

2019 Ontario Market Lamb Calendar

Month	Holiday	Consumption preferences	Market processor needs	Public auction market impact
January	None	Leg of lamb, stews and curries are in favour with the colder weather.	Steady demand for heavier lambs/sheep with some Orthodox Christmas demand.	Lower market volumes generally.
February	None	Leg of lamb, stews and curries are in favour with the colder weather.	Lower demand.	Lower market volumes and demand generally.
March	None		Easter holiday inventory buildup.	Growth in supply following winter, with Easter demand increase.
April 19	Easter Good Friday (Christian) 1 day A peak sale period in year.	Roast lamb is a main festive meal for European (Italian, Portuguese, and Greek) heritages.	Healthy young lambs. (under 60 lbs live weight; ideally milk fed and fat) Numbers of lambs under 65 lb begin to increase in three weeks before Easter, and peaks during the week before Easter. Numbers of 65-79lb lambs will increase during this time as well.	Higher market demand in 2 to 3-week period preceding holiday. Hint: check local auction schedules for 'special' Easter sale dates.
April 20 - 27	Passover (Jewish) 8 days	Traditionally must be processed under Kosher laws.	Healthy finished lambs. (up to 64 lbs live weight; ideally milk fed and fat)	Steady market. A limited influence.
May		Start of barbeque season which is more frequently featuring Ontario lamb.	Moderate demand. Processors see an increase in barbequing lamb demand from May to August. This will push some demand from May through late July.	Commonly higher supply and slightly higher but still moderate demand. Later month leads into Ramadan commencement.
May 6 to June 5	Ramadan (Islam) 1 month (daylight fasting)	Some celebrations will occur prior to start of Ramadan.	Weaned market lambs (60 – 90 lbs live weight)	A moderate market factor for week leading into Ramadan.
June 5	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 live weight) Lower demand for heavy lambs.	A moderate market factor for week leading into end of Ramadan.
August		Ending to barbeque season, leads into Eid holiday period.	Lower demand for heavy lambs. Lower consumer demand with end of summer barbeque season and lead-up to Eid.	Lower early demand for light and heavy lambs, will increase in 2 to 3-week period before Eid.

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August 12	Eid ul Adha (Festival of Sacrifice, Eid) (Islam) 1 day A peak sale period in year.	Eid, the festival of sacrifice, is one of the most important observances in the Islamic faith. (This may be referred to as <u>Qurbani</u> , though this refers to the actual act of animal processing.)	Weaned market lambs (70 – 90 lbs live weight); heavier older lambs are also in demand. Lambs should be under a year of age and be unblemished. Blemishes may include open wounds, torn ears or other physical unsoundness. Wethers and lambs with docked tails may not be acceptable to some buyers.	High market demand in period leading up to holiday. Peak demand is in week preceding holiday. Note: There is a high activity level of private holiday sales sought by families for this important celebration period.
September 1	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 health.	Steady market. A limited influencer.
September 30	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 14	Thanksgiving (Christian)	Not yet a tradition but lamb is a turkey alternative.	Steady demand with slow year over year consumer demand increase.	Steady market. A limited influencer.
November	None	Stew/casserole are growing in seasonal popularity	Lower but steady demand during transition from Thanksgiving into Christmas period.	Lower market volumes and demand.
December 23 – 30	Chanukah (Festival of Rededication) (Jewish) 8 days	Traditionally must be processed according to Kosher law.	Healthy heavy lambs. (up to 100 lbs live weight)	Usually occurs close to Christian Christmas which leads to high demand.
December 25	Christmas Day to New Year (Christian) A peak sale period in year.	Lamb is a feature at Christmas parties (lamb-pops, spiedini, roasts). Leg of lamb, stews and curries are food staples.	Lambs should be freshly weaned (milk fed), 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.