



A Continued Focus on Governance

Over the course of this past year I've written a lot about the work the OSF Board has been engaged in regarding governance and succession planning. The board has made great strides enhancing its understanding of governance and its capacity to best position the sector to take full advantage of future growth potential and to adequately respond to policy and regulatory reforms impacting sheep production.

The work that we have been engaged in has captured the attention of Ontario sheep farmers who are raising some excellent questions about the changes we have been making; such as establishing a Board Advisor position. To help answer some of these questions, the OSF will be reaching out to talk about governance within the districts, governance around the OSF board table, and how following good governance can lead to better decision making and a more productive district/organization.

The OSF Board is made up of 11 Provincial Directors that are elected from their districts. All of them must have bought or sold sheep within the last 12 months and are registered with the Ontario Sheep Farmers. The role of the Provincial Director is to bring issues, concerns, or resolutions from their district to the OSF Board for discussion.

While the board members have a breadth of knowledge, they sometimes want to seek advice, or additional information from an outside source. There are a few ways to access advice. One of the more common ways is through the use of board committees and another way is through a Board Advisor.

The OSF has six standing committees: governance, finance, predation, research, wool and the convention committee. Each committee is tasked to work on an issue for the board in order to provide insight and recommendations back to them. For example, the board tasked the predation committee to work through the changes to the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program and bring recommendations back to the board for consideration.

There is the potential to bring in non-board members to sit on each committee, tapping into those individual's particular skill sets or experience. One of the areas that the board is looking to improve this year is to expand the number of members at large (non-board members) on each committee.

Sometimes there are questions and/or issues that the board wants to seek advice on that are not suitable for the committees or are best approached through a discussion with someone who has a depth of governance and agricultural knowledge. The Advisor is someone who can sit down with the board to walk through deliberations on key sector issues such as animal health and welfare and to help the board expedite fair, just and equitable resolution of issues regarding board and/or member conduct.

The committees and Board Advisor do not make decisions on behalf of the OSF Board. They make recommendations to the OSF Board. The board considers all the information and recommendations provided before making a decision. OSF is a governance board which means the board decides what it wants to get accomplished and the industry affect of doing so. It is then up to the General Manager (GM) to ensure that the board's direction is accomplished by the staff. **OSN**

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