access to the funding
- Improved the price & profit predictability tools for Ontario sheep producers and started working with OMAFRA on updates to the Ontario Sheep Farmers Profit Predictability Tool
- Worked with the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) to change their policy to ensure that veterinarians were not the only ones who could provide pregnancy ultrasound services

- Advocated for changes to parts of the Nutrient Management Act achieving immediate removal of the need to recertify every 5 years, saving time and money, and reducing red tape
- Advocated for investments into the wool sector resulting in approximately \$150,000 for the Canadian Wool Council to help build a more sustainable wool industry in Canada and spread awareness of the beneficial qualities of Canadian wool
- Engaged with abattoirs to gain a better understanding of their concerns and needs
- Made revisions and improvements to the MV program

#### Mastery

- 29 farmers completed the full Master Shepherd's Course and an additional 21 participated through 37 single module registrations
- Hosted the Fall Speakers Series webinars which covered Market Outlook, Breeding for Resilience and Longevity, Improving the Water Cycle and Drought-proofing your farm
- Hosted a series of webinars for producers on topics such as: Forage harvest/storage feed-out/Obtaining samples for analysis, How to Read a Feed Analysis, Standards of Care for Outdoor Dogs, Cost of Production, Preparing for Lambing, Transport Regulations, Coyote Information, Improving the Water Cycle and Drought Proofing your Farm, Regenerative Agriculture, Selecting Ewes for Resilient Lamb Production, North American & Canadian Market situations
- Initiated the Genetics Breeder Group discussions with GENOVIS for Dorset and Suffolk breeders
- 16 producers attended the online Parasite Management course
- 77 participants completed the online Introduction to Small Ruminant Production Course
- Invested over \$17,200 memberships with industry organizations
- Invested over \$91,000 in industry focused research projects
- Hosted and organized an OSF educational day at the 2022 All Canada Classic
- Continued to sponsor the Ontario Forage Council and other grazing and pasture management initiates such as OMAFRA Grazing Cover Crops webinars
- Continued to provide staff support for the Ontario Soil Network #letstalksoil and timing matters campaigns to further promote best practices for manure management
- Provided updates to the online producer education courses such as Parasite Management and Introduction to Small Ruminant Production

#### **Operations**

- Consulted with producer members on the types of information, news and updates they would like to receive from OSF including how they would like to receive it
- OSF Board, staff and some producers participated in leadership development training on topics such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training, as well as Workplace Violence and Harassment training to improve professional development within the sector
- Continued updating the OSF membership database

#### 2021/22 By the Numbers

- Issued more than 50 market reports which are available on website and tapeline recordings
- Improved the market reports provided in The Messenger with more details
- Ontario Sheep News (OSN) circulated to over 2,400 individuals four times per year
- The Messenger circulated to over 1,100 subscribers every week
- @OntarioSheep has over 2,600 followers
- @OntarioLamb has over 1,100 followers
- Processed over \$50k in Yield More Financing payments since the program launched
- Offered over a dozen educational webinars reaching over 500 people across Ontario, Canada and internationally

#### Communications

On the communications front, Ontario Sheep Farmers is continuing to work hard to find and develop new ways to stay in touch including Ontario Sheep News and @OntarioSheep.

- Revamped the OSF consumer website www.lambrecipaes.ca. In addition to including new recipes and producer profiles, the site can also be translated into 106 different languages
- Continued with the weekly digital circulation of The Messenger (OSF's digital newsletter)
- Sought producer feedback in a variety of surveys such as a Sheep Financial Protection Program and a Risk Management Program
- Created an info phone line extension where producers may call the OSF office and hear a recording of industry news and upcoming events
- Continued updates to the new producer and mental health pages on the OSF website
- Provided updates to the new producer page on the OSF website and new producer package
- Continued to support and update online professional development programs offered by OSF **OSN**



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## Reminder of the Federal Humane Animal Transport Regulations

Check out the OSF resources to ensure you meet the regulations.

he requirements for the transport of all animals into, within and out of Canada are found in Part XII of the Health of L Animals Regulations. All those involved in transporting animals either directly or indirectly have the responsibility to assess animals for fitness, then select, prepare and load only animals that are fit for the intended journey. If you are responsible for activities related to the loading, unloading, or transporting of animals, you must be familiar with – and follow – Canada's transport of animal's regulations.

Enforcement actions are proportional to the animal welfare situation and the seriousness of the non-compliance and can include notices (verbal or written) and penalties (monetary or non-monetary). The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, provincial governments, producers, transporters, industry organizations, and many others each have a role to play.

OSF developed a resource page to assist producers and those transporting animals in finding information to ensure compliance with the regulations including common questions and answers on the Humane Transport Regulations for the Sheep Sector as well as providing producers with a sample transport manifest and other resources such as a sample contingency plans and other suggestions for record keeping.

For more information on the regulation producers are encouraged to visit https://www.ontariosheep.org/Transport OSN

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#### Finance your ewes at Ontario Sheep Farmers with Yield More Financing™



#### Yield More Financing Line of Credit

#### **FEATURES**

- A revolving line of credit that can be used for financing ewes through the Ontario Sheep Farmers
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- Monthly statements to help you keep track of your purchases during the year
- Access to a dedicated team of Yield More Financing Specialists who have been recognized for their strong product knowledge and excellent customer service

#### APPLYING

- · Contact or visit Ontario Sheep Farmers
- Contact a Yield More Financing representative at 1-866-603-4188 and complete the application over the phone
- Visit Ontario Sheep Farmers to provide 1
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  (e.g., driver's license, passport, etc.) to
  finalize the application
- You will receive a credit decision from us typically within 2 business days after completing the application

 Credits are at a maximum of \$50,000, and no security is required<sup>2</sup>

#### REPAYMENT

- No payments are required on your line of credit between March 1 and January 31
- Payment is required February 28 and must be 100% of the outstanding balance of your account as of August 31 plus accrued interest

#### ACCESSING YOUR CREDIT LINE

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#### RATES AND FEES

- Interest calculated daily on your outstanding balance is added to your account at the end of each month
- Prime<sup>1</sup> + 2.95% for lines of credit of up to \$200,000, and Prime<sup>1</sup> + 1.95% for lines of credit of more than \$200,000
- If security is required, registration fees will apply

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## Continuing Virtual in 2022 with hopes of being in person in 2023!

### Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) Annual General Meeting Details

Ontario Sheep Farmers is currently working on plans for the 2022 OSF Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The virtual 2022 AGM will be held over the Zoom platform on October 28th, 2022, at 1pm.

This year's AGM will follow a similar format to the previous virtual AGM's.

Watch for updates in The Messenger, Ontario Sheep News, and social media.

We look forward to seeing you in attendance!

For additional information or to register please visit www.ontariosheep.org/OSF2022AGM or contact the OSF Office at 519 836 0043 or email admin@Ontariosheep.org **OSN** 

DRAFT AC	GM AGENDA
12:30 p.m.	Registration
1:00 p.m.	Welcome and Introductions
1:05 p.m.	Convene Ontario Sheep Farmers Annual General Meeting Opening remarks
1:10 p.m.	Keynote Speaker T.B.D
1:40 p.m.	Approve the Agenda Approve minutes from 2021 Virtual AGM
1:50 p.m.	Chair's report
2:20 p.m.	Review of 2021/2022 audited financial statements.  • Approval of 2021/2022 financial statements  • Appointment of auditors for 2023
2:35 p.m.	Presentation of 2022/2023 budget  • Approval of 2022/2023 budget
2:45 p.m.	2021 Resolutions Report 2022 Resolution
3:05 p.m.	OSF Awards & Scholarship Thank you to outgoing provincial directors
3:20 p.m.	Adjournment of annual meeting



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## Master Shepherd's Course (MSC) 2020 Graduates



he 2020 offering of the MSC included several significant changes - first time offered in an on-line format, applications accepted throughout the course, enabling OSF to offer it at a lower cost. The changes also mean enrollees complete the course at different times. Look to future OSN issues for more graduates as they complete their final modules.

Join OSF in congratulating the following Ontario Sheep Farmers who have completed the full 12 modules, submitted a business plan and presented their business plan to the 2020 class. **OSN** 

"The on-line format enabled me to take the course. I would not have been able to attend if it was offered as in-person only."

~ Taylor VanSchaik



Grant Cowan District 6



Julia Durham District 1



Kim Empringham District 7



Chris Houwer District 4



Kim Schneider District 7



Emily McKague District 2



Michael Richards District 4



Taylor Van Schaik District 7

"The online format of the MSC provided me with an invaluable digital resource that I've referenced repeatedly for information since the course ended. I found this to be the most well organized and informative online course I've ever taken. With daily chores and a young family, the online format enabled me to take the MSC where I otherwise would not have had the time away from the farm."

~ Robert Parker

## Master Shepherd's Course 2022 Offering



By the time you receive this edition of OSN, the 2022 offering of the Master Shepherd's Course will have already started. However, full-course applications will continue to be accepted until November 30, 2022.

#### Full Course Consists of

- Eleven on-line modules
  - each online module consists of eight 1.5-hour sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
- One two-day in-person module (Module 4 Business Planning)
- One two-day farm tour (June or September 2023)
- A second optional two-day farm tour (minimum of 25 registrations required).
- Limit of 35 new full-time registrants with Ontario producers given preference.
- For an application package
  - email mastershepherd@ontariosheep.org or
  - call 519-836-0043 extension 322.

- Cost: \$2240
  - with flexible payment plan options include "pay-asyou-go" or 4 installments

#### Single Module Registrations Also Available

- Limit of 10 single module registrants per module.
- Register through THINKIFIC https://learning-ontariosheep. thinkific.com
- Cost: \$245

#### Who should apply?

 existing sheep farmers who want to improve the management, productivity and profitability of their flocks. OSN



## Understanding Feed Analysis Reports

By Anita Heeg, Feed Ingredients and By Products Specialist, OMAFRA

Providing a balanced ration for your sheep, may require you to obtain a laboratory analysis. Often this is done via feed representatives who then look at it. However, it can also be very helpful for you to understand the quality of your feed, especially when managing ewes and lambs at different stages of production. Other times it may be that an alternative feed becomes available, and an analysis will help you understand what it's worth, and whether it fits into your ration. The analysis, as well as ration balancing approaches use the dry matter basis. When feeding a by-product, moisture plays a role in the concentration of nutrients present to either increase or substitute a parameter such as protein or energy. Along with moisture, the transportation costs and load size need to be considered as they can influence the cost.

Looking at an analysis, each report may look different but will generally record the same parameters. Crude protein (CP) is a term calculated based on the nitrogen content of the feedstuff. Without looking at the type of protein it is made up of, CP only tells us that it contains nitrogen. The report generally splits the CP parameter down further into soluble protein, acid detergent fiber-CP (ADF-CP), neutral detergent fiber-CP (NDF-CP), and undegradable intake protein (UIP), also known as by-pass protein. To appreciate the values of each on the analysis report, a basic understanding of these terms is needed.

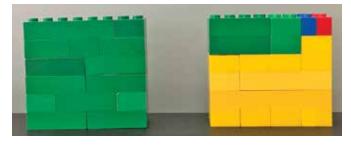


Figure 1. Representation of crude protein versus detailed protein parameters included in crude protein.

Looking at Figure 1, the green wall on the left represents the total crude protein of a forage analysis. It appears to contain all the same proteins. The wall on the right, represents various CP parameters on a report. The yellow bricks show the portion of soluble protein, the green bricks represent the undegradable intake protein (by-pass protein), and the blue and red bricks show the NDF-CP and ADF-CP, respectively.

Soluble protein, the largest portion of crude protein, is also the most readily available which consists of small amino acid chains that will solubilize in rumen fluid and be absorbed across the rumen wall. These amino acids are important for various functions such as basal metabolism, growth, health, and reproduction. By-pass protein is the fraction of protein resistant to degradation by rumen microbes. This fraction has a few names; undegradable intake protein (UIP) and rumen

undegradable protein (RUP). It is valued because it provides amino acids which can be absorbed in the small intestine.

Figure 2 illustrates the portions of a cell wall. Acid detergent fiber (ADF) refers to the cell wall portion of the forage and is made up of lignin and cellulose (the outer layer of the cell wall). The value is important as it relates to the animal's ability to digest the forage; a higher ADF suggests a decrease in digestibility. Neutral detergent fibre (NDF) refers to the cell wall fraction that includes both ADF (outer cell wall and lignin) and hemicellulose (inner cell wall). The NDF value is related to the amount of forage the animal can consume and, as NDF increases, dry matter intake generally decreases. Lignin, located between the outer and inner cell wall, is the indigestible portion of the plant cell. Think of it as a glue stick sitting as a pillar between the inner and outer wall, holding both together. This number will increase with forage maturity and therefore negatively impacts the digestion of the cell wall, acting as a physical barrier to microbial enzymes.

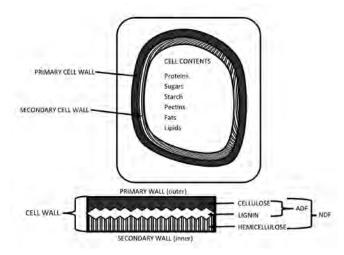


Figure 2. Plant cell wall

Neutral detergent fiber digestibility (NDFD), as the term indicates, allows us to know how digestible the forage is for the rumen bugs. A NDFD24 and NDFD48 indicates how much NDF was digested in 24 and 48 hours, respectively, by rumen bugs in the rumen fluid. This digestibility is affected by the lignin content of the feedstuff.

To illustrate this point, see Figure 3 for a visual representation of how forage cell walls differ with maturity. As the forage matures, the cell wall thickens. When the cell wall thickens, the lignin, ADF and NDF has increased, therefore, making the stem of the plant harder to digest by the rumen bugs.

The relative feed value (RFV) is not used much anymore to evaluate forages, but at times, it is still recorded on the certificate of analysis using ADF and NDF in its calculation.

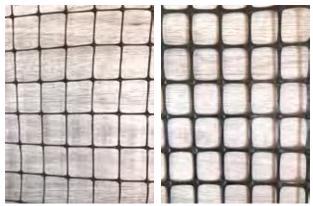


Figure 3. A visual representation to illustrate immature forage (left) and mature forage (right).

Although protein is not considered in the calculation, generally a higher RFV indicates a higher protein. However, when comparing an alfalfa to a grass, the NDF has a much higher impact in the RFV equation. With fresh clippings of spring alfalfa, the NDF will be in the low to mid 20% range, whereas at the same point in time, grass would be in the 40% range. This seems high, but the NDF of a grass doesn't change nearly as much during maturation as that of alfalfa. At harvest, a grass may have an NDF in the low 50% range, which is where an alfalfa will be at harvest. The value of NDF contributes three times as much as ADF in the RFV equation. Therefore, there is a shift towards using relative feed quality (RFQ), which considers the digestibility of forages.

Another parameter that is often looked at when utilizing home grown feeds, or a purchased by-product is energy. An equation is used to calculate energy or a total digestible nutrient (TDN), since it is not a nutrient. The most recent analysis will use the Weiss Equation which includes the lignin, NDF, fat, starch, minerals, and bound protein and estimates the energy values.

Minerals are important to check for as well. These are categorized between macros minerals, such as phosphorous, calcium and potassium, and micro minerals such as selenium, copper, and zinc. The Calcium: Phosphorous ratio is important, as well as excess amounts of some of these minerals which are then excreted.

Overall, feed analysis reports provide a wealth of knowledge that can improve your animals' health, growth, and production, and is worth investing the time in to understand them. Work with your flock nutritionist, and they can help you further in understanding your specific on-farm numbers and how it relates to the overall nutrition of your flock.

For more information refer to the OMAFRA Factsheet titled, Feed Analysis Reports Explained. It can be found at the following link: http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/ livestock/dairy/facts/16-049.htm OSN



## Sheep Body Condition Scoring

By Delma Kennedy, Sheep Specialist, OMAFRA

ody condition scoring is a universal system developed in the 1960s to rank mature animals according to how fat or thin they are on a scale of 1-5. The objective is to be able to estimate and quantify the nutritional wellbeing of breeding sheep.

The same scoring system is used on many different breeds around the world. Although some breeds tend to deposit more fat internally than others, the subjective measure of body condition score as it is currently done is not a fine enough measure to need to adjust the scoring system for different breeds.

#### Importance of Body Condition Scoring

Sheep are managed in groups. This means that nutritional requirements are estimated for the group of sheep according to their weight and stage of production and a ration is formulated from available feedstuffs. However, weight is not a good measure of nutritional wellbeing. Two sheep of the same weight may have different structures with one being thin and one being fat. Figure 1 shows ewe body weight by condition score for a group of mature ewes. They are all the same breed from the same management group, the sheep didn't look dramatically different.

This figure shows a large variation in weight at each body condition score. At an average body condition score of 3, weight varies from about 40kg to just over 80kg. If a ration is formulated for an average weight of 60kg at body condition score 3, some animals may lose weight, and some may gain weight. Body condition scoring must be done to determine how to adjust the nutrition program so that as many animals as possible have the ideal body resources at critical times in the production cycle.

#### When to Body Condition Score

Body condition scoring can be used to monitor whether breeding animals are in the correct body condition score for the stage of production and to quantify the effects of a feeding program.

The most important times to body condition score ewes to improve production are at mid-pregnancy and weaning. At mid-pregnancy, it is critical to ensure that ewes are in good body condition score entering late pregnancy and lambing. At weaning, it is important to determine condition so that an adequate feeding program can be determined to ensure ewes are an optimum body condition score 3 at the time of the next breeding. To evaluate feeding programs, ewes



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should be body condition scored at breeding and lambing. Breeding body condition scores will provide an indication of how successful the feeding program has been since weaning and body condition scores at lambing will indicate if the late gestation ration was adequate.

Rams should be body condition scored 8-12 weeks prior to mating. This allows time to ensure rams are in good body condition score at mating. Spermatogenesis takes 7 weeks. This means that conditions affecting a ram today can affect sperm that is produced for breeding 7 weeks from today. Many rams will lose condition during the mating period and as a result it is recommended that rams be a condition score 3.5 - 4.0 at the start of breeding.

#### Effects of Body Condition Score on Production

Since body condition scoring estimates nutritional wellbeing, the benefits of body condition scoring relate directly to the nutrition program and the effect of nutrition on production.

#### **Breeding Ewes**

Ewes that are thin at breeding will have lower ovulation, conception and lambing rates compared to ewes in good condition. Studies have shown that low and high body condition scores can influence reproductive rates. In general, a score between 3.0 and 3.5 will result in the best pregnancy

rates. Large research studies in Australia and New Zealand have shown that body condition score at breeding also affects birthweight and weaning weight even if the animals are the correct body condition score at lambing.

#### Late Gestation Ewes

Late gestation is the most important time for ewes to be in good condition. Most of the fetal growth happens in the last four to six weeks of pregnancy. Thin ewes will have smaller lambs and less milk. Ewes that are too thin or too fat have a higher risk of pregnancy toxemia at this time in the management cycle.

#### Lambing Ewes

Ewes that have a good body condition score of 3.0 at lambing, generally have heavier lambs that survive better. The ewes look after their lambs better, produce more milk and wean heavier lambs. Score 3 at lambing means that the ewes had adequate feed and body resources to grow lambs in late gestation.

#### Rams

Body condition at the time of breeding will affect the sexual behaviour of rams. Rams that are less than a body condition score 3 during mating could take twice as long and require twice as many mounts to breed one ewe. Body condition score affects the quantity and quality of sperm. Rams under BCS 3 have smaller volumes of semen with less

Continued on page 26.

## Ontario Sheep Farmers at the 2022 Canada Outdoor Farm Show

ntario Sheep Farmers (OSF) was pleased to be part of the 2022 Canada Outdoor Farm Show. During the three-day event the OSF team met with several new sheep producers and handed out lots of producer resources.

OSF promoted Ontario Lamb at the show by serving samples each day between 11am and 1pm which were well received by attendees. Thank you to the Zone 37 Lions for cooking the lamb samples!

Delma Kennedy Sheep Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) facilitated several body condition scoring demos that were well attended.

Thank you to the OSF team, OMAFRA and the volunteers from OSF District 2 for making the event a success. OSN



Tom Lewis OSF with Amy Cronin Chair Farm Products Marketing Commission



Jan Smith OSF and Delma Kennedy **OMAFRA** 



Zone 37 Lions who cooking Ontario Lamb samples on the BBQ



Delma Kennedy OMAFRA doing the body condition scoring sessions

#### Continued from page 25 ~ **SHEEP BODY CONDITION SCORING**

semen motility than when they have a body condition score between 3 and 4.

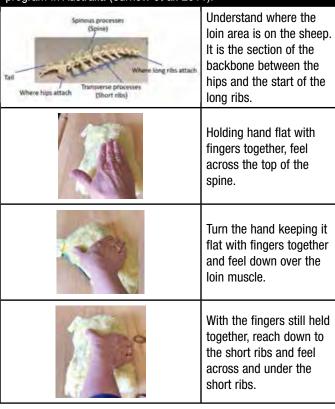
#### Animal Welfare

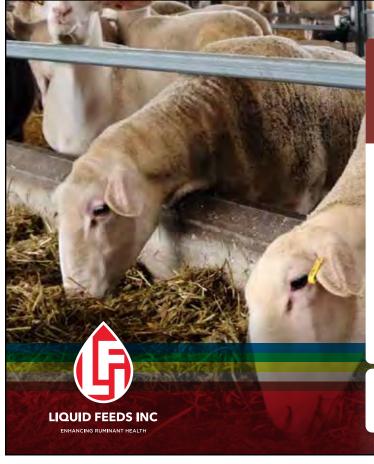
Ewes and rams will change body condition score as they go through the reproductive cycle. Ideally the animals will have a minimum condition score of 2 and a maximum score of 4 for optimum health and production. However, there will be some animals who are difficult to keep in this range due factors such as: illness, receiving a flushing ration and not becoming pregnant, having a large number of lambs and not having the capacity to eat enough feed when pregnant or an individual who is efficient at mobilizing fat to produce milk and does not eat enough to maintain weight.

#### How to Body Condition Score

Body condition scoring is commonly used around the world to determine mature sheep fatness. It is important to note that this is not the best method for evaluating if lambs are ready for market. Market lambs should be evaluated using the GR site 11 cms off the midline over the 12th rib. In mature breeding sheep, the loin area is used to evaluate fat stores. The loin area is identified in figure 2 and can be found on the sheep between the hip bones and the long ribs.

Figure 2. Identifying location of loin and technique to evaluate loin fatness. BCS loin models developed by the Lifetime-wool program in Australia (Curnow et al. 2011).





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- Minimize pregnancy toxemia
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Figure 3. Differences Between Body Condition Scores 1-5. **Body Condition Score 1** 1. Spine is prominent and sharp 2. Short ribs are sharp 3. No fat cover and little to no muscle between spine and short ribs 4. Can put fingers right under the short ribs 1. Spine is smooth but prominent **Body Condition Score 2** 2. Short ribs are smooth and slightly rounded 3. Little fat cover with moderate muscle depth between spine and 4. Can put fingers under the end of the short ribs and between them with minor pressure **Body Condition Score 3** 1. Spine is smooth and rounded. Can't feel between spinal processes. 2. Short ribs are smooth and well rounded 3. Moderate fat cover with full muscle depth between spine and short ribs 4. Requires firm pressure to put fingers under ends of short ribs, can't feel between the short ribs **Body Condition Score 4** 1. Spine can only be felt with pressure 2. Short ribs cannot be felt without strong pressure 3. High level of fat cover with full muscle depth between spine and short ribs 4. Can only put fingers under short ribs with really strong pressure 1. Spine cannot be detected even with firm pressure. There will be a **Body Condition Score 5** depression directly above the spine between enlarged fat and muscle covering 2. Short ribs cannot be detected 3. High level of fat cover with full muscle depth between the spine and short ribs 4. Cannot find short ribs or put fingers underneath them. Adapted from Jefferies (1961); Russel et at. (1969), Russel (1984a,b), Kenyon (2014).

To compare animals, it is important to standardize how to feel the loin area. Using body condition score loin models developed in Australia, Figure 2 shows a standard method of using your hand to evaluate the loin area.

This hands-on method must be used to identify different scores. Extremely thin sheep may be obvious to the eye but unless freshly shorn, sheep can not be properly scored visually. To differentiate between different body condition scores, first commit the description of a body condition score three to memory. Although there are 5 scores that are well described, most of the time, the objective is to decide if the animal requires more feed or if the animal has had too much feed. Figure 3 shows a loin cross section of each body condition score along with a picture of a ewe in that score and a description of how the loin area will feel for each score.

Body condition scoring is a skill that must be practiced. Sheep come in all different levels of fatness, not just the 5 scores that are described. As a result, in a group of 30 ewes that range in body condition score from 2.5 - 3.5, there will be 30 slightly different feeling loins. Practice will develop knowledge that a score 2 animal that needs more feed will have a prominent spine, some muscling and cover and short ribs that you can feel between and press your fingers under.

#### Conclusions

Body condition scoring throughout the management cycle is a simple tool that will ensure the wellbeing of breeding sheep and that feed resources are used efficiently. It is a subjective skill that must be practiced as actual sheep fatness is a continuous scale and the scores are merely points along the scale. Developing the skill to determine a 3 score, identifying whether a sheep may require more or less feed, and using this to group sheep differently for feeding will increase the productivity and health of the sheep flock. **OSN** 

#### **Selected Resources:**

V. P. Maurya et al. 2010. Effect of induced body condition score differences on sexual behavior, scrotal measurements, semen attributes and endocrine responses in Malpura rams under hot semi-arid environment. Journal of Animal Physiology and Animal Nutrition Vol p309-317.

Ewe Body condition scoring handbook, Beef + Lamb New Zealand

http://www.beeflambnz.com/Documents/Farm/Ewe%20body%20condition%20 scoring%20handbook.pdf

PR Kenyon et al. 2014. Review of sheep body condition score in relation to production characteristics. New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research, Vol 57, No.1, p38-64.

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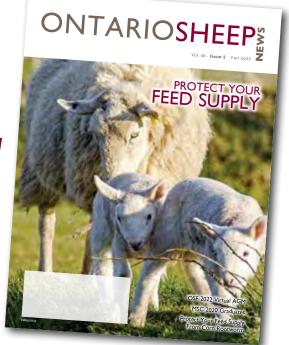
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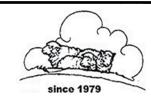
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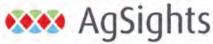
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