



Wrapping Up My Time as OSF Chair

It's hard to believe that my time as chair of Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) is drawing to a close; it certainly has been an honour. During my tenure I have had the ability to meet with a lot of sheep producers and industry leaders from across Canada and am encouraged by their enthusiasm. By now you all know of my passion for both industry and producer engagement. This is particularly true when it comes to ensuring that sheep farmers are building relationships with producers in the United States and becomes especially important as the agricultural sector faces trade uncertainties.

This was driven home again in July when OSF hosted Mike Corn, President of the American Sheep Industry (ASI) and his wife Jennifer for farm tours and events. Mike was kind enough to speak to those who attended the District 1 provincial tour dinner about the issues facing US sheep farmers. Not surprising, they face many of the same issues that Ontario sheep farmers face, including an inability to fill their domestic demand for product. It's important that, moving forward, our industry here in Ontario continues to build upon the positive relationships and momentum we have been able to establish with our American counterparts to date. The opportunity exists to build on this momentum and work with the ASI in areas of common interest including flock health, genetic improvement and trade.

While visiting Ontario, the Corns were able to tour several Ontario sheep farms and I would like to extend my appreciation to the producers who took time out of their schedules to host them – Mike Swidersky, Romy and Ryan Schill, Mark Martin, the Holstein Agro Expo organizing committee, and the Lewis family.

District elections for provincial directors in Districts 1, 4, 7, and 10 have just recently taken place or will be taking place shortly. The OSF board has been informed that Sally, Fraser and I will not be pursuing new terms as directors for our respective districts. As some of our new, and past directors can attest, being a provincial director is a commitment that extends beyond attending board meetings. And so somehow just saying thank you to Sally and Fraser for their commitment and contributions to OSF doesn't seem like enough. But thank you.

And, as some of you have heard by now, Districts 4 and 10 will not have provincial directors elected in time for the OSF annual meeting. The board will be discussing this at the October board meeting. The OSF board does have the option to appoint a director, as does the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission, however the option does exist to leave these positions vacant. There are operational impacts to filling a position or leaving it vacant that the board will also need to discuss. The board will be in communication with the districts on these issues and, as always, will be providing updates to the industry via the Messenger.

Planning continues for the 2018 Ontario Sheep Convention. We will be back at the Nottawasaga Inn Resort on November 1 and 2. The theme of the Convention is *Driving Flock Performance – more lambs to market, more \$\$\$\$ in your pocket* and Richard Ehrhardt, Small Ruminant Extension Specialist from Michigan State University will be joining us, delivering two keynote presentations. More information about the Convention, including a draft agenda and registration form is included in this issue of the magazine. I look forward to seeing you there. **OSN**

Editorial policy: Ontario Sheep Farmers welcomes and encourages letters to the editor and article suggestions from farmers and industry partners as a means of communicating with the Ontario Sheep Farmers board of directors and other farmers on issues of importance. Letters may be on any sheep industry topic, including Ontario Sheep Farmers' policies, programs and procedure. Letters may address previous articles or letters to the editor, and the editor may comment on the accuracy of the information in letters. Letters should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for style and grammatical errors. When submitting a letter, please include the name of the author, address, phone number and/or email address (for verification purposes). Printed letters will include the author's name. Potentially defamatory or libelous material, or personal attacks on individuals will not be permitted. If an author feels that the editor has inappropriately edited or not print a letter, a written request can be submitted to the board of directors for review to determine if there has been a violation of *Ontario Sheep News'* editorial policy.