The ability to track and trace animal movements is becoming a national priority; as demonstrated by Minister Mitchell's financial commitment to the development of the Canadian Livestock Identification Agency (CLIA). In June 2004, Mitchell announced that $529,600 would be allocated to the CLIA for the establishment of a multi-species tracking and tracing system.

This issue has been deemed a priority due to the increasing number of farm animal movements and potential risks of animal disease out breaks, food safety crisis and bio-terrorism. There is a push, then to improve Canada's emergency response planning while trying to minimize the economic, social and environmental impacts of such crises.

The CLIA represents seven livestock associations (including the CSF), the Canadian Meat Council and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. The Agency's mission is to "Ensure Canada has an efficient national animal identification system to support the financial viability of the nation's livestock and food animal industries by:

- Minimizing the impacts of a foreign disease outbreak or food safety crisis;
- Reinforcing our domestic and export market access; and
- Improving the competitiveness of Canada's food animal industries.

The CLIA will strengthen Canada's response to any major animal disease or food safety issues and enhance our efforts to produce safe, high-quality products.

The CLIA will establish national standards for compliance and enforcement of animal tracking and tracing information for its member organizations. In addition, it will provide a forum for discussion of animal health and safety issues affecting all species and potential opportunities for joint research initiatives.

One of the initiatives that the CLIA is working on is Premises Identification. A CLIA Working Group was appointed the task of developing a national integrated implementation strategy and providing recommendations on the development of a national, multi-species premises registry database.

A premises is defined as "*…a parcel of land associated with a legal land description or geo-referenced coordinates that define its boundaries or refers to its centroid on which or on any part of which, animals regulated under the Health of Animals Regulations are kept, assembled or disposed of*"

The objectives of a Premises Identification are to improve our knowledge of the location, origin and destination of livestock and to allow more rapid determination of the land parcels from which livestock originated in the event of a problem. It would also assist in finding where animals have been moved to if they have been exposed to a potential threat.

The information that would be collected for Premises Identification would included: the premises ID number; legal land description; name of appropriate contact person; premises type (farm, stables, pastures, community pastures, abattoir, assembly yard, auction etc…); and the livestock species kept, assembled or disposed of on the presmises for the last year.

The transfer of premises information from producers, land registration offices, producers; associations or provincial governments to a national database, even one owned by industry

organizations, would be subject to current and future federal and provincial freedom of information and protection of privacy acts.

Food-Safe Farm Practices Program: Implementation funds available
France Lanthier, National Coordinator On-Farm Food Safety

As the fall approaches we gear ourselves for the upcoming season of meetings and administrative business. For the Canadian Sheep Federation, especially where the Food Safety program is concerned, this is an exciting time of year. As previously discussed the CSF has been awarded a letter of Completion of Technical Review for our Food-Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) program by the CFIA. The letter of completion will be officially presented at the upcoming National AGM in November. With the assurance of the CFIA, that our Food Safety program is sound, the CSF in now able to move forth with confidence with implementation and program management.

Implementation

As part of the Canadian Food Safety and Quality Program's On-Farm Implementation Component, funds have been made available to National Producer Organizations to assist with the costs of implementation. It is imperative that producers interested in learning more about the Food-Safe Farm Practices program notify their provincial sheep organizations or the CSF as soon as possible. For the time being, and hopefully this will not have to change, the Food-Safe Farm Practices training is free of charge to producers. With the available funds from the CFSQ program the CSF can currently apply to recover part of the costs associated with program implementation; however, these funds may expire. For further details on CFSQ Implementation funds see the article *Food-Safe Farm Practices Program: Implementation funds available* in the August issue of From the Flock.

The CSF is also pleased to announce that Food-Safe Farm Practices training will soon be available online. The Food Safe Farm Practices website will include the Food-Safe Farm Practices manual along with a series of 5 training modules. Producers will be able to log-on the website and complete modules at their leisure. Upon completion, a certificate will be awarded to certify that all modules have been completed. The website will offer great convenience as producers will have the flexibility to complete the training program in one session or to scale the training modules as they can fit them into their schedules.

Food-Safe Farm Practices Manual

Producers having completed a Food-Safe Farm Practices training session should have a program manual. Recently **sections A and D of the Food-Safe Farm Practices Manual have been updated**. To obtain the latest versions please contact the CSF at the following:

Write to:
Canadian Sheep Federation
130 Malcolm Rd, Guelph, Ontario, N1K 1B1
Or email:
france@cansheep.ca
or phone:
514-567-1608

If you have completed training and do not have a manual, make your request to the above addresses.

Program Management

The development of a Food Safety program involves many stages. The full program framework established by National Producer Organizations, Industry, and the CFIA is the following:

Stage One: Technical Review
Part One: Technical Review of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points-based Documentation - This stage was completed by the CSF July 19th, 2005.
Part two: Technical Review of Management System and Associated Documentation

- General Management Component
- Technical Component (which includes the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points-based documentation)
- Conformance Component
- Auditor-Training Component

Stage Two: Implementation and Third-Party Audit

Stage Three: Implementation Assessment

Recognition

Post-Recognition: Ongoing Monitoring

(Full documentation on the Food Safety program structure is available at: http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/polstrat/reco/processe.shtml)

Part two of Stage One: Technical Review is where the CSF is at currently. As described in the 4 criterion above, Part two of technical review deals with program management. The CSF's goal is to develop a national management umbrella that can take into account that provinces will deliver and manage the program according to their producers needs.

The Canadian Sheep Federation will be holding its National Annual General Meeting November 24 and 25th in Ottawa. Provincial Food Safety representatives have been invited to participate to a Food Safety Meeting on November 25th. It is imperative that all provinces be represented as the objective is to establish the framework from which the CSF will develop its strategy for future management of the Food-Safe Farm Practices program.

Changes to Genotyping Program
Irish agriculture ministry boosts scheme to breed scrapie resistant sheep.

The Irish National Genotype Program (NGP) for sheep has been given a boost in a bid to increase the level of participation.

To date, more than 33,000 sheep have been genotyped under the current program, which is designed to find sheep that are resistant to scrapie.

The Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan, this week confirmed that details of a compulsory breeding program are being finalized .

The changes to the NGP are intended to encourage both pedigree and non-pedigree breeders to have sheep, in particular their rams, genotyped in anticipation of the introduction of the compulsory breeding program.

Under the new NGP arrangements, the agriculture department will make a once-off payment of Euro 40 towards the cost of veterinary fees in respect of each flock for which an application to genotype is received by the Department on or after 1 September and for which sampling has been completed by 18 November 2005.

In addition to the contribution to the veterinary costs, the department will pay a flat rate of compensation for any ram which, when subsequently sampled, is found to be in those categories which are susceptible or highly susceptible to scrapie provided they are slaughtered on or before 18 November 2005.

The amount of compensation that may be paid to any one claimant will be capped at Euro 1,500.

The department will also continue to pay the standard Euro10 contribution towards the cost of testing blood samples, with animals involved in the official Pedigree Sheep Breed Improvement Program qualifying for a Euro15 contribution. These payments will continue after 18 November.

Ms Coughlan said that the overall objective of the NGP was to increase the level of resistance to scrapie among the Irish sheep flock by promoting the use of the most scrapie-resistant animals for breeding. To date, most of the 33,000 plus sheep that have been genotyped under the NGP were from pedigree flocks.

The minister added that the initiative was aimed at both encouraging all flock owners/breeders to have their sheep, particularly rams, genotyped and at removing the most susceptible categories of rams, thereby increasing the level of scrapie-resistance in the Irish sheep flock.

She said that her department was currently finalizing the terms of a compulsory breeding program in consultation with pedigree breed societies and the farm bodies. She added that she was confident that the terms of the compulsory program would be finalized shortly and that it can be introduced at an early date.

Web posted: August 22, 2005
Category: Food Safety,Legislation and Regulation,Research
Chris Harris, Editor

Drought leaves sheep producers unable to meet demand
Friday, 02/09/2005

Two new surveys out today show the sheep industry will not be able to satisfy unprecedented demand both overseas and domestically over the next year, because of drought.

Meat and Livestock Australia has released its sheep and lamb projections, which say the number of new season lambs is expected to fall 4 per cent to 17.2 million.

Lamb markings are due to be down 1.6 million this year to 38 million, while overseas demand is expected to jump by 17 per cent to a record 130,000 tonnes.

Chief market analyst Peter Weeks says dry conditions are hampering the industry's growth.

"The main frustration with the industry is that there's a determination to expand to meet some of these new consumers that we've got but the drought continues to hinder that," he said.

"Lambing percentages are down, joinings are down, which means in the next 12 months we're now expecting production to fall by about 4 per cent."

http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2005/s1451837.htm

First sheep gene marker set to be released in Australia

By MARIUS CUMING, National Sheep and Wool Writer

The first known gene marker to be found in sheep in Australia will be announced later this year.

The gene found to be responsible for double muscling in sheep is known as the Carwell, or the Rib Eye Muscling gene, and a test for it in sheep is expected in November.

The cost of finding the presence of the gene is to cost between $25 to $40 per head.

A blood test will simply identify if the sequence of the DNA that codes for the particular gene in any particular animal and whether there is more than one copy.

Researchers at the University of New England found the gene in Poll Dorset sheep in 1990 after studying some animals with extremely large eye muscle area readings.

Over the last 15 years geneticists have been verifying and validating the gene marker in order to develop a commercial test for the gene.

Lambplan manager, Alex Ball, says the release of the Carwell gene is a historic moment in Australian agriculture and the dawning of a new genetic age.

Animals with the Carwell gene have been shown to have up to 46pc more muscling in the rump than those without.

Throughout prime lamb sires the presence of this gene accounts for about 10pc of all variation in loin weight.

"That is a very significant amount given loin values are between $10 and $20 per kilogram, so if you can add an extra $3 or $4 on to the value of a lamb carcass it becomes very significant," he said.

Gene markers will become a much larger part of the future of livestock industries, particularly given the establishment of Sheep Genetics Australia, encompassing both Merino and prime lamb industry genetics.

Boy meets girl at Lakeland College

Tracy Hagedorn – AAFRD
Business Development Branch

While the rams and ewes were getting acquainted out in the breeding pens, about 50 human guests were celebrating inside at Lakeland College on August 31.

The Vermilion campus hosted an open house for the sheep industry to celebrate the launch of an applied research project that's garnering interest right across Canada.

The rams making lambs with the college ewes are from five different terminal sire breeds, donated by purebred breeders as far away as Ontario. Their lambs will be evaluated over the next two years for carcass traits with the highest market value.

Sheep industry representatives from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario gathered for the Lakeland Project launch on Aug. 31 in Vermilion, AB.

With over 40 different breeds of sheep represented in Canadian farm flocks, lambs of all shapes and sizes go to market, said Sue Hosford, the project manager and Business Development specialist with Alberta Agriculture. "Our lamb has to compete with New Zealand lamb in the supermarket, so we have to take lessons from them about product consistency. Data from this project will help producers build better lambs by using the right type of ram on their own ewe flock."

Stakeholders in the Lakeland Carcass Sire Project – Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, Lakeland College and Sunterra Meats

Kliner, general manager at Sunterra Meats Innisfail, the largest federal lamb processor in Canada and one of the major sponsors of the Lakeland project. The company is scrambling to meet the demand for premium quality domestic lamb. Increasing the supply of high value lambs will benefit the entire industry, said Kliner.

The celebration at Lakeland College was a way to acknowledge the contributions of all the stakeholders working behind the scenes to get the project off the ground, and to thank sheep breeders who donated top quality rams for the research.

Shish kebabs from Sunterra Meats were the highlight of the barbecue that followed a tour of the Lakeland College sheep facility.