

# OntarioSheep

FARMERS

## 2025 Provincial 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**

farm cash receipts

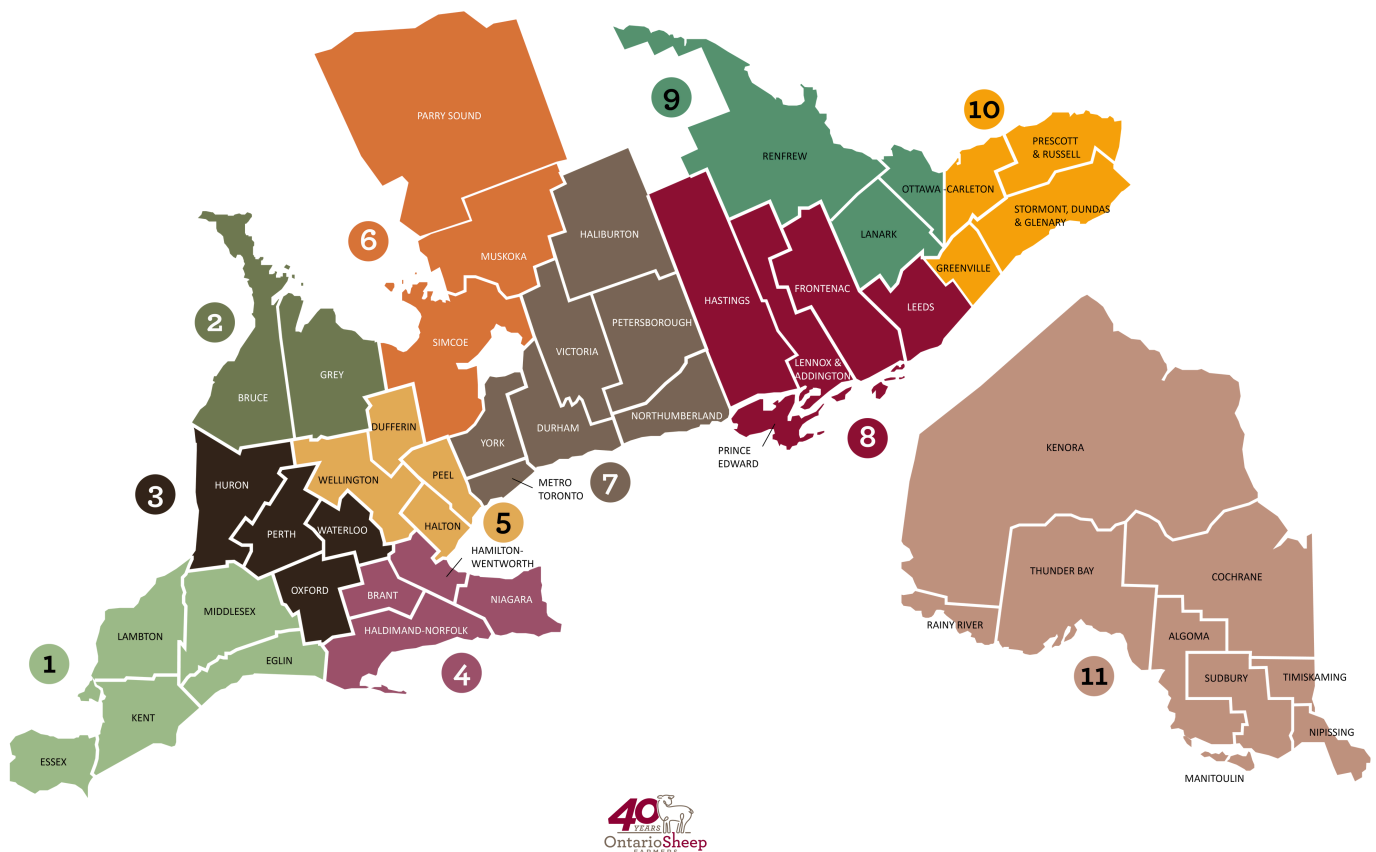
**3,600**

jobs created

**\$200 million**

contributed to Canada's GDP

*Source: Statistics Canada*





# 2025 Provincial Priorities

## Risk Management Program

Thank you to the provincial government for the recent increase in funding of \$100 million for the Risk Management Program.

### 1. 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



### 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 30% of our domestic demand for lamb. As a result of increased immigration, domestic consumption of lamb per capita is increasing at a rate of 5.7% 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.



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## 2. 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

## 3. 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.

## 4. Interprovincial Trade

OSF commends government for taking steps toward interprovincial trade for meat within Canada.

### Recommendations:

- OSF encourages the province to begin border pilots in 2025 for eastern and northern regions of Ontario.
- For the 'Ready to Grow Pilot,' OSF supports the initiative for Ontario plants and supports expansion of the pilot program to plants in other provinces that meet or exceed Ontario's processing standards.



## 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 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.

