



**Sheep Producers
Association of Nova Scotia**



Photo by Crystal Fullerton

January 2019 Newsletter

Message from the President



We are now in early January, temperatures have dropped and most of the Province is covered in a layer of snow. The winter months mean SPANS is now preparing for our upcoming workshops and Annual Meetings as well as working towards completing projects we have been working on over the past several months. SPANS will also be on the move this winter- we are anticipating to moving office locations sometime in March to 7 Atlantic Central Drive. This location is just off of Exit 17 on Highway 104 near Wilson Equipment. We will keep everyone updated on the timeline for the move.

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 SPANS Annual General Meeting

In November, the 2018 SPANS Annual General Meeting was held at the Best Western Glengarry, Truro, NS. We are having some changes to our board as we say thank you to our retiring board member Jerry Graham. He has dedicated his time to the Sheep Producers of Nova Scotia board over the last few years. We wish a warm welcome Marie Ouimet and Andy Hebda to the board for their 3 year term.

Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers (CCWG) Report

In the last 12 months fine wools from all origins have achieved unprecedented record prices although at the time of this writing prices have pulled back for most microns in the last couple of weeks. Unfortunately the crossbred and broader wools which are much more plentiful in supply have been left behind for the most part and have only recorded marginal increases compared to the previous year.

The growth in fine wool prices can be attributed to two main factors. There is major concern regarding future available supply due mainly to ongoing Australian drought in most of the major wool producing states. This has resulted in decreased production i.e. lower fleece weights due to feed shortages and reduced sheep numbers. For the 2018/19 season it does not look any better with the current forecast of a 5.7% reduction in the Australian wool clip.

As always, China is playing a major role in influencing the market due to the significant growth of their middle class and upper income earners. Despite rising prices, consumer demand for wool apparel has continued to grow. It was only ten years ago when China was mainly a low cost manufacturing and re-exporting destination for most of the wool exported to China. Today more than half of China wool imports are manufactured into wool products that stay in China and are purchased by Chinese consumers. Upwards of 70% of global wool production finds its way into this market. These are the main reasons for the current strong performance of fine wools. Most leading Chinese textile companies are reporting an increase in domestic sales but a decrease in exports. This underlines the huge growth potential for domestic sales within China as incomes continue to rise.

In addition to challenging global climatic conditions the current USA / China trade conflict cannot be underestimated. This escalating trade war remains a key risk to global economic activity and to global textile markets because of the uncertainty it is creating. It has the potential to completely disrupt the supply chain and to lower consumer confidence which up to this point in time has been very high in most of the major wool consuming countries. The present situation is that American raw wool, hides etc. are now subject to a Chinese duty of 25%. China accounts for 53% of all USA imports of wool clothing.

Although we have developed markets for Canadian wool in six countries, China will be our major export destination in 2018 for all wool types. It does not appear that the new USMCA agreement will have any impact on Canadian wool exports to USA, greasy wool is still rated duty free the same as the previous NAFTA agreement.

Our wool volume dropped approximately 4.3% during the 2017/18 wool marketing year but we are encouraged by recent Statistics Canada figures that indicate our sheep and lamb numbers have increased by 1.6% in 2018 compared to 2017, the first increase in 7 years. However, the drought conditions experienced this year in several provinces has resulted in high feed prices that will likely result in some flock reductions or dispersals.

The tough trading conditions for the broader wools in 2017/18 resulted in lower sales of almost 14.5% for Canadian wool compared to the previous fiscal year. Conditions are somewhat improved during the current wool marketing season. We have found much better selling opportunities compared to a year ago to our regular network of buyers and also some newly established customers.

The retail business of CCWG achieved better than projected results for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2018 and continues to grow. Profitability was up at all locations with overall sales increasing 9.2% in terms of revenue ratio it is now almost 25% (wool) and 75% (retail).

2018 marks our 100th year in business which is a significant achievement. Sincere appreciation is extended to all staff and directors for your efforts in helping CCWG reach this major milestone. You are the company's most valuable assets. Of course we must recognize the support we receive from our loyal customers who are the reason we are still operating and growing the business today. We are fully committed to building relationships with our customers based on the right product at the right price and delivered with exceptional customer service. Best wishes to all for continued success.

2018 SPANS Producer of the Year



2018 SPANS Producers of the Year are Printhie and Wade Sanford of Oak River Farms. In 1999, their farm began with buying 3 ewes for their daughters 4H project with a barn they built to hold both sheep and Simmental cattle.

Printhie, from a dairy background, had an idea of how to run their new sheep operation and with Wade's business background they increased their flock from 150 to 300 mature ewes as of 2013, breeding a mixture of Suffolk, Rudeau Arcott, Ile De France and Canadian crosses.

They've expanded their operation with 2 tarp barns, introduced an excel program, and made the decision to confine their flock as a way to combat with the rise of *Haemonchus contortus*. They've also adopted two software systems such as Ewe byte and Farm works. They use their land for grass silage and rely

on Ewe byte for nutrition guidance. While being confined, the Sanford's have seen an improvement in overall herd health.

The Sanford's breed out of season with the previous help of seeders and now have fully embraced using photo extension within the last two years. With using the excel program they are breeding their sheep for March, July and October lambing, they are able to meet consumer demand for spring lamb. Northumberland lamb is their primary market while Outlon's Meat Market in Windsor would be their secondary market.

Canadian Sheep Federation Report

While affected livestock sectors wait for proposed traceability regulations to be published for comment (expected Spring 2019), there are a few steps that can be taken to prepare including registering for a Premises Identification Number (PID), ensure that your PID is entered in the Canadian Livestock Tracking System and review CFIA's Livestock Traceability Program requirements.

The USDA has reviewed and responded to changes proposed to the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP) that would align program elements with the USDA Scrapie Flock Certification Program.

In 2017, the Food Safe Farm Practices Chapter (food safety chapter) of the Canadian Verified Sheep Program underwent revisions as part of the 18-month 'review of changes' required by the CFIA's On-Farm Food Safety Recognition Program. Producers and stakeholders who have already completed the training, online or in-person in 2017 or earlier, are encouraged to review the newly revised Chapter and familiarize themselves with the changes. Canadian Verified Sheep Program certified farms will be evaluated against the revised program material during their next audit.

To learn more about the Canadian Verified Sheep Program, or to update on Food Safe Farm Practices changes, visit the online training program at fsfp.cansheep.ca

Sheep Shearers List Update

Sheep Shearers wishing to be included in the SPANS list of shearers please provide name and contact information by January 31st, 2019. No charge for inclusion on the list. Please pass this on to any shearers who may not be receiving the SPANS newsletter.

Improving Lamb Survival Workshops



Improving Lamb Survival Workshop

Guest Speaker: Jonathan Wort, Ruminant Specialist, Perennia

Topics include

Warming Boxes
Stomach Tubing
Colostrum Quality
Intraperitoneal Injections
Benchmarking your lambing
Improving lamb survival rates
Treating lambs suffering from Hypothermia

Where and When

Antigonish

January 21, 2019. 6:30-8:30PM

Department of Agriculture Office. 190 Beech Hill Road

Lunenburg

January 22, 2019. 6:30-8:30PM

Lunenburg Provincial Building. 312 Green Street

Please RSVP to Jena by January 17, 2019 at 902-897-6742 or
novascotiasheep@gmail.com

The Shepard's Toolbox - Water, how important is it really?

We all know that water is important for animal production but how important is it really? What are the requirements and how can you benefit from a hydrated flock? According to the Canadian Sheep Federations Virtual Toolbox the requirements for sheep vary with stage of production, air temperature, and moisture content of feed. High -quality water cannot be stressed enough and sheep should be given all the water they can drink because limitation of water intake reduces animal performance more rapidly and dramatically than any other nutrient deficiency. Water constitutes approximately 60 to 70% of an animal's live weight and consuming water is more important than consuming food. Not all water must be provided as drinking water; feeds that are high in moisture, such as green chop, silage or pasture, will provide part of the requirement. Feeds such as grain and hay offer very little moisture and can lead to lack of water found in your flock. This lack of water can lead to dehydration, some of the warning signs would be tightening of the skin, loss of weight and drying of mucous membranes and eyes.

Water sources should be easily accessible and large or numerous enough so that 'boss' animals cannot easily control them. These sources can come from various resources such as ponds, streams, dugouts, pressurized farm well systems, cisterns, and pressurized urban systems or water holding/ drinking systems like waterers, bowls, tanks, etc.

Ponds/dugouts are not a recommended water source, but if these are used, watch for build-up of blue-green algae or other contaminants as they can be potentially fatal to livestock and humans. If possible, be environmentally responsible and pump water out of ponds for the sheep rather than allowing livestock access to the pond. Automatic watering systems should be provided, where possible in both the pasture and indoors. Sheep actually prefer running water and such designs are available. The added advantage of running water is that moving water has a harder time freezing and can create a benefit for Nova Scotia producers.

It is important to remember that water quality is as important to animals as water quantity. With more water bowls available, you can create an issue of freezing water bowls in the winter depending on your flock size while creating more work for bowl cleaning in the summer if the bowls aren't touched. Water quality may affect feed consumption and animal health since poor water quality will normally result in reduced water and feed consumption. Water access as well as quality can affect livestock performance.

- Pasture utilization can be greatly enhanced when animals do not have to travel far for water.

In cold climates, water bowls can freeze and/or reduce water intake leading to dehydration. It is essential to protect the water bowls from freezing winds in order to help reduce winter heating costs for waterers. If you have a particularly cold barn, consider investing in heated automatic bowls, waterers and insulated/heated pipes. Depending on the size of your flock, you may notice that there is still freezing happening. This can be caused by the flock being too small for the amount of water bowls available.

Provide at least 4.5 litres of water each day per sheep, keeping in mind that both pregnant and lactating ewes will require more. In confinement situations, allow one bowl or nipple per 10 rams, or 40-50 ewes, or 40 ewes with lambs, or 50-75 feeder lambs.

Last Mailed SPANS Newsletter Distributed

Please note: **this is the final printed edition of the SPANS Newsletter.** All future newsletters will be emailed to those within our registered producer database. If you do not currently receive emails from SPANS, please ensure we have your email address so you may receive the newsletter when it is electronically sent. The most current SPANS newsletter will also be available for viewing on our website (www.nssheep.ca/current-spans-newsletter/), as well as posted to our social media accounts of Facebook and Twitter.

If you request a printed newsletter, please sign below and mail back to SPANS at
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Signature

Date

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