

CSF's Response to Cysticercus Ovis

Over the past six months hardly a month has gone by where Cysticercus Ovis (C. Ovis) has not been a topic of at least one edition of From the Flock, or your provincial magazines or newsletters. While C. Ovis is not new to the Canadian sheep industry, this year has seen a substantial increase in the number of lamb carcasses condemned in Canada. This parasite is continuing to infect Canadian sheep and negatively impacting the profitability of the entire industry.

The Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) was established by CSF as a trace back system to address producer concerns relating to sheep health, to prevent and control the spread and impact of diseases, to provide safe food to consumers and to maintain access to the domestic and international markets.

Although not a federally reportable disease, C. Ovis is affecting the sheep industry with the increase in condemned carcasses having a severe negative economic impact. As the presence of the parasite cannot be detected until slaughter, the entire production chain is impacted from the processor back to the producer.

The CSIP was established to deal with such an event. The CSF has implemented a confidential process through which the tag numbers of full carcasses condemned (in this case for C. Ovis) will be provided to the CSF. On a strictly confidential basis, designated persons at CSF will provide the farm of origin information to a veterinarian. Whenever possible either a CFIA or provincial government veterinarian will be contacted. The veterinarian will contact the farm of origin, again on a strictly confidential basis, to report that a carcass originating on their farm has been condemned for C. Ovis and to answer any questions the producer may have as to the cause and methods of preventing C. Ovis. The goal of this confidential program is to provide producers with the information they need to reduce the infection rate.

Having only designated persons at the CSF and veterinarians involved in the tracing of the carcasses and contacting the producers will allow producer information to remain confidential and ensure that no punitive action is taken against the producer.

To ensure that the CSIP program operates as it is intended, CSF is strongly encouraging you to keep complete and accurate records for ALL animals moving off your premises, including tag numbers, date of movement and their destination.

If you have any questions with respect to this policy please contact the CSF office. 1-888-684-7739 or jennifer@cansheep.ca