



FROM THE *flock*

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Traceability – Multi-species and government collaboration

By Daniel Dion, National ID coordinator

At the last Industry-Government Advisory Committee (IGAC) held in Winnipeg in October 2011, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) presented on the National livestock and poultry traceability performance targets, the proposed federal regulatory amendment for livestock traceability and on compliance verification and enforcement for animal identification and traceability.

Industry representatives from different species are working within their industry and with government to move forward on many aspects of traceability. The following outlines the information presented by the CFIA.

Please note that as we move forward on the implementation of traceability, it is very important for all the stakeholders to be involved in the process. Please send us your comments and questions to allow us to represent you the best we can in the development of the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP). Comments can be sent to daniel@cansheep.ca.

Why implement traceability and what are the goals of traceability?

Within the process of implementation of traceability, it is important to understand what the goals or performance targets are in order to understand why this traceability system is being developed. The National Livestock and Poultry Traceability Performance Targets will provide the stakeholders developing traceability systems with a guideline. The targets will be used not only as a benchmark for implementation plans, but also as a benchmark against which regulations will be developed.

The performance targets have been developed by industry and governments to communicate the high-level goals of a National Agriculture and Food Traceability System (NAFTS).

These outcomes represent what is required to rapidly and efficiently manage an animal disease outbreak, food safety issue, or natural disaster affecting the Canadian flock. Achieving these targets would decrease the potential magnitude of an event and shorten the time to full economic recovery after such an event.

RECOGNITION

Funding for the Canadian Sheep Identification Program and the Canadian Sheep Federation's Food Safe Farm Practices Program, has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative under Growing Forward.

Funding for the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program has been provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) AgriFlexibility program.

Opinions expressed in this document are those of the Canadian Sheep Federation and not necessarily those of AAFC.

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Key performance targets specify that within 48 hours, it must be possible to:

1. Establish the location(s) where a specified animal has been kept during its life.
2. Establish the location(s) from where animals at a given site were received.
3. Establish a listing of all animals that have been kept on the same location as the specified animal at any stage during those animals' lives.
4. Determine the current location of all animals that have been kept on the same site as the specified animal at any time during those animals' lives.
5. Determine the identification number and movement history of all conveyances used to transport animals to and from a given location.
6. Establish the location of a specified animal immediately prior to importation into Canada or the location of a specified animal immediately subsequent to exportation from Canada.
7. Establish the location and date at which deceased animals were sent, transported, received and disposed of (both on- and off-site), and a listing of those animals if identified individually.

Who is involved in the changes to regulations, why are changes being made and how is it being done?

As the sheep industry is working to move from mandatory identification to mandatory traceability of sheep, other organizations are also involved in the process to implement changes for their industries to Part XV (Animal Identification) of Health of Animals Regulations.

The livestock organizations that have agreed in principle to work with CFIA on changes to the regulations are Canadian Cattle Identification Agency, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Canadian Bison Association, Canadian Sheep Federation, Canadian National Goat Federation, Equine Canada, Canadian Cervid Alliance and Canadian Zoning Committee. The main objectives of the regulatory framework are:

- To reduce impacts of a disease outbreak, food safety issue or natural disaster originating from and/or affecting the Canadian herd,
- To better protect public health, animal health, and
- To support Canadian industry in meeting consumer's demands both domestically and internationally.

The industry and federal and provincial governments are working together to outline the nature of the proposed amendments to the regulations..

The amendments are slated to come into force in 2014 or 2015 to allow time for phase-in implementation of proposed requirement. The proposed regulatory amendments will support the traceability performance standards developed by IGAC and harmonize the regulation across species where possible in order to simplify framework and facilitate compliance.

It should be noted that the livestock traceability programs design and delivery will be reviewed to ensure graduated enforcement approach and to accommodate compliance verification effort required.

How is government working with industry to improve enforcement procedures?

The federal and provincial governments are not just working with industry on the industry requirements for traceability. They are also working on their roles and responsibilities; most notably compliance verification and enforcement.

For example, a Compliance Verification System (CVS) is being developed that includes detailed procedures, guidance for inspectors on the verification process and reporting tools. The goal is to implement an efficient and consistent approach to compliance and enforcement. It will also include training for inspectors and external partners. This is welcomed by the sheep industry, which, over the past couple of years, has struggled with inconsistencies from the CFIA in terms of enforcement. It is our hope that the development of the CVS will address the issues we have been dealing with.



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Antimicrobial Stewardship Conference

By Barb Caswell, National On-Farm Food Safety Coordinator

Earlier this month, the 2011 National Antimicrobial Stewardship in Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Conference was held in Toronto, Ontario. The conference featured national and international experts on various aspects of antimicrobial stewardship in agriculture, veterinary medicine and medicine. The focus was on current and emerging resistance problems and on identifying, in a collaborative manner, steps that need to be taken at all levels to improve antimicrobial drug stewardship in Canadian agriculture and veterinary medicine, in order to preserve these miracle drugs. The conference followed up on a previous session held in 2005.

What is antimicrobial stewardship? A term you may be more familiar with is the prudent use of antimicrobials, meaning using antimicrobials in an appropriate and responsible manner, such as following label guidelines and only using when necessary. The term prudent use is being replaced by antimicrobial stewardship. "Good antimicrobial stewardship involves selecting an appropriate drug and optimizing its dose and duration to cure an infection while minimizing toxicity and conditions for selection of resistant bacterial strains."¹ The concern is, of course, to prevent or reduce the conditions for development of antimicrobial resistance bacteria. Antimicrobial resistant bacteria have become a major health concern to the human population internationally and have led to scrutinizing the use of antimicrobials in both human and animal medicine.

While the link between the use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine for domestic livestock production, and the development of resistant bacteria concern to human health is not completely clear, awareness of the issue encourages antimicrobial stewardship. Antimicrobial stewardship also allows one to treat their animals in a manner that reduces costs and gives the best chance of success in terms of addressing animal health issues. As part of the small ruminant session, the CSF was requested to give a presentation on the Food Safe Farm Practices Program (FSFP).

¹Fishman N. *Am J Med.* 2006 Jun;119(6 Suppl 1):S53-61; discussion S62-70.

The FSFP encourages antimicrobial stewardship through responsible use of animal health products – following all label instructions, prescriptions for all extra label drug usage, having a vet/client/patient relationship, and keeping records of usage.

There were also presentations given by Ontario Goat, the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, the Veterinary Drug Directorate, veterinarians from Ontario and Iowa State University, and researchers. The topics of discussion ranged from what stakeholders concerns are with regards to stewardship, to the Regulations for using and approving animal health products, to research on antimicrobial resistance.

While the levels of antimicrobial resistance in the sheep population may not be as concerning as they are in other commodities, other commodities have struggled with resulting restrictions being imposed around their use of antimicrobials. As such, it is important for the sheep industry to be proactive. A question has also been raised on the potential for antimicrobial resistant bacteria to be transferred between different livestock species on contact and, as such, become an issue for a commodity such as the sheep industry when produced with other livestock.

Based on the presentations given, the group discussed some potential courses of action to address antimicrobial stewardship for the small ruminant industries:

- A continued focus to encourage producers to implement the Food Safe Farm Practices Program to help address antimicrobial stewardship.
- Education for producers.
- Increasing access to animal health products.

Increasing access to medications was a major discussion point. The Veterinary Drug Directorate (VDD) has created the Minor Use Minor Species (MUMs) approval process, which allows using research on a drug from outside of Canada if production environments are similar, rather than recreating expensive research.

Conference continued

However, while the VDD has done its best to streamline this process, and industry has consulted with them on potential products that would be useful to sheep producers in Canada, it is now up to companies to submit drugs for approval. The VDD has approached some companies but, to date, no submissions have been made. CSF continues to correspond with the VDD to see if there are potential areas where more could be done to encourage submissions for approval in Canada.

Unfortunately, drug companies need to see a return on investment – this is a course of action for industry to follow up and provide such information on the potential growth of the industry and, as a result, a potentially larger market. Working with small ruminant veterinarians and the VDD to educate companies on the MUMs process is also crucial. The sheep and goat industries in Canada are both small industries, and with extra label use of some drugs, companies are already capturing a large portion of the potential market in Canada, creating further difficulty in encouraging companies to make submissions.

A report of potential courses of action from each breakout session is going to be provided to the stakeholders.

Canada opens door to Welsh exports

WELSH lamb has broken into the Canadian market after a successful trade mission headed by red meat promotion agency Hybu Cig Cymru - and there are high hopes for sales in Sweden and China.

It was revealed at this week's Royal Welsh Winter Fair that a consignment of Welsh lamb has already been shipped across the Atlantic, with further supplies to follow. It marks a successful attempt to move into the North American market by HCC and several Welsh processing companies.

HCC led a trade mission to Canada at the end of September and the response we had from the country's importers was superb, said HCC's market development manager, Laura Dodds. The reaction has already been positive, with one butcher in Ontario responding on HCC's Welsh Lamb Facebook page with: The lamb is amazing My first order sold out in two days and I can't wait until Tuesday for my next delivery.

Growing demand -- According to HCC, research has shown a growing demand for premium quality Welsh lamb from the established population and newer immigrants to Canada. Statistics show that in 2008, Canadians consumed 34 million kg of lamb, of which just over half - 17.5m kg - was produced domestically, with the remainder imported. The Canadian market relies on imports of lamb from New Zealand, Australia and the USA.

Source: Farmers Guardian, UK

Continuing Education Survey

The Canadian Sheep Federation, in partnership with provincial sheep organizations, is responding to the need, identified by Canadian producers, for relevant production information. The plan is to offer a comprehensive continuing education program to assist lamb producers in building their farming enterprise.

The Canadian sheep industry is as diverse as the people involved in it and although we have a sense of the scope and types of issues facing producers, we need to determine the specifics of what producers, such as you, want access to. This is your opportunity to make your opinions known and to influence the content and format of the program as the material is being assembled.

The survey is divided into two parts. The first is subdivided by production topic; each will take 1-3 minutes to complete depending on how much additional detail you wish to provide. The second part addresses the need for, and availability and reliability of, existing educational resources. Feel free to add as much commentary as you wish. All responses will be kept in confidence and combined with other responses in order to make recommendations and develop the program.

Thank you for your opinions and your time in completing this survey. You can complete the survey by going to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/mastershepherds> or send a message to jennifer@cansheep.ca to receive a word version of the survey.



Proposed Changes to Imports of Small Ruminants from the United States

By Corlena Patterson - National Scrapie Project Coordinator

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency recently released to industry its proposed changes to the requirements for small ruminants imported from the United States for breeding, domestic or captive purposes. The proposed policy has been distributed to industry groups through the Canadian National Goat Federation, Canadian Sheep Federation, the Canadian Sheep Breeder's Association and the Canadian Livestock Genetics Association. Industry has until December 16th to submit comments and questions regarding the proposed new policy, and input should be submitted through your national organization. These comments will become part of a discussion with the CFIA regarding the proposed new policy and so it is vital that all interested parties express their opinion before any new policy becomes official.

The proposed policy change would also see further limitations for importing females, as they would need to be sourced from a USDA SFCP herd or flock enrolled for 36 months and having completed 3 annual inventories, when imported to a Canadian VSFCP herd or flock.

The proposed import changes will have the greatest impact on the ability to import male small ruminants into Canada. Where rams and bucks may currently be imported under a general health certificate, the proposed changes will require that males:

- Are imported from a US herd or flock that has achieved 'negligible risk status'
- OR**
- Are imported to a Canadian herd or flock that has been enrolled in the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program for at least 24 months and completed 2 annual inventories IF they are imported from a US herd or flock enrolled in the USDA Scrapie Flock Certification Program for at least 36 months and completed 3 annual inventory reports
- OR**
- Are imported to a Canadian herd or flock that enrolled in the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program in 2009 or 2010 and completed 1 annual inventory IF they are imported from a US herd or flock enrolled in the USDA Scrapie Flock Certification Program for at least 36 months and completed 3 annual inventory reports
- OR**
- Rams may be imported from any flock if they are determined to be of the codon 136AA/171RR or 136AA/171QR genotype.

There is no indication to date of the timeline for implementation of new policy nor is there suggestion for grandfathering of new policy to accommodate pre-purchase arrangements. The Scrapie Canada working group has compiled a list of discussion points that will be included as part of the larger discussion surrounding these proposed changes and will address these concerns. There are additional changes and elaboration to existing policy in the new document and it is important that all interested producers review the document in its entirety. A copy of the proposed import policy is available from the CNGF, CSF, CSBA and the CLGA.

These proposed changes on import policy will greatly affect the small ruminant industry's ability to source breeding livestock from the United States and impact market access to new genetics so it is very important that industry members thoroughly review the proposed changes and put forward comments and suggestions to the CNGF (info@cangoats.com), the CSF (info@cansheep.ca), the CSBA (office@sheepbreeders.ca) and the CLGA (clga@clivegen.org). These proposed import policy changes stand to greatly impact the small ruminant industry and stakeholder input must be an essential part of the process.

Voluntary National Farm-Level Biosecurity Standard

Thank you to those of you who have already called into the CSF office expressing your interest in participating in the biosecurity project. We have been collecting your names and you should be hearing from Serecon within the next month.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), in collaboration with the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF), is developing a voluntary national farm-level biosecurity standard and producer guidance document for the sheep industry. An advisory group is guiding the development of the standard and guidance document. This group is composed of representatives from CSF, provincial associations, producers, academia, and provincial and federal governments. The national standard is expected to be completed by the summer of 2013 and will focus on the broad issues affecting biosecurity. Funding for this project is being provided through the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Growing Forward program.

Biosecurity refers to activities that can be done to minimize the risk of introducing and spreading disease in sheep flocks. The benefits of adopting a national approach to biosecurity include the following:

- Helping to prevent, detect and control infectious disease,
- Increasing productivity when there is no disease present, and
- Contributing to the continuation of inter-provincial and international trade in the face of a disease outbreak.

A national producer-level study will be conducted to help in developing the standard. The study will explore current farm-level biosecurity activities and best practices. This study is very important in the development of the standard in order to make it realistic and achievable for producers to easily implement on-farm.

Serecon Management Consulting has been engaged under contract to work with the CSF, CFIA, the Advisory Group and other stakeholders in the development of the standard and the administration of the questionnaire for the producer-level study, which will be conducted by phone or on-farm interviews. The CSF and your provincial associations are respectfully asking for volunteers to respond to the biosecurity questionnaire. The intent is to have sufficient volunteers in order to ensure that the data can be analyzed by geographic region, production type and flock size. In order to have a representative sample of the sheep industry in Canada, Serecon is looking for participation across the country (see chart above).

Provinces	Target number of farms
British Columbia	22
Alberta	22
Saskatchewan	20
Manitoba	28
Ontario	37
Quebec	61
New Brunswick	9
Nova Scotia	19
PEI	8
Newfoundland and Labrador	11
Canada	237

We are seeking your participation in the national producer-level study. The only contact information required is your name and telephone number. If you are interested we would ask that you directly contact Jennifer Mac Tavish, the CSF's director to ensure that you have the opportunity to participate in this very important process for the sheep industry. These new national voluntary standards must be based on actual experience in the industry. Your input will serve to ensure that standards are operational.