

ONTARIO

Vol. 44 - Issue 1 Spring 2026

SHEEP NEWS



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Publications Mail Registration Number:
40033529 ISSN 0844-5303

SPRING 2006
Date of Issue: April 2026

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DESIGN & LAYOUT:
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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

By Art Alblas, Chair, Ontario Sheep Farmers

First Steps Toward Achieving Our Goal

After a lengthy winter, I hope that by the time you receive this magazine, spring is beginning to show itself and you've experienced a meaningful and rewarding Easter season.

Over the winter, our organization has been leading the efforts to turn the board's vision of fulfilling 50% of market demand for lamb by 2040, into a more tangible roadmap to follow on the journey to growing our production.

You might have noticed at your district meetings or in communications from our office that our long-term objective has been divided into specific metrics to help direct our organization's investments.

These efforts encompass priorities such as enhancing animal health, genetics, and lamb survival rates, improving carcass quality, and supporting members who wish to expand their flocks. Thank you to everyone who has attended a district meeting and provided feedback on our metrics and shared ideas for ways we can support our membership. We will continue to summarize and share what we learn with all of you. OSF Member engagement is critical to the success of our organization.

At OSF Policy Day, delegates identified a top priority: creating an Ewe Financing program similar to the Beef Farmers' breeder and feeder finance co-ops. Our OSF Industry Growth Committee has been designing a program, while staff has met with potential financial partners and spoken with government about the need for a loan guarantee.

On the national front, I sit on the board of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) on behalf of Ontario, Quebec and Alberta sheep farmers through our membership in the National Sheep Network. Over the last two years, in partnership with our livestock colleagues on the board, we

have championed advocacy to resolve the veterinary tools shortage. CFA is now actively lobbying for Canadian livestock farmers to access the same pharmaceutical products as our trusted trading partners in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Europe.

The CFA has also taken the lead on behalf of Canada's agricultural sector objecting to a recent announcement by Agriculture Canada that they are closing seven agricultural research stations across Canada, including the only facility in the country doing meat science, grading research and food safety work, located in Lacombe, Alberta. From CFA's Op-Ed in the Western Producer, "It strikes at the heart of our capacity to innovate and compete, undermining the resilience of the agriculture sector, which the government has identified as a strategic industry essential to Canada's economic growth and prosperity. This is particularly puzzling given Prime Minister Mark Carney's pledge to improve Canada's food affordability, domestic production, and long-term food security.



Federal Agriculture Minister, Heath McDonald and Art Alblas.

The goal of this advocacy work by CFA is to change the policy environment in Canada to allow sheep farmers and other livestock producers to access the tools and the research knowledge needed to continuously improve our farms.

I have also been meeting with my colleagues representing other sheep provincial organizations in Canada regularly this winter. We see many opportunities for national collaboration in the sheep sector. OSF is circulating a member survey, and I encourage you to complete the section on national unity at the end of the survey. It is important to us that any commitments our board makes to working with other groups at a national level are made with the endorsement of our members in Ontario.

This new goal will continue to focus the work of our organization on delivering the programs, educational resources, research projects, advocacy priorities and industry partnerships that will grow our sheep industry. We look forward to working closely with our members throughout this journey, Leading with Vision. OSN

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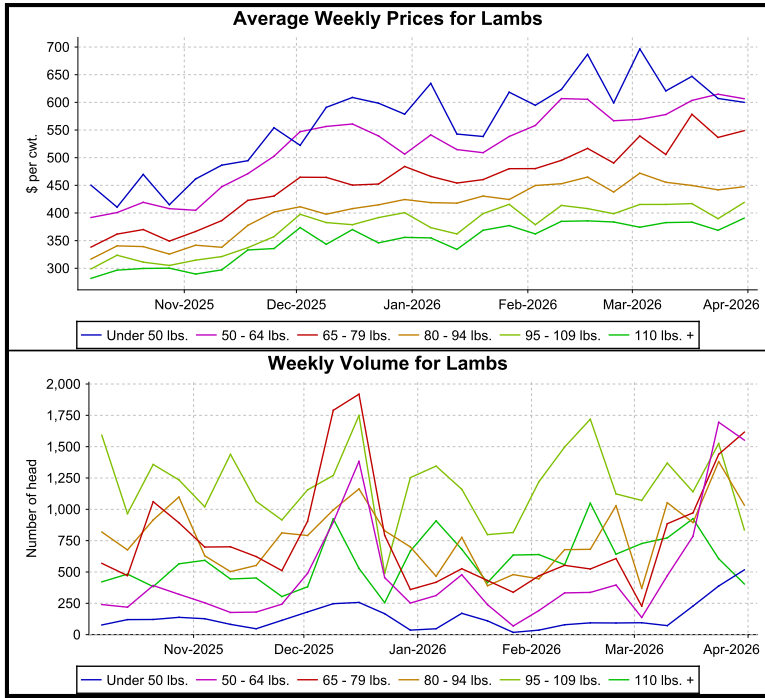
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Editorial policy: Ontario Sheep Farmers welcomes and encourages letters to the editor and article suggestions from farmers and industry partners as a means of communicating with the Ontario Sheep Farmers board of directors and other farmers on issues 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.

THE ONTARIO MARKET REPORT

Full market information can be found every week in the Ontario Farmer and online at www.OntarioSheep.org under "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.

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2026 OSF Awards & Scholarship



Emerging Leader Award

The Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) Emerging Leader Award celebrates and recognizes distinguished younger members of Ontario Sheep Farmers who are socially responsible leaders and innovators, currently making notable contributions to the Ontario sheep industry with significant impact.

NOMINEES MUST:

- The nominee must be in his/her first 10 years of sheep farming
- The nominee must be a member of OSF in good standing.
- The nominee must not have previously received an OSF Emerging Leader Award.
- The nominee must have achieved significant accomplishments within the categories as outlined in the application form
- The nominee must have shown outstanding promise for continuing service and leadership. Specific examples of his/her continuing activities must be provided.

NOMINATORS MUST:

- Have known the nominee professionally for a minimum of two years. Nominators are not required to be a member of OSF.
- Demonstrate, with examples, how the nominee has met the criteria.
- Not be employed by OSF, nor a relative of the nominee. *A producer can nominate themselves if they meet the nominee criteria listed Selection Process
- Nominations will be reviewed by the OSF Awards Committee
- Each nominee shall be considered individually and confidentially and will be judged according to the criteria listed above and the information provided in the application form.
- The award may be presented annually, but there is no requirement that the award be given each year.

Award Presentation

- Each recipient of the Ontario Sheep Farmers Emerging Leader Award receives a congratulatory package, including a certificate that recognizes their accomplishments and \$1,500 which can be used towards a leadership training program such as AALP.
- The award shall be presented during the OSF Annual Meeting, and it will be given in name of the Ontario Sheep Farmers.

Outstanding Shepherd Award

Awarded to an Ontario shepherd who has made significant contributions to the advancement of the Ontario sheep industry. This award is presented to an Ontario shepherd who exemplifies the values of leadership and responsible sheep husbandry.

Long Service Award

Awarded in acknowledgment and appreciation of long-standing contributions to the Ontario sheep industry, recipients of this award have demonstrated outstanding dedication, leadership, and an innovative spirit. This award is presented to an Ontario shepherd or industry service provider in recognition of their significant contributions to the advancement of the Ontario sheep industry over many years of service.

DLF Pasture Award

This award, sponsored in part by OSF, DLF and the Ontario Forage Council, recognizes individual sheep farmers who are doing an outstanding job of pasture management. The DLF Pasture Award is a way of encouraging sheep farmers to implement pasture management strategies to maximize production per acre. The winner of the award receives a cash prize of \$250.

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Ontario Sheep Farmers Memorial Fund

Industry Leader Award - Funds for this award have come from donations made in memoriam of Ontario sheep industry leaders. This fund was started with donations that have been made in memory of the late Bob Irvine, an Ontario sheep farmer who was a strong supporter of continuous learning. He was a dedicated member of the industry, with a focus on sheep genetics and was a mentor to many. This \$500 cash award is open to applicants who are wanting to further their leadership development in Ontario's sheep industry. This award can be used by the successful applicant to participate in postgraduate or industry education opportunities and leadership courses. Individual registered Ontario sheep farmers or those who are involved in the Ontario sheep industry (i.e. veterinarian students) are eligible to apply for this award.

Applicants must complete the application form, submit two reference letters along with either an essay (of at least 500 words) or a two to three-minute video answering the following question: What do you see as your contribution to the Ontario sheep industry in the next five years? 10 years?

Ontario Sheep Farmers Undergrad Scholarship

This \$500 cash scholarship is open to applicants who are enrolled in their first or second year at an accredited university, college or apprenticeship program (shearing schools and

programs qualify). Applicants do not have to be enrolled in an agriculture program to be eligible for the award.

Applicants must be one of the following:


- A registered sheep producer as of April 30, 2025;
- Have a parent/guardian registered as a sheep producer as of April 30, 2025; or
- A member of a 4-H Ontario sheep club.

In addition to completing the application form, applicants must submit either a written article (minimum 500 words) or a two to three-minute video on one of the following topics:


- What strategy or strategies do you think the sheep industry should employ to address public trust?
- If you were going to produce sheep, what management style - annual lambing, accelerated lambing or a combination of the two - would you choose and why?
- Give a detailed description of the biosecurity setup and explain why this is important to the individual sheep farmer and the industry.
- What do you feel is the sheep industry's greatest weakness, and therefore greatest challenge? How would you address that if you could?


Application Form

<https://www.ontariosheep.org/communications/awards-scholarships/> **OSN**



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Role of Nutrition in Improving Lamb Survival

Anita O'Brien, On-Farm Programs Lead, OSF

Lamb survival is one of the drivers of profitability on sheep farms. And as such, is one of the areas OSF's Industry Growth Initiative is focused on.

Lamb mortality on Ontario sheep farms was reported at 14.1% (to 100 days of age) in flocks participating in the Sheep Flock Improvement Program from 2007 through 2009. More recent data from the GenOvis program indicates 5-year average lamb mortality on participating Ontario farms to be 13.1% (to 50 days of age) and an additional 5.8% (50 to 100 days of age).

Understanding when lamb mortalities occur and the primary factors involved enables sheep farmers to identify corrective actions they can make to improve lamb survival.

Most lamb losses occur at birth and the few days following, so we tend to focus our efforts to keeping lambs alive on managing what happens at lambing time. And rightly so. It is also important to understand how management of the ewe flock throughout the entire production cycle plays a significant role in lamb survival. This article focuses primarily on the impacts nutrition of the ewe flock has on lamb survival.

Nutritional management of the ewe flock impacts lamb survival through its role in breeding success, number of lambs born, lamb birth weight, colostrum production, and milk production and thus lamb growth.

Breeding Success

In accelerated lambing flocks, there is a very short window of time (30 to 45 days) to dry ewes off and get them back in to breeding condition. Ewes with a low body condition score (BCS) at weaning time are less likely to conceive on their next breeding compared to ewes with BCS of 3 to 3.5. To regain one condition score (15 to 20 pounds of body weight) between weaning and breeding requires that they gain 0.36 to 0.48 pounds per day. If this is not achievable with your feeding program, one option is to delay breeding of thinner ewes until they achieve BCS 2.5 or greater. Alternatively, lactation rations that provide sufficient nutrients to minimize weight loss ensure ewes are close to target breeding BCS at weaning time.

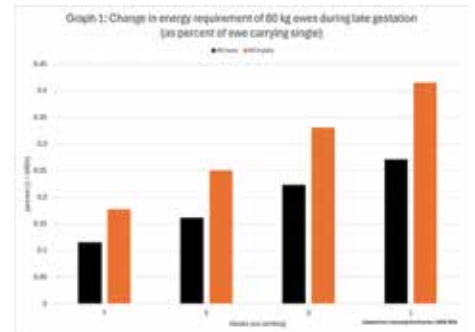
Ewes in annual lambing flocks, on the other hand only need to gain 0.15 to 0.20 pounds per day as they have 12 to 16 weeks to regain the body condition lost during late pregnancy and lactation. Ewes that do not regain

Number of Lambs Born

Number of Lambs Born is influenced by breed type (prolific breeds and their crosses having more lambs), age of ewe (first and second time lambers have smaller litters compared to mature ewes of the same breed or breed cross), season of breeding (lower from out-of-season breeding events), ovulation rate, and body condition score at breeding. Nutritional

requirements in late pregnancy increases greatly as number of fetuses increases— ewes carrying triplets have a 30 to 45% higher energy requirement in the last three weeks of pregnancy compared to ewes carrying single lambs.

Over the same period, protein requirements increase 20 to 30% in triplet bearing ewes. Lamb survival also decreases with increasing number of lambs born as shown in Graph 3. Using 2024 GenOvis performance



summaries, Ontario flocks with prolific breeds and their crosses can expect over fifty percent of their ewes to have triplets or higher. Dedicated care and lambing facilities conducive to lamb survival are critical to preventing high lamb losses in prolific flocks.

Lamb Birth Weight

Lamb Birth Weight is a predictor of lamb survival with light birth weights associated with death due to hypothermia /starvation complex and heavy birth weights associated with death due to dystocia. Multiple factors affect lamb birth weight including genetics, season of birth, litter size, ewe age/parity, lamb sex, ewe size and ewe nutrition.

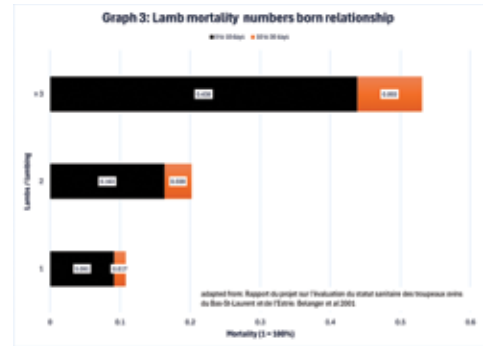
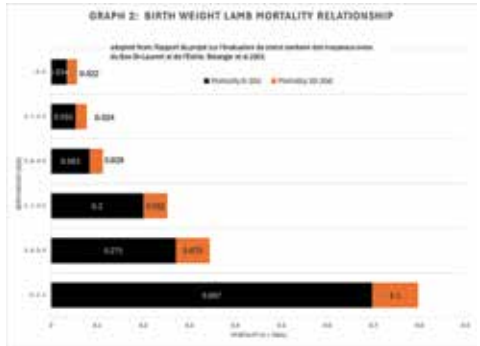
Undernutrition of the ewes during or extending into late pregnancy, where 70 percent of fetal growth occurs, results in a significant (22 percent) decrease in lamb birth weight. This same study, which reviewed and analyzed data from 76 feeding trials, found that overnutrition in pregnancy in indoor feeding experiments resulted in a small and significant increase in lamb birth weight, while outdoor feeding experiments resulted in a nonsignificant lamb birth weight change. It is important to recognize that it is not just the current feeding program that impacts lamb birth weight. A Michigan study found that ewe nutrition during the previous lactation period may affect fetal growth later in the next pregnancy. Their results showed birthweights of lambs from mothers fed the low diet (70% of NRC) during the previous lactation period were 4% lighter than those from mothers fed control (100% of NRC) or high (150% of NRC) diets in the previous lactation, independent of sex or litter size.

A study that assessed health status of sheep flocks in the Lower St. Lawrence and Eastern Townships of Quebec showed lambs with birth weights lower than 2.6 kgs had very poor survival rates compared to lambs that were 2.6 kg and heavier. This

study also showed that lambs born as triplets or greater were 5x and 2.5x more likely to die in the first 30 days of life compared to lambs born as singles and twins respectively.

Metabolic Disease in Pregnant and Lambing Ewes

Some lamb mortalities result from ewes succumbing to pregnancy toxemia and / or ketosis in the lead-up to lambing. In a recent study of 25 prolific flocks in Quebec, the metabolic status of ewes in late gestation carrying more than one lamb was assessed (n = 1012). Ewes with toxemia or at high risk of toxemia were identified in 60% of the flocks studied. Furthermore, 10% of ewes suffered from severe energy deficiency; and this proportion rose to 20% for ewes carrying four or more lambs. The results of the survey confirm that under Quebec's commercial conditions, prolific ewes undergo significant metabolic stress that predisposes them to developing toxemia at the end of gestation.



takes place during the last month of pregnancy. Undernutrition and overnutrition from mid to late pregnancy in ewe lambs have been shown to alter colostrum quality and quantity.

Lamb Growth


Lamb Growth to weaning is highly dependant on the milk production of their dam. Ewes reach peak milk yield at 3 to 4 weeks post-lambing. Feeding ewes well at least to this point maximises the amount of milk they can produce and the growth rates of their lambs.

Colostrum Production

Colostrum Production and intake are critically important for newborn lamb survival. There is a clear relationship between the ewe's energy intake over the last three weeks of pregnancy and colostrum production. Most mammary gland development

Summary

Nutritional management of the ewe flock plays a vital role in lamb survival. Feeding programs built on analysis of your forages and using body condition scoring at weaning, pre-breeding and pregnancy scanning to monitor how the flock responds will help to improve lamb survival. **OSN**



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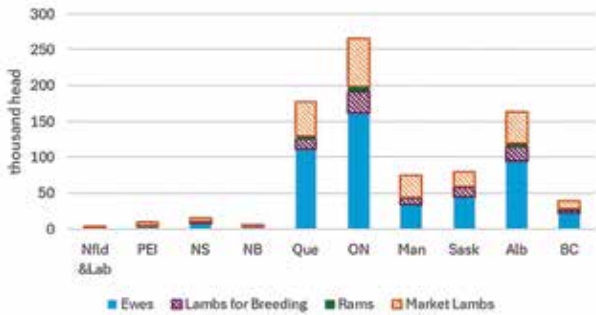
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Select Sheep Industry Stats 2025

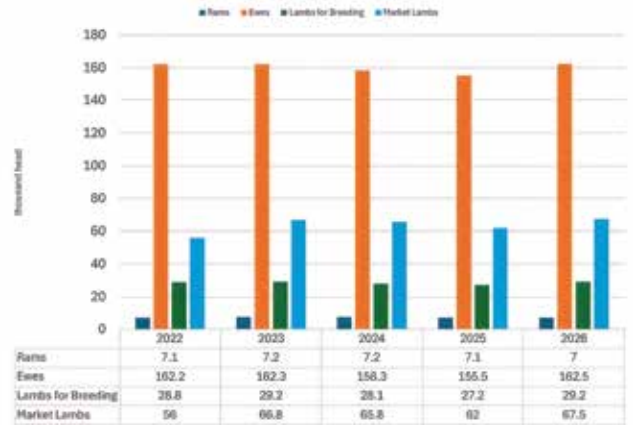
Anita O'Brien, On-Farm Programs Lead, OSF

Provincial Flocks, Jan 1 2026, by animal class



- Total Canadian flock increased 3% to 833 thousand head
- Canadian ewe flock increased 2.4 % to 489.5 thousand ewes
- Lambs for breeding increased 1.9% to 90.3 thousand head
- Market lamb inventory was 5.1% higher to 229.6 thousand head
- Ontario is home to 43 % of the national breeding flock (ewes, rams, lambs for breeding)

Ontario Sheep Flock, January 1 inventory 2022 through 2026



Compared to Jan 1, 2025, Ontario's flock

- +4.5% in ewes to 162,500
- +7.4% in replacements to 29,200 head
- +8.9% in market lambs to 191,700 head
- Quebec & Saskatchewan also showed flock increases, while Alberta's flock declined

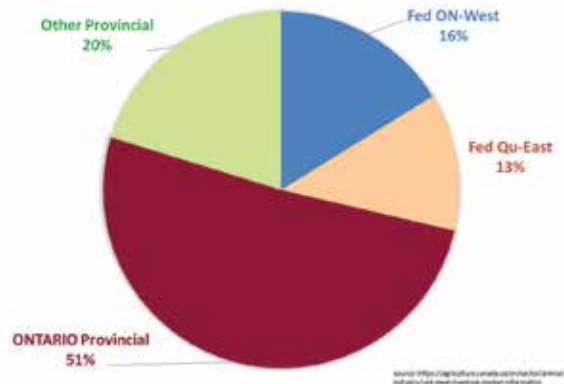
Canadian Sheep & Lamb Slaughter, inspected, federal, provincial



2025 total Canadian slaughter

- 561,104 head was -5.7% lower than 2024,
- Federal slaughter accounts for 29% of all Canadian sheep & lamb slaughter - majority in Quebec & Alberta

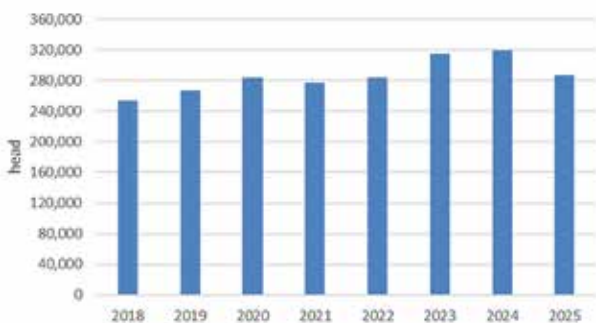
INSPECTED SLAUGHTER 2025



Ontario slaughter accounts for more than 50% of the national total.

- provincial slaughter accounts for 72% nationally and more than +90% in Ontario
- Many lambs from western and eastern provinces are shipped live to Ontario for slaughter

Provincially Inspected Slaughter Ontario, annual



For 2025, total provincial inspection slaughter in Ontario was 286,644 head (236,178 lambs and 50,466 sheep)

- Sheep represent approximately 17.6% compared to 21% in 2019 & 2022
- Lower partially due to replacements held back, but also a major plant going federal in Nov 2025

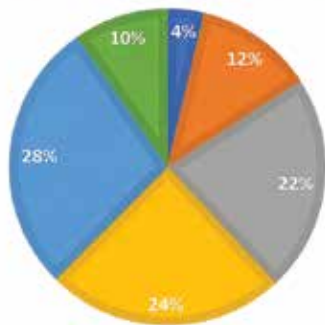
Volume			
	YTD 2025	YTD 2024	% change
	224,757	235,328	-4.5%
<50	8,380	9,742	-14.0%
50-64	27,196	31,406	-13.4%
65-79	50,021	53,938	-7.3%
80-94	54,672	64,596	-15.4%
95-109	62,763	60,080	4.5%
+110	21,717	14,117	53.8%
Sheep	53,393	61,651	-13.4%

Live Auction volumes for 2025

- 13 auction marts reporting lamb & sheep sales
- Higher numbers in the heavier categories

LIVE AUCTION VOLUME YTD 2025 224,757.0

■ <50 ■ 50-64 ■ 65-79 ■ 80-94 ■ 95-109 ■ >110



Of live auction lamb volumes:

- 95 lbs & heavier account for 38%
- 80 to 94 lbs account for 24.3%
- 65 to 79 lb account for 22.3%
- Less than 65 lb account for 15.8%

Annual Imports, Lamb & Mutton, Canada

source: AAC, Red Meat Import Report 06P (monthly)

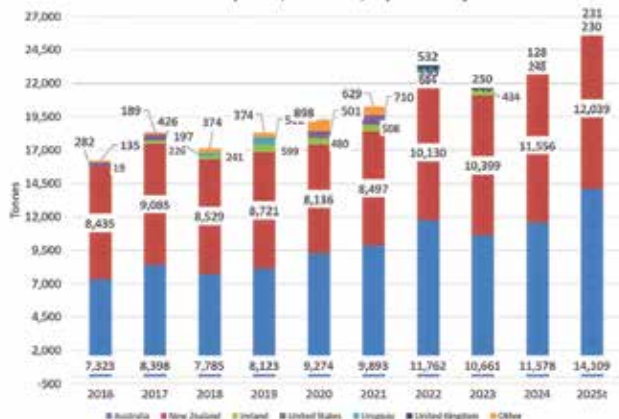


Imports have steadily increased since 2018.

2025 imports were 12.8% higher than 2024 and 21.3% higher than 2 years ago

- 27,568,912 kg lamb
- 4,978,497 kg mutton
- Lamb accounts for 85% of total imports

Lamb Imports, Canada, by country



- Australia and New Zealand supplied 94.8% of lamb and mutton imports into Canada in 2025
- Australia surpassed New Zealand in lamb and mutton supplied to Canada in 2020 becoming our top lamb supplier
- 68.8% of lamb and mutton imported into Canada ended up in Ontario.

Additional info:

- 7,875.9 tonnes of lamb and mutton was produced / processed in Ontario in 2025. This represents 24.2% of lamb consumed in Canada.
- Ontario is the 3rd largest lamb market for processing in North America, behind Colorado and California

SAVE THE DATE!

AGM, Convention & Lamb Banquet 2026

Thursday, October 29 & Friday, October 30

Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre, 700 Hespeler Rd

More details to come...



OSF Happenings

Carcass Grading Workshop

Ontario Sheep Farmers held a Lamb Grading Workshop January 29 at the University of Guelph with 7 participants to learn grading standards for lamb. Bill McCutcheon taught the course and started with an explanation of how to grade carcasses with pictures and descriptions of the grading chart. Participants then had the opportunity to assess 5 lambs in the cooler that varied in GR score (level of back fat) and grade. Each participant was given a grading knife as part of the workshop and had the opportunity to get the GR measurement for themselves in the cooler.

During lunch, the staff at the university cut the lamb and later in the afternoon participants were able to evaluate the fat cut off two of the carcasses; one with a high GR score and one with a lower score. The various cuts were also evaluated for other attributes like loin size and overall product quality.

Grey-Bruce Farmers' Week

The winter weather let up for the sheep day of Grey-Bruce Farmers' Week this

year on Saturday, January 10. There was a great turnout to the meeting and the organizing committee put forward a very knowledgeable line up of speakers again this year.

This was the 60th anniversary of the event and a highlight of the meeting was the opportunity to honour GBFW coordinator, Lori Smith. Lori has done an incredible job organizing the Farmers' Week for 20 years and will be missed when she retires this year.

The speaker line-up this year included a keynote presentation by Justin Woodward, partner in the solar company Good Energy Partners. Justin shared the benefits of grazing under solar panels and solar companies working with farmers to retain soil properties and keep the land in farming, while offering a service to manage grass for the solar operators. Solar farms are grazed by sheep in Ontario but cattle under panels is an opportunity growing in the US. Good Energy is optimistic there will be thousands of acres of solar projects in Ontario over the next 5 years and encourages farmers wanting to offer grazing services to connect with them.

The next keynote speaker was Steven Rosvold, owner of the Floating S Ranch and FSR Border Collies in Ethelbert, Manitoba. Steven spoke to the crowd about selecting and training herding dogs for use on a livestock farm. He owns the business FSR Stock Dogs and trains dogs for his own use and other farmers. Steven walked the audience through the steps to train a working dog and attributes in a puppy that signal they will work well. He also touched on some common issues and the ways to address them. The big takeaway is to choose a bold dog, then work with your dog's instincts. Start slow and let the dog grow its confidence as it gains experience. Steven starts and sells dogs from puppies to finished dogs and offers custom training for any producers looking for a canine employee.

Courtney Vriens made a presentation on different feeding systems and key variables that make each farm unique. There were two breakout sessions; a presentation on gastrointestinal nematodes by Dr. Brad DeWolf from the University of Guelph and a fleece to fabric presentation by Jeanette Lourens. An interesting takeaway from the wool presentation was Rideau wool is great to work and grows quickly – they are prolific in more than just lambs!

The panel on grass and pasture management was facilitated by Jason Emke from Elmwood and included producers Ben Bartley from Clifford, Jay Lennox from Ayton and Stephen Frankland from Dundalk. It was great to learn each producers' approach to grazing sheep.

Overall, it was a great day. Thank you to the sponsors and exhibitors who support our sheep industry and for everyone who volunteers their time to organize this great event. **OSN**



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Shearing Competition

In August 2025, the Eastern Canadian Sheep Shearing Championship was held at the Teeswater Fall Fair for the first time. This merging of skilled shearers and quality Ontario lambswool brought about something inspirational, unexpected and entrepreneurial—a collaboration that transformed raw fleece into a story worth wearing.

With about 4,000 pounds of soft, lamb’s wool laying on the ground after the event, Jasmin Sloan looked at the wool and had an idea.

She proposed using the wool to create woolen items, which is when Jeanette Lourens of Red Maple Homestead enthusiastically stepped up. Jeanette, who having recently spoke at Grey Bruce Farmers Week, has a simple but important message: wool’s value begins on the farm. By focusing on adding value locally, she supports both producers and the localized economy.



Jeanette brought the raw fleeces to a nearby scouring plant, where they were then processed into about 2,000 pounds of clean wool. This wool has now been re-imagined at Red Maple Homestead, and turned into hats, scarves, vests, felted insoles, and knitted blankets. This effort highlights the potential of Ontario wool and demonstrates how collaboration between producers, event organizers, and processors can create value locally within our existing industry.

Now available for purchase on the Red Maple Homestead website, any remaining items from this project still available at the time of the 2026 shearing competition will be retailed at the event.

But that’s not all! All retail proceeds, minus processing costs; are going back into supporting the shearing competition. This reinvestment helps ensure the competition’s viable longevity, encouraging continued interest in Ontario’s wool industry.

Celebrating the skill of Ontario’s farmers, shearers, and artisans this initiative showcases the power of community collaboration, in building a thriving local industry

For more information or to purchase these wool products, please visit <https://redmaplehomestead.square.site/>. OSN

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Moroccan Lamb Stew

Total Time: 45 min
Prep Time: 15 min
Level: Moderate
Yield: 4 Servings



Ingredients

- 3 ½ lbs lamb shoulder, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp allspice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 2 cups onions, chopped
- cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 ½ tbsp fresh ginger, minced
- 1 1/3 cups water
- 2 large blood oranges
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tbsp honey

Cooking Instructions

- Mix salt, pepper, cinnamon, and allspice in a medium bowl
- Add lamb and toss to coat
- Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat
- Add lamb to pot and sauté until brown on all sides
- Add onion, garlic, and ginger to pot and sauté 5 minutes
- Add water, bring to a boil and reduce heat
- Cover and simmer until lamb is tender
- Add blood oranges and honey
- Season with salt and pepper
- Garnish with parsley

For more recipe ideas visit www.lambrecipes.ca



District Updates

News About What's Going on in the Sheep Districts

District 1

District 1 held a December social at Natterjack's Brewing, including a brewery tour. In March, they hosted a well-attended online session on the Risk Management Program (RMP) with guests from both OMAFA and Agricorp. The event wrapped up by detailing a marketing opportunity with Parkhill Meats, which has launched a new federally inspected facility in the area. District 1 is planning an upcoming online event for their discussion on the 50% by 2040 initiative.

District 2

District 2 hosted a brewery tour social in December at Neustadt Springs, one of Ontario's most historic breweries. They were also key contributors to Grey Bruce Farmers Week Sheep Day in January, a full-day event featuring speakers on multiple sheep-related topics and a producer panel. Their annual Lamb Banquet in March is nearly sold out, and they will hold their upcoming "50% by 2040" meeting as a hybrid event in early April in Elmwood.

District 3

District 3 has been proudly representing Ontario's snowbelt, with winter weather interfering with planned events. Their in-person and hybrid "50% by 2040" meeting in April, should offer a good opportunity for producers to connect and discuss the future of the industry without having to hurry home to clear snow!

District 4

District 4 has no major events to report over the past few months.

District 5

District 5 has not held formal recent events, members were very active in the fall attending local fairs and agricultural career events to represent the sheep and wool industry, providing inspiration especially to area youth.

District 6

District 6 hosted a Grey Bruce Farmers Week watch party, featuring a hot lamb lunch and good attendance.

In February they held the first district level "50% by 2040" meeting, paired with a barn tour. This drew an impressive turnout of 50 people, with about 15 staying for the business portion. A hot chili lunch was served. The district is developing ideas for upcoming spring events. Congratulations to this district for significantly increasing member engagement over the past year!

District 7

The group had a good turnout for its December social and barn tour at the Found family's barn, which included a wool skirting demonstration, networking opportunities, and a gift basket filled with goodies and an OSF mug. Currently they are busy planning for their "50 x 40" meeting.



District 8

In January, district 8 hosted UNDO Carbon to learn about wollastonite, an alternative to lime for use on fields. The distributors are working on carbon credit collaborations with area producers. Despite the snowy weather there was good discussion, including thoughts from one producer who is already using it. The group braved the snowy evening, sparking good discussion about possible applications.

February featured a tour of Hoard's Station Auction barn. The turnout was strong, even for a cold day. Ab Carroll led the tour with Auctioneer Brandon Taylor in attendance to help with sheep related questions. They discussed the auction's new ownership, and shared plans to double their intake of sheep and goats. Currently district 8 is looking into a collaboration with a neighboring district for an event in May.

District 9

District 9 has been putting in a lot of effort to organize a May tour of local farms. An exciting spring event announcement will be coming soon!

District 10

District 10 is aiming to build on conversations with producers at the Ottawa Valley Farm Show to launch their "50% by 2040" initiative. They coordinated volunteers from both Districts 9 and 10 to support OSF staff at the event. In February, they continued their 'Baarnside' Chat series with a tour of Heidi Bailey's barn. An upcoming "Spring Dinner" in Alexandria will feature a chef preparing lamb dishes, including tastings and preparation demonstrations, helping direct-market producers enhance both their marketing and production skills. They are planning a Pasture Walk in May with OMAFA representative Christine O'Reilly, which will also serve as an OFCAF KSE.

District 11

District 11 has been meeting online to organize district-wide fecal egg counting courses at multiple locations, with plans to run them this summer. This initiative will give widely located members greater access to this useful training. Northern producers are also looking forward to the upcoming annual Earleton Farm Show, Northern Ontario's flagship farmshow event. **OSN**

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www.ontariosheep.org/wool-map

Fight the Freeze: Understanding Lamb Hypothermia

Dr. Lisa Sharko, Lead Veterinarian Animal Health and Welfare, OMAFA

Few sights are more disheartening for a producer than a cold, weak lamb struggling to stand. Hypothermia is one of the leading causes of early lamb loss. Luckily, it is also one of the most preventable. Understanding why lambs are vulnerable—and acting quickly—can make the difference between losing a lamb and watching it thrive.

Hypothermia occurs when a lamb's body temperature drops below the normal range of 39–40°C. Lambs rely heavily on stored energy and external warmth to maintain that temperature, especially in the first hours of life. Lambs also depend on the ewe for warmth, nutrition, and protection from the elements. When exposed to cold, wet, or windy conditions, or when they miss early feedings, their small bodies simply cannot produce enough heat to keep up with heat lost to the environment. Because the decline into hypothermia can happen quickly, early recognition and intervention is critical.

The severity of hypothermia is divided into mild to moderate or severe. Mild to moderate hypothermia is characterised by a body temperature of 37–39°C and lambs may look dull, shiver, or fail to nurse. Shivering is an involuntary self-defence mechanism the lamb uses to generate body heat, but it quickly burns energy reserves. Severe hypothermia occurs below 37°C; lambs become weak, unable to stand, and they are unable to shiver due to depleted energy reserves.

It is important to know and be vigilant for the early signs of hypothermia, which include:

- Shivering or a cold mouth
- Dull or lethargic
- Standing with their back arched and their belly tucked up
- Failure to stand or nurse
- Seeking shelter

If you suspect a lamb is not warm enough, start by checking its rectal temperature to determine the severity of hypothermia. See page 15 for a detailed description of how to properly assess a lamb's body temperature and the appropriate response based on the severity of hypothermia and the lambs' condition.

Why Lambs Are So Susceptible to Cold and Wet Conditions

Newborn lambs face several physical challenges that make them particularly prone to cold stress. The combination of these physical factors means lambs can become hypothermic very quickly under the wrong conditions, especially in cold, wet, or windy weather or when the ewe is slow to mother-up.

Lambs are born with only a small amount of brown fat which is the energy they burn rapidly to stay warm. If they don't nurse quickly after birth, they'll run out of fuel within a few hours, becoming hypoglycemic - a deficiency in usable energy, specifically glucose. Once that happens, they can no longer shiver effectively, and their body temperature plummets. Hypothermia and hypoglycemia often go hand in hand in newborn lambs, creating a vicious cycle that can rapidly lead to collapse and death if not addressed promptly.

Lambs also lose heat quickly because they have a high surface area to body mass ratio. This means heat escapes faster than their immature systems can replace it. Lambs with smaller birthweights are at an increased risk for hypothermia because their surface area to body mass ratio becomes an even larger issue and extra caution is needed to prevent hypothermia. Lambs are born with a thin hair coat that offers only minimal insulation. If the thin fleece becomes wet from birth fluids, rain, or wet bedding, heat loss accelerates dramatically putting them quickly at risk of hypothermia.

The Critical Role of Colostrum

The two key pillars of lamb survivability are warmth and colostrum. Colostrum provides energy-rich nutrients, including protein and fat, that support heat production, shivering and early growth. Colostrum delivers antibodies that strengthen the lamb's defenses against disease during early life, when it is most vulnerable. A lamb needs 50 mL/kg



Photo credit: Dr. Lisa Sharko

of good-quality colostrum within the first hour and an additional 200 mL/kg within the first 24 hours. Delays in nursing drastically increase the risk of hypothermia, hypoglycemia, and infection. Even if you successfully warm a lamb, it will not stay warm unless it receives colostrum.

Hypothermia can be a swift and silent killer, but with attentive management and quick action, it is also highly preventable. By understanding the biology of newborn lambs, ensuring access to colostrum, and providing protection from cold and wet conditions, you can significantly improve lamb survival and set the stage for a productive lambing season.

Prevention Strategies

Good management before and during lambing can drastically reduce the risk of hypothermia, even in the coldest of seasons.

- Provide well bedded, clean, dry, and sheltered lambing areas protected from drafts.
- Ensure ewes are in adequate body condition before lambing.
- Stock your lambing kit with a rectal thermometer.
- Have a plan and be prepared to warm a lamb.
- For outdoor lambing, choose fields with natural shelter and avoid lambing outside in severe weather.
- Check teats for milk flow after birth.
- Mark and monitor lambs born in poor conditions or with low birthweights more frequently.
- Supplement with colostrum from the ewe, or high-quality substitutes when necessary. **OSN**

Hypothermia in Young Lambs

E. Massender and D. Kennedy

STAGES OF HYPOTHERMIA

Treatment varies with the degree of hypothermia, as indicated by the rectal temperature. The basis of treatment of the hypothermic lamb is to warm it up and provide a source of energy to start heat production again.

Mild Hypothermia (rectal temperature 37°C–39°C)

The lamb is weak, depressed and appears empty but may be able to stand. It should be moved into shelter, dried off if wet and fed colostrum by stomach tube. Feed 50 mL/kg of bodyweight slowly over 5–10 minutes and then feed 200 mL/kg bodyweight spread over three more feedings in the first 24 hours. The lamb can stay with the ewe provided she is in a sheltered area and the lamb is suckling. Once the lamb's rectal temperature is normal, they can be returned to the flock.

Small lambs less than 1.5 kg at birth may have insufficient fat reserves to initiate heat production, even with colostrum, and should be fed a 20% dextrose solution (50 mL/kg of bodyweight) by stomach tube 1 hour after the first colostrum feeding. Lambs under 2 kg may benefit from wearing a wool pullover for 2–4 days to help maintain body temperature and/or being artificially reared.

Moderate to Severe Hypothermia (rectal temperature below 37°C)

Once the rectal temperature falls below 37°C the lamb may no longer have energy reserves in addition to being hypothermic. The treatment plan will differ depending on the age of the lamb and whether the lamb has a suckle reflex (is able to swallow). In all cases, remove the lamb from the ewe and dry off if wet. Lambs over 5 hours old may not have energy reserves. Failure to provide energy before warming will cause the lamb to convulse and die. See Table 1 for treatment protocols that are dependent on the age and suckling ability of the lamb.

Once the lamb has been revived to a rectal temperature over 37°C, has a suckle reflex and has received colostrum, it can be kept in a hospital pen with a heat source (e.g., box in warm environment) and fed until strong and maintaining a normal temperature of 39°C. Once strong, return the lamb to its dam, but make sure it is nursing by identifying it with livestock paint or marker. The lamb may need to be artificially reared if it fails to thrive or is rejected from the ewe.

Table 1. Recommendations to revive lambs with rectal temperature less than 37°C

Scenario	Symptoms	Treatment
less than 5 hours old, with suckle reflex	weak, empty, depressed, may be unable to stand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• place in warming box until rectal temperature >37°C• administer warm colostrum by stomach tube (feed 50 mL/kg bodyweight), additionally, feed 200 mL/kg body weight spread over three more feedings within the first 24 hours
more than 5 hours old, with suckle reflex	tucked up, empty appearing and depressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• administer warm colostrum by stomach tube (feed 50 mL/kg bodyweight) prior to warming• place in warming box until rectal temperature is >37°C• administer warm colostrum by stomach tube again (feed 50 mL/kg bodyweight), additionally, feed 200 mL/kg bodyweight spread over three more feedings within the first 24 hours
more than 5 hours old, no suckle reflex	lamb is unable to stand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• do not attempt to stomach tube as colostrum will be deposited in the lungs, which will kill the lamb• the lamb must first be injected with a sterile solution of warm 20% dextrose (10 mL/kg bodyweight), into the abdominal cavity• place in warming box until rectal temperature is >37°C• once revived and with a suckle reflex, administer warm colostrum by stomach tube (feed 50 mL/kg bodyweight), additionally, feed 200 mL/kg bodyweight spread over three more feedings within the first 24 hours

Agricultural Information Contact Centre

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2026

OSF PHOTO CONTEST

**ARE YOU A MASTER AT FRAMING FLOCKS?
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Entries are now open for the 2026 Ontario Sheep Photo Contest. Whether you're a seasoned photographer or an amateur enthusiast, this is your chance to showcase the beauty of Ontario's sheep and the vibrant life on its farms.

CATEGORIES

- **Flock Shots:** Capture the essence of a flock, with a minimum of 20 sheep.
- **Around the Farm:** From pastoral landscapes to bustling barns, show us the heart of sheep farming.
- **Sheep Farmers:** Candid moments of farmers at work or the warmth of farm family life.
- **All About Wool:** Highlighting the pride of Ontario's wool production.

PRIZES

Top photos in each category will receive a \$100 cash prize, with an additional \$250 for the grand prize.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Email your entries to admin@ontariosheep.org with the subject line "2026 Photo Contest." Images must be in JPEG format and at least 200 dpi and 1 MB in size. Only Canadian entries will be considered.

The deadline for entries is September 11th, 2026.

Include the following information with your submission:

- Photo title (optional)
- Contact information: mailing address, phone number, email
- Photographer's name (if different from the submitter)
- Chosen category

CONTEST RULES

- All submitted photos become property of Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) and may be used or reproduced by OSF, with credit to the photographer where possible.
- If the submitter is not the photographer, the photographer's name must be provided.
- Each photographer may submit up to two entries per category.
- Participation in the sheep industry is not a requirement for entry.



Honouring Glen Porteous

60th Anniversary Sheep Day Outstanding Contribution Award

As part of Grey Bruce Farmers' Week's 60th Anniversary celebrations, they are highlighting volunteers from different commodities who, over many years, have significantly contributed to their commodity and to the continued success of the event. The recipient of the 60th Anniversary Outstanding Contribution Award for Sheep Day is Glen Porteous.

Glen has contributed greatly to the GBFW Sheep Day program for decades. Organizers relied heavily on Glen's suggestions and speaker ideas, and he also assisted with welcoming and hosting speakers while they were in Grey-Bruce, showcasing true Grey Bruce hospitality. He even picked up the lamb meat for years from the abattoir and delivered it to the caterers in Elmwood, regardless of weather conditions. Glen will do anything to make GBFW Sheep Day a success and to support its continuation for years to come. His dedication has helped Sheep Day grow into a well-attended and respected event, with 150 producers attending this year's Sheep Day.

"Glen, thank you so much for everything you have done to contribute to GBFW's stellar success. It has been a pleasure working alongside you. You are one

of the finest gentlemen I have had the pleasure to know," said Lorie Smith, Grey Bruce Farmers' Week.

Beyond his long-standing support of Sheep Day, Glen Porteous has had a lasting impact on the sheep industry in Ontario and across Canada.

Glen Porteous is a third-generation purebred sheep farmer from Grey County. As a young man, Glen entered the sheep business by establishing a flock of Suffolks. Later, when he moved to Kilannan Farm, he also established a flock of Polled Dorsets. Glen proudly showed sheep at many fairs and exhibitions across Canada, with special memories of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, where he also served a term as Chair of the Sheep Committee. He has been president of both the Ontario Dorset Sheep Club and the Ontario Suffolk Sheep Association.

Glen was one of the founding members of the All Canada Sheep Classic, which continues to be an important event for sheep breeders across Canada. He was a 4-H Sheep Club

Leader for a number of years, and his three children were all involved in helping on the farm and showing sheep through



the Sydenham School Fair and Grey County 4-H. With his vast knowledge of sheep breeds and his keen eye for quality livestock, Glen was welcomed as a judge at many fairs and exhibitions as he never tires of talking about sheep! Over the years, Glen has worked with many farmers to establish their own flocks and has also been involved in partnerships, notably Kilannan Farm and Stonehill Sheep. He and his wife Judy now live near Chatsworth and continue to maintain a small flock of purebred Suffolk and Dorset sheep. (Background profile provided by Jason Emke, OSF District 2 Chairman)

This year also marks Lorie's retirement after 20 years of dedicated service to GBFW, during which her leadership and commitment played a vital role in the event's ongoing success. **OSN**

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Suitable to feed per load:

50 adult sheep or 500 lambs*



*Depending on body weight and ration composition

Pasture or Confinement?

Two Lambing Systems, Two Ways to Make It Work

Walker Ball, Industry Relations Specialist

In sheep farming, the right lambing system sets new producers up for success. Pasture-based lambing is often praised for lower inputs and less intervention. Confinement lambing is valued for control, consistency, and the ability to produce year-round. Experienced producers work hard to build a lambing system that works for them and reduces lamb losses.

We sat down individually with Mark Ritchie and Phil Botden on our Flock Talk Podcast to learn more about their approaches to lambing.

Ritchie and Botden run very different lambing systems, yet both make the same point: no system works unless the sheep, the feed, the facilities, and the manager are all pulling in the same direction.

Ritchie has spent decades refining a grass-based system on Amherst Island, building around the timing of forage growth, easy-care genetics, and minimal intervention. Botden, a first-generation Ontario producer, has built a fully confinement-based flock designed for accelerated lambing, close observation, and year-round output.

Their systems are different, but their thinking isn't.



Start With the System, Not the Romance

One of the easiest mistakes in sheep production is falling in love with an idea instead of building a system that fits the farm and the available labour.

Ritchie's operation was designed around grass from the beginning. Rather than trying to fit pasture around the flock, he built the flock around pasture growth. In Ontario, that means working with a spring flush, a summer slump, and sometimes a second burst of growth in the fall. His goal is to have ewes lambing just after grass starts growing, so peak lactation lines up with grass at peak nutrient density.

That timing is the backbone of the system.

Botden's confinement setup is built on a different foundation; however his flock of roughly 500 ewes is managed indoors year-round, with lambing groups moving through every six weeks. The system is not built around grass growth or seasonality, it is built around control: controlled feeding, controlled environment, and controlled production flow.

Both men have built flocks based on the system their farms can support and what they can manage on their own.

Genetics Have to Match the Job

Both producers are blunt about genetics: if the sheep do not fit the system, the system will fight you every day.

For Ritchie, pasture lambing works because the flock has been shaped for it over time. Coopworth genetics, easy lambing, strong mothering, good mobility, and the ability to raise lambs on grass without intervention are all non-negotiable. In Ritchie's system, the goal isn't to maximize litter size, it is a mature ewe that can raise twins and a yearling that can raise a strong single.

Too many triplets on pasture can lead to weaker lambs, more losses, and more intervention.

Botden's flock is built for a different purpose. Using Rideau Arcott genetics, along with Ile de France on the terminal side, he is working with more prolific sheep in a confinement setting where larger litters can be supported. That comes with more work, but it fits the production model.

In both systems, breed selection is paramount to success.

Neither System Is Easy. They're Hard in Different Ways.

There's sometimes an assumption in the industry that one system must be easier than the other. But when asked, neither producer really supported that idea.

Pasture lambing can look straightforward from the outside, especially when it's working well. But the manageability of the system is built on years of culling, selecting, managing body condition, improving mineral nutrition, and learning when not to interfere. Ritchie's flock can lamb outside with very little intervention because the sheep have been genetically selected over years for that purpose.

That kind of "easy" takes a long time to build.

Confinement lambing brings a different kind of pressure. Botden avoids many of the predation and weather challenges that come with pasture systems, but he deals with higher litter

sizes, more barn management, and a steady workload all year long. There is no real off-season when ewes are lambing every six weeks.

The labour may be more predictable, but it is also more constant.

Feed Still Drives the Whole Thing

No matter where lambing happens, both systems are nutrition-driven.

Ritchie's entire model depends on matching nutritional demand to forage supply and quality. If lactation peaks when grass quality is high, the system works with nature instead of against it. If timing slips, performance slips with it. He also makes the point that lamb survival is not just about the last few weeks before lambing. It reflects how the ewe was managed over the previous year: body condition, minerals, forage quality, and overall resilience.

Botden makes much the same argument from the confinement side. Nutrition is one of the biggest drivers of flock health, productivity, and vet costs. In a housed system, the producer has more control over the ration, but that only matters if the ration is right.

Both men come back to the same truth: nutritional issues show up at lambing, one way or another.

The First 48 Hours Tell the Story

If there is one place the two systems overlap completely, it's here.

The first 48 hours are where lamb survival is won or lost.

On pasture, Ritchie is watching for vigor, quick nursing, strong mothering, and lambs that can handle the conditions they're born into. Weather can turn a manageable situation into a bad one very quickly, so the ewe and lamb have to be able to bond quickly. He credits improved selenium supplementation as one important factor in reducing the number of weak, tail-end lambs.

In confinement, Botden is focused on many of the same basics through a different lens: colostrum intake, lamb vigor, pen management, and preventing losses from crowding, weakness, or environmental stress. Indoors, the weather may be controlled, but the barn brings its own risks if ventilation, bedding, and space are not right.

The Best Flocks Need Less Babysitting

That may be one of the clearest shared takeaways from both producers.

Ritchie talks openly about the risk of too much interference in pasture lambing. A shepherd can create problems by stepping in too soon, stressing ewes, and disrupting bonding. In his system, if a ewe needs help lambing or if lambs have to be artificially reared, that gets recorded and ewes are culled.

Botden, even in a more hands-on system, has moved in a similar direction. He still checks regularly, but he has backed away from the idea that success means disturbing ewes while in

labour. If things are quiet, he leaves them alone. His view is simple: buy sheep that can do the job.

That's not just philosophy... It's economics.

There Is No Best System... Only the Best Fit

That's probably the part sheep producers understand better than anyone.

Pasture lambing is not automatically more natural, cheaper, or easier. Confinement lambing is not automatically more intensive, more productive, or more efficient. Each system has strengths. Each has tradeoffs. Each can fail when the pieces don't match.

Ritchie's system works because the genetics, feed supply, lambing season, and culling decisions are aligned.

Botden's system works because the barn setup, labour flow, nutrition, and breed are aligned.

The question is not whether pasture or confinement is superior. The better question is whether the system actually fits the farm, the flock, and the shepherd. **OSN**



Flock Fusion & Junior Sheep Expo
+ **PSBO Online Sheep Sale**

June 27-28 | Rockton Fairgrounds | Rockton, ON
Hosted by the Purebred Sheep Breeders of Ontario (PSBO), this two-day event brings together youth, breeders, and buyers for education, competition, and access to quality purebred sheep.

Flock Fusion & Junior Sheep Expo
For Ontario Youth Ages 9-21
A hands-on educational experience designed to build confidence, skills, and knowledge in the sheep industry.

Saturday, June 27

- Fitting Competition
- Judging Competition
- Salesmanship Competition

Sunday, June 28

- Showmanship
- Conformation Show

PSBO Online Sheep Sale

Saturday, June 27

- Timed online auction hosted on DLMS
- Purebred sheep consigned by PSBO members
- Animals available for live, in-person viewing at Rockton Fairgrounds on Saturday

For More Information Contact
Flock Fusion Contact: Delaney Hopkins | 519-379-5795 | hopkins_789@outlook.com
Online Sheep Sale Contact: Travis Dow | 613-905-7304 | travdow4@gmail.com

www.psbo.ca

Lambing Supplies: Essential Gear for a Successful Lambing Season

Heather Johnson, Member Relations Coordinator

Introduction:

Whether lambing occurs in confinement or on pasture, being prepared with the right supplies can make a significant difference in lamb survival and ease of management. Taking time to run inventory and organize essential equipment ahead of lambing helps ensure producers are ready when lambs begin arriving. Having the necessary supplies on hand also allows time for any last-minute procurement, helping support smoother lambings and healthier lambs.

Start the inventory 2-4 two to 4 weeks prior to the first expected arrival of lambs. A good cue for this is the time of vaccine boosting ewes prior to lambing.

Sorting the supplies into buckets or kits makes for a quick grab of needed items.

Planning

- Calendar for planning lambing. Aim to lamb in group sizes which fit your infrastructure and personal schedule, preferably in above freezing temperatures.

- A vet-client relationship for access to meds, advice and emergencies.
- Pre-lamb vaccines for ewes (typically 4 weeks pre-lambing).

Infrastructure Check

- Water pails or check auto water system functionality.
- Check function of milk machine.
- Inventory jug panels, make any needed repairs.
- check lambing barn temperature and drafts to ensure good lambing environment conditions.

Basic Lambing

- Stomach tube for feeding colostrum (appropriately sized).
- Supplemental colostrum (powder or banked).
- Towels for drying off lambs.
- Lamb coats for chilled lambs.
- Iodine solution for navel dipping.
- Vitamin E/Selenium injectable.
- 18 and 20-gauge needles 3 and 6cc syringes.



Farmer Wellness

Look after your health and wellness.
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Ontario Mental Health Helpline
Call 1-866-531-2600



www.ontariosheep.org/farmer-resources

- Box of latex gloves.
- Navel clipping scissors.
- Scissors for trimming woolly ewes.
- Bulb syringe for clearing mucus from newborns.
- Tote with a secure lid to hold mortalities prior to disposal.
- Alcohol for disinfecting tools.

Complicated Lambing Supplies

- long obstetrical gloves.
- Prolapse retainer spoon or rope.
- OB lubricant.
- Ketone strips and propylene glycol for helping to diagnose pregnancy toxemia.

Tagging and Record Keeping

- Docking and castration bands/pliers.
- Cellphone app, notebook and pencil or whiteboard for notes on the fly.
- Lamb tags and tag applicator.
- Record keeping system.
- Sheep marking paint for identifying lambs to dams and culls/problem ewes.

Artificial Rearing Lamb Care

- Bottles, nipples, and nipple pails.
- Milk replacer for lambs.
- Shavings for AR lamb pens.

Newborn Lamb Support

- Warming box for cold lambs.
- Source of heat (thermostatically controlled microheater or hairdryer).
- Dextrose for hypothermic lambs.
- Fish scale and sling for weight monitoring.
- Supply of hot water (electric kettle or hot water heater),
- Rectal thermometer.

Pasture Lambing

- Capable, well-fed ewes in good condition.
- Lamb carrying box (that is easily disinfected) attached to your quad.
- Shepherd's leg crook.
- Rope or gambrel restrainer for feisty ewes.
- 50% dextrose and a 60cc syringe for treating hypothermic lambs.
- Lambing pastures that provide natural shelter from high winds. Portable windbreaks or stacked bales can be used to provide shelter on open fields.

Being well-prepared and organized can improve the lambing outcomes, reducing both mortalities and morbidities. More lambs to market, a healthy flock and a healthy bottom line makes a happy shepherd! **OSN**

PRODUCER/SHEEP OWNER LICENCE FEE REMITTANCE FORM

(PRIVATE TREATY SALES)

Ontario's 3,000 sheep producers are represented by the Ontario Sheep Farmers organization. With a focus on profitability and sustainability, the organization works in the areas of advocacy, industry capacity, research and market development. The organization is funded through a check off (or licence fee) on lamb and sheep marketed in Ontario. Representing the sheep, lamb and wool industries, it was established in 1985 under the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Act. A compulsory check off (licence fee) of \$2.20 per head sold or slaughtered in Ontario is payable to the Ontario Sheep Farmers to fund projects and operations supporting the Ontario sheep marketplace. Visit our website (www.OntarioSheep.org) to see your licence fees at work.

Auction markets, livestock agents, and processors are to deduct the check off fee from the proceeds payable to a seller, and processors must also assess the licence fee in addition to the slaughter fee. This fee is applicable to each sale or slaughter transaction.

Private sales (i.e. a sheep owner to sheep owner sale, sales not done at an auction market, nor to an agent or processor) require licence fee self-assessment and reporting through this remittance form.

Ontario Sheep Farmers 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1B1

SHEEP/LAMB: FEE IS \$2.20 PER HEAD PLUS 13% HST

Producer # _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date of Sale: _____ Date Remitted: _____

of sheep/lamb sold: _____ Lic. Fees (x \$2.20=) \$ _____

PAY BY PHONE USING VISA OR MASTERCARD

519-836-0043

HST# 107800823

Plus 13% HST \$ _____

TOTAL REMITTED \$ _____

GENETIC AND HEALTH PROGRAM ENROLLMENT LISTING

If you have questions, concerns, or would like more information about these programs please contact the Ontario Sheep office at (519) 836-0043 or email admin@ontariosheep.org.

CURRENT PRODUCERS ENROLLED IN THE GENOVIS PROGRAM (AS OF MARCH 2026)

1000914124 Ontario Inc. O/A Halfway Farms
Hiske & Carmen MacKay • (519) 281-3725

4S Maple Lane Farm • Kimberly Schneider • (905) 404-7811

Allinbrook Farms • Neil Allin • (905) 983-5791

Asphodel Sheep Co • Todd Payne • (705) 875-5904

Breezy Ridge Farm • Philip & Elizabeth Smith • (970) 472-9951

Brubacher Ovine • Earl & Naomi Brubacher • (519) 321-8016

Steven & Lucille Burkhart • (519) 698-0232

Cedar Creek Charollais • Ted & Joanne Skinner • (905) 263-2102

Cedar Grove Farm • Quintin Mc Ewen • (519) 949-4130

Century Lane Farm • Robert & Shirley Graves • (613) 791-2656

Circle R Livestock • Ryan & Romy Schill • (519) 669-4146

Cowan Acres • Grant Cowan • (705) 796-2236

Craigmore Farm • Wayne Kreklewich • (416) 892-0664

Cursio Farms & Arkell Valley
Frank & Ned Cursio • (519) 766-3378

Jim & Wendy Driscoll • (519) 638-5703

Emke Livestock • Craig Emke • (519) 901-2519

Fare Vewe Acres • Mark & Betty Bearinger • (519) 323-1760

Farlane Livestock • Christopher Macfarlane • (705) 868-5199

G & L Brien • Gary & Luanne Brien • (519) 674-3846

Gimlet Hill • Rob & Tracey Werry • (289) 385-6804

Grahamloch Farm • Lori Anderson • (705) 724-5780

Grey Stone Sheep • Dean Keranovic • (647) 889-6785

Homstead Acres Suffolks • Len Riebot • (905) 359-3347

J & J Farms • Ross & Clementine Savasi • (705) 652-7477
John & Holly Wallace • (519) 368-6540

Kettle Crest Farm • Art & Sandra Alblas • (519) 637-0050

Lamb Lady Farm • Shelagh Finn • (647) 932-7102

Lush Acres • Jenean & Jason Lush • (519) 538-2753

Maple Meadow Farms
Colleen Acres & Dwayne Bazinet • (613) 826-2330

Parker Agriculture Ltd. • Jeanne Parker • (204) 730-0597

Rising Oak Farm • Laura Mosley • (705) 305-9275

Rocky Lane Farm • Allison Brown • (705) 308-3284

Shadow Ridge Acres • Zabrina Bielaskie • (613) 433-6199

Schuyler Farms Ltd. • Brett Schuyler • (519) 427-9696

Shepherd's Grove • Harv & Christine Breman • (519) 879-6579

Shillalah Farm • Florence Pullen • (519) 233-7896

Southgate Sheep Inc. • Jesse Bauman • (226) 752-7170

Stonehill Sheep • Paul Dick • (519) 794-3732

Todd Sheep Company Inc. • Keith Todd • (519) 528-2650

Tri R Way Livestock • A. Scot & Mary Robertson • (705) 322-6977

Tulach Ard Farm • Sean McKenzie • (905) 786-2476

Twin Shores Farm • Brian Voith • (343) 364-4095

Twyla Brae Farms • Garry & Karen Milne • (705) 446-5457

Wooldrift Farm
Chris Buschbeck & Axel Meister • (519) 538-2844

FLOCKS WHO HAVE ACHIEVED "A" STATUS ON THE MAEDI VISNA PROGRAM (AS OF MARCH 2026)

Allinbrook Farms • Neil Allin • (905) 983-5791

Century Lane Farm • Robert & Shirley Graves • (613) 447-2656

Huron Grove Farms
Michael & Fraser Hodgson • (519) 918-4159

Kettle Crest Farm • Art & Sandra Alblas • (519) 637-0050

Rainbow Woods • Eleanor & Sarah Reed • (705) 454-3167

Robert Pennie • (705) 859-2671

Rider Ridge Ranch • Jill & Tim DeClark • (519) 644-0766

Rocky Lane Farm • Allison & Luke de Vos • (705) 308-3284

Shadow Ridge Acres • Zabrina Bielaskie • (613) 433-6199

Stitch and Steel Homestead
Sam Sheehan & Andrew Sheehan • (647) 546-8906

Trailblaze Farm • Valerie Robinson • (519) 560-0946

FLOCKS WHO HAVE ACHIEVED "ENROLLED NEG" STATUS ON THE MAEDI VISNA PROGRAM (AS OF MARCH 2026)

Prolific Acres • Charlie Renaud • (705) 322-2140

Antje & Wouter van Breugel • (902) 393-4677

SHEEP PRODUCERS ON THE SCRAPIE PROGRAM (AS OF MARCH 2026)

Century Lane Farm • Robert & Shirley Graves • 1 Certified

Parker Agriculture Ltd. • Jeanne & Rob Parker • 1 Certified

WoolDrift Farm • Axel Meister • 1 Certified

For more information visit scrapiecanada.ca/vsfc/vsfc-enrolled-producers/.

THE 2026 ONTARIO LAMB MARKET CALENDAR

Date	Holiday	Consumption Preferences	Market Processor Needs	Public Auction Market Impact
January 6	Feast of the Epiphany (Christian)	Lamb is featured in many celebration meals.	Recently weaned and milk-fed lambs are preferred.	Lower market volumes generally.
January 7	Orthodox Christmas	Lamb is featured in many celebration meals.	Recently weaned and milk-fed lambs are preferred.	
February 19	Chinese 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.
February 19 - March 19	Ramadan (Islam) (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.
March 19-20	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.
April 1-9	Passover (Pesach) Jewish	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 5	Western Easter	Roast lamb is a main dish in festival meals for Mediterranean (Italian, Portuguese, and Greek) heritages	Healthy young lambs. (under 60 pounds live weight; ideally milk-fed and fat). Number of lambs under 65 pounds begins to increase in the 3 weeks prior to Easter, and often peaks during the week before Easter. Number of 65-to-79-pound lambs will also increase during this time.	Higher market demand in the 2-to-3-week period preceding holiday. Check local auction schedules for "special" Easter sale dates. A peak sale period in the year.
April 12	Orthodox Easter	Roast lamb is a main dish in festival meals for Mediterranean (Italian, Portuguese, and Greek) heritages	Healthy young lambs. (under 60 pounds live weight; ideally milk-fed and fat). Number of lambs under 65 pounds begins to increase in the 3 weeks prior to Easter, and often peaks during the week before Easter. Volume of 65-to-79-pound lambs will also increase during this time.	Higher market demand in the 2-to-3-week period preceding holiday. Check local auction schedules for "special" Easter sale dates. A peak sale period in the year.
May		Start of barbeque season which more frequently featuring Ontario lamb.	Moderate demand. Processors see an increase in BBQ lamb demand from May to August.	Commonly higher supply and slightly higher but still moderate demand.
May 24-26	The Hajj (Islam)			
May 26-28	Eid al Adha (Festival of Sacrifice, Eid)	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. Some prefer lambs older than six months. Blemishes may include wounds, torn ears, or any 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.
June 16	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.
August 25	Mawlid al-Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad)			
September 11-13	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 12	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 4-12	Hanukkah (Festival of Rededication) Jewish	Traditionally meats 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)	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. A peak sale period of the year.

This calendar and the 5 year calendar is also available on the OSF website at www.ontariosheep.org/religious-ethnic-market-calendar.

District Contacts

Look for your district news and events in the Messenger or on the website.

District 1

Counties of Essex, Kent, Lambton, Middlesex, and Elgin

Director	Art Alblas	519-317-9988
Chair	Jeff Swain	519-433-0984
Vice Chair	Sean McBrien	519-437-1874
Secretary	Kacey Wilson	519-521-6742
Treasurer	Cathy Pollard-Culbert	519-868-3076

District 2

Counties of Grey and Bruce

Director	Jay Lennox	519-374-4055
Chair	Jason Emke	519-379-8778
Vice Chair	Mike Follings	519-897-3952
Secretary	Dennis Thompson	519-881-3174
Treasurer	Steve Ernewein	519-392-8624

District 3

Counties of Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Oxford

Director	Keith Todd	519-525-7539
Chair	Susan Martin	519-669-8066
Vice Chair	Tyler Harper	519-801-9932
Secretary	Cynthia Kretschmann	519-272-3907
Treasurer	Rick Zimak	519-284-0533

District 4

County of Brant, Regional Municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand-Norfolk and Niagara

Director	Kevin Krakar	226-931-1640
Chair	Courtney Miedima	519-209-2014
Vice Chair	Vacant	
Secretary	Vacant	
Treasurer	Monica Roberts	519-755-7487

District 5

Counties of Wellington and Dufferin and the Regional Municipalities of Halton and Peel

Director	Ryan Schill	519-669-4146
Chair	Mike Swidersky	519-370-8586
Vice Chair	Heather Little	519-939-0408
Secretary	Romy Schill	519-669-4146
Treasurer	Bill McCutcheon	519-766-7905

District 6

County of Simcoe, District Municipality of Muskoka and the District of Parry Sound

Director	Grant Cowan	705-436-2236
Chair	Rachel Brooks	705-828-0059
Vice Chair	Jeremy McNabb	705-818-3860
Secretary/Treasurer	Amy Spence	705-790-7209

District 7

City of Toronto, Regional Municipalities of York and Durham, City of Kawartha Lakes, and Counties of Peterborough and Northumberland

Director	Ken Lamb	905-985-4247
Chair	Kim Schneider	905-404-7811
Vice Chair	Allison de Vos	705-308-3284
Secretary	Tracey Werry	289-385-6804
Treasurer	Jenny Carnaghan	905-718-3380

District 8

Counties of Lennox and Addington, Hastings, Prince Edward, Frontenac and Leeds

Director	Karen Davis	613-532-3347
Chair	Phil Botden	613-358-2676
Vice Chair	Brad Davis	613-561-7731
Secretary/Treasurer	Kayleigh Graham	289-355-9947

District 9

Counties of Renfrew and Lanark, and the Township of West Carleton and the City of Kanata in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton

Director	Wesley Godden	647-244-4768
Chair	Kim Groskleg	613-717-3795
Vice Chair	Shanna Armstrong	613-433-8255
Secretary	Charlotte Mackay	613-281-2476
Treasurer	Zabrina Bielaskie	613-433-6199

District 10

Counties of Russell, Prescott, Glengarry Stormont, Dundas and Grenville, and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, except the Township of West Carleton and the City of Kanata

Director	Devon Wensink	613-330-8014
Chair	Colleen Acres	613-826-2330
Vice Chair	Lana Penner Tovey	613-799-5262
Secretary	Yvonne Seeley	613-330-0272
Treasurer	Sarah Jean Campbell	613-330-8014

District 11

Districts of Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay, Cochrane, Algoma, Sudbury, Temiskaming, Nipissing and Manitoulin

Director	Helen McRae	705-206-6315
Chair	Ryan Klapwyk	705-648-4432
Vice Chair	Jenna Wight	705-622-1774
Secretary	Trudy Reid	807-935-3224
Treasurer	Jim Johnston	705-647-7160

OSN

Auction Markets and Abattoirs

ABATTOIRS		
NAME	CITY	PHONE NO
Abattoir LeFavre Inc.	Lefavre	(613) 679-4698
Afghan Halal Meat Suppliers	Schomberg	(416) 894-1802
Agram 2005 Meats Inc.	Georgetown	(905) 877-6082
Almarwa Halal Meat Packers	St. Ann's	(365) 777-4932
Al Madina Halal Meat Packers	Brinston	(613) 652-1301
Aman's Abattoir	Wellington	(613) 399-2173
Bachert Meats	Walton	(519) 887-9328
Belle Vallee Meats & Abattoir	Belle Vallee	(705) 647-7419
Bentinck Packers Ltd.	Hanover	(519) 364-3538
Beverly Creek Farm	Millgrove	(905) 690-8111
*Bilal Farms Inc.	Clarence Creek	(613) 488-2268
Birch Lake Abattoir	Massey	(705) 865-1366
Burt Farm Country Meats	Gore Bay	(705) 282-0328
Caledon Halal Meat Packers	Bolton	(905) 880-9888
Charles Quality Meats Ltd.	St. Agatha	(519) 886-7931
Cloverbelt Country Meats Co-operative	Oxdrift	(807) 937-6716
Cole Bros. Meat Processing	Picton	(613) 476-6955
Country Fresh Packers	Tilbury	(519) 682-2222
Creative Meats	Warren	(705) 967-2006
Desormeaux Slaughter-house & Meats Inc.	Crysler	(613) 987-2148
Dresden Meat Packers Ltd.	Dresden	(519) 683-2585
Dufferin County Meats	Amaranth	(519) 939-8068
Elora Road Meats	Mildmay	(519) 367-2261
Ewe Dell Family Farm	Woodslee	(519) 723-4456
Farmersville Community Abattoir	Athens	(613) 924-0400
Gord's Abattoir Ltd.	Leamington	(519) 326-2503
Green's Meat Market & Abattoir Ltd.	Wingham	(519) 357-2912
Grey County Meats	Maxwell	(519) 922-2400
Hank De Koning Ltd.	Port Dover	(519) 583-0115
Harriston Packing Company Ltd.	Harriston	(519) 338-3330
Hastings Meat Market	Stirling	(613) 395-0505
Hay's Custom Cutting Ltd.	Campbellford	(705) 653-3388
Henderson Meats	Chesterville	(613) 448-3471
Highgate Tender Meats Ltd.	Highgate	(519) 678-3383
Highland Packers Ltd.	Stoney Creek	(905) 662-8396
Hilts Butcher Shop Ltd.	Norwood	(705) 696-2172
J.J. Meat Distributing Inc.	Schomberg	(905) 859-1540
Joe Savage & Fils Abattoir Inc.	St. Albert	(613) 987-2070
Johnson Meats	Aylmer	(519) 773-9208
Ken R. Mogk Butchering	Tavistock	(519) 462-2280
L & M Meat Distributing Inc.	Beeton	(905) 729-2771
L & M Meat Distributing Inc.	Gilford	(905) 775-6775
Matar Meats	Osgoode	(613) 821-7929
Miedema's Country Meat	Exeter	(519) 235-4978
Miedema's Meat Market	Embro	(519) 475-4010
Millgrove Packers Ltd.	Waterdown	(905) 689-6184
Mr. Beef Inc.	Pakenham	(613) 624-5222
Mount Brydges Abattoir Ltd.	Mount Brydges	(519) 264-1873
Newmarket Meat Packers Ltd.	Newmarket	(905) 836-7001
Northhorizon Abattoir	Bruce Mines	(705) 941-8132
Ontario Halal Meat Packers Inc.	Milton	(905) 875-0270
Otonabee Meat Packers Ltd.	Peterborough	(705) 743-8547
Palmateer's Abattoir Ltd.	Tweed	(613) 478-3801
Parkhill Meats	Parkhill	(519) 293-3000
Peel Meat Packers	Drayton	(519) 638-3446

ABATTOIRS		
NAME	CITY	PHONE NO
Pine Ridge Meat Packer	Little Britain	705-786-9970
Rainy River District Regional Abattoir Inc.	Emo	(807) 482-3028
Reiche Meat Products Ltd.	Pembroke	(613) 732-3773
Rua Meats Ltd.	Foxboro	(613) 962-7915
Simcoe Street Meat Packers	Oakwood	(705) 821-3151
Smelser Meats	Cayuga	(905) 772-5053
St. Helen's Meat Packers Ltd.	Toronto	(416) 769-1788
Stayner Meat Packers Ltd.	Stayner	(705) 428-3006
Taylor's Custom Meats	Roseneath	(905) 352-2367
Teals Pure Pork Sausage	Waterford	(519) 443-8844
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Elections for Provincial Directors in 2026

OSF districts 3, 6 and 9 are holding elections for Provincial Director on the OSF board this year. This is an exciting opportunity for you as a sheep producer to shape the future of our organization. As a valued member, you have the chance to play a pivotal role in guiding OSF.

Serving on the board is a meaningful way to contribute your expertise, leadership, and vision to our industry. Board members help set strategic priorities, make key decisions, and support the growth of our organization.

The benefits of being on the board include learning about the industry and gaining new skills, learning from other producers on the board, meeting new people in the industry and expanding your personal network and utilizing your skills sets to guide the industry forward.

If you know someone who you feel will be passionate about making a difference and would like to be considered, we encourage you to nominate them.

Each year the OSF board of directors completes a skills inventory and this year, we encourage candidates with knowledge of the wool industry, research and environmental sustainability, but please don't hesitate to put your name forward if these aren't your areas of experience. All industry knowledge and business acumen is valuable.

District AGM's are held in August and September and notices will be sent out early summer. **OSN**



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