



Photo by Crystal Fullerton

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 8 N E W S L E T T E R

Message from the President

Shubenacadie Sam predicted an early spring and so far it looks like he may be correct, let's hope the good weather continues into summer. By this point most of us are well into lambing season and those who aren't will be starting in the coming weeks.

At the annual meeting, Meghan Spares was elected to the Board. At recent Board elections, Fred Hamilton was re-elected as President, Joseph Lech was elected Vice-President and CSF Director and Meghan Spares was elected as Secretary-Treasurer for the coming year. Below is a full list of the current SPANS Board (dates in brackets indicate their term expiry):

(2020) – Matthew Lynch, Scotsburn ; (2020) – Meghan Spares, Secretary-Treasurer, Windsor; (2018) – Jerrold Graham, Upper Stewiacke; (2018) – Andrew Hebda, Maitland; (2019) – Fred Hamilton, President, Lower Onslow; (2019) – Joseph Leck, Vice-President & CSF Director, Brookfield; (2019) – Andrew MacLennan, Mabou.

I would like to thank all producers who have agreed to participate in our research initiatives, whether it was the carcass ultra-sounding with CDPQ, the Maedi visna research being coordinated by Cathy Vallis or the ongoing Haemonchus research that Gwyneth is working on. We are very fortunate to have these dedicated project leaders working on our behalf. As all of these projects will be coming to an end over the next month, we will post results and reports on the website. On March 20th, CDPQ will be holding a webinar to go over the results; more details will be available via Facebook and Twitter once they are finalized.

I would like to encourage all sheep producers to attend the 2018 All Canada Classic to be held from July 5 to 7, 2018 at the Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Complex in Truro. This is a spectacular event, which will bring sheep breeders from across the Country together for a show, sale and hospitality. For more details and a complete list of events, please visit www.sheepbreeders.ca.

Recently, the SPANS Board has starting working on a strategy to improve and increase sheep production in the province. As part of this, we are conducting a survey of producers to gather baseline information on production and marketing. This information is very important so we understand the complex structure of the industry and it can be used as we move forward. To participate in the survey, please visit www.nssheep.ca/survey. As part of this process, we will also be reaching out to producers to provide feedback on the strategy.

We have recently joined Facebook and Twitter to make connecting with producers much easier.

Make sure you check the website and social media for a full listing of upcoming meetings and workshops. As always, if you have any questions/comments or suggestions for workshops, don't hesitate to contact the office at 902-893-7455.

Fred Hamilton, President

2018 Nova Scotia Sheep Producer Survey

SPANS, in conjunction with Perennia, is conducting a provincial survey for producers to fill out, indicating their farm management practices. This survey should only take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. The link to complete the survey has been added to our website and can be found at www.nssheep.ca/survey. If you'd prefer, you can also phone the office at 902-895-0581 and Ashley can complete it with you over the phone. Any and all responses are greatly appreciated!

Upcoming Events

- Improving Lamb Survival Workshops, Jonathan Wort; March 7th Brooklyn Fire Hall 6:30-8:30PM
March 10th River John Fire Hall 1-3PM
- Ultrasound Webinar, Germain Blouin, CDPQ; March 20th 7:30PM

Please register for these events by calling Kara or Ashley at 902-895-0581.

Livestock Producers Impacted by Changes to Regulations Related to Access to Antibiotics – December 1, 2018

Health Canada is implementing changes to the regulations that control access to and the use of antibiotics in livestock. Beginning on December 1st, 2018, all livestock producers will need a prescription from a licenced veterinarian, before being able to buy medically important antibiotics for treating livestock. Over the counter sales of antibiotics will no longer be allowed at places like feed stores. This means that as a producer if you don't already have a Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) you need to establish one.

A VCPR is the relationship that is established between a veterinarian and farmer, where the vet has an understanding of the farm operation, the livestock and its management. If you have a working relationship with your vet, they visit the farm on a timely basis and you work with this vet to ensure the ongoing health of your livestock, then you probably have an established VCPR.

If the vet never comes to your farm and you have been buying antibiotics from a feed store then you need to consider what you are going to do. On December 1st, 2018 you will no longer be able to access antibiotics from that source and you will need a prescription. In order to obtain this, you will need a VCPR with the vet.

If you are in this situation, you need to think about establishing this relationship with a veterinarian or vet clinic now; don't wait to the last minute. A critical part of the acronym VCPR is the R; Relationship. Good relationships develop over time and take effort. If you don't have a "vet", start by talking to other producers and find out who they work with. Based on these conversations, contact the vet who you think is a good fit for you and your flock/herd and talk to them about establishing a valid VCPR with them. Yes, there will be a cost; Vets have bills to pay, just like farmers.

Anything in which you invest money and time that improves your farm, should pay for itself. Rather than relying on vets for emergency calls, consider this an opportunity to establish a flock or herd health program. This could help in being proactive in improving the health of your livestock, increasing the returns for your operation and reducing the number of reactive emergency calls.

There are areas in Canada where access to a large animal vet is a challenge. Nova Scotia is no exception. These challenges can be overcome and VCPR's established. If you are in this situation, talk to fellow producers and identify a vet who is interested in the livestock you have and reach out to them. It may be that the best fit for your needs may not be the closest vet to your farm.

In the next newsletter, there will be an article explaining reasoning for changes to the antibiotic use policy. For more information, check out the article at: <http://www.beefresearch.ca/blog/prescription-required-for-livestock-cattle-antibiotics-december-2018/>, talk to your Veterinarian, or contact SPANS.

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Purebred Sheep Breeders Association of NS – Sheep Sale Announcements 2018

The Purebred Sheep Breeders Association of Nova Scotia is proud to be hosting the All Canada Classic Sheep Show and Sale which is the National Show and Sale sponsored, annually, by the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association (CSBA). The 2018 "Classic" will be held at the Provincial Exhibition Grounds on July 5th, 6th, and 7th, with the sale being conducted on the last day, with Andy Carter as our Auctioneer.

For a more detailed schedule of events and entry forms, please go to the CSBA website at www.sheepbreeders.ca. Entry forms and catalogues may also be requested by calling 1-866-956-1116. Because of the hosting of the Classic, the Association will **not** be holding the Atlantic Fall Sheep Sale on the Labour Day weekend in September this year.

Canadian Verified Sheep Program (CVSP) Update

Congratulations to Rhonda and Ian McCarron of Brook Ridge Farm in Brierly Brook, NS; the first CVSP certified farm in Canada! We are very proud of them and wish to thank them for making the effort and putting in all the work to reach this milestone. The Canadian Verified Sheep Program is developed through the Canadian Sheep Federation, with additional information available at: <http://www.cansheep.ca/cms/en/Programs/FoodSafeFarmPractices/FoodSafetyFarmPractices.aspx>

Contact Kara Saville at 902-895-0581, or ksaville@agricommodity.ca, at the SPANS office if you are interested in participating.

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