

**OntarioSheep**  
FARMERS

**2026 Federal 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.

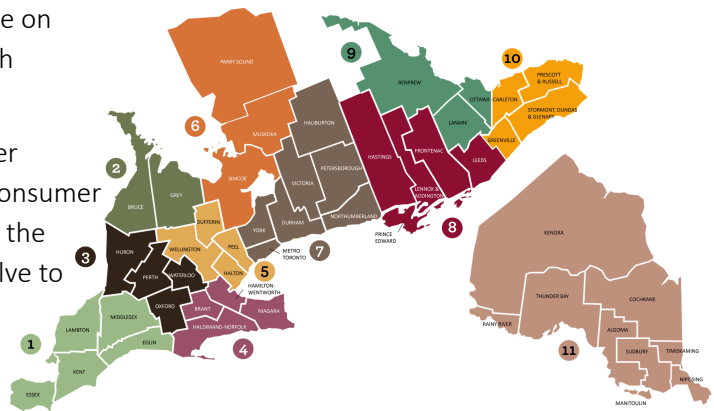
## Economic Impact

**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.*



# 2026 Federal Advocacy Priorities

## 1. Access to Veterinary Tools and Care

Veterinary product access and veterinarian availability are at a crisis point.

Canadian sheep farmers have signed on to the white paper authored by organizations representing Canada's farmed animal producers that was prepared for the federal government in August 2024.

**OSF endorses the white paper titled, "Improving access to veterinary pharmaceuticals, veterinary health products, livestock feeds and veterinary biologics in Canada," and recommends the federal government adopt the nine solutions detailed within the paper.**

The availability of small ruminant animal veterinary care in Ontario has reached a crisis point in Ontario. This deficit is continuously growing as large animal veterinarians retire without replacements.

**OSF recommends the federal government monetarily support the provincial government's efforts to increase the number of veterinary students in Ontario for those wanting to pursue large animal practices and increase incentives for small ruminant veterinarians to increase capacity across Ontario.**



## 2. Improvements to the Advanced Payment Program

To achieve the goal of fulfilling 50% of market demand by 2040, our members have identified access to financing as a requirement to growing the industry.

The Advanced Payment Program (APP) is a critical tool for farmers, particularly new entrants and young farmers, that helps farm operations manage cash flow demands amid rising market volatility and high debt servicing costs.

Sheep farmers participating in the APP commodity loan program are required to repay advances within an 18-month period. However, sheep production cycles do not always allow for full revenue realization 18 months after the purchase of breeding stock.

Additionally, increasing cost pressures related to feed, veterinary services, labour, and transportation mean meaningful returns from breeding stock investments are not fully realized within the 18-month timeframe. Two and a half crops of lambs are required for full loan repayment without financial hardship to a sheep operation.

Recommendations:

- **The repayment period be extended to 24 months, to align with the repayment timeline offered under the comparable cattle commodity loan program.**
- **Increase the interest-free portion under APP to \$350,000 to mirror the recommendations by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food**



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## 3. 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 Canada as a world leader in agricultural research.**



## 4. Business Risk Management

Agriculture is a high-risk business that faces volatile prices, unpredictable weather, and a global market influenced by government supports to competing producers in other countries. In order to maintain its economic growth and continued innovation, Canadian agriculture must have a stable economic foundation from which to address shifting global and domestic market opportunities. For those risks that cannot be addressed through on-farm management practices, access to effective risk management programs provides Canadian producers with the income stability they need to continue investing in innovative technologies, to adapt to evolving market demands, and maintain long-term economic growth.

### Recommendations:

- **Effective production insurance for commodities that are not adequately covered by traditional crop insurance**
- **AgriStability must provide funding on a timely basis to ensure that the short-term impacts of significant income losses are mitigated and payments must be calculated in a transparent and straightforward fashion that allows producers to predict and bank upon impending payments.**
- **The AgriInvest program must match producer contributions up to 1.5% of allowable net sales and the government-matched contribution limit must also be amended to allow for matchable annual contributions up to \$100,000.**
- **The AgriRecovery framework must define clear and precise rules such that it can respond quickly to exceptional events and take into account all losses not covered by programs such as AgriStability and AgriInsurance.**