

OntarioSheep
FARMERS

2026 Provincial Advocacy Priorities



Industry Overview

Ontario Sheep Farmers

is a producer-led organization representing and advancing the sheep, lamb, and wool industries in Ontario. For 40 years, OSF has served as the unified voice for the province's sheep farmers, advocating for their interests and promoting industry growth.

Our Vision

is to enable Ontario sheep producers to be the suppliers of premium lamb and sheep products.

Our Mission

is to educate, innovate, and strategically advocate on behalf of our membership, while maintaining high standards of professionalism and leadership.

OSF enhances marketing efforts through producer education, promotional campaigns, and raising consumer awareness. Originally established in the 1970s as the Ontario Sheep Association, OSF continues to evolve to meet farmers' needs and strengthen the sector.

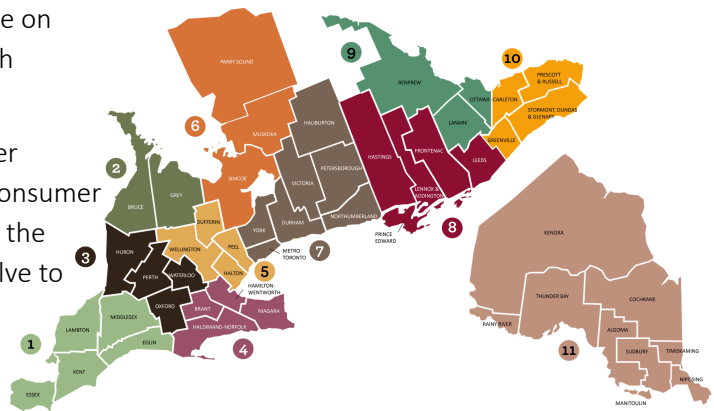
Economic Impact

3,000
sheep farmers

285,000
lambs marketed

\$100 million **3,600**
farm cash receipts jobs created

\$200 million
contributed to Canada's GDP



Exciting Market Opportunity for Ontario Lamb

Ontario is the third largest market for lamb processing in North America, processing over 50% of the sheep and lambs born in Canada. Ontario is also home to the country's largest sheep flock that contributes over \$200 million to Ontario's GDP.

Today, Ontario's 3,000 sheep farmers are fulfilling 35% of our domestic demand for lamb. As a result of increased immigration, domestic consumption of lamb per capita is increasing at a rate of 3% annually. The market opportunity for Halal lamb and goat meat is projected to grow from \$214 million to over \$300 million in the next five years. The first choice in meat for a significant number of new immigrants is lamb.

In light of this exciting market opportunity, Ontario Sheep Farmers has set a goal to fulfill 50% of market demand for lamb by 2040.



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Risk Management Program

Thank you to the provincial government for the increase in funding of \$100 million for the Risk Management Program and the ongoing commitment to the program.

1. Ewe Finance Loan Guarantee

The level of growth Ontario Sheep Farmers projects for the sheep industry over the next 15 years must begin with an expansion of existing flocks and the addition of new producers. A Ewe Finance Program, backed by a government loan guarantee, will support sector growth, like the success of similar cattle programs.

With financing available to Ontario's sheep producers, OSF plans to grow the industry by over 12,000 ewes per year to reach our 2040 goal.

A Ewe Finance Program will attract young producers to our industry and encourage sheep farmers to grow their flocks. It will lessen our reliance on imports and improve the sustainability and competitiveness of Ontario's agricultural sector.

Recommendation:

- **A \$1.5 million government loan guarantee program to leverage approximately \$6 million in private financing, modeled on successful cattle programs.**



2. Improving the Provincial Predation Program

The Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program (OWDCP) is a valuable resource to livestock producers in Ontario and OSF appreciates the responsiveness of government in the past when issues have been identified and addressed.

The current broad inconsistency in program delivery across municipalities, predator type and sheep breed has led to inequity between farmers.

Moving to online program delivery will reduce red tape and save the province and municipalities

thousands of dollars in administration time and the cost of investigators for every claim.

Recommendations:

- **The province administer the program through an online wildlife damage reporting form rather than through municipalities.**
- **Annual survey of sheep breeders to determine actual value of breeding stock**
- **Harmonize compensation for losses to dog attacks using values from the OWDCP**



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3. Veterinary Access

Veterinarian availability and veterinary product access are at a crisis point.

Recommendations:

- Veterinarians Act regulations prioritize financial health of the livestock industry through increased usage of RVTs and medication dispensaries
- Incentives and program spaces to increase the number of small ruminant veterinarians in the province
- Contribution to a national 'Pull Model' to bring new veterinary pharmaceuticals to Canada

4. The PAWS Act

LGDs and other working dogs are required to ensure the health and welfare of sheep in areas with strong predation.

Recommendations:

- Revise the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act to allow farmers to own as many working dogs as required for their operation to protect sheep from predation without the requirement of a license.
- Conduct a formal review of the PAWS Act and its underlying regulations and operational processes.

5. Research Investment

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance between OMAFA, U of G and ARIO funds significant agricultural research in the province. Funding is decreasing annually as research costs continue to rise.

Investments in research drive economic development, protect animal health and welfare and support sustainable, homegrown food.



Recommendation:

- Increase investments in the Alliance to a level that fulfills the goal of Ontario as a world leader in agricultural research.

