

Alberta
Lamb
Producers



2011 Producer Survey

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Executive Summary

The purpose of conducting a second Producer Survey was to elicit feedback from the Alberta Lamb Producers (ALP) members about the following:

1. Changes to the demographic profile since the first survey conducted in 2008
2. What they think ALP is doing well and what can be improved upon
3. Their opinions on, and perceptions of, the market and industry as a whole
4. To determine the memberships perception of progress made on the strategic objectives outlined in the first strategic plan
5. To elicit feedback on specific proposed initiatives such as advertising
6. And to 'close the loop' by measuring progress since the first survey

This information allows ALP, members, industry, and funders to check on perceptions of progress made and to do future planning with producer feedback in mind.

The majority of producers were generously willing to support the survey and provide feedback. As this is the second survey conducted we only have the first one as a comparator so we cannot use it to definitively predict trends.

Most of the information asked for was anecdotal vs. statistical. That is, we asked for participant opinions which are hard to measure and quantify. However it is significant to note that there were improvements or increases in every measured area of the study.

Although this was predominantly a chance to hear from members there was also a significant amount of information passed on to producers about ALP's services, information available, and the efforts being made on their behalf.

As with the first survey, we contacted a cross-section of the industry to attempt to ensure fair representation. We called small, medium, and large size producers including Colonies, and a wide variety of business types. We had approximately even numbers represented in every zone of the province. Of the 111 Producers provided on the list:

- 53 surveys were completed
- 20 could not be reached (no answer, busy, couldn't find time to connect)
- 14 are out of the sheep business
- 10 were deleted by Margaret (They were out of the sheep business or moved)
- 9 were wrong numbers and no new contact information was available
- 5 declined to participate

Where possible 2008 data has been supplied with 2011 data for comparison purposes. (NB: some of the 2008 questions were omitted and new ones were added this year) We have also included some of the 2008 demographic data in Appendix 1 simply for background reference.

Methodology - Producer Survey

This survey is part of ALP's ongoing attempts to foster industry communications, connection and transparency.

The following questionnaire was administered by telephone to a random cross-section of Alberta sheep producers between January 3rd and February 13th, 2011.

The survey was carried out by Prairie Sun Creations Inc., an objective third party, and all results were kept anonymous aside from specific requests from producers for ALP follow-up action or information. (NB: there were only three requests for action which were passed on to the office and were handled immediately by Margaret).

The 24 questions (down from 33 in the first survey) fell into two categories:

- Section 1 – Demographics (producer information) and feedback on the industry
- Section 2 – Involvement with Alberta Lamb Producers.

The survey calls lasted between 15 and 87 minutes, with the average taking 29 minutes.

Calls were made at various times of the day (morning, afternoon, and evening) and on all seven days of the week to connect with as many producers as possible.

Over 101 producers, from every zone and of every size operation, were contacted. The final number of respondents was 56, which is considered a very high response rate and can be interpreted to indicate producer willingness to participate with ALP's efforts to connect.

It is recommended that this complete report be posted on the web site in .PDF format for any member or interested party to download.

Study Limitations

It is important to note that these survey results are "anecdotal" – that is, they are opinions offered by members and do not represent verifiable claims.

- Although statistical breakdowns have been provided all data is intended to be indicative only, as it:
 - Cannot be verified
 - Does not, in many cases, include exact reporting by survey participants – in most cases they are providing estimates or 'best guesses'
 - Is not based on the entire member base. While every effort was made to take a cross-sectional sampling of producers of various sizes, location and type of operation this may not provide a proportion of the actual demographic make up of ALP's member base. For example, we may have a smaller percentage of 'off-farm' workers represented as they were not as available as those who were home all day. We were only able to survey 2 Colonies as the others were unreachable. Approximately 6% of the members that were reached refused to participate often due to a lack of time.

Notes in <brackets> are comments made by interviewers to clarify the question or the response received or to provide clarifying information in response to a producer comment.

Section 1 – Producers and the Industry

1. Has your operation changed in the last 2-3 years, and if so, how?

101	Not really changed a whole lot.
102	We got smaller. About 100 ewes less than we used to have. Have about 250 that lamb in the spring now.
103	I don't know exactly how to answer that. We were trying to increase, but it went the other way, but we actually got smaller in land base, but the goal is to get bigger in the sheep. We built a barn. It has changed and hasn't changed.
104	Yes, We've increased quantity of sheep; we have also become part of a pilot on lamb traceability. New handling system and new computer set up. We started that in the spring. This will be our second lambing when it comes up in March, It'll be a good comparison between the two years.
105	No not really. I'm sort of retired now Have about 35 ewes. A little extra cash income and that's it. I'm not into it that deep.
106	Yes, it's decreased. 95%
107	No, not really.
108	No not really.
109	We sold all our sheep back in 2009. Coyotes were a big part of it, and then the drought as well. Now I'm growing forage for cattle farmers around.
110	Yes, I had to reduce some numbers due to my health issues.
111	It's increased in number, by 50 ewes to 100 ewes.
112	Hasn't changed a lot. It's gone down, slowly. I used to have about 240, now I have about 40. Getting smaller.
113	We scaled down, instead of going up like we wanted to. We got robbed, 200 lambs stolen. The high hay prices \$100/bale for feeding the sheep was a big part of the problem that we had to sell sheep.
114	It hasn't changed much on purpose. Had a crappy year last year and lost a bunch of sheep. It was dry, and we couldn't get quality feed. We have less now.
115	No. Almost the same.
116	I just have more lambs. 30 more. Up to about 45 now.
117	It's got bigger. We've expanded 2 places now. About 1000 up to 1700 ewes. Feeder lambs up to 1000 more than we had before.
118	I've been expanding as much as I can. One of the only things holding me back from expansion is I didn't grow as much as I wanted to.

119	Our herd grew. It was about 25, now we have close to 60.
120	Yes. It's got smaller, but it's got more efficient. Had 35, we had lots of people who wanted to get in, so we sold a lot of ewes this year, we're down to 8 ewes and 9 ewe lambs that we kept.
121	We're still about the same. It's a hobby thing. I'm 77 years old. We've still got 25 ewes.
122	Yes, we've downsized. From 400-250.
123	Increased in numbers. Increased about 150 ewes. Have around 400 now.
124	We've increased in numbers. We increased about 100 ewes in the last two years. Have 490 older ewes, 110 ewe lambs, and 45 buck lambs.
125	Downsized. 4 sheep left. I kept the better ones. The kids wanted to keep some sheep.
126	It hasn't really changed. I've downsized a little, if that's considered to be a change. I was running at about 150 ewes. I'm probably down to about 100. That's not related to the industry so much as to my age. I'm not getting any younger. And having to work other jobs in this world of farming. Other than tidying up my operation and doing things better, faster, smoother, and trying to find ways to cut corners, I'm pretty much the same.
127	Not really.
128	No.
129	I've expanded a bit in the last 3 years 60-65 to 80-85 ewes.
130	No.
131	Got smaller, sold most of my ewes, had 300 ewes, now I only have 60.
132	It's changed for the better. You guys helped me out with a scale system, because we're on the traceability project. I like that. Some people complain about the traceability. Even if you don't care about traceability, it's a great management tool. I think people complain about the cost of the tags. It makes sense if you're commercial. If you're just a hobby producer it doesn't matter.
133	I've downsized, I went up to 50-60 sheep, now I'm back down to 25.
134	No it hasn't. 31 ewes.
135	Were increasing in size. We've gone up about 50 ewes. At about 170 now.
136	Yeah. My daughter is now raising purebred Hampshire sheep. Her first offspring was last year. We still have the commercial ewes too. 45 ewes and 5 rams.
137	Not really. I'd like to get bigger but it's hard to find good sheep.
138	I've had a small flock of about 70 ewes. I ran into an eye problem, I'm just starting up a new flock now. Almost back to 70 now.
139	We've downsized, and gone to straight purebred sheep. 150 down to 50.

140	We've been dry. We're in the drought area so I've had to cut back. It's changed in the fact that I downsized. Not really by choice. By dollars. There was no feed to buy. If it rains, we get lots of moisture and we've got hay, we'll keep ewe lambs and we'll go back up again. Was at about 360-70, down to 200.
141	We decreased our number of ewes. We're about 30 ewes; we were around 50-60 before.
142	We're increasing a bit.
143	Not much.
144	It got smaller - 50 % of what it was. Now 50 ewes.
145	We've expanded - lots. Actually we did a film with Prairie Sun. They filmed our place. We've been in expansion. We're at about 1300 head to 2500.
146	It's 50% bigger. More than 1000. Not sure how many.
147	We had to get rid of all our sheep last year because of the drought.
148	I've gone from winter lambing to pasture lambing - big change for me. Decreased numbers. A few hundred head. Have 350 ewes now.
149	It's expanded some. We're up to about 200 now from 150.
150	Hasn't changed much.
151	It hasn't changed much. Last 2 years some bad problems with feed, had to reduce, couldn't expand - ran out of space, time, and feed. We have about 300 head of sheep right now.
152	Definitely downsized. I'm just taking care of my marketing business instead.
153	Downsized drastically – 800 to 100 ewes. Because of predation. Lack of assistance from anyone to deal with it. Cattle down too.
154	Yes. Got bigger and then smaller. Up to 900 now down to 500. Down because of combination of factors. Got rid of poor sheep. Busy off-farm.
155	About 130 Purebred ewes - maybe slightly bigger.
156	No. Hasn't changed. Fairly steady. We did change our handling system – on the traceability project. The electronic reader speeds up handling the lambs. That gives us good reports.

Results – Operational Changes – Last 2-3 Years:

	Expanded	Reduced	Stayed the Same
# / 56	16	24	16
%	28.5%	43%	28.5%

2. What are your plans for your operation for the next 2-3 years?

101	Not really sure. I could do lots of things if I won the lottery. At the present time, not a whole lot of changes.
102	Go smaller yet.
103	Increase, hopefully in 3 years I'll be back farming full time. - I'm working off the farm to supplement the farm. At my last job I was working UFA in retail sales; most of the small farmers are doing something else.
104	We're going to continue to increase our numbers; We'll be just over 400 this year lambing out. Our plan was to go to 500 and lamb three times in 2 years is what we were heading towards, so that we would have different lambing times. It just didn't work out last year. This year we are hoping it will come fall. Get everything ready so we're lambing in March here and again in November. That will give more production for sale and for market.
105	My stepson got married, I might increase if he wants to get involved, or maybe not. The people out there are doing the right thing.
106	Hopefully expanding again. I'd like to get back up to where it was.
107	I'm just holding my own here. I'm not really expanding anything and I'm not going to drop anything. I'm not a big operator.
108	Probably stay much the same.
109	No plans to get back into it.
110	I'm going to increase numbers a little, but I can't increase them too far. I'm going to be 65 in a year's time .Time to maybe throttle down a little.
111	To stay the same size or increase if you can find grass for them.
112	I'm actually retired now, I have a few goats now, I'd like to stay about 60-70 ewes too. Not going to be doing too much.
113	Slowly but surely building up the herd again.
114	Same thing as we've been doing. We raise our lambs, fatten them ourselves, and then ship them to Lambco at Sunterra.
115	Downsizing. Probably 50 now - probably end up with 25.
116	I'd like to gain a few more, up to about 55 or so. Steady increase for the next few years.
117	Continue expansion on the ewes. We'd like to get into 4-5000 ewes. The lambs, continue to feedlot those. That will expand too. Not quite double, but maybe double over the next 2-3 years.
118	Keep expanding, as money allows.
119	No idea.

120	Keep it about the same, same numbers. In the mean time I have a permanent off farm job. We can't have 35 ewes and not be home all the time. Cost of feed is a big factor, because we can't grow our own. - We're too small.
121	It's going to stay the same as long as I can keep up with it.
122	Not sure at this point. Depends on policies that are coming in.
123	I'm hoping to possibly get bigger. Depends on land that's available.
124	We want to get to about 550 ewes is the plan.
125	Considering buying some in the spring and selling them in the fall, rather than keeping them overwinter.
126	I don't really make plans anymore. You're probably aware that the farmers are aging, not enough young people coming in. The young people are doing a lot more animals than we used to think about. Circumstances could change overnight, nothing's set in stone. I can't plan too far ahead because of my own health. As long as I'm functioning well, I plan to continue. I value the exercise it gives me. I'm planning on being here if things go ok. I'm just a little more fragile who has backup, and I don't have any other family (besides my husband) here for backup.
127	About the same I guess. 124 ewes now.
128	About the same. 20 ewes. Used to have about 40. I always stay between 20-40.
129	Maintain the number around 80-85 mark.
130	Pretty well stay the same, maybe increase 10 percent. About 60 head now.
131	Building it back up again. Don't know if I'll get to 300 or not though. 150 maybe 200, that'd be it.
132	More of the same. I'm an old guy. My next 4-5 year project is to get some young guy to work in and take it over. We're running about 250 now and we're going to get up to 300. We're trying to get someone in to expand and take it over. Because to make it viable by itself you need about 600 ewes minimum. Alberta flocks are small, and everybody supplements their income somewhere else.
133	I've been debating getting out all together, or staying the same size. Haven't made up my mind.
134	About the same probably.
135	Go up some more. Not sure where we'll end up. 250-300.
136	We're going to continue building her herd, and move out of the commercial, and go strictly into the purebred.
137	Expansion. About 600 would be nice.
138	We don't like to raise more than 70-75 matures. We expect to stay the same.
139	Hopefully get back up to about 100 purebred ewes.

140	If we get rain and grass and hay, we'll increase back to 300.
141	Not sure. Might just be getting out of sheep altogether, or else continue where we're at.
142	It's hard to tell. It'd be nice if we could increase. About 440 now.
143	Make it profitable. Try to make things work better.
144	I want to increase. I had some wolf problems last summer. I'm hoping my ultimate goal is to get to 500 ewes, but that's a long ways away.
145	We hope to double our flock. We want to go to 3000 this year, and keep increasing.
146	Probably downsize a bit.
147	I don't know I'm 80. God only knows. I was able to keep 50 ewe lambs with the hay that we had, but won't be able to get back to what we had before. We had up to 300 before.
148	Likely to stay about where we are.
149	We're going to expand again. - Numbers wise I don't imagine we'd go past 300.
150	Probably stay about the same as where we're at. I'd have to build more buildings, and I can't see myself doing that.
151	Try to see if I can expand more. I have to get new facilities rebuilt. I have corrals too close to the house. Going to try to see if I can get a few more head so I can survive more on the farm.
152	Probably just stay small. 30 ewes.
153	<p>Like to get back to larger numbers of sheep – especially with the prices that they are today. Don't know if there is any use – such a cyclic business. Price goes up, lots of people enter the market. Younger women raising young families buy sheep for chores to teach the kids responsibility. Coyotes love those kinds of situations. Many women don't kill them. Trains the coyotes. Then those kinds of producers get out of sheep and the coyotes move onto the remaining producers fields. He can't keep up with shooting the large numbers of them. The government won't help. Hinder them with rules and regulations that restrict their ability to deal with coyotes. Can't stay with the sheep for 24 hours. Have had up to 12 dogs – but even then they are worn out. Min. \$300 buck each plus expensive to keep them. Constant thing.</p> <p>Have to find someone to replace Margaret. Her grandkids are going to win out some day and when they lose her they will lose a valuable asset. So they better get on that – she is the one who keeps it all together. She is amazing.</p>
154	Plan to see how things pan out – we'll stay around 500 if we can. Likely a decrease in numbers.
155	Probably expand - up to about 150 this coming year.
156	To carry on the way we are.

Results – Operational Changes – Next 2-3 Years:

	Expand	Reduce	Stay the Same / Not Sure
#	26	4	26
%	46.5%	7%	46.5%

3. What is your primary sheep business now?

101	I'm not a very big producer, basically we market a little bit of pure bred stock and that's it.
102	Market lambs, some breeding stock, but mostly market lambs.
103	Meat, finished lamb. - To a buyer, not direct to slaughter.
104	We have hair sheep. It's totally meat. We're a commercial flock. Ours go directly to market. Lots into the Calgary market. A buyer comes out of south and east of Calgary, selling to the Calgary market. Picks up and delivers.
105	35 Ewes. Lamb in the fall. Selling here in 2-3 weeks. I sell at Beaver Hill auctions in Tofield.
106	Direct market.
107	Direct to market.
108	For meat.
109	None.
110	Lamb operation I guess you could call it. I sell feeder lambs.
111	Meat.
112	All sold for meat.
113	Lamb production. Mostly for meat.
114	Meat, we raise them, fatten them then take them to Sunterra to get butchered.
115	I sell pure bred animals 1/3 of income stream. I sell unregistered grade for another third, then wool and meat for the other third. More breeding animal sales than meat animal sales.
116	Direct to market.
117	Meat.
118	Essentially selling, Half market lambs and half feeders.
119	For market.
120	Meat sheep.

121	We eat them, a few go to Innisfail.
122	Genetics.
123	Some genetics and the meat market. I sell some breeding stock as well as lambs.
124	It's both wool and meat. We run purebred Rambouillet and we get our stud rams in from South Dakota. We want to get the wool for the better microns, and we cross it with the Suffolk lamb to get the market lambs.
125	Meat, local to friends and family, and to the auction market. We take some to the slaughterhouse. We deal with the auction market in Tofield.
126	Primary is fine tuning the quality of the stock and selling breeding stock. It's good at the moment, It's holding well, but I do sell meat lambs too.
127	Most of them go to Sunterra.
128	Auction market at Tofield. Stettler has a sale too; I haven't been to it yet though.
129	Commercial market lambs. Lamb buyer takes them.
130	Meat. Take it to high river for Easter lamb market.
131	Ewes and lambs. Meat. It varies where I take it from year to year, depending on where I can get the best price.
132	It's meat. The wool is a bit of a joke. If you're in Merino or rambled sheep you can get something from wool. Everybody's in the meat business, the meat is a good price. Everyone's going to increase their flocks because of the good prices of meat today. They go to Tofield mostly. The best market in the past shipped lambs to the market. Today, Tofield sale is a very good sale. You don't get as much as you would if you were to sell into Toronto, but Tofield's better than Toronto if you include the freight. It costs us \$10 to sell them there and \$10 to get them there. Depends on size, 70 pound lambs are going for \$2/pound.
133	Meat - Usually sell it privately, they buy the live sheep. Whatever I don't sell privately, someone takes to the auction market, probably Tofield.
134	For meat, lambs. Take them to Tofield Auction market. Beaver Hill Auction Market in Tofield.
135	Meat - Mostly Tofield or we sell it direct off the farm.
136	Mostly commercial lambs, Both my kids are in 4-H too, They show in 4-H shows all across Alberta and MB. The commercial lambs get sold at shows and some get sold at auction at Olds.
137	Most of them get shipped to Ontario for meat. I guess that's wholesale. We do about 50-60 lambs privately every year.
138	Market lambs, I have a lot of purebreds. Take them to Innisfail, but I think we may go south this year to Lethbridge, and then they ship down to Ontario. I think that's where we're going to go. It's great to have carcass evaluation, but they aren't paying as well as these other guys are.

139	Still selling market lambs. Tofield auction mart. Breeding stock is getting there. It's just about equal now.
140	Meat. I ship some to Tofield, and I have a market that I get rid of lots around the area that I live in. I have quite a few contacts with the South Africans and the Algerians, the brown colour people. Not being disrespectful. But there is a difference.
141	Sell purebred breeding stock. We have a double A status, same as Ian Clark. So we've been tested the top status you can get, so we've been tested 5 out of 6 years. He was well known in the industry for years, but he retired this year. He sold out to 3 different breeders who are going to keep the status. We have different bloodlines and that, but it's a lot of paperwork all the time.
142	Mostly for meat. Take replacements out of there. They go to Sunterra. Some go to specialty meats now.
143	It's meat. Direct market, to the restaurants, and one farmers market.
144	Feedlot. I pretty much just sell them to beaver hill in Tofield. We're feedlot size, between 60-80 lb.
145	Lamb production for Sunterra meat. Quite a bit goes right to Sunterra. Other lambs are market other places. Also we do breeding stock all over. We did sell a fair amount of breeding stock into Mexico, but since the border's been closed we haven't been able to do it. Lamb production and breeding stock are our main sources of business.
146	Meat. People come to my farm. Direct sales.
147	Ewe lambs for breeding.
148	Commercial meat flock. - Sell most off yard to buyer. Not direct marketed though.
149	Breeding. We sell ewe lambs for breeding stock. Male lambs go to the meat market.
150	A little direct market, some purebred sales - quite a few, marketing ewe-lambs, and feeder lambs, I feed them out and sell them directly to Sunterra.
151	Mostly just meat - sell lambs in the fall. Try to sell the wool too. Up to now the price hasn't been that great. - A guy out of big valley comes and picks up most of my males in the fall. I keep my young females, so I don't have to buy anything.
152	I'm involved in the marketing of sheep and goats.
153	Meat. Sell to plant at Innisfail. Great believer that more people should sell to that plant. Shooting ourselves in the foot by running around and selling lambs to the freezer trade. Actually losing money when you run around to other inspected slaughterhouses. Don't make as big a profit at the plant but you don't have to spend as much time as you do otherwise. I estimate that it costs us about \$50 per lamb to run around. My dream is that if we can take enough to the plant we'll get another plant in the north part of the province. Crazy that all facilities are Red Deer and south. All you have to do is look at the concentration of sheep in the Innisfail etc. area. I have to leave 2.5 hours ahead to get my lambs to the plant but I think that's the right way to do it. Concentrate it rather than spreading it out in the freezer trade.
154	Meat. To the plant.

155	Good ewe lambs for breeding stock, a few yearling rams, and the rest go to slaughter. About half-75% females go to replacement or ewe lamb sales.
156	Feedlot. Buy average of 60lbs. Can range from 45 - ? We sort them according to weight and size and then run them through the traceability reader (insert tags if they don't have them) and then run them through again when it's time. Then again when we ship them to the slaughter plant. Weigh the big lambs on a weekly basis at this time of year.

- ❖ Of 56 Respondents – 8 specified Breeding Stock
- ❖ Of 56 Respondents – 8 specified “other” than meat. (i.e. Feedlot, genetics, out of sheep, etc.)

4. What do you think, if anything, has changed about the sheep industry over the last 2-3 years and why do you think those changes have happened?

101	As far as the industry goes, not a lot of changes, except market lambs have come up in price which brings up the price of breeding stock. We got a new influx of new Canadians who have always eaten sheep and goats and that has helped the domestic market.
102	The prices are a lot better, but that's because there's fewer sheep and more sheep eaters. The market got further away. We used to sell our sheep locally, but now we have to take them to Tofield to sell them. There were a few years there wasn't any sheep in the country, the sheep buyer locally moved elsewhere. No (role for ALP) well maybe in the market part of it, through advertising.
103	Well, demand has increased, and supply has gone the other way due to coyotes. I think more people quit sheep for coyotes than for any other reason. And they can certainly be a challenge. That's one thing unrelated to ALP, but it'd be nice if there's something the government could do to help that situation, in terms of a bounty on coyotes or something to that effect. I think ALP probably does have a role, helping people realize the potential of the sheep industry, especially those who have been in the cattle industry in the last few years. There are people getting into it all the time because of the outlook in the sheep industry.
104	Around here I see more people getting into it. One fellow bought his first sheep from us, and he's going into it more heavily. South of Cereal there's a guy coming into his 2nd year. And there's another young fellow considering going into lambs. Increased interest in lambs/sheep. I don't think we're making enough of an inroad here in the meat requirements for Canada yet.
105	I read the Alberta seed thing. The greatest thing to happen was that BSE closed the borders, and things picked up after that. No complaints really.
106	It's gotten better pricewise because there are less producers, but there are less places to market it to. I don't know why those changes have happened... The smaller auction marts have closed down, and prices have gone up because there's more demand for lamb.
107	The big thing is the progressive enlightenment—awareness of the lamb market in north America in general. There has been more advertising, more time spent by the lamb producers to get their product in front of the public. It's because they've solicited more funds from the government or the producers. Now they're getting them into the restaurants and the market place. People try it, maybe they like it maybe they don't. Everybody's doing it. Chicken, beef, pork producers etc.

108	The prices got some better, and that's just a function of markets really. The other thing would be going to the RFID tags. That's not affecting us right away but it's going to.
109	It's become a lot more profitable and a lack of people in it equals lots of demand.
110	Definitely the price has really gone up on the animals. I guess this is due to the demand.
111	I don't think too much has changed. It's about the same.
112	There's a better price than they used to be, so that's always good. I guess we have quite a few people eating lamb and they haven't been bringing as much NZ lamb. That's the way they regulated the market.
113	Did anything change? The traceability project, we're part of it. That's a big change I think. Has to do with the global market. The way I saw it Canada is moving forward. I think it's great that they do that.
114	I don't know if anything's changed that much.
115	I don't know, I don't give it much thought. I know what happens here, but I don't think about the general industry per se. We're still in a position where we have a larger market than we can supply. Imported product doesn't have to play by the same rules, and the border is closed to the south, so it hasn't changed in the last 2-3 years.
116	I don't have an answer—I don't know.
117	Consumption is the biggest thing that's changed. The ethnic/European people are demanding it. Cattle to them are sacred. The producers are getting older and they're dropping out and there aren't enough young people coming into the business to keep up the supply. It's supply and demand, the supply isn't there but the consumption is. That creates a good market.
118	The prices are getting better and better all the time .I think it's the demand for holiday lamb that keeps going up. The number 1 factor why we see better lamb. So even though guys like me are trying to expand demand is still outstripping supply. It's a supply and demand thing. I'm sure Alberta lamb would want to take a lot of credit for that. I think it's not that easy. It's the way the economy and immigration and everything else that has to do with how much lamb is consumed in Canada. That's what I see anyways. I think it's a hell of an opportune time to be in sheep. Unfortunately I can't get as big as I want to as quick as I want to try and beat it here. I don't think it's a fad, it's a sustainable industry. I wouldn't be in it otherwise. I'm from a cattle background, and I've seen the ups and down, I think it's here to stay. Not like Llamas and bison, Sheep has a long term future.
119	I don't think anything's changed. I don't know.
120	I think the sheep industry has grown a lot. I think it will keep growing. I hear a lot of people are switching from cattle and want to get into sheep because they're easier. We used to be dairy farmers, and it's easier to us to have sheep.
121	It's about the same thing. A low of people who had sheep are the older guys, they were fed up working for nothing. I know the guys who had 100 ewes or so, they sold out completely. On top of that, hay and pasture have been very scarce in recent years.
122	Virtually a total loss of export markets due to BSE.

123	There's a decrease in lamb producers and an increase in lamb consumption. Reason being ethnic people that come to Canada and more people are enjoying the taste of lamb than they did before.
124	There was a big change made in the wool price. Our wool has come up. A guy here was taking his wool down south. Now they know what the price is, now we're getting what it's actually worth from 80 cents to \$1.50 that's quite a difference. We can get more money yet if we get a little more interest from down south. It's worth \$1.75 if you have 20 microns.
125	I'm not too up on it, but I understand that they have to have chips or something. We have sold most of them last fall. They had ear tags which were sufficient, but now I'm not sure.
126	Everything is driven by markets and money. You have to know that I have purebred sheep. I'm doing that because I have registered animals. I'm not in the run of the mill production animals. You do ok if you build up a name for yourself. The changes I've seen have had to do with the markets. People are now interested in a sheep that don't shed. I have the Katahdins. It's a shedding sheep and it doesn't require shearing. Breeding has a lot to do with keeping the quality up. The biggest change I've seen is these sheep produce just as well as any other. Other than the fact that the world has been changing for livestock. We have a higher regard for feeding and care of them now. There's a lot more help out there now. That's a change for the better.
127	Lamb prices went up, because we have more Asians living in Alberta.
128	They've gotten higher, because there are lots of ethnic people in Canada. They like lamb. That's my guess.
129	Optimism increased, and that is mostly due to a strong market lamb price.
130	Price has finally increased, I guess with shortage of production.
131	If anything it's getting stronger. It's because of all the ethnic people moving into the country that are eating sheep.
132	What's changed is the price, because the ethnic market is increasing faster than our production is increasing. The best part about lambs is that we only produce 47% of what we need, the rest is imported. In other animals most of it is exported. The biggest change is the traceability project. ALP is promoting and helping that and that's been good. There's not been a lot of change in the sheep business, but it is changing slowly. There are 2 new guys starting up with substantial numbers. There are two other guys who are considering getting into sheep and they're young. It's good to see new young blood starting up.
133	I'm finding that it's being talked about more. In local newspapers they're talking about sheep symposiums. It's becoming more accepted, better known. Why? Because more and more people are realizing there's a market for them. You do better with sheep than you do with cows. At least for a while there. We have both, that's how I know.
134	Prices went up. A shortage of lambs I guess.
135	We're making money. It's demand.
136	Not a lot has changed I don't think. We're happy with the way things are going right now. It's a hobby for us; we don't make a living off it. We mostly got into it because the kids were in 4H.

137	I would even know where to begin. My concerns are more about how lamb is marketed in Canada than just the last few years. I don't think a lot has changed. We certainly meet demand. My concerns have to do with an industry as a whole, rather than private sales to people. Hard to give a black and white answer to that one.
138	When there was a drought I think a lot of sheep from an AB perspective went east, down into Ontario. Lots of registered flocks and stuff like that. We're probably down in numbers now. If you have a drought people punt, get out, and then start up again, instead of maintaining long term flocks. Definitely down in numbers, especially with registered flocks.
139	Our prices certainly have gone up for our products. Mainly that is because of numbers. We don't have enough sheep around. Most, because of numbers, no matter what weight they are, they get slaughtered. There are very few people feeding lambs now.
140	There are lots of people going out of them. As far as I'm concerned there's too many regulations on us. It's impossible to keep up. It's frustrating. You can't do this and that, you have to do this, and you have to do that, and the things you have to do cost money, then you're working for them, not working for yourself anymore.
141	Drawing a blank. I think people are being more accepting of the On Farm Food Safety program and health status and requirements like that. 4-5 years ago people didn't care, being on the Scrapie program, because now they like what we're doing for the purebred stuff.
142	Prices have gone up. They just can't supply the demand. People are eating more. A lot of producers went out years ago.
143	There's more interest in lamb. A lot more interest - which is reflected in the price - which is good for the industry, compared to beef and pork. People looking for an alternative meat. It's claimed to be a healthier meat.
144	I'm not really that familiar because I'm so far north. I think it's good for the RFID tags for the cows too. So you know where the animals come from if there's a sickness. I have a hard time with the wool. We can't find anybody who wants to come get the wool, or the shearers don't take it, and we're stuck with it. To send it with the bus to Lethbridge that's too far, so I burn it.
145	I don't know - I don't know. I see people exiting the industry, others entering. You have old people exiting, young people entering with enthusiasm. A lot of it diminishes when they realize what work it is. The prices look good, but without production and the efficiencies behind it, it doesn't look good. There's promise for the industry, but I do see lots of false hope for producers who are just starting up. It's a bit of a pipe dream that's been broadcasted out there. The realities aren't always conveyed as they should, people lose heart and lose interest. We try to be honest with people who ask us. You have to have an animal that suits your method of production. Your animal is going to produce based on the environment it's in.
146	More regulations because government wants people to think food is safe. That doesn't have anything to do with actual food safety. They just want people to think it is. More government interference means less sheep producers. Smaller guys get out, big guys get bigger.

147	<p>It's become entrenched more as a hobby. It's not a business or industry; it's a group of hobbyists. When we formed Peace River Lamb - we were marketing direct air freight to Vancouver. We had over 1000 head now the only thousand head operations are Hutterites.</p> <p>The majority of the operations are under 100 head. It takes 7 ewes to equal 1 cow in terms of feed. 100 ewes is equal to 17 cows. It's an industry of hobbyists. Now we're into the tracking of lamb. The Peace River Lamb group got the Innisfail plant going. My lambs are slaughtered after hundreds of US lambs. Any lambs that go into the Innisfail packing plant are competing with US lambs without ID. For us to get lambs in to slaughter we have to book up to a month ahead of time. US lambs have no identification at all. Nobody knows where they come from, or disease backgrounds or anything.</p> <p>AB Lamb has never raised a question about it. When I phoned AB Ag anyone who raises questions about the Innisfail packing plant will forfeit the support of the AB government in that plant. ALP has done nothing. IF - IF they've done anything for the AB industry, they've never communicated this to producers. They have failed miserably in communicating. Their recent newsletter contained a glaring error. I phoned in to AB Ag rep in Camrose responsible for putting it in. She missed it. No editing, it went sailing right through. Nobody reads it, or we have naive producers who wouldn't know that kind of error if it came and bit them.</p> <p>Producers are hobbyists - they don't know a technical mistake when they see one. Neither do the girls in the office in Airdrie at AB Lamb. This producer feels ALP has failed miserably in assisting the building of the industry and failed at communicating at what they've done. They spend \$120k check off money to support a cross-breeding program that's been done many times. Served no function to support the industry.</p>
148	<p>We have a lot of new people in the sheep industry - Primarily because other industries have struggled.</p>
149	<p>Positive attitude, more positive focus perhaps. Prices have improved dramatically. Probably the prices have been a major part of it. If people can make money they get encouraged.</p>
150	<p>Lamb prices have come up a little bit and with that the interest in replacement females has come up. There's still a shortage of lamb. A couple of wrecks; lots of people went of production, with BSE and the drought, - It's coming back up now. I think it'll stay strong for a couple years.</p>
151	<p>I don't think there's been much change. I just trying to get larger terminal rams in my flock.</p>
152	<p>Prices got higher, because we have stable marketing and good buyer support. Less Western lambs travelling to Ontario. They're selling out here. They may end up in Ontario, but the buyers are coming out here instead of the Alberta producers shipping to Ontario on their own.</p>

153	<p>The drought years saw us lose a tremendous percentage of the small producers. Hay got so expensive so many dropped out and won't be back. Newcomers will hear lots about those hard times, therefore discouraging them. Larger ones coming in but you cannot raise sheep the way the government thinks you can. Technology (weigh scales, sorting systems, etc.) costs too much when we're not sure how the ID tags will work out.</p> <p>Everybody hates the producer groups – went to the feedlot people and subsidized the new systems. We're buying the tags so that a few others can try it out. Those systems don't do anything for the people raising the sheep. Great for large feedlots and auction markets. Nowhere in the world are they raised like the government is trying to get us to do it here. If this new technology works so well – why aren't they using it in New Zealand and England and Australia? Articles about it in the paper but they don't really talk about how labor intensive it is. How you need a lot of people for large flocks. Breeding year round is even more expensive and labor intensive. People think I'm just a grumpy old man. But I've run 800 ewes for a long time. I don't care how much technology you've put in – it doesn't replace manpower.</p>
154	<p>Moved out of the dog house into a viable industry. Largely because of promotion done by ALP and the other sectors are not performing well. So the attitude towards sheep farmer is changing. Seen as business managers vs. just poor old farmers who just love his sheep. More credibility.</p>
155	<p>Don't think a lot changed. The worst thing happening to us is the RFID tags, only costs us money and does nothing for the average producer. AB Lamb Producers rip off about half of check-off, in bed with government, benefits the packers, but does nothing for the average producers. Sheep and wool commission did nothing for producers on that.</p>
156	<p>More people are becoming aware of the RFID and traceability – because there has been some money available from government. This has helped the smaller producers who couldn't go and get them on their own. I think you have to have 100+ to apply. Lamb prices are tremendous this year. Producers should be doing fine. Can't produce enough to keep up with the demand so they should be doing well. Started in 2010 at \$1.60 - \$1.70 for feeder lambs whereas in 2008 they were from \$1.05 - \$1.10. Due to insufficient supply. Lots of demand in the ethnic market and down east.</p> <p>People are working together more. More of a feeling of helpfulness. When we started no-one knew much about sheep (no info. on feedlots at all) and if they did they weren't going to share it but now there is more communication amongst producers now. I think that's in part due to Traceability project. There's a carrot at the end of that stick.</p> <p>People are looking at the industry as more of a business now – not as a hobby or 'wife's project' or to clean up the grass. We have a lot of farmers who had the PMU barns and hog barns that have gone under so they have a big barn with nothing to do – so sheep fit quite well there now.</p> <p>Not getting laughed at any more – treated with more respect by the rest of agriculture. Can go in with a smile on your face to meetings if you are a sheep producer now.</p> <p>The ads campaigns and media have really helped with that perception. They have some really good people at the office who are doing a lot with a little!</p>

5. What don't you like about the sheep industry? What would you warn someone about who is considering getting into the industry?

101	Like I tell everyone, the sheep end of it is a 4-H project gone badly. Our son wanted to join the sheep club, all the kids left home, but dad's still left with the sheep. The big thing is it depends on what you want to do. I think there are some opportunities for growth in the industry because of the new Canadians that have immigrated in this country, and they've eaten sheep and goats all their life, and they're going to continue that. And their children will too, because that's what their parents have raised them on. There is room for growth in the industry.
102	It's the predator problem that can put you out of business. Not enough disease management yet. I would tell them to watch which breed they're going into.
103	My background is dairy. I'm used to intensive stuff. I like the way a friend of mine put it to a beef producer. If you can calve out calves, you can calve out sheep... But sheep, it's like having 20 sheep having twins on the same night. You can't take it like a Texas longhorn and let them go. You could do that depending on the breed, but I don't think that's where the profit is. Start slow. Don't start with 500 head.
104	Make sure you have good dogs. Good predator control. We have trouble finding good dogs. I guess record keeping is a must, and it's hard to fit in some of it some of the time.
105	Don't know. ... If you want to go purebred, They're expensive; I'm just a small commercial breeder. You gotta make sure you can pay for your transportation and your motels and stuff. If I was 45-50 years old, I'd go to Saskatchewan, buy 3 quarters and start no question. But I'm almost 65. If I was going to expand I'd have to get out of this area because the land is too damn high, but I'd definitely stick with the sheep industry. Besides that and the bison that's about the best thing going on right now. Better than the beef industry. The BSE was tough, but it's getting better for them.
106	It's way more work than what people think. Everyone thinks a lamb is a nice little animal, easy to look after, but they're a lot of work.
107	Everybody wants to make money, If you're in the sheep business you're in the sheep business. That's what they want to do with your time or energy. Unless you have international contacts or a ready market, you're making a few bucks and that's it.
108	Well I guess a lot of the publications I've seen are really promoting it. The prices are good; I don't think they tell the whole story. It's not as easy as they make it sound.
109	Coyotes once you have a big flock in a big area. It's lots of work. If you have the time for them you can do good. If not, stay away.
110	Availability of markets to sell feeder lambs and so forth. When you get into northern Alberta, only one place to sell, that's Tofield.
111	The high cost of fencing.
112	The biggest thing is the predators. The coyotes is pretty much all I've had trouble with. They're a real problem.
113	I don't know if there's anything not to like. The small flocks get better treatment than we do. There aren't many big flocks around.

114	It's a lot of work when you're lambing. We're in eastern Alberta here, and our market's a long ways away. We have to haul them practically across the province and you don't do that for nothing.
115	The primary focus is on large production with chemicals without concern for long term sustainability. I think the focus would better serve the producer If they could reduce chemicals on the land and in the animals and move towards a healthier, sustainable model.
116	I don't think I'd warn them about anything I'd rather run them than cows.
117	Knowledge. They have to get a mentor to help them in the industry. There's a lot of marketing, disease, and predator control. They need somebody to guide them. You can't just say go into the sheep business, because they'll get frustrated and quit. We probably would have quit if we hadn't been so stubborn. Lots of people give up way before they should.
118	They're hard work. They're harder work than you ever would have thought of. They're high maintenance animals. If you want to have good quality lamb and sheep it's a lot of work. If you don't like work than you're not in the right business. Harder work than cattle. His dad thinks he's spending too much time with these animals. They're ok, but realize that they're not the easiest critters to look after either.
119	Nothing.
120	It's hard to get them processed. There's not many slaughterhouses that want to do sheep. Travelling distance there. The price of feed. But that's probably not just a sheep industry issue – it might be a personal issue. Also, convincing people to pay more for lamb than beef.
121	Right now, If we don't get rain in the spring we're going to be in a heck of a mess. We got a bunch of snow here, we're pushing snow, and the moisture we had last fall is gone. You can dig any time you want, and the soil is dry. Depending on how it melts in the spring, right now nobody's planning anything.
122	Lack of unification. You've got X different breeds, everyone wants to claim their breed as king of the castle. It's a lack of working together. I think every breed has some place.
123	I can't say there's not anything that's worth not getting into it for. Can't think of anything that's an obstacle or a disappointment in it.
124	I don't know what I don't like. They always pay the bills. If somebody has some time, it's the most profitable livestock to get into.
125	Some of the problems are it's hard to get somebody to shear for a smaller operator. For the auction market it's \$7 an animal to sell plus overnight charges. If you have to spend \$8 to shear and so much to sell for small producers that's lots. I didn't know about that when I got into it. And government regulations are needed to a degree too, but it's one more thing to worry about.
126	I go through my usual spiel. I ask them what market they want to get into, Not every market is good for every breed of sheep. If you want to sell for feed lots and auction markets, my breed is not for you. If you want to fatten them quickly and sell them on my breed is not for you. I don't want them to think that sheep is the be all and end all. Some people think they can get into sheep and make a lot of money, and it doesn't quite work that way. Education is still needed.

127	I don't think these high prices can stay and a lot of people coming in think the prices will always be this high.
128	Nothing really. I've always told people they're more money than cattle. Cattle people always laugh at me but when you do dollar to dollar compared to cattle, there's more money in sheep.
129	If they are new to the industry I would say that you have to be aware that at times there are severe price fluctuations in the market lamb price. They have to do their research before they go into it, but it's really something they have to look as a business rather than a hobby.
130	I don't know what to say. It's volatile. Market can be up /down in a short time. Wool is always the same.
131	I don't know.
132	It's a lot of work. It's hard to mechanize. You can mechanize your chute system. You have to have a good dog to run sheep. Start small so you get to understand about the sheep. You can't decide to have 600 ewes tomorrow, because you'll get discouraged. Lots of shepherds are females. Wives can run sheep. Predation is a problem. People have to manage the predators. In AUS/NZ they don't have the predators.
133	It doesn't make sense to me, what doesn't make sense to me is the wool. I have the Romney, they're dual purpose, meat and wool. It's only useful if you can find a spinner, but they can only spin so much. I know lots of smaller outfits that do it privately, but to go through the wool growers association you don't get much. It's discouraging.
134	The shearing part.
135	I'm not sure. For us it's pretty good. If I was warning people coming out of the cattle industry I'd be saying it's more hands on. Can't let them go as easy as cattle. Predator control is another issue.
136	I guess it's a lack of good breeding stock around.
137	I think in Alberta it's a lack of local markets frankly. In terms of places to take sheep. Most local processors won't take your lambs. I live in Alberta. I ship 95% of my lambs to Ontario.
138	I think one of the drawbacks to the sheep industry is they always want you to have 100 ewes. You can't do that alone. You need to bring in help. It can't be a one man operation. They always want you to have a larger flock. Once you get up there where's the help going to come from. I think that's a bit of a barrier to expansion. It's easy to have 100-200 head of cattle, but it's not easy to lamb that many ewes if there's just one of you.
139	I tell most people that I talk to that the main thing restricting people from expansion is predators. The AB government doesn't have any kind of predator program in place, to subsidize the buying of dogs or anything like that. It's hard for people to expand. The predators do a lot of damage. Most places don't realize they have a problem until about 10% of their lamb crop is gone.
140	I wouldn't. If I was to say anything I'd say have facilities before you have animals. Put the horse before the cart rather than the cart before the horse. Fence, a barn, a handling system. They don't need to be expensive. You can make one that works quite well, but have those in place before you buy your animals otherwise you're not going to stay in it.

141	If I was starting out now, I'd have a closed flock. Now you're seeing lameness coming through. If you're beginning, I'd go that route, but then I understand the commercial side too, right.
142	People have to know what they're doing. It's just like anything if you're starting new. For us, we do all our winter lambing. I think a lot of producers are having problems with coyotes. We've got guard dogs. That's what keeps us going. They do a good job.
143	Just like everything else, it always works out better on paper than in reality.
144	I don't know if I would have anything negative to say about the sheep industry. It used to be that the wool was a second income. Now it doesn't even pay for the shearer. That's the only negative thing that I can think of. Prices are good with lambs. Unless you go with breeds that don't have wool you're stuck with the wool because it's not worth the money you get.
145	I would warn them about the misconception that it's the best prices and that it's great right now. I'd warn them about the monopolies that are out there, on several fronts because the industry's so small. Only one retailer for equipment - Wool Growers. Limits in marketing and limits in availability of markets. Wool Growers buy wool and sell sheep supplies. They're one of the only ones that does that. Monopoly on federal plants for slaughter. They have a monopoly on that in Western Canada. Further north, people ship 12 hours to Sunterra in Innisfail. They can't reasonably truck to Toronto where the next market is. That's a legitimate warning.
146	Very highly labor intensive.
147	It's not an industry. If you want to get into the sheep business it takes numbers. Unless you're starting with 600 head (would be like 80-90 cows) you're wasting your time. That's the problem. The Hutterites know this that's why they don't have less than 1000. I'm now a hobbyist. I have 50 ewes. I'm also very much retired. Nobody should get into the industry unless they do have a business prospective. There are no people to help them do this. One person in Camrose hired to be sheep specialist for Alberta. She was one of my students in agriculture in Fairview. I think if you ask Sue if she's done any agricultural prospectuses for sheep flocks she'd say no, because they don't see it as a business. There are 49 breeds on farms in Alberta. They use breeds that continually cause lambing problems. The most popular course in Alberta - lambing 101. To show how to assist the delivery of a lamb from a ewe. That epitomizes the failure. I used to be a cowboy. There were 1500 ewes, two guys ran it. They were Rambouillet and they lambed easily. When you call a meeting of sheep producers if 20 people are there 15 are women. Hobbyist. They don't know how to control coyotes. Don't know how to imprint guardian dogs so they'll know how to guard, don't know how to snare coyotes, build fencing, and build handling facilities.
148	One pet peeve is that it's being promoted as extremely profitable. I don't know if the way it's being promoted is entirely truthful. It's being promoted as better than it really is.
149	I don't like the way things are going with the government regulation. I don't like what's happening with research funding. Research funding has been pulled completely, basically. There's demand from government for increased cost for tagging and paperwork and certifications and things. That's what I warn people about.
150	My biggest concern is only having the one major market here - Sunterra. If they decided to quit killing sheep it gets pretty costly to transport them to Cookstown. They're the only federal plant.

151	I don't know. Nothing against the sheep industry. I know the sheep can't handle a lot of debt, so I don't buy machinery right now. I got rid of my cows about 11 years ago, decided to try something else, got into sheep and so I just have to accept what comes from the market.
152	It's still work. Everybody thinks they're easy, but it is still work. Do not be accepting bids or offers trying to buy private in the country. They may save the commission and a little trucking but if they're interested in making money the only way to get the value is at the auction ring.
153	If you want to get into it – buy good, clean stock. Don't buy 100% of what you want to have in 5 years – leave room for expansion. Choose the replacement stock so that you build a strong flock. Don't go too big to start with. If a young family is interested – don't buy expensive land which will mean you'll be away from the plant. I was interested in direct marketing but always had the same question (went to sessions put on by ALP) – how do you ship (down to Calgary) and keep it frozen for transport and do that economically? If you're close to Calgary you can afford to direct market but not from up here. A plant up north of Edmonton would make it more cost effective because this is where the land is cheaper. The auction markets are too expensive because there isn't enough demand. So many have closed down.
154	Have to use a calculator, get the right information, and really treat it like a business. Not look through a colored lens.
155	Big problems in sheep industry are expansion unlike the cattle business. There is no culture of knowing how to do it. You end up with hobby flocks—nobody does it well. Get discouraging because you can't get good replacements. There's no shortage of market—prices are good. I've been in sheep for over 30 years and the percentage of domestic consumption has gone from 15% to about 40% so there's certainly a market there.
156	Most people go too big too fast. Start small until you get confident. Don't go out and buy 500 ewes. It's kind of scary that we only have one major slaughter plant in AB. If we lose that one we lose the only Federal inspection option. Have to have that. Then we would have to look for another market. We sell all of ours to Innisfail. We get along very well with them and don't ship anywhere else. We have good quality animals that are finished well so we have a great relationship with them.

Results - What you don't like about the sheep industry

- ❖ Predators – big challenge
- ❖ People not treating it as a business – just a hobby
- ❖ Lots of work. Need a lot of attention – especially at lambing time
- ❖ Must know the industry and know a lot about nutrition and production. Education, a good mentor, and getting lots of information is critical to success for new producers
- ❖ Takes a large number of sheep to make money (est. range from 500 and up)
- ❖ People try to jump in with too many sheep – can't handle it and leave. Start small & grow
- ❖ Compensation for wool is low – costs more to shear them than you make
- ❖ Need good fencing
- ❖ Shipping to market – expensive and because of small number of facilities it can be long drives
- ❖ Hard to get good, or enough, breeding stock
- ❖ Rising costs making it harder to earn a profit (grain, tags, medication, shipping, etc.)

6. What are the benefits you would tell someone considering getting into the industry?

101	I think there are some opportunities for growth in the industry because of the new Canadians that have immigrated in this country. They've eaten sheep and goats all their life, and they're going to continue that. And their children will too because that's what their parents have raised them on. There is room for growth in the industry.
102	You can raise sheep on a small land base. Easy for kids and women to raise. Better cash flow. Better return, with good management.
103	They're easier for women and kids to work with. Not going to kill you. I like working with them. You get one you get them all. That's a help not a hindrance. But you can't separate one without some handling equipment.
104	You're not going to get run over like you can be by a cow. My husband has never been run over by one of the ewes yet. They're more labor intensive; you're tied to the farm more than you are with cattle. They're easy to handle. If you have a problem, most of the time you can deal with it yourself without a vet. Make sure you keep up on your vaccination program because if you don't you're in trouble.
105	You don't need all the heavy equipment; your calving facilities are reasonably cheap. The beef /bison is big money but you need the heavy duty corrals and equipment. To get into sheep is cheaper. Have guard dogs and a good wire fence. I have a Pyrenees dog—that's the secret. I haven't lost a lamb to a coyote in 10 years. If you have a section and they're not fenced, you have to train your dogs and trade them off. I just have 30 acres, they see the big Pyrenees dog barking and it scares the coyotes off.
106	There's some money to be made, and I enjoy the quality of life looking after sheep. It's rewarding with the animals. They look up to you when you have them.
107	It's like everything in North America in the last 10 years. The margins are disappearing. They aren't like they were 10-15 years ago. For the big producers there's gotta be money there to keep them interested. That's not a benefit. Just be aware of your market. Learn to like lamb. Everything's cutthroat these days. You have to like what you're doing.
108	There's potential for profit with good management.
109	Lower startup costs than getting into cattle. Easy to expand.
110	The return actually is really great for the animals. When you look compared to other livestock it's just tremendous. Compared to the hog industry the return is phenomenal.
111	Good lamb prices.
112	Right now if the price stays up that's one of the benefits. They're a lot of work and they're a lot different than cattle. It takes a lot of feed to get them producing. A cow you can just keep them; the sheep you have to shear and stuff. A lot of people go in and out of sheep pretty quick.
113	I don't think there are any benefits except the way of life, and that's a tough one.
114	If you're a cattle rancher, it gives you some income at a different time of the year, when you're usually kinda low. I imagine that would possibly benefit a grain guy the same way. We just raise the grain we need.

115	I guess you get to live in the country. If you're an animal person and enjoy country living then those are positive things. There are good people and bad people, inspiring stories and those that would leave you aghast. It's like anything. The good news is the market exceeds our supply. There's lots of room for expansion. You're not going to have to fight and claw for market share, but you still need to figure out what the market wants in a way that is appropriate.
116	I don't have to worry about being trampled by wild rampaging sheep.
117	Low startup cost. The return is pretty good. It can be a family oriented business from just the women doing it to the kids helping out with something. You wouldn't let your kid do a cow but your sheep he can get involved with. I'd say that's the biggest advantage. And our world is changing. Our population is changing. Not all beef eaters like we were years ago. Changing to healthier meat. The Europeans and ethnic people demand their goat and lamb—they'll eat it at whatever cost.
118	The capital cost to get into them is just about nothing as compared to cattle and any other animal. They're cheap to get into in regards to equipment and facilities. With a small flock you hardly need anything for facilities. You can do it pretty basic for the first while until you get bigger. The other thing about sheep is they're a lot easier for kids to be around than cattle. I usually tell people about that when they ask about my operation. That's the two basic things. One thing you have to get over as a guy you have to be willing to take a few jokes. Most people in the sheep industry are women. When you're breaking into the industry you'll get your fair share of ribbing over it.
119	The money.
120	There's an insatiable market for lamb, because people can't buy fresh lamb in the store. It's good prices at the markets. They're easy to handle.
121	Anyone who's willing to go it's time to go. I'm sure it's still going to go up. The ethnic people love the stuff it's time to get it to them.
122	Huge growing market. Our net imports in terms of people are lamb meat consumers, and our production is not increasing accordingly.
123	Lots of opportunity for increase. Lamb prices have been good. That's incentive in itself. Stayed steady for the last two years, so that's good. Opportunity for expansion, because the numbers of producers is decreasing. There's a need for more sheep people.
124	Benefits - It's a quick return. If someone were to buy a ewe today for \$200, turn the ram, then they have two lambs a few months later, they're worth, 180 times two, plus the wool, where else in the industry can you get your money back in 5-8 months and have some profit left over?
125	The reason we looked at sheep was with children they're much easier to handle, that's one of our main considerations. The kids with the bottle fed lambs - there's benefits there. They become almost like dogs. They're friendly, manageable animals.
126	I'm a front line person because I've been through it for a while. Sheep are an excellent thing to get into, for a farm family; they're easier for a wife and children to look after on a smaller scale. They can be attached for a farmer who's doing cattle. Lamb is coming back for consumption. I push the fact that animals need to be cared for and good management has a lot to do with the taste. I can take the grandkids out amongst them.

127	If you're working off the farm lots of times your spouse can look after the lambs or the animals easier than they could if you had a cow/calf operation.
128	They're easy to have around and they're something you can do on a small scale if you want and still make some money at it. You don't have to have 2-300, unless you want to make a living at it. I don't make a living at this. It's something to do to make a couple extra bucks.
129	I think the future is fairly bright as far as prices go, for the next 2-3 years. I'd say that it is fairly easy to expand in numbers because of the profligacy of sheep. It's an easy industry to expand from within.
130	Very low inputs. You don't need large tonnage for hay like you need for cattle. You can get by with a small tonnage.
131	Easier to look after than cattle are, on a smaller place there's more money in them. You can run more animal units on your grass.
132	Easy to handle and they're easy to feed. We can feed ours fairly mechanically. Fencing is a bit of a problem. As far as livestock goes they're easy to handle. Cattle can be rough. If you can tip a sheep up to check a foot it's easy. You've gotta shear them. You have to manage their health better, they tend to die easier.
133	For just getting started, they're easier to handle than cattle, especially if it's a woman. There are profits to be made. It's just so much fun working with them. The lambs. It's easier to look after, except for the fencing, that's an extra expense there.
134	The return on your investment is really good compared to beef or anything else.
135	They're gonna make money. If they work hard and do things right there's money to be made right now. They're also a little easier to handle than the big range cattle.
136	Low maintenance, low cost, low initial cost of setting up. They're easy to handle. They don't take a lot of work. We're lambing right now.
137	I do grain farming as well. It's profitable, if you manage them correctly, but I don't want to tell too many people that otherwise competition is an issue.
138	I guess there are monetary benefits right at the moment - might not last forever. If you really enjoy working with animals I think sheep are a really great to work with. I think it's really enjoyable. If you're going to get into it do it because you like it and hope to make some money on the way.
139	Your return on investment - if you wanted to get into sheep tomorrow the breeding stock you're buying within a couple years your breeding stock would be paid for, because your prices are so high. It doesn't take much to get set up with sheep. It's not like cattle where you need lots of equipment and facilities. You can get started with sheep for minimal expense.
140	Dollar-wise number 1 compared to beef you earn twice as much. What I'd say to them, for one beef cow and one calf you can keep seven ewes and 10 lambs. They're a lot easier to handle. The population for eating lamb is growing. We're getting more and more people from offshore, and a lot of them are lamb eaters. I have one guy who has a standing order for a lamb every month. Lots of them are good lamb eaters, and they're looking for lamb.

141	ALP is helpful. Directors and Margaret are good. There are a lot of helpful people, and if they can't help they'll direct you. I've always had information from Airdrie that's helped out. There's some really good vets and stuff like that. If you get a good relationship going with a vet, something good can happen. If you get into it you can make things work. You just have to have people to help you but it's a busy job to have sheep.
142	You don't have to have no quota to get in there. If you have decent operators, there's bound to be some return. You don't need all that much equipment either. Especially if you're a small producer. If you're big it's different, but 50-100 head, Almost anybody could go into that with a little experience or knowledge.
143	It's got the best, of all the meat industries, best potential for growth.
144	It's good money. In the last couple years the prices went up. I own cattle too, and with the sheep you can do it alone. With the cows you need to get neighbors to help you, with the sheep you can handle it yourself. Easier to handle on the livestock part of it.
145	We've found some benefits in working with the abattoir. Today I had a meeting with Sungold regarding our business. They're willing to have a working relationship with producers. Obviously they still have the buying power, they're still trying to make things go. The market is strong for lamb production. They have the place to sell it but they don't have the lamb production. So that's a positive. We're in the shadow of Ontario. We get paid the Ontario price - from the internet - minus various factors. We know there are people out there making \$50-70 more per lamb than we are.
146	You don't have to cut your grass. (Hehe). If you get it set up right you can do ok.
147	There are no benefits unless they have enough to make it worthwhile. Unless they make it a flock of industrial strength it's not worth getting the fences, dogs, etc. Most people are hobbyists. The odd one has a barn. There are lambing barns built that have no relation to the economy of the operation that they're running for 300 ewes--it's preposterous. Even 500. lambing on pasture is totally beyond their means because they can't control the coyotes. I think our operation was the only one that lambed on pasture. As far as ALP is concerned, zero. Farm literature is full of efforts of beef cattle groups in western Canada. They're a good example, but ALP doesn't seem to be looking at them.
148	It's a great way to diversify.
149	Chances are pretty good that for the next several years prices will remain above the cost of production. We may be one of the few that can look forward to that. The fundamentals. We're in a good position. We can't produce enough to supply the market.
150	Price of lamb. We had several new producers buying ewe lambs from us. Getting started with the right kind of sheep. I see the markets going strong. There's lots of potential to get your initial investment back and start making money.
151	It's about the only thing out there that has a good market right now. In the past years a lot of guys reduced their herds. That might be changing now. Everyone who wanted out, got out so it might be changing. I live a boring life and I'm not paying attention to everything.
152	You can repay your initial investment quite easily within the first year. With cattle you're looking at a 3 year investment on that young heifer you're looking to calve.

153	If a lamb has twins or triplets and you lose one you still can make money. You have to be there for lambing so it's labor intensive. If you've got any amount of shearing to do get the non-Canadians in (i.e. New Zealand shearers can do 300-400 sheep a day). Don't let yourself be conned into being a judge at a sheep show. People will be upset if you don't pick them. It's hard work but if you have moveable pens that are coyote and dog proof (if you want to sleep) that helps. It's not as expensive. It's a good life. You're out in the fresh air with nature. Too bad about the predators but it's nice to be out with your sheep.
154	Missed this question.
155	Benefits are if you're prepared to work at it, low capital cost compared to the cattle business, Commercial you need about 500 ewes to make a living. For the huge majority of producers, it's a subsidiary activity. Most people don't know how to look after them. If you're willing to work at it you can make a few dollars at it.
156	Steady source of income. Cattle are a one year shot when you sell the calf. Grain is big cheques in big lumps as long as you can sell it. Small window for cash flow. If you do lamb right you can have something to sell every month. Can lamb them out at different times and can schedule them. Fix up your facility well before you get your sheep. If we were starting over we'd fence all around our land to keep the predators out. Then you've got lots of time to adjust your pens.

Results - What are the benefits to the sheep industry

- ❖ Market is strong. Most profitable livestock right now
- ❖ Rapid returns – quicker return on investment (1 yr vs. 3 or more for cattle)
- ❖ Strong and growing market demand
- ❖ Less investment or start up costs. Need less land and equipment than for cattle
- ❖ Ease of the animal to deal with (easier and safer than cattle) / low maintenance
- ❖ Nice animals / cute / enjoy sheep – and dogs (part of the package) – shepherd culture
- ❖ Great for families (children) to learn farming / animal husbandry – good for couples
- ❖ Lower inputs than other livestock

**7. Do you use email? High speed or dial up?
A. If not, do you plan to use it and when?**

101	Basically no email, high speed internet.
102	No email. We only have dial up, it takes forever, and then you get cut off anyway. It's really slow. All industries are going to email to keep you informed. There's a good chunk of the population that's not there yet. I just get my son to do it. He can do it a lot faster. If we get faster service, we might use it. There's a lot of disadvantages where we're at. We don't have very great cell service. Have to drive out to the road to use the cell phones. A bad pocket here.
103	High speed, not as high as I'd like. On email.
104	We're on high speed now, satellite. We do use email. We give it out sparingly because of the name that we use we don't get much in the way of spam.

105	No email/no computer at all.
106	Yes email and I'm on high speed.
107	None.
108	I use email and we're on 3G so it's somewhere in the middle.
109	Satellite High speed so it's not very good. Yes on email.
110	I'm on dial up. Uses email.
111	High speed. Yeah I use email.
112	No. I don't have a computer. I'm too old for that. Never been able to run one.
113	I have finally high speed. I am not a computer wizard. Yes, I use email.
114	I should just answer Zero to both of those. I can't stand it, I can't be bothered.
115	Yes, on email, and on high speed.
116	Yes I use email, and on high speed.
117	We have high speed, and I do use email, but I don't have an address myself, my wife/son do.
118	We have an Aircard, so it's reasonably high speed. I definitely use email. I even got a Smartphone, and when I can afford I plan to get the Bluetooth to match up with my phone, and I already have my sheep records on the phone. They're not linked to the EID tags yet. Now that it's going to be mandatory I'll get into it more sooner rather than later. Probably good to get into it before you have too many animals.
119	We have an Aircard, I guess high speed. Yes we have email.
120	High-speed, and email.
121	No internet.
122	Email and high speed.
123	Yes, email, and high speed.
124	We don't have a computer.
125	High speed, have email.
126	I have an Aircard. It's considered high speed in some circles. Since I don't have a cell phone that works, and now we have an antenna on our roof and we're all set. I'm not an old granny who doesn't know how to use computers. I'm a sheep lady with a website. Oh yes on the email.
127	Yes. High speed.

128	Yes - very little, I'm not that great on the computer. High speed.
129	Yes. High speed.
130	Yes, High speed.
131	Yes, I think its high speed now.
132	Yes. High speed.
133	Yes, We have an internet stick.
134	No computer period.
135	Yes. High speed.
136	Yes. Dial up.
137	Yes. High speed, but rural high speed isn't high speed like it is in town.
138	Yes. High speed.
139	Yes. High speed.
140	Yes. Supposed to be high speed but takes about 5 minutes to get where I want to be. The dial up, you used to go make coffee and do housework. It's faster, but not equivalent to town.
141	Yes. Wireless High speed.
142	We don't have either one for the sheep operation. We do it by hand, by paper in books. By the sounds of things they're going to force computers onto us.
143	Yes. High speed.
144	Yes. High speed.
145	Yes. High speed.
146	No email or internet period.
147	Yes, and I get their little blurbs, of no consequence at all... Dial up.
148	Yes. And High speed.
149	Yes, High speed.
150	Yes, High speed.
151	No. I haven't had a real need for it. I don't know what I really need. Getting one hopefully within the next 6 months. Every time I look to see what's out there they always change. I'm wondering if I'd have enough computer skills to run the thing, or whether it'd be collecting dust like everything else.

152	I don't use it at all. I like to talk to people on the phone. I think it's much more effective, much more personal.
153	The wife uses email – they have high speed.
154	Yes. High Speed.
155	No email, no computer. No plans to get it. We can sell more than we can produce.
156	Yes. High speed stick.

Results – Email Usage (2011):

	No Email	With Email	Dial Up	High Speed	Have but Don't Use
# out of 56	12	44	3	41	2
%	21%	79%	5.5%%	74.5%	4%

Results – Email Usage (2008):

	No Email	With Email	Dial Up	High Speed	Have but Don't Use
# out of 60	24	36	21	15	7
%	40%	60%	49%	35%	16%

Results – Change Since 2008:

	No Email	With Email	Dial Up	High Speed	Have but Don't Use
%	- 19%	+ 19%	- 43.5%	+ 39.4%%	- 12%

8. Do you access or use the Internet? How often?

101	My computer knowledge is limited, so I don't use it a whole lot.
102	About once a month.
103	Daily.
104	Yes, My husband's probably on it every second night. Goes to Roping the Web, and uses the SK sheep site quite a bit. I use it for email and for school stuff, because I'm a teacher as well.
105	Yes, all the time - every day.
106	I don't. I have a friend that if I have any questions about the market. He can pound it out for me.

107	Yes, Probably several times a week.
108	Yes, every day.
109	I'm on the internet every day.
110	Probably every day.
111	No. I don't use it at all.
112	Tough to say. Maybe 4-5 times a month if I have the time. I'm not going on too often .
113	No. It seems like you can waste a lot of time on there. Almost none.
114	Couple times a day.
115	Daily.
116	N/A
117	Yes.
118	Probably at least 2-3 hours a day. I'm an addict to the Alberta agriculture site, checking sheep prices and that kind of stuff.
119	Every day.
120	All the time... Lots.
121	No.
122	Daily, hourly... A lot.
123	Daily.
124	No.
125	Quite a bit, between the kids and I.
126	I do a lot of my work on the computer. Daily for sure.
127	Daily.
128	Usually, if not daily, then every other day. Depends on what's going on.
129	Every day.
130	Not too often, my wife every day.
131	Me? Hardly ever. My wife does it some, but I just don't.

132	Wife all the time. I'm not much of an internet guy. I should more. I don't even know how to run the computer. Wife does it all the time. Together, with her help, we can find everything we want to know with Google. We have this Racewell machine and we told them we needed a new manual. They emailed it to us. We just printed it off.
133	Daily, most times.
134	I don't.
135	Daily. I'm on it right now.
136	I use it quite a bit. I have an accounting business here at home. I use the internet quite a bit. I do a bit of volunteering for various organizations. 15-20 hours a week. My kids have computer too, and they're on it when they're not in school.
137	Daily.
138	Fairly regularly. Every day.
139	Every day. Some way we're on there just about every day.
140	I don't spend a lot of time on the computer. If I want to research things or check things out I do it, but don't spend evenings or extra time on the computer. I'd much rather sit down to a sewing machine than a computer.
141	I usually try to do it every day, but this last month it's been very little because of lambing. I'd say every 2-3 days I'm on the computer.
142	The only info I get from the internet is what they send out in the mail. I get sheep Canada and the latest news from the sheep industry. I'm satisfied with that.
143	I don't use it, the farm uses it. My daughter looks after that stuff. It gets used a lot.
144	Every day - couple hours.
145	All day long - on my blackberry too. - I'm pretty connected.
146	n/a. - Sometimes I get people to look up diseases and stuff, nothing directly.
147	Every day. I do a fair amount of writing, and I have columns in the local paper that I produce every week.
148	Daily.
149	Daily.
150	Me? - Not very often. My wife - Steady.
151	About three months ago was the last time I was on it. I don't use it much.
152	I don't. If I go on it's just for a game of poker - and I play for free.

153	She uses the internet daily.
154	Daily.
155	Not at all, no.
156	One there every other day or daily. All business done on the computer.

Results – Internet Access (2011):

	No	Yes - Frequently	Yes - Occasionally
# out of 56	11	39	6
%	19.5%	69.5%	11%

Results – Internet Access (2008):

	No	Yes
# out of 60	24	36
%	40%	60%

Change: 20.5% more producers are using the internet and the vast majority are doing so daily.

9. Have you checked out the new ALP web site? What were you looking for and did you find it?

101	No. N/A.
102	No. N/A.
103	Actually I have it open right now. I figured that's what the call was about. I've been accepted on the ALP traceability project. As part of that I will be using Farmworks and switching to RFID tags and a reader, and I'm pretty excited about that. Haven't gone to website a lot, but I'm getting more involved. I'm president of our local sheep club and very interested in the industry. I've been attending lots of the information meetings.
104	No I haven't. N/A.
105	No. No computer.
106	Yes. Looking at their website. Not really looking for anything in particular.
107	No. N/A.
108	No. N/A.
109	Not for about a year. Looking for anything to do with predator control and markets.
110	Not lately. Looking for different breeds and characteristics. I found it.

111	I haven't been on it for a couple months. Probably haven't seen the new one. I was just looking for some information, I think I found it.
112	No.
113	No I haven't. N/A.
114	If It's a new one I haven't. I have been on the old one, but I haven't been on the new one.
115	No.
116	No. N/A
117	I believe so.
118	I did have a look, not too deeply a little while ago. I can't remember what I was looking for, and can't remember whether I found it. It was definitely the new website.
119	Not lately, no.
120	I have... I think something to do with RFID links. I did find what I was looking for. I was also looking for recipes, I do that a lot.
121	No.
122	Yes. I was looking for a producer's sale page—I didn't find it. I asked the Assoc if they'd put on a producer's sale page. Something for you can send in \$10 and have a listing for a few months, but it would be a targeted market. Could be anything from equipment from lambs, sheep or whatever, but it would be a way within the province to advertise and locate services for our industry.
123	Yes. I was just browsing. I got an email telling me to take a look at it and I did.
124	No.
125	No.
126	Oh yes. I was looking to see that they had my name right and my new numbers and my email address. The one tool I used now, I used to tell people what to do with their animals, now I send them to the website to send them through the management modules there. I just tell them to skip the shearing part.
127	No, haven't looked at it lately.
128	No.
129	No. I haven't.
130	No. I haven't. I'll check that out.
131	No.

132	I haven't, but I'm up on them all the time because of the newsletter. They send us all the information on the newsletter.
133	No.
134	No. No computer.
135	I haven't been on there. I check it once in a while. I went through for our farm courses and used it to get some equipment from the government. Don't remember what I was looking for.
136	No. But I will take a look at it.
137	Yes I have. I don't even remember what I was looking for. I was just looking at it to see it.
138	Yes. It's not a site I've gone to often. They email things out and might refer you to the website for something. That's about it.
139	I've been through there looking at the production modules. I haven't had time to go through the whole thing. Found them fine. There's anything you're looking for on there. Lots of info for anyone getting started, or for anything I'd need to find too.
140	No. I'm not into computers. I just never got around to doing it. Never thought about it actually. If I want information I pick up the phone and ask. I'd much rather have personal contact with people over the telephone rather than in an email. Which tells you that I'm of the older generation.
141	Yes. I can't remember what I was looking for. Something to do with Scrapies in Canada.
142	No. No computer.
143	No. I'm sure my daughter has. Since they're always doing stuff back and forth. <No>
144	No.
145	Yes. I was looking about check-off regulations. I did find it. But it was cumbersome to find. I had to go through a couple links to get it. It should have been on the front page. It's what everyone wants to know about. It's a priority thing right now. People want to know what's happening. Put it on the front page. There are a lot of producers that don't want to go on the internet.
146	No.
147	I think I have. I wasn't looking for it. It was in an email. Wasn't looking for anything.
148	Yes. Yes - I don't remember what I was looking for and I believe I found it.
149	Yes. My name - I found it. There are programs there that are worth looking at. I'm in 4-H and I'm constantly getting the kids to look at the website.
150	Yes - I did look at it one time. I was just snooping on it - not looking for anything.
151	No. I haven't.

152	Yes I have. I just wanted to see what representation they gave us for the auction mart, and they've done a very good job. They have us listed there as someone to contact when marketing your sheep, and they show our market report.
153	He hasn't. Not sure if she's looked at it. <No>
154	Yes. Was looking for a medication list (withdrawal dates) – had trouble finding it but did find it after talking to Kathy. Had a weird name so hard to find.
155	No, Never used it. It's a waste of money.
156	Sad to say – haven't looked at it that much. If I was a producer I would.

NB: A web site overhaul was done in 2008 prior to the survey and considerable additional content and upgrades have been done since then so both surveys referred to the 'new site'.

Results – Visited New Web Site (2011):

	Yes in the past	Yes saw new site	No	N/A (No Internet)
# out of 56	7	16	22	11
%	12%	29%	40%	19%

Results – Visited New Web Site (2008):

	Yes in the past	Yes saw new site	No - Neither	N/A (No Internet)
# out of 60	6	14	28	12
%	10%	23%	47%	20%

10. Have you ever participated in an online Webinar? (A 1 hour educational seminar that you watch on the internet and usually listen to on the phone) Would you in the future if we were to provide sheep education and training that way?

101	No. and not likely.
102	No. yeah It would be a good way to access a lot of people wouldn't it.
103	Yeah I have. Webinar I think would work. I've tried some online presentations I think it's too slow. We even did some of those for work for my last job—some discussion of new products was done that way. You can connect with other producers—whoever's on the webinar. Other producers might think of something I wouldn't think to ask. I'm open to that sort of thing. I don't know if others would be. On dialup it might not be an option. You take what applies to you and pass by some of the rest. Depends on your experience and goals.
104	No. I've seen them advertised with one of the farm shows, and they talk about webinars. Yes, I probably would watch them, as long as we weren't in the middle of lambing. I imagine they would record them so you could go back and watch them later.

105	No. Unless I intend to expand and get deeper into the industry. Depends on what son and his wife want to do. On my own I'm not expanding. It's a little hectic after 15 days getting up 4 times per night. If you're not there to family ties them they get lost in the herd.
106	Yes, through work. Yes.
107	No. No, because I'm almost 70 years old. If I haven't learned it yet, I don't think I'm going to learn it in the next few years.
108	No. Possibly, yeah...
109	No. If I had better high speed internet I'd be interested in webinars.
110	No. When you're on dialup it's not as easy.
111	No. Yes.
112	No. I don't have the computer.
113	No. Only for my son, not for myself. I've been in the sheep business for 18 years. Maybe my son, he joined us 2-3 years ago. It might give him some benefit, especially the financial stuff.
114	Yes, with Avon. Possibly. If it's stuff like feeding programs they should have my husband on it and the chances of him sitting on the computer are a tad on the slim side. Marketing it could be either one of us... I don't know quite how to answer that one. I guess you could say it's a possibility. We've gone to some of the seminars but not for awhile.
115	No. No. All the subjects I've seen offered aren't ones I want to spend time learning about. Perhaps consider it if the topic was good, but I prefer to go to the sheep symposium if there are speakers who are interesting to me.
116	No. I think so yes.
117	No. Maybe as a mentor, but not as a student.
118	No. I know what they are because the wife does them for something. -- I probably would because I really enjoy going to any meetings or anything I can as long as they're cheap and I have the time. I've been in the industry about five years now, and still don't know everything. When you start thinking you know it all that's when you'll have a wreck.
119	No, No.
120	Yes. Oh yeah - definitely.
121	No, no internet.
122	No. I'd probably look at it, though I'm not much involved in production. I look after marketing, my husband looks after production.
123	No, It would depend what the training was I guess.
124	No.

125	No, if there was training and info online I'd consider it.
126	I haven't ever done one. I don't know whether my speed would be good enough to do that because I don't have high speed. Lots of their market would be rural, so watch out for poor internet connections. I could probably write the webinar. I don't know what they could teach me. I'm an up to date sort of person.
127	I've done similar stuff. I think it would be a good way of doing it.
128	No I haven't. Probably not interested.
129	No. I know what they are though. I would likely be interested, yes.
130	No. Yes, that would work.
131	No. Probably not.
132	No. I don't know. I'm kinda old. I have to ponder things a bit. I'd have to try it and see. B but I like going to the seminars because of the social aspect of it. If the lamb producers or the sheep producers put a seminar on I'd go to it depending on who's speaking.
133	Yes, but not for sheep.... Yes, that would be cool. It's an inexpensive way of getting that information out there.
134	No. It wouldn't bother me at all, because I'll never have a computer here.
135	No. Maybe I have. Because I went to the sheep association for a certificate so I could apply for a grant for environmental for sheep handling and food safety. I haven't done it before. If I was available I'd do it though.
136	No I haven't. I probably wouldn't. My wife might.
137	No. Yes, I think so. I'm going to be honest. I'd much rather we had a lot more information provided to us on the webpage. The stuff up there is custom form crap that's been up there for years. It should be up to date. I'd even suggest if you weren't a member you couldn't access the thing so we'd know that the money we're spending is directly benefiting the producers. <NB: ALP has put over 220 pages of new content on the site in the last year>
138	No. Sure, I'd prefer that. I seldom go to any of the sheep events. Especially with something I was interested in or needed more knowledge in, sure I'd do that.
139	No. I don't know - I like in person seminars and events.
140	No, I haven't. I haven't had high speed for very long and you can't do it on dialup. --- No. Simply because if I went someplace and that's all I did, that's fine. But sit down in my own home, there's too many interruptions. I wouldn't get as much out of it if I just went somewhere and sat there and did it.
141	No. Yes, that would be ok, because there are things you'd have to go to Airdrie for, but then you might not, because of the winter roads or something.
142	No. I don't know what's going to happen with that.

143	No, I haven't. I think it'd be a good tool. I'd probably look into using it.
144	No. I couldn't tell you that. I don't know. Depends how long it is. Keep them short. If it's half an hour/day or something. Better than sitting there for hours. A couple shorter sessions than all at once. Recorded - if I could watch when I wanted, wouldn't be so bad.
145	Yes. It depends an awful lot. Potentially. I wouldn't recommend using my check-off dollar for that. Unless it was something like genetics and nutrition. Animal husbandry. We can just read a book about that or go on the internet. I think there's a lot of good topics and info that isn't at our fingertips. If we can get something that brings value to the industry. Stuff that's not just for new entrants. I wouldn't be on if it was stuff like that.
146	No. Possibly.
147	No. No, I taught sheep.... all over the industry, they're not interested in my views... It's not an industry. It's hobbyists who are raising sheep for their own enjoyment. In Peace River, represents 1/3 of cultivated farmland. One guy covers the whole Peace River country, never has any meetings. The communications are zero. So I'm not sure if they're grasping at straws about education. Why would you do an online survey about education, from hobbyists who haven't the foggiest notion what they're doing anyway? They've never had an industry soul searching. We used to put them on yearly, now symposiums are on every other year in Camrose. Speakers from UK, US, and the odd one in Camrose, to put on a symposium that has nothing to do with the problems that business faces in Alberta.
148	Yes. Yes, possibly.
149	No, I haven't. I've seen announcements for federal webinars that would be interesting. --- I'd be interested in that.
150	No. Possibly.
151	No. I would be.
152	Yes, I've heard of them. Not interested.
153	Don't think they would. They have been doing it for so long that they likely wouldn't want to take seminars. Good idea so people wouldn't have to travel. Feeding seminars, especially in the fall because the feed is poor.
154	No – hasn't yet. No wouldn't – not personal enough. But undecided because no experience so not sure.
155	No. No. No. No. :-)
156	No. A teleseminar once but it was hard to focus. I prefer to read through the information and provide feedback. That's mostly the age bracket we're in. If it was on predation I would look at it because we don't talk about that enough. The topic was good at the last zone meeting. We have worked with Fish and Game and they are not that helpful – especially if it's an animal that is protected.

Results – Interest in Webinars:

Have you participated in Webinars? Would you in the future?

	No I Haven't	Yes I Have	No I Wouldn't	Yes I Would
# / 56	48	8	26	30
%	86%	14%	47%	53%

11. Research indicates that AB is only meeting 50% of the total demand for lamb product. **Do you think that ALP should continue to be involved in helping the AB producers increase production in order to meet current and ever growing market demands?** What kinds of support would you like? How can the association help producers improve their businesses and/or increase production?

101	Yes. Not really 100% on what a guy should be doing. AB Lamb producers group basically lobbying government for access to foreign markets and I think they've gotta continue doing that. Cut out some of the garbage regulations that we already have.
102	Yes. Education. Access to one-on-one help. When I started that's what I had. That certainly was a big benefit. When I started in sheep 20 years ago there was a government person who helped you get started. Looked at your situation, told you how to get started, how to flip them or trim them or whatever. I do a lot of that now for new producers. I don't know how else they could help because a lot of people jump in to sheep and jump out again. Shoot all the coyotes that would be a big benefit for everybody.
103	Yeah I think so, sure. ALP is our voice in the sheep industry. Their study on the terminal sires was a very valuable project that they did. I don't know what they could do. I'm pretty focused on what I'm doing. More of the same I guess. People are aware the opportunity is there. Especially with the RFID stuff going on now for this year. Next year it's compulsory. I know they've talked quite a bit about it already. If the numbers are great enough you can save a lot of work. Not on 10 head. One question that anyone would ask is "how big is a viable sheep operation?"
104	Any help that we can get is beneficial yes. I'm not sure as to what I would want.
105	Yeah, but the thing is there's too many sides to every fence. Who can afford to spend 200k or 300k for a quarter of land to get into livestock? Everybody's getting squeezed. The hog guys are just about done. That's one thing about sheep/cows/bison, you don't have the big building costs. But the price of land in Alberta it's hard for anyone to get started. The industry, I'm not going to knock them; they're doing good. But someone who's 25 years old, unless they get started with their family they won't do it. Alberta has a high price of land because they have oil written on it. Doesn't seem like the young people want to get into it. When I grew up, 50% of kids grew up on farms now, probably 15%. They don't know farming and can't afford it.
106	Sure. I'd like to see some sort of incentive for predator control. SK sheep producers have an incentive for buying dogs/predator control. I'd like to see something like that. Having a listing of markets to sell your lambs at. They have some, but they should find a few more.
107	They should. The government is shifting the responsibility for raising onto the producer, instead of guiding or getting them information. Government has reneged on all their responsibilities. They have to have some access to funds. They can't just totally shut them off from them. They have to be leaders, not followers. They've proven that with the BSE. They knew it was out there but never tested for it until they blew it up in their face. There could be something coming up in the future that could blindside us and they may be aware of it.

108	Yes. I think they should. By continuing to educate and promote. I think they can educate people in terms of details of the sheep producing. Make sure people understand what they're getting into.
109	Most definitely. More research on predator control. And maybe resources to help producers who are having trouble with it.
110	Yes, I think they're working as best as they can. I think they should go to more regional meetings and have speakers come out.
111	Yes. Keep on doing what they're doing. Try and offer seminars. I'd like to see more seminars. And learning about how other producers operate. Maybe the webinars could include tours of other people's operations explaining what they do and how they find it.
112	Yeah - I imagine that would be alright as long as they don't hurt production. The only danger is imports. I'm not even interested in support at all. I guess for the young people.
113	Yeah, I would say so, the more help you can get the better it is. I'm not involved much with ALP so I don't know. Maybe financial. I think with education and maybe financial help - we have this new software for the traceability project. Financials and training about it.
114	I suppose so. They need to change in AB the way people... A lot of people are stuck on "I don't like mutton" We're raising lamb, grain fed, which are the best lamb to eat. We have to educate the consumer that this is a prime product we're offering. We need to educate that our AB lamb is better than that NZ lamb. They have to do promotion and possibly taste tests and something like that, something that intrigues the public to encourage them to taste the first bite. Your markets can always use help. People have to be trained to eat it.
115	<p>Yes, but they need to broaden their gaze in terms of the models that they advocate. One of the things that I think is important in moving forward in a sustainable way is looking at the genetics that allow us to produce healthy grass fed sheep. Most of the data that is being provided to producers has nothing to do with that sort of model. A three tier production system would have to be modified for use in AB; but spending time and money investigating that would be worthwhile.</p> <p>Looking at the genetics to establish natural parasite resistance or tolerance rather than relying on chemical de-wormers. We've also got the CSIP program it's gone to RFID tags and that's just what they've decided to do which is fine. It adds cost to the producers. Our competitors who have lamb slaughtered into our markets don't have to do that. I think if they want to support AB producers, they should ask other producers to comply with what we have to do here. But the Americans don't like that, and they'd retaliate. Beef runs things. Whatever situation works for beef is what will prevail. All the US has to do is suggest they'd do something to Canadian beef exports then nothing will happen because the export model is so important to Canadian economics.</p>
116	For sure. I don't know what support is available. There's so much they could be doing. It's a scary spot in our situation you have to buy the hay. The weather is totally out of their control for feed for the winter. If they had control over the weather I'd say yeah.
117	Yes. I feel they should, I just don't agree with them getting new producers in. New producers fumble along for several years, not good for increasing production. They need to go to existing producers who know what's going on. We can increase production with people who know what they're doing and help them expand—perhaps by making financing a little easier.

118	That's a really tricky one. There are quite a few producers talking about this. It'll be just like the pigs. You're going to get everyone into this and now they're not worth food anymore. It boils down to a supply and demand thing. So I don't know what to tell AB Lamb about that. I know they're trying to raise numbers and quality. I'd like to see that, because there are a lot of junk sheep out there. I want to see things be profitable but if you get too many into it <the market>, it's a double edged sword. Too many arguments for and against and I don't know what to tell you about it. The more people you get into sheep the more check-off money. It's good for AB Lamb if they get more producers but that's a tough one to give you an answer on.
119	I guess. More money I don't know.
120	Yes definitely. I like what they're doing. I like the emails, information, reminders. Everything they're doing is perfect. Webinars would be great, because it's hard to get to the major cities for people who need to be on the farm every day.
121	Yeah I think we should have some help. A lot of people who want to get in, cattle, you just put up a fence. For sheep you need buildings, a better fence. It'd be nice to have a little help for the people who want to start. Hard for me to say. I'm on top of the hill. When you're at the bottom looking up it's a different story. The inputs are still very high compared to the price of lamb. I know I made money with sheep, we didn't have the pasture. We had about an acre fenced, and we fed year-round. We had real success with that.
122	Yes, again my focus is marketing. The #1 thing that ALP has to do is eliminate interprovincial trade barriers. If a lamb is processed in a licensed <Provincial> facility in Alberta it's unfit for consumption in Saskatchewan <Can't export it outside the province.>. There's enough international barriers so I don't know why we have to build them in our own country. Processing is the big barrier to market access. You can get 2 million lambs or ewes in Alberta but you're restricted to ship to eastern Canada. All your grocery stores requires federally inspected processing which means you're dealing with the Price boys up in Innisfail, but they'll charge you what they need for their bottom line, not yours. I'm not blaming them, but I don't like it.
123	Yes. I'd like to see them do something more for predators. I'd like to see access to people's names so that you could call someone to come deal with coyotes. Set snares and that sort of thing or supply some sort of compensation to help with dogs. One idea that I heard was having a feeder association like they do for cattle so you can keep your ewe lambs back.
124	Sure. Why not. If we can take the meat and put it on the shelf and get more people interested in it so much the better. Advertisement is always good. I don't know... We need support, if we don't have people marketing the lamb, advertising the lamb, pretty soon there would be no more interest in eating lamb anymore. We're sheep herders, we're out with the sheep. We need you guys to advertise it.
125	Yes. I'm not sure; the price of lambs is pretty good. If we had more time, learn about marketing it ourselves. If we could market it ourselves for a little better price than at the auction mart it would benefit us I think. I'm not sure what they could do. I guess information is the biggest thing. As far as smaller guys like me you learn as you go what you can. Any place where you can get some direction on how to do things is always helpful.

126	Who else would be involved if they weren't? Everything that AB Lamb is doing is the only game in town - that's helping to promote the lamb industry. Everything's tied in to the AB Lamb producers. I don't know if they could be doing any more than that. We need to be marketing a perceived wholesome well looked after animal. Anything that helps them keep from being taken over by the SPCA. They need to be involved in that.
127	Probably, yeah. The electronic tags are going to be enforced in the next year, and they're a lot more expensive than what we're using now. They should help producers get the tools necessary to apply the tags and read them and stuff like that.
128	I've never been to the seminars, but I'd imagine some people would find it interesting. Nothing, and I'll tell you why. I don't think people should be given stuff. You don't need a hand up from the government all the time. If it's other people's dollars that have to help you out, then you shouldn't be in the business. Lots of these programs that are offered I don't get involved in. I never have.
129	Yes, I would say so. Things like nutrition information and cost of production is also a possibility. Again, I think AB Lamb should makes sure that producers look at their sheep enterprise as a business with hard business decisions that need to be made and looked over.
130	Yes. I think they could keep on helping. I guess just updated marketing for costs. Everyone knows what they need for feed. Marketing and nutrition I guess.
131	Yeah they should be. They should be promoting. My wife and I do professional dog trials and sheep dog competitions and stuff in Colorado. The Colorado lamb growers association puts on a big barbecue. They smoke it first then they cook it and sell it to the association. There's lots of farm fairs around. If there was somebody who could cook it and get it out there they'd have more people cooking lamb, more people eating lamb.
132	That's part of their role is to promote. They did that with the video that was a good video. That's a good role for them. I think they have it pretty well covered. They had that t-shirt Baa is the new moo, good to rib these cattle guys a bit. They'll come up with new ideas all the time. Sheep is a new thing and not a new thing for me. We were in the honey business. I used to learn a lot from the states at conventions. If some of the directors travelled a bit, Often the US is early and fast at new ideas and management and that stuff. When I was in the honey business I learned a lot from them because they were always ahead of everybody. Even in promotional ideas. They were always ahead.
133	Yes. I'm not sure how they could help. Keep doing what you're doing.
134	I think it would help. If more people were going into producing lamb. Oh boy you've got me stumped on that one.
135	I'd love to say no to that one because we've got a market. I'm very happy that we're getting paid a good price. You get too many people and the price drops. I'm not sure that they help a lot. I think the sheep industry is getting better just because the demand is there.
136	Yes. To get the word out to more farmers to explore the possibilities of raising sheep. I don't know. We're satisfied with the production we get here. We average over 2 lambs per ewe.

137	<p>That's an obvious yes, but it's a loaded question too. It's not that black and white, and it's not that simple. Why do I get a higher price in Ontario than I get here in Alberta? Knowing what their mandate is, there isn't anything they can do. I don't have an answer for how they could help. A lot of my issues are that we have the only federally inspected kill facility in this province, Sunterra, and they do nothing to help the industry. That in itself is a huge problem.</p> <p>That's why most of my lambs go to Ontario. These would be my concerns. The country of label origin is becoming strictly enforced. I know that Sunterra were bringing lamb out of the US, and as long as they're killed within 36 hours they're labeled a product of Canada. Can't be labeled a Alberta lamb, but it's labeled a product of Canada.</p> <p>It does factor back into sheep too because in Agriculture you need a unified voice. For me that part of it is frustrating. Solution? I think we need more marketing choices. If you want to truly supply the amount of lamb that's needed the amount of kill facilities have to increase exponentially to meet demand. It's like having 5 combines and one 3 ton truck. I'm shipping 3-500 lambs a year to Ontario.</p>
138	<p>Sure. I guess it's a good thing. I had a discussion with Margaret Cook about the subsidies and the Check-off. Now that it's optional they're going to have a lot of guys saying they don't want to pay. Detrimental in the long term, because you need to have somebody out there dealing with the industry as a whole; talking to governments. Most of the stuff they're doing now there's more benefit to the big flocks as opposed to the smaller flocks.</p>
139	<p>Yes. I think it all boils down to bringing awareness to the quality of product that AB lamb is, and lobbying. I don't know if it's their job to do; but to lobby food chains, grocery stores to carry Alberta lamb. You see lots of NZ lamb still. Because of what we're producing, they have to bring in NZ lamb, because we aren't producing enough for the domestic markets.</p>
140	<p>Yes. I would like to see them have funds to the different zones so we can put on seminars. Right now the Peace River Lamb we're working to come up with producers and areas that they're in and we'd like to take the seminar to them. Instead of Ft. St. John people travelling to Grande Prairie or Fairview we'd like to have the seminar in Ft. St. John. If we could come up with speakers we'd like to take them to various places. For me to go to a seminar in Leduc, It's 2 days - 3-4 days for me, and \$500, I don't have the money and the time. It takes a day to get there, you need hotel rooms and you need time. If you could bring the seminars to us, go for it. It would only have to be a day seminar, it wouldn't have to be two or three.</p>
141	<p>All their information isn't hurting everyone. We had a hard time getting in to ship to Sunterra. We heard they were getting their lambs from the states. They were telling us they didn't have room over the phone but I only had 14 to ship. Maybe they just weren't interested in my 14. I think it's a good market to be in. It's a time consuming job.</p>
142	<p>If it wasn't for them, people wouldn't keep consuming as many lambs as they are. Once they get a taste of lambs, even if it's more per pound than beef, people just seem to buy it. They used to talk about eating mutton, but that's an older ewe. This is a different meat.</p>
143	<p>Maybe in helping new producers get started. The current producers are established and looking for support. For the most part they're more aware of what their operations are. They've got some good material already helping producers. They've been pretty keen on helping the new and the established producers with whatever they need.</p>
144	<p>I didn't know they help. One thing they could do is help with funding. In the cattle industry. they have cattle co-ops where you can go purchase livestock and pay it back with the calf crop that they are getting. That would encourage more sheep farmers to increase their herds.</p>

145	<p>It's a trick question. I support ALP. I work for two of the producer organizations. I support the collaboration of industry and producers. I support the community they have. I don't find enough value coming out of ALP. I don't know if it's budget or time. I don't see them as necessarily doing the job. I'd like to see less AB Lamb magnets on my fridge, and less banquets and pens. Let's spend it on marketing. Put a sign on hwy 2: eat AB lamb. The cattle marketers use a much bigger budget than us. They can do some stuff with the money they have though. They should do stuff on a larger scale than pens and stuff for people who are already in the industry. I think ALP feels they're doing their job to bring entrants in and increase the price. I hate to steal their thunder, but it's not their fault. It's the market. People are coming to the industry. People in Vancouver or Calgary know the health benefits of eating lamb. I know Margaret is committed to the industry. We could do some more. I have some ideas, but apparently I'm young and foolish because all those ideas have apparently been tried.</p>
146	<p>I can see trying to increase supply. I don't think it's still their mandate... Initially people were promoting the consumption of lamb. We don't need to promote it if we can't keep up with supply. It's not the white guy who's eating lamb, it's the immigrants. Getting ALP to promote lamb; that's a waste of time. If they want to get people involved in lamb production I don't have a problem with that. One thing I don't want them to be is a mouthpiece for Sunterra. If Sunterra wants more business they can do their own promoting. I don't need any more demand. I can't keep up with the demand right off the farm. I guess one of the biggest things would be to get info about sheep - when I started a sheep was a sheep. There was no real education about what was quality. You just got whatever and paid the price later. The biggest thing would be real education about, if you're going to get started, what kind of animals you want to buy, and whatever size. When I started I never figured I'd get this big. What I imagined I'd need for facilities would never have done what I need. It'd be nice to have somebody tell you if you want 500 head, what kind of facilities you'd need. If you go to the vet, they don't have a clue about sheep.</p>
147	<p>No, ALP has done nothing. Sue Hosford in Camrose is the only sheep specialist employed by AB agriculture, and she's in Camrose. She has no money and can't do much. As far as ALP promoting the industry I fail to remember any events that could be considered as promoting or improving the industry. They could start, but they don't have any money. Today I read a list of research projects approved for payment by AB or Canada agriculture. One on a list of 12 research subjects was 'develop a variety of brome grass more in line with growing lambs'. If you were to list the needs; it would be off the scale 1000 points below - It's so mindboggling obtuse I had to read it 2-3 times. It's in this issue of the Western Producer that came out today.</p>
148	<p>Yes. I'd like more cost of production analysis, give people the tools to do it because a lot of people can't do that on their own.</p>
149	<p>I think so. The 2 basic functions that the lamb producers ought to concentrate on is being the voice of the shepherds in the government circles, in political circles. And the other thing is extension and education.</p>
150	<p>Yes. I'm not sure what they could do different. They're doing lots of advertising and getting out there. I don't know.</p>
151	<p>Yes. Make me aware of the market prices and the new equipment that's out there and new programs that the government is offering.</p>
152	<p>Yes definitely. The ones who are in it encourage them to keep going and tell them their marketing opportunities so we can put the money back in the producers pockets. The way to keep people in business is to make sure they're making money.</p>

153	What if you did a 2-3 day intensive educational session a couple times of year to entice people to take a more serious look at getting into the field? (orientation sessions about everything involved in having sheep) Do think we need to encourage increases in production. We need to look at the global economy... why should we import scabby meat that we could replace with good product. Everyone wants to be a cowboy not a shepherd – but it is a great life.
154	Yes they should concentrate about 30% on increasing production – other 70% for existing producers on how to increase their bottom line. Small producers take lots of time and effort on the part of ALP but they don't really benefit from the work we do. The guy with 4 sheep take up as much time as the guy with 4000 sheep. From a business standpoint they should be focusing more on big producers – not sure if that is ethically correct.
155	No I don't think so. Market drives it. It's got nothing to do with Alberta Lamb producers putting on a little show, It doesn't touch anybody. When I grew up people ate a lot of lamb, and then people didn't eat much, now they're eating more. Nothing to do with sheep and wool commission at all. I think these promotions that they're working on are just a waste of money.
156	I think they are doing a good job in this area. When we started 30 years ago AFSC had a program for beginning sheep farmers. It was a loan. Got your interest back if you made your payments on time. That's what helped us get started. Something like that would probably help now – not handouts but make it easier to get in financially. A hand up not a hand out. They are doing great to help with production. Traceability has been a great help to get information and feedback in this area.

Results – ALP Support for Increasing Productivity (2011):

	Yes	No	Not sure
# / 56	48	4	4
%	86%	7%	7%

Results – ALP Support for Increasing Productivity (2008):

	Yes	No	Not sure
# / 60	44	6	10
%	73%	10%	17%

Change: 13% more producers support ALP's efforts to expand the industry since 2008.

12. Overall are you more optimistic, or less, about the future of the industry – where do you see us going?

101	I think there's room for quite a bit of growth in the industry. I'm not sure whether you'll see that or not because of agriculture as a whole. You can get a job elsewhere and make more money and you get paid holidays and this kind of thing. At the present time, agriculture is still basically the backbone of this whole country. Our politicians have never understood that because they've never had to go short when it comes to putting food on the table. As a country we have to do a better job of supporting our agriculture industry.
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102	We're going to see more production, the prices are going to go up and, we're going to have more production than we need and a lot of poor production... Poorer quality of animals.
103	Nowhere but up. That's partly because of what's happening to our population. Ethnic groups want to eat lamb, and the regular Canadians are learning and want to eat it too. You still hear stuff like Grandpa hated sheep from the war and nobody wants to try.
104	I think I'm probably more optimistic. If we do things like... If we have a timeline, I like to know that A B C D is going to happen in that order. Getting the meds into the lambs, vaccinations done, making sure the feed is at the right time. I think we'll do a much better job if we have this timeline done. I think it can only improve. We were the only ones out here who were lambing at one point, now there's 4 of us. The money we're being paid is better now. When you compare cows and sheep, you can get 7 sheep on the same land as one cow so it's more profitable now to have sheep instead of cows. I can see more people being involved with sheep and we can provide more of the provinces meat requirements. As long as the government doesn't allow NZ lamb to be increased. ALP should push for increasing our own Alberta lamb. I know in SK their sheep industry has an in with the Co-op. Their meat is sold locally, and advertised as Saskatchewan Lamb. That's a way we can be a little more proactive.
105	I think it'll be ok for the time being. When BSE came in and closed the order, Canadians started tasting our lamb instead of NZ lamb it spurred things a lot. The people who are pushing it I can't knock them at all. The sheep industry compared to the beef industry it's 20% <of the size> but it's doing better than the beef industry. The people promoting it are doing a good job I think.
106	I'm more optimistic about it. Like I said I'd like to get back into it more.
107	I'm more optimistic about it. The people become more aware of the product, they'll be more inclined to go to the restaurants and use it in their own home. There's millions of acres of land that's underutilized, because the big time beef producers don't think sheep are allowed within 40 miles of the place. Sharing range = sharing profit.
108	I think I'm more optimistic.
109	Fairly optimistic about the industry.
110	I'm optimistic. I think it's moving ahead.
111	I'm more optimistic.
112	It looks good right now.
113	I hope it's going up, because there's more money in sheep than there will ever be in cows and in other livestock.

114	I think a guy can be fairly optimistic on it. I don't think we take the hits on it that they do in the beef industry. All the big buyers and stuff that you get in the beef industry. In quite a few instances the market for everything is controlled by the American dollar. We need to pretend we don't know if the states exist. When our dollar is high and theirs is low, you don't get the sales you do when ours is lower, which is sad. I think there are a lot of ethnic groups moving into Canada and they're more used to eating lamb. They come from countries where they can't afford to feed people beef, so they're leaving lamb and goat. So I guess tap into that market as you can. There's a future for the sheep industry. We've had them for over 30 years. I can say I don't think we've ever taken a real hiding on them. The worst was the year when the BSE hurt everything. It shouldn't have been a problem for the sheep industry. That was an example of getting ripped off.
115	I think the market is going to continue to expand based on the immigration situation so I think that there is the potential for improved conditions in sheep production in Canada. To meet that potential we have to work on the situation so that producers can expect level playing field and can find ways to move away from reliance on chemicals.
116	I'm more optimistic because I think it's just going forward.
117	We're going great. I see a good future for at least five years. Even the government can't screw it up in five years unless we see something like Bluetongue or hoof & mouth, but those are extremes. The market will demand more lamb and we can't produce it. That's what makes this a good scenario. We can't import enough and nobody else can. It's a worldwide shortage, that's what makes it so good for several years to come.
118	I'm more optimistic for sure. If I was less I wouldn't be doing it. I think it's going to go good. I'm getting into some purebred breeding stock. I see it as my future, whether it's a pipe dream or not I'm not sure yet.
119	Probably more optimistic.
120	More optimistic. I think it's getting better.
121	I think it's looking good as long as the government doesn't go crazy with import permits and whatnot. I know NZ and Australia would like to get a foot in our share. So as long as we don't get too much pressure it should be ok.
122	It's crawling back. It's going to take time. Needs new gas in the engine. New people on the top end.
123	I think it's good. I'm more optimistic.
124	I see it staying good.
125	I'm optimistic. I've been muddling around with them for 5 years. I see things improving with respect to markets and stuff.

126	I'm optimistic because I think things move around in waves. I think people are way more interested in what they're eating. Whether they'll be able to afford to eat better is an open question. I'm not sure about the market. I get enough calls for lamb. It's something that's coming back. I'm very optimistic about the future of eating food that fits the criteria that we seem to be looking for. You city slickers want things to be raised in a friendly sort of way. You don't want to hear anything bad about the animals. We're aware more about this through AB Lamb and the symposiums and those things help the producer be aware of those issues. When I first came into the industry there was a lot of backbiting and carrying on. We have to improve and given that we have been improving, we will continue to do so.
127	It's probably going to grow.
128	It's very optimistic. The way the lamb prices have gone up I think it's very positive.
129	Because we can't produce as much as we can consume, because the price is so high, I'd say that definitely I'm optimistic.
130	I would say it's optimistically increasing. Every day someone's born. I think it would increase some that's for sure.
131	I'm more optimistic because the ethnic people and the country are growing. It's gotta grow. The only thing I don't like is the price in the stores. The NZ lamb is 35/40 bucks. I think lots of people are turned away because of the price. It's ridiculous what they get in the stores compared to what the producer gets for the lamb. <Solution?> I think more farmers markets, where you can buy it direct from the producer. Right now they're against off farm sales; they worry about inspections and stuff. I don't know how much difference that makes. I butcher my own meat all the time and haven't had a problem with it yet. We need to get it out into the farmer's markets without having the middle man. The butcher shops might be a good way, but that's already one man in the middle making money off it. I think you should be able to sell it that way somehow.
132	I'm optimistic, because of the markets are good right now. Agriculture as a whole is hard to make a living in. You can go to the oilfield and make money easier. Food is not expensive enough. In a lot of products it's poor so there's not a lot of net return. We were in the honey business when I was a kid, now I'm a paramedic. Anyone who still loves agriculture, they get a job and have a hobby operation. That way they get the best of both worlds.
133	More optimistic, because there's more information out there and supply and demand, since we're only meeting 50% of demand, why wouldn't we increase? It'd be foolish not to.
134	I'm more optimistic. Bigger demand for lamb for one thing. That's something that's increasing all the time.
135	I think there's a huge upside, so more.
136	It'll go forward. There was a lot of talk the year before last, when hay was expensive and drought... there was talk about them moving over into the sheep industry. The more people that are aware of the possibility of making some money on sheep vs. cattle, it's pretty straightforward in regards to your bottom line.
137	I'm very optimistic on sheep because of the supply and demand issue. We're not going to meet demand anytime soon, so I'm fairly bullish on sheep.

138	I think it looks pretty good right at the moment. It'd be nice if prices stabilized. You can work yourself out of a market. Instead of these high swings. It gives you long term growth. I think it's fairly decent. Agriculture in general is going well. I think the only thing that might hurt it is the cost of the grains. Grains are doing well. Soy meal is quite high as an input cost. It's good for the grain guys, but the people in the cattle, sheep and chicken industry is going to see it as a downer because it increases your costs. Otherwise we're doing fairly well.
139	I think there's plenty of room for expansion. Overall I think we're pretty optimistic.
140	It's going to increase. We're going to lose a lot of people on the traceability and the tags. The bigger producers will get medium sized, and when everybody gets the kinks worked out, you'll get new people coming back into it. When you get something new people rebel.
141	I think there's more and more people interested. When we were selling rams, we were selling to smaller producers. Then sometimes you see producers with 1500 ewes. Some people have more, some have less. Last time when I was at the market there were lots of dispersal sales. I'm not sure where everything is at with that.
142	If it isn't run properly, the producers aren't going to survive. Right now, it's staying about the same. But to jump in and out isn't the answer.
143	I'm pretty optimistic. It's been slowly growing. It's got lots of potential for growth.
144	More optimistic. Healthy eating.
145	I am optimistic about it. I see growth in Ontario. I see people buying ewe lambs in Ontario. We have big overseas orders. We have a 2 page wait list for genetics right now. We've obviously done what we feel is necessary to get that. Not every industry is lucky to have people waiting on their product. The market is hot for replacements and meat. Prices have been climbing. I'm optimistic. I'm honest about it with people. It's hard work. If you do well, it looks like the market's going to hold, you can make money. You just have to work like a dog, but there's reward. To answer your question, I do see optimism.
146	I would say in general I'm slightly optimistic for my own situation, I have no end of demand, but I'm in a unique situation because I have so much demand- I'm so close to Calgary. These immigrants found me, and it's all word of mouth. I can raise as many sheep as I want and I'll be able to sell them all. - We have a good niche, but we have to backtrack a bit, for infrastructure, because the information wasn't there. It seems each individual guy has to learn as he goes, rather than learning at a common agency where there's a bulk of information they can rely on.

147	<p>I wrote an article for the Peace Country Sun, comparing cattle with potential sheep production - using figures from our farm. Our sheep outperformed the cattle industry by a factor of 2.3-1. We did 1990 stats on the entire beef cattle industry. I plugged in current prices for the cattle. So of course I have optimism.</p> <p>I have optimism that people would smarten up and realize 30 head isn't an industry, it's not even a business. That's 4.5 cows. 30 head of breeding ewes. With a factor of 2.3 to one, I think it as self evident that the industry, if there is one, to be tremendously prospectively profitable. I was told by a producer 450 ewes, to stop talking about industry, because he wants to keep 50% supplied to keep the price up. That's a great attitude. I think it's evident that sheep are profitable. I did a masters in this, the profitability of sheep so far outstripped cattle it's mindboggling.</p> <p>But nobody has applied the business strategies to make it happen. So they're back to lambing 101. They're getting stuck at births. 50% of the commercial truckers in the Peace industry let their licenses lapse, because they can't make it worthwhile trucking lamb.</p> <p>Use Polypay breed - all one breed. Developed in the US of 4 breeds, easy lambing, multiple lambs, relatively good carcass, and a good wool clip.</p> <p>Sheep producers are still using 1750 genetics and management techniques. Lambing technique is 108%. I despair for the future. He's been doing research, teaching and extension seminars for 50 years. We were in Ohio when the American government put on a push to figure out what it would take to make the industry viable. there were too many hobbyists. There were 8 seminars, on various topics. Vern Gleddie went to the Texas seminar on genetics. These brought in all the guys in the states - 200 at the seminar in the states. They were all sorts of people nutritionists, major corporations, The Sheep Industry Development Program. There has never been anything in AB to equal that kind of investigative approach. Again it developed in 1968, devolved into a hobbyist type of industry, destroying the business incentive to building a business. Hobby farming is incompatible with business. The two would never meet.</p> <p>My despair lies with the people in the business now. I don't despair about the profitability. It's a glaringly profitable industry but won't be if it's a hobbyist program. I developed a break even program. Can you market your lambs profitably - I developed it on Lotus in the 1980s, I offered it to Sue Hosford - there is no computer break-even program to know when to market, how much to invest in their lambs because it's not a business. They don't know costs, price, and long term range. Whether they want this? They had one from Saskatchewan. That's obtuse, developed by the university of Saskatchewan. It's not a business oriented approach to business decisions. One question I've asked to the ALP rep here - the president, - Why haven't there been any stats about profit per ewe in Alberta? It would be something they could gather but they' can't because the industry is made up of hobbyists who don't know what their profitability per ewe is. Here we go around in circles. It's lucky my wife isn't here. If she heard this conversation again she'd leave me. <Please note: ALP provides links on their site to two existing Cost of Production calculators. In addition, information gathered from the AB Lamb Traceability Pilot Project has, and will continue to be, provided on this topic. See recent newsletters for data.></p>
148	More optimistic. I see the industry growing.
149	I'm about the same - I was pretty optimistic three years ago too.
150	I can see them staying good for a while. I'm optimistic.
151	I think it's going to go up. - The Muslim population is increasing all the time. They've been brought up to eat more lamb in their diet. Everyone else - I talk to N. American women and they have no idea what lamb is.

152	The average age of producers in the province is way too old. We're losing our young people. That's the only downfall I see. If we can hold it steady now, I know our numbers went down over the last 3 years... I know the dispersal sales we've seen are old people - they're ready to retire.
153	I'm optimistic but we have to come up with some way to move the fat stock from the farm to the plant. Without that plant we are dead in the water. Used to have collection sites for hogs – a big truck would come and empty it out. That might work for lambs.
154	More positive about the future of the industry. Think we're going to be expanding – increasing and improving our production.
155	I think there's reasonable optimism.
156	Optimistic. Lots of European people getting involved – and they have grown up with intensive operations and they don't see it as an obstacle whereas prairie people have grown up used to large spaces. We need to make sure that there is information for the intensive farmer too.

Results – Direction the industry is going (2011):

	Improving / Better (Optimistic)	Deteriorating / Worse (Not Optimistic)	Staying same	Not sure / Mixed Feelings
# / 56	53	0	0	3
%	95%	0%	0%	5%

Results – Direction the industry is going (2008):

	Improving / Better (Optimistic)	Deteriorating / Worse (Not Optimistic)	Staying same	Not sure / No answer
# / 60	27	12	5	16
%	45%	20%	8%	27%

- **Dramatic increase in optimism about the industry.** Consistently increased demand and its impact on profitability are cited as the #1 reason.

Section 2 - Involvement with Alberta Lamb Producers

13. Do you know which zone you are in and who your Director is? (if not – tell them who it is and how to find out in the future (where it is on the web site)

101	I know who my director is, I think it's zone 4. Bill Gibson is my director.
102	We're in Zone 5, and have a new director. Can't remember the name, but it looks very promising. <Judy Cabay>
103	We got a new guy Bill Gibson. I think I'm zone 4. I should mention last year, we had Margaret Cook speak at one of our membership meeting. That was really good, she had a little info package and told us what ALP is about.
104	We are in Zone 3 and I'm not sure who the director is now. I know it's out at Airdrie. I know a couple of times we've gone to the zone 4 meeting because it's closer.
105	I think I'm in 5, I'm not sure. <Bill Gibson in Zone 4>
106	I just looked it up the other day. I think I'm in Zone 5. No, because I think they just changed it again. It's Judy Cabay.
107	No. I think it's up around Barrhead. < Zone 6, Den Broeder>
108	I think I'm in zone 4 and I think my director is Dean. He lives pretty close and he's a personal friend. <Bill Gibson>
109	I think I'm in zone 7. <Gave correct zone>
110	Zone 5 with Judy Cabay
111	Yes. Zone 3 and my director is Kathleen Parker.
112	Zone 7. Don't know director.
113	I'm zone 5 or 6, it could be 6. My director is Ronald de Broeder from Barrhead.
114	I don't know the zone number off the top of my head. <zone 4, Bill Gibson>
115	I'm guessing that I'm in Zone 3 and it's Kathy Parker.
116	No clue.
117	Yes, I think we're in 6, Ronald Den Broeder.
118	Zone 6 and Ronald Den Broeder.
119	No, but I can find it.
120	I know it's Kathy parker. <Zone 3>

121	I know who it is but I haven't met him yet.
122	No. <Told> I should have known that.
123	I know it's Bill Gibson. Zone 4.
124	We're in zone 2, and I don't think we have a zone director at this time.
125	I don't think I've looked at the info, I don't really know off hand. <Zone 5>
126	I think it's 6 - It's Ron Den Broeder.
127	Kinda. Bill Gibson.
128	No I don't. It used to be.... Edith Williams I think... <Zone 4, Bill Gibson>
129	Yes, I'm in Zone 2 and we don't have a director.
130	To be honest, no I don't. <Zone 3, Kathy Parker>
131	I'm not sure. <Zone 3, Kathleen Parker>
132	Yeah. Phil Kolodychuk is our director. Zone 7.
133	No.
134	I'm in Zone 5. I don't know his name, or her name. < Judy Cabay>
135	Used to, not sure who the director is now. <Zone 6>
136	No.
137	Is AB Lamb the same as the Sheep and Wool Commission? I think I'm in Zone 2. I might even be in Zone 3. Kathy Parker is the director there. I'm in one of the two. I'm close to the edge.
138	I think I'm in zone 5, and it.s.... <Zone 3 Kathy parker>
139	It's Ronald Den Broeder. <Zone 6>
140	Phillip Kolodychuk, I'm in Zone 7.
141	Zone 6 and really nice guy. Ronald Den Broeder.
142	We used to be in zone 3. Our zone is from Consort all the way to Red Deer. Used to be one of the Rutledge girls. Bill? We bought some breeding stock from him.
143	Norine Moore, and I think we're in 2. <1> But I definitely know it's Norine.
144	Yes, I think it's Kolodychuk.

145	It's Bill Gibson, and Zone 4. I go to Zone 5 meetings sometimes. I would have run for Zone director but I don't have the time and I don't think people would vote me in. I'm pretty up front with people. I see optimism for the industry. Sometimes people don't see eye to eye with me. A lot of people are still micro-producers and they see things different so you can't carry on a conversation. I do support the organization. As much as it sounds like I don't - I do see the need for ALP.
146	I'm not sure what the number is - Kathy Parker I think is my director. <Zone 3>
147	Of course. We're in Peace River zone. 7, Philip Kolodychuk, I understand he's now president. Never says a word to anybody. He's not a communicator. He works as a farm employee at Fairview college and he tries to manage his sheep operation at the same time.
148	Ron Den Broeder - Zone 6.
149	Yes.
150	Zone 4. I can't remember. <Bill Gibson> --- He phoned me the other day - I was just drawing a blank there.
151	Zone 4 - Bill Gibson from Tees got it.
152	Zone 5
154	Ron Den Broeder - Zone 6
155	I'm in Zone 3, but I'm on the south end, so I go to Zone 1 meetings in Fort Macleod. I would never go to Zone 3 meetings.
156	Yes. Have Bill Gibson.

Results – Zone / Director Awareness (2011):

	Yes Zone	Yes Director	No to Both
# out of 56	32	32	24
%	57%	57%	43%

Results – Zone / Director Awareness (2008):

	Yes Zone	Yes Director	No to Both
# out of 60	28	25	29
%	47%	42%	48%

Change: There has been a 15% increase in awareness of who to contact to discuss zone or ALP related issues. Producers who would like to provide suggestions and have input into their industry association via the ALP Board of Directors are encouraged to contact your zone representative directly.

Please see <http://www.ablamb.ca/about/contact.html> for a list of zone directors and their contact information.

14. Do you know what services ALP provides?

101	I don't know 100% what they provide. I go to the meetings, but I can't say this and this and this. I have a basic knowledge of what they're doing. I know they're in consultation with government on different regulations, I know they're working in that respect.
102	Not off hand.
103	It provides information for <then he listed things from the website he had up>. I know they're also active in the RFID traceability. I understand Alberta is setting the standard for the rest of the country because they've done more work on it than anyone else has. Also legislation and manifests and things you have to take care of if you're going to be in the sheep industry.
104	I think they help with the sheep symposium, getting that organized and stuff. They do some reports to government I believe. I know the Zone 4 up north of us has put on a workshop this last fall that my husband went to and the past resolutions with regard to check-off and that sort of thing. I'm sure they do a lot more than what I've said.
105	They used to come out and do talks and guests, but now you have to go to Airdrie. If I was bigger and wanted to grow they have lots of seminars in the summer. But I'm sort of at a stall situation now - don't want to get involved. They are providing pretty good service. We're not paying very much for it either - it's mostly coming out of government money.
106	A little bit. They have a newsletter with up to date information on the sheep industry. They provide the tags for check-off. They have lots of information and literature on production. I've looked at it a little bit.
107	Not really. I read their little pamphlet. Do we buy tags from them? Somewhere we have to send for tags. I don't think it's ALP - it's another outfit.
108	I guess they're our advocates with the government. They're part of the CDN Sheep federation, liaise with various government groups. Zone meetings, with producers, they know about the symposiums, and they're involved with the RFID stuff.
109	Not really, no. I know they do the Traceability project.
110	I guess basically they try to lobby the government on all aspects of sheep production or marketing or whatever is out there.
111	Yes, I think mostly. Support for producers, education materials, seminars, I guess that's it.
112	Not really. I haven't paid much attention to them.
113	They provide help with project services. They have free recipe cards and stuff like that, and the newsletter, that's very important.
114	I got an idea, some of the stuff.
115	I don't pay very much attention.
116	Not at all.

117	Yes, They're a government voice for us. They'll go to the government and give us a fair shake on programs and bylaws that might be changing that we don't know about... if the government is trying to do something the little guys don't know about. They support the traceability program. I'd like to say they're a little bit on the import of lambs. I've had trouble with AB Lamb group. We import lambs from the US and I ran into trouble with them thinking that I wasn't doing the rules right. I didn't think that was part of their job. They collect the check-off. Those check-off dollars helps pay the wages and keeps our office open.
118	They organized the RFID deal for figuring out which tags to use and the government grant money to do things differently. The terminal sire program in Lakeland and other odds and ends. Of course all their literature, the handouts, and the Alberta sheep hair guide or whatever. I haven't read the new one yet. They give money to the 4-H to promote the sheep project for the kids and stuff. A whole bunch of other things - keep people in touch with what's going on in the industry with the N'ewesline and the newsletters and stuff.
119	No idea.
120	They do the check-off dollars, they handle that. They send all the emails, and put out the meetings and the newsletter.
121	There's all kinds of good stuff coming out of Lethbridge. We get the clippers sharpened and stuff like this. I imagine there's lots of literature and stuff a person might get.
122	They do provide quite a number of services. If you put in any effort to look at the website or call the office or contact them. Clearly they're doing some things really well.
123	Just the general stuff that you can get. Are there specifics? I know they go to the government for us.
124	They go to the government to get grant funding with the chutes they want now. Another thing you should do is try to get more wool going south. You should try to get more interest in the wool up here. All these Rambouillet sheep are sold for about the same price as the bad wool. People can make a sheep that pay for it's feed with the wool, and cross it with a good Suffolk ram and make a sheep that's got good meat at the same time.
125	No, I don't really. I'm a small producer. Got into it as a hobby and grew a bit. I haven't been looking for much information.
126	Yes - the website. I'm on that email list about lambing. Specifics? What I'm happy about them doing is that their education is necessary. I don't believe they're actually involved with marketing other than that you can use their website for producer contacts in the industry. I've never seen them I can't remember if they have sites up for pricing and stuff. I forgot the newsletter. I know I should have put something in the newsletter about our association. The newsletter is wonderful. I use what I need, and I don't know what else is there.
127	They're doing the traceability project, which is successful, and they're helping you buy sheep handling equipment. They're supposed to be marketing lambs, and making people aware of lambs and stuff like that.
128	No, I don't.

129	They are involved with AB Lamb, a program where it's marketing your own lamb to individuals. Removing the middle man for marketing. The biggest job: they're a liaison between the producer and the government. They're the voice of the industry to the provincial government and the Canadian federation.
130	No I don't.
131	Not all of them... I'm not sure. I need to read up on that a bit for. I knew they worked with the government and stuff like that. Exactly what all they do I wasn't sure.
132	Probably I don't... But They do a lot of stuff that I probably don't use because I'm an old guy. I go to the meetings. Phil keeps me up to date. I know him personally. I don't have a problem finding out. I helped them run the booth in Grande Prairie. They did it there, and they probably do that in other zones too. They always give me a pen so I can always write them a letter. They have lots of promotion stuff like that.
133	I didn't before now.
134	Not really.
135	Not really, I don't access them much.
136	Not a lot, no. My wife usually handles that. I'm the laborer.
137	Yeah. They do a nice check-off on their tags. They're good, they provide us with booklets and packets and info we can give out to customers and clients. Specifically I don't think we've used the services they provide. I can tell you honestly the SWC has always for the most part focused on the purebred breeders and not on the commercial side of the business. The last time I went to the symposium almost everything was geared toward the purebred producer. It is changing though. Baby steps. Should gear more towards the commercial business. That's where the money is.
138	Most appreciative of them dealing with governments when they're trying to impose new regulations on the industry. Their big role is helping to mitigate these rules and regulations so they're something we can actually absorb and use. Things like foreign governments and stuff like that. And restrictions with overseas - mad cow and everything. I think that's a good thing they do, working with governments on behalf of industry. On Farm Food Safety, new tagging, RFID, traceability. I think they're also involved in stuff like registering and then you can sell your lambs to freezers then they also go to venues where they will displays there. I think one of the bigger things is to help to work with government, because producers can't do that on their own. You need somebody who can work with industry and you need somebody to work as liaisons with those people.
139	Well, They do lots of lobbying to government to get us to be part of programs that would be just for the cattle industry. They get the lamb producers recognized and the government to show them that we're a viable industry and not just a hobby farm type operation. There's all sorts of stuff they do for us.
140	Probably a lot more than I use. I don't know if they're still doing it. You used to get stuff to hand out. I did quite a bit of it 4-5 years ago. I'm sitting at the point where I don't know what they do, but If I need info, I phone Margaret and she gives me the answers. I've done my share.

141	They do the conference and they give the information. They do the government - they're the people in between. They represent the producers to the government. They do the regulations. They do programs. They're helpful with growing forward grants. Send emails to help you know what's going on. Have programs (bluetongue). They represent the government to producers.
142	They promote our lamb. There must be some other things too, but top of my head I can't think of it. I'm sure whatever they do the industry benefits from it. That's hopeful anyway.
143	If you've got questions they can't answer they'll find a producer who will answer it. They'll get you in touch with professionals whether it's flock health or any other topic. They also help with financial planning. They'll direct you to a person who can help you get started on it even for the established producers.
144	I get the newsletter all the time so I know what's going on, but I'm not really that involved with it.
145	They provide the website, phone - you can call Margaret anytime with questions about sheep, they collect the check-off. They do some trade fair stuff. You see them at the trade booth. They put on a banquet once a year - I think it's the ASB that does the symposium. One of them puts on the sheep symposium. <Both groups> They put on some kinds of events. Advocacy and liaison is huge. Obviously that and marketing. That's what we need them for. We have different issues here than elsewhere. We need our provincial guys. Sometimes it's hard to feel like they're doing anything for us though.
146	Promoting the consumption of lamb. After that, it seems like they're promoting production of lamb. Otherwise that's it. Also, I think they're trying to protect the industry from government, but I don't think they're doing a good job. I see some stuff in the newsletter. As far as representing the industry to government. A lot of times it seems that whatever the government does they're behind it - they don't think of how it affects the sheep producer. We're supposed to tag every animal that leaves our place. The whole thing doesn't make sense if we were to trace it back. The whole thing has nothing to do with food/disease safety. It's so there's a perception of safety. Trying to make people think everything's ok.
147	Yes, I do, Zero services. I've never yet seen a service offered by ALP that would be of any consequence to a producer who is in the business of raising sheep.
148	Available to answer questions from producers, they do lobbying for the government; provide us with representation on different committees that gives us industry representation. They provide some training and organize workshops and what not.
149	Yes.
150	They've got a lot of printed material you can get, manuals and so on. You can get a lot of information - just about anything you need to know about sheep.
151	That's the newsletter that comes out. I try to read it all the time, but it gets stacked with the papers I have to read and collects dust. They have the shearing courses, They provide that every year, and the zone meetings, every time it's in the fall, and I'm busy, so I never have a chance to get down to those meetings. I'm too busy to take notice of what they're doing.
152	I know the #1 thing is their website. A lot of people access that for information. I've had very little to do with them on other levels, so I don't know.
153	Don't know what they do now. Used to know.

154	Yes.
155	They don't provide anything to me. The only thing the Sheep and Wool Commission <Changed name to Alberta Lamb Producers in 2010> can do for us is to combat the provincial and federal government from loading more costs from stupid regulation and stupid things for which we pay and get nothing out of it. That's the sole purpose for a producer organization is to bring the producer interests to the regulator. The rest of it is just fluff.
156	If I need to know anything I get a hold of someone there.

Results – Awareness of Services (2011):

	Lobbying / Government Awareness	Newsletter	AB Lamb	Education / Info. Provided	Tagging	Health Studies / Research	No Idea / Not sure	Yes, I Know
# / 56	16	11	10	20	7	7	22	7
%	28.5%	20%	18%	36%	12.5%	12.5%	39%	12.5%

Results – Awareness of Services (2008):

	Lobbying / Government Awareness	Newsletter	AB Lamb	Education / Info. Provided	Tagging	Health Studies / Research	No Idea / Not sure	Yes, I Know
# / 60	8	7	10	14	9	4	29	16
%	13%	12%	17%	23%	15%	7%	48%	27%

Results – Change Since 2008:

	Lobbying / Government Awareness	Newsletter	AB Lamb	Education / Info. Provided	Tagging	Health Studies / Research	No Idea / Not sure	Yes, I Know
%	+ 15.5%	+ 8%	+ 1%	+ 13%	- 2.5%	+ 5.5%	- 9%	- 14.5%

15. What services have you used that ALP provides?

101	Well, Directly, none. Indirectly, I guess I've used some of them. Some of the things that happen in the industry benefit you indirectly.
102	None that I know of.
103	Information more than anything. I went on here because I needed to contact Ronald den Broeder. He's in zone 6/7 but he's the contact for Farmworks so I came on here to find it. It's a source of information for me.
104	My husband going to the workshop in Zone 4 was a positive. Margaret Cook is the person isn't she in Airdrie. I've used her before - not in the last year. I got cookbooks and stuff when I was doing farmer's markets. They also do promotions, the road show, Agritrade in Red Deer. I'm sure in Edmonton and Calgary as well. I know if I needed information I could call Margaret.

105	No. I mean indirectly. I've made a few phone calls - but I figured it out myself.
106	Not really much. I've been doing my own thing. I read the newsletter and the internet.
107	None that I know of.
108	We went to the sheep symposiums; The government gave us some money for RFID stuff. We look at the publications. Other than that, not all that much really.
109	None really. I guess I did use that course that they had that had the OFFS program.
110	I guess I've used their service to find other breeders and stuff.
111	I usually phone Margaret Cook. I talk to her or I go on their website.
112	No. I haven't been going. Pretty well been out of it.
113	I'm part of the traceability project, and I use the recipe cards from them and lots of people like them.
114	Not really. Promotional meetings, stuff like that. They have the zone meetings, where we can talk things out. It was a big improvement when they changed the grading system a few years ago. I can't remember whether we get our tags from them or wool growers - there's somebody we buy them through.
115	My primary focus here is wool and ALP supports that with donations to fiber week at Olds College. It's not something I use, but it's something I appreciate very much. They send out information on the N'ewesline. So I'm aware in a general sense of what's going on.
116	Don't know.
117	A little bit on the RFID/Traceability program. We've been using that. They wanted a big operation to give their feedback on it. RFID will be helpful for us. It's a winner of a problem. You won't be able to be in the sheep business without it here soon.
118	The newsletters, the N'ewesline, the 4-H money. I did take part in the shearing course a few years ago. I go to the zone meetings every year. Ronald did do a workshop as part of the zone meetings which I really liked, so that was a good thing. So any time you get a workshop like that or something you didn't know already it's a good thing.
119	No idea.
120	I've gone to some of their seminars where they had a lambing informational thing. And I usually just use them for information.
121	I'm not really that close to the industry.
122	Basically the big one is notification of association bulletins (newsletters and N'ewesline) that come out via email.
123	I don't know if I've used any. I don't think so.

124	We haven't taken any grant for the government that they were trying to give. I think they're doing their thing. A lot of testing out. They put some money in BC there's a place where they did some rate of gain and stuff like that.
125	Reading through the pamphlets - general info, nothing specific.
126	They provide a sheep symposium I go to. They even used me as a speaker one year. I appreciate the N'ewesline. They used to send it out pretty fancy but it's much clearer now. That's better. You can't send out digests that are too fancy. I have to pay for my bytes. They were looking after the Western Health Program. They used to run things I'm not using now.
127	I just became a member of the traceability project, but other than that I don't use them that much.
128	None. I never have. It's more hobby farming. If I was making my living at it I'd be more inclined to get involved in it.
129	I go regularly to the zone meetings. As far as services, that's a confusing term to me, because it's a board instead of a business. I read their newsletter, so that communication part of it, what they're doing for the industry, if there's workshops, I've gone to those too, and the zone meetings.
130	I've never really done much other than a few years ago we used to get the newsletter. We just lamb out, in spring the lambs go to market.
131	I'm not sure if I've ever used any of them, to be honest about it.
132	The newsletter is a good service. We got on this traceability service through them, there's a lot of promotion about that. They got some farmers on to promote the traceability project. They got a grant to help guys with handling systems. We're happy about that. The liaison with the governments is a big one. The Canadian Sheep Federation is in Ottawa and they can get together with the big kahunas down there. That's a good service.
133	I guess up until now none except for reading stuff in the local newspapers that's come out. Information I guess.
134	I got the sheep and goat manual.
135	Not really. Not that I can think of.
136	I don't think that we've used any.
137	We have some information from there. Not a lot. We haven't used a lot of services that they provide.
138	I use all their emails they send out, I guess that's a service that they provide. I read their newsletters and stuff like that which I find very informative. It's nice that they keep you up to date on new things... what you're going to have to do if you want to raise sheep.
139	We've been part of the marketing of the Farm-gate sales. Where they provide you with recipe cards, books, stuff like that. How to cook lamb, prepare it. We use the production modules. We've used pretty much all of it. We get quite a bit of information from them, and we're not afraid to phone Margaret if we need help.

140	I've probably used all of them. I've used the Lamb Producers webpage. I've used their advertisements, the stuff that they send out. If I have questions I ask Margaret. I've probably used all their services at one time or another.
141	AB Sheep producers do the symposium... But I've used the website, I've talked to Margaret in person, she's helpful on food safety, and Growing Forward. She's sent emails about the newsletter. The Canadian health flock program. They helped with a health program binder, the OFFS binder, and the seminar that they had. There's the Growing Forward and the grant money that was allowed right now and the Western Canadian flock health program. That's where you get the AA status.
142	All the lamb producers get the magazine sometimes.
143	Probably all of them. I keep up with the newsletters. If I have questions I can always call somebody. They also call me at times. Pretty good little network and good people. They always have time to discuss things.
144	The newsletter - I think it's very informational. The other stuff I don't really use it. I couldn't tell you if it's good or bad. I'm not as much involved as I'd like. I'm too busy. I just can't drive 3-4 hours to seminars. It would be nice if I didn't have anything else to do but be a sheep farmer and do those things.
145	Years ago I used the manuals. I have some sheep husbandry manuals. I see them at Agritrade at Red Deer. It's good info for young entrants. It's probably good they don't have me at the booth because people would freak out. I try to promote the industry wherever I go. You have to show enthusiasm. That's why the promotional video is good.
146	Probably none, other than the newsletter. Other than that, I'm not aware.
147	Obviously... No. I haven't seen any yet that would be worthwhile.
148	I've phoned the office in the past. If I have a question... I have attended some of their functions.
149	ALP is involved in the tagging project - the traceability project. We're involved in that - we use the information available through ALP's Sheep Central program. They provide Sheep Bytes - the ration balancing program. We've accessed director's funds for 4-H Achievement days. You'd have to let me think for a while. There's several.
150	I've got different manuals from them on sheep production. There's been marketing seminars and so on that I've gone to. Lamb traceability project I'm involved in. Sire reference programming. Testing different sires and so on.
151	A long time ago I took a shearing course through them. I've been trying to get on the web to get the Growing Forward program. That's the registration. I'd like to get involved with that one. Can't find the time to get it - I need a computer.
152	I would say other than the website virtually none.
153	Not really.
154	Information pamphlets – programs like OFFS. Traceability program.

155	None whatever.
156	Newsletter. Work at trade fairs and farm shows. Were on the AB Lamb project. On traceability project. On the OFFS project. Helped write the book.

Results – ALP Services Accessed (2011):

	Workshops	Meetings	Info. / Educ.	AB Lamb Materials	Tags	Funding / Programs	No / Very Little
# / 56	9	9	34	10	2	16	18
%	16%	16%	61%	18%	3.5%	28.5%	32%

Results – ALP Services Accessed (2008):

	Workshops	Meetings	Info. / Educ.	AB Lamb Materials	Tags	Funding / Programs	No / Very Little
# / 60	3	4	15	4	7	3	36
%	5%	7%	25%	7%	12%	5%	60%

Results – Change Since 2008:

	Workshops	Meetings	Info. / Educ.	AB Lamb Materials	Tags	Funding / Programs	No / Very Little
%	+ 11%	+ 9%	+ 36%	+ 11%	- 8.5%	+ 23.5%	- 28%

NB: Several respondents said ‘No’ but then later mentioned liking the newsletter or going to zone meetings (which are services that they have accessed).

16. Have you attended any ALP meetings? (Type: AGM, Annual Symposiums, zone meetings, educational sessions?)

- A. If yes, when and why did you attend?
- B. If no, why not?
- C. What, if anything would make you want to attend meetings?
- D. What kind of meetings or events would you like to see? (I.e. More involvement / sessions at the Annual Symposium, more zone meetings, educational sessions connected with zone meetings, etc.?)

101	<p>A. Yes - because I normally go to a lot of different pasture schools/producer schools that are partly seminars/full days - kind of the same thing. In our zone they have some guest speakers at the meetings and you go to hear what they have to say - it's kind of a day out.</p> <p>B. N/A C. You talk to other producers and hear what different perspectives different people have, whether they're just another producer, or whether they're a guest speaker giving a talk on a subject. It's kind of a knowledge deal.</p> <p>D. As far as meetings and that kind of thing in the area that I live in, we have quite a few information sessions/meetings or whatever. I normally attend just about all of them.</p>
102	<p>B. No, I haven't went anywhere for a long time. Tied down to the farm and taking care of my husband. He's pretty well bedridden. It makes it hard to go anywhere.</p> <p>C. It would be nice to get out, as long as it's not too far away. The zone meetings have been too far away to go to.</p> <p>D. More informational ones.</p>
103	<p>No, Up to last July I was working in retail sales at UFA farm supply. If it was a work day there just wasn't time. Now I'm doing contract bobcat work - it's more flexible. Basically because off farm work. I plan to go more. I think in the sheep industry lots of us have off-farm jobs.</p>
104	<p>No, I don't believe I have.</p> <p>B: Why not? Because they were on days that I worked, and distance for traveling.</p> <p>C: I would have to look at the thing that came through and see what was up for discussion. Take a look at when the meetings were, compared to what was happening on farm. It would have to be at a time when I wasn't working. That's about it. Weekends work well for me, but the majority for farmers, anytime during the week is ok, they just have to adjust, but it makes it easier when both partners can go, because what one partner picks up the other might not, and you can talk about it when you're driving home.</p>
105	<p>No, not for the last 6-8 years.</p> <p>B: I just retired. I've been gone 11 hours a day. To fit in the time it would be a pain in the ass.</p> <p>C: There's good information there, I get the pamphlets. I'm not sure what I'm going to do for the next few years. Unless my stepson gets involved I'm probably going to shut it down. I'm going to stick with it for another 3-4 years. It gets a little hectic. The brochures they send out pretty much tell you what's going on. You pretty much have to want to grow. The size of the operation I have doesn't pay back.</p>
106	<p>Yeah, I did one. A: Vermilion, close to home, I wanted to see what it was about. C: If I had time. I would like to attend some more, I just haven't got to doing it. D: More trade shows and stuff, I like to go to the sheep symposium, I've never been because I haven't had time.</p>
107	<p>No. B: I'm not a big producer. I'm not interested in spending my time with those people.</p> <p>C: Not really. D: I don't really know. If I was 40-50 years younger I'd probably have something to say about it, but I'm at the end of my production era here.</p>

108	<p>Yes, not recently. They've shifted the meetings to during the day, instead of the evenings, I have another job and it makes it hard to go to them.</p> <p>C: They could shift the times to an evening or a Saturday would be better. D: Probably more information stuff. There's the general zone meetings - they're ok too. Basically information, focus groups, that sort of thing.</p>
109	<p>No. Distance and time. C: If I had more time I would have. I also have a full time business as well. D: Ones on predator control and more differences about the different breeds.</p>
110	<p>I went to one when it was in vermillion. The zone meeting. I wanted to see what's ... If you don't participate how can you improve the industry.</p> <p>C: If they would have some guest speakers, pointing out different aspects of production and so forth.</p> <p>D: I'd like to see different, maybe a veterinarian explaining diseases in production, and how they could be protected, and feeding processes and so forth.</p>
111	<p>Yes, I was at their fall meeting. I like to find out what's going on in the industry and know what's coming, and get ideas from other producers and see what they're doing.</p> <p>C: If they had a seminar, including a seminar with them, I'd like that. Time of year is another factor. I think it should be towards the end of November when everyone's done harvesting out in the field.</p> <p>D: More educational sessions.</p>
112	<p>Not for several years. B: I just don't bother. C: Nothing could make me want to attend. D: Not really. I just don't bother with it anymore.</p>
113	<p>Yes, the fall round up was the last one I went to. It was close by and it was time for me to join the folks again and meet our fellow shepherds. C: More time. :) D: Information about the sheep industry and where it's going, Financial help and meetings like that.</p>
114	<p>Yes. You attend when they have them. We didn't get to them at these last ones. Too busy or something. C: We go if we can. D: N/A.</p>
115	<p>I don't think so. I've gone to the sheep symposium and I went to one of the OFFS meetings and stayed for a meeting after that.</p> <p>C: It's hard to say. I'm really not a meeting person. I have to drive a long ways. I'd have to be sure that something constructive would have to come out of it, and my general feeling is people chat and discuss things. In terms of productive decision making, it's not particularly useful for me. My focus is different than most producers in industry. D: Nothing comes to mind.</p>
116	<p>There was one but I couldn't make it here. Unable to attend. Had a buddy that went and she said that it was really awesome. C: Just knowledge. Any extra little bit of knowledge that a person can take in is a step in the right direction. We've only been in it 4-5 years so any knowledge we can get is a bonus in our report.</p>
117	<p>I don't go to many meetings. The stuff they talk about isn't for the average guy so we don't usually attend those meetings. C: Not really. D: No I don't think so.</p>

118	<p>Yes. I don't think I've missed a year since I got into the industry about 5 years ago. I like hearing what's going on in the industry. It's a chance to connect with other producers and to discuss things. I consider it one of my bigger social events of the year. There's not a lot of sheep producers around. You can talk to people about the industry and it's not something you can do very often.</p> <p>C: We look forward to the AB Lamb meeting because it's a bit of a social outlet, to talk to the producers we never get to see. D: Definitely the workshops as part of the actual meeting. To make sure to allow enough time for the meeting, the workshop, and the social aspect too, It's enjoyable for us to have that time.</p>
119	<p>No, B: We just have sheep and sell sheep don't care about anything else. C: No. D: Nothing.</p>
120	<p>Yes - A couple years ago. I couldn't this year because I was working on the day. I just wanted to know what was going on. They did a seminar, about the farm food safety thing and it was a good way to have an info session and the meetings at the same time. That was a good idea to get people to go for meetings. I also use them for links and recipes.</p>
121	<p>Haven't been to meetings in the last two years. C: No, it's 70 miles away. D: That's a question you gotta ask the younger guys.</p>
122	<p>No, Because they're politically sensitive. C: I won't in the future. You need to have new people there and unless you make a void you won't get new people there. D: Probably not in the short term. You need to give it time to have new Chiefs with new Indians. The only way for that to happen is if there are voids created. I will offer advice, but I'm going to stay on the sidelines.</p>
123	<p>I've attended the zone meetings. They had one on RFID. I have RFID here on the farm so wanted to go. The traceability projects and stuff like that. C: I don't know. A lot depends on when and where they have them and what they talk about. I don't know if that could be changed much.</p>
124	<p>I did. I attended one this fall. Then I was out in Olds college, and they had a demonstration there. I was looking at one of the record systems they had there for marketing lambs. C: If you're out here on a farm you don't have much time to go to many meetings. If you're not herding sheep or cows, you're combining. It's a farmer's work to feed the world that's all. You don't have much free time. D: Not really an issue, but if they wanted to put more meetings, health benefits and vet meetings would be valuable. It's tough enough to make a living, so you don't want to have to go to meetings too.</p>
125	<p>I'm not sure, there's the Camrose sheep club. I don't know if that's ALP sponsored. I've gone to 3-4 of those meetings. C: What made me want to attend less meetings is we got off on a tangent, talking about private planes, I travel 50 miles each way to talk about sheep and lambs, but people get off on a tangent. That's a waste of my time.</p>

126	<p>I have always attended the Zone meetings every year. I was disappointed to miss this one, because I was in Ontario, and nobody asked me about it when they set the date. I'm just being smug. It was a good one, and I'm sorry I missed it. It's just distance and time. I get my contact at the symposium. Having it in Leduc was a great idea. I don't think I'm missing out on anything.</p> <p>C: Only if they held it in my hometown, or got me in a plane to fly down there. When I do have to go to meetings... I also have to leave and earn off farm income. Time. I don't think there's anything they could do that would be realistic.</p> <p>D: I'm happy with what they're doing. We've got our own local organizations where we can do the local zone stuff. I think the NW Sheep Producers is one of the stronger active zones. We cover the small bits. I can't see them doing more than what they're doing now, and I think they're doing that well.</p>
127	<p>Yes, to vote a representative in, and to discuss about sheep problems. C: I think the seminars are always good, so you can learn more about sheep production and stuff like that.</p> <p>D: Educational ones.</p>
128	<p>No, don't really get involved, small producer, and I can't find the time. C: I'm older, If I was younger maybe. I'm in my mid 50s, so probably not. D: No. I'm a small producer and don't have time to get involved in that sort of thing.</p>
129	<p>Yes, I'm an interested producer. The more producers are communicating and directly involved with the director, the more chance they have to affect change within the industry.</p> <p>C: I attend zone meetings every year, so probably not. D: Possibly a guest speaker at a zone meeting would be a good thing. That could create more interest.</p>
130	<p>I never usually go to meetings. I think I'm a smaller operation with 60 head. I probably miss them because I don't really know when they are. Time is an issue too, because I work driving a truck and I'm gone all week. C: I don't know. If they had informational talker or speaker that might help, but I don't know if they do. If I had more time, full time working and on the farm, it's hard to take the time away. If there's letters from the lamb producers that would keep us up to date on the meetings that would be good. D: Maybe if they did have anything on nutrition - I know lots of cattle have that, updates on injections and that sort of stuff. Updates on what's new.</p>
131	<p>I have some but haven't for a year or so. When it was in our area something was going on. The last one I was at was in Brooks. Often I just can't get to them. C: If I have more time. I'm kinda gearing up to get back into them. I might start attending because it might be more practical. D: A little bit of everything is good. The educational meetings are good, and the zone meetings are good because they keep you in touch with the producers in the area.</p>
132	<p>I do our zone meeting every year. I've been in the other symposiums down in the southern part of the province. I try to get to them whenever they're going on. C: I don't go to a meeting just to go to a meeting. If they put it on and have a speaker or anything, I go to try to learn something. Phil makes our zone meeting at the same time as our little lamb marketing association which is a joke (Not ALP). At any of the ALP meetings there's some meat there. They put on a good meeting and teach lots. Sunterra's representative is often at AB Lamb functions. Randy Smith is their buyer there. Randy will put on a barbecue promoting lamb, but he doesn't really have to promote it to our group but he does and we like it. Sunterra helps the lamb producers that way. Even sometimes financially for some of these meetings.</p>
133	<p>No, too busy, not really aware of where they are. C: I'm not sure. I've been debating getting out of sheep, so then I wouldn't have an interest. D: More education.</p>

134	They're either at the wrong time for me, or too far away. C: Not really. It would be nice to attend one and see what it's all about, but ... D: Not really, no.
135	No. Maybe I did... Last spring I went to a presentation on traceability. Which I'm not in favor of. It's a waste of time because we have no export, and probably no foreseeable export business. C: I'd have to have the time. Right now we're building and we've just moved and we've considered getting more involved, we just haven't got there yet. D: Not really.
136	I think my wife/daughter attended one years ago in Calgary. C: I go to enough meetings. It's not for me. D: It doesn't really matter to me.
137	No. Too busy usually. C: Not specifically, unless they can help me get my other work done. AB Lamb used to be separate from SWC and all it did was promote Alberta Lamb. The SWC is bigger and they amalgamated the two. My complaints may have something to do with the way that SWC operated in the past than Alberta Lamb did.
138	<p>No. I am a small producer and my theory is that it's really geared to the larger producers. I feel I can get enough information from these other sources. I don't feel I need to attend.</p> <p>C: I don't know, I've never been so I can't really say. I guess you'd have to have an idea of what it's all about. There's so much information they send through email and newsletters, and even if you want their financials and how they run, you can get that. You just have to ask for it. I don't know how much more you can get. If you need anything, you can research a lot of information on the internet.</p> <p>D: I've not really been interested in being part of that side of the sheep industry. My passion is the raising the sheep and working with the ewes. I keep up on as much as I need to so I can keep up with what you have to do, high health standards and on farm food safety. I don't want to be involved in the political aspect.</p>
139	Oh yeah. Their end of the year and when their zone meetings are is a bad time for us for our operation. I try to get in touch with quite a few of the directors. C: It's all timing for us. Not that the last couple years they've brought speakers and lunches and stuff like that. It's a good thing, but it's a matter of timing for us more than anything. D: Pretty much they cover everything we've been interested in. For beginner producers it could be educational but for people like us who've been in it for a while something like that isn't interesting. For new stuff, like the RFID tags or software - new things coming into the industry is what we'd be interested in.
140	<p>Yes. If Phillip is going to do anything for the zone we have to be there grousing at him saying what we think. If nobody tells a rep what we want he can't do his job. So I attend them all and I usually have a few verbal things that I say. C: No, I don't want to attend more meetings.</p> <p>D: Last year, they did the zone meetings and they brought in a speaker. That was excellent. It brings people out for the producer meetings and makes it worth your while. Travel in the north is a big issue. If it's miserable, nobody's going to go. If there's something to attract people, like a speaker, they'll say it's not worth it. Same old...</p>

141	<p>I've just went to the seminar. I've gone to the symposium. C: No, they're all good, the info they have. It's been in Airdrie and I just didn't like driving by myself in the winter down there. Plus I'm usually doing this by myself, so it's hard to get away when you don't have someone who can feed your animals while you're gone. Nothing to do with them. The webinars would be interesting though. One time they coordinated for me to go but I couldn't make it. They knew someone else from my area was going. They've been really helpful. D: No, because I don't attend all the ones there are right now. I've never not liked what I've gone to. It's been enjoyable and informative and everything. They're good, open, and straightforward. Margaret's been really good. Very helpful. If you have a question when they're in meetings or whatever, they'll get back to you. There's always someone who can assist you with something.</p>
142	<p>Not for a while. I'm in more than one project here. I don't have the time. C: Well, if a person wants to learn and find out more about them, I suppose, Right now I have my fingers in too many other projects right now. D: n/a</p>
143	<p>I do the zone meetings, trade with my son a lot to do some of the others. He's spoken at the symposiums. Either one of us try to attend some of the meetings, especially if they're in our area. C: For the most part good enough as it is. Biggest problem is time, lots of things on the go. You can't do it all. D: Not right at this time no.</p>
144	<p>No. No time. C: I'm a single mom, I have cows, sheep, 3/4 sections to farm, and a pet and feed store. It's out of the question. I don't know when I can catch up with sleep.</p> <p>D: I would say zone meetings. There should be more of them. If I would be able to attend, the zone meetings are more important. It depends on the weather system. It was hard one year to get hay. Sheep farmers got together to buy hay. Education is easier. If they're telling everyone how to do it, it's easier. There's enough on the computer for that. Better to see how ALP can help with funding and marketing. That's more important I think. Too much education doesn't weed out the bad producers.</p>
145	<p>Yes, I skip the educational sessions on purpose. They had one at the zone meeting. I didn't necessarily agree with the consultant they brought in. I'm quite disappointed with the numbers they're proposing with the industry. These numbers will eventually be used for financial institutions. Some of the people putting those tools together aren't doing a good job. At one meeting they were telling people how to be more efficient. He was a good guy, but he's too disconnected from reality, that's happening on the farm level. I don't agree with what they're teaching. I go to the symposium though. I spoke at the last one. I go to the AGM if I can. I'm quite involved on a national level.</p> <p>The stuff they're doing with education is good, but if the people would listen more than we tell them this is the cost, this is the death loss. I see this big deception out there - when you were talking about warning people. People are making it out to be easier or more profitable than it really is. We were going to do some accountability work to make sure the numbers were correct. It's serious work.</p>

146	<p>I haven't recently, but I did a few years ago. I don't have the time and it doesn't seem like much happens at the meetings that would benefit me.</p> <p>C: More info on actual sheep producing - a speaker at the meeting on certain topics could help. Even Kathy Parker... she wrote an article in the paper - stuff that I'd never heard of before, if I'd known it 5-6 years ago it would have helped a lot! It seemed she didn't know it either, but went to a cattle producers meeting. If you get experts speaking on things rather than getting people to run for directors and trying to get people not to claim their check-offs back, and silly threats about why we shouldn't have people killing lambs on our property and stuff like that.</p> <p>D: Educational sessions. I think they had some things in Olds that would have been interesting. It'd be nice if they'd videotape them so if you didn't go you could have a library or CD or Tape or something you could watch the meetings/seminars. I don't know what happens in northern Alberta. Education is the biggest thing. I don't need politics.</p>
147	<p>There's only one meeting/ year here - Annual meeting. Speaker lady vet - speaking on ram selection. I purposely stayed home. C: When the day comes when they won't include a vet as the speaker I think more people will attend.</p> <p>D: My son and I convened a meeting on nutrition and management in Fairview at the hotel, 65 people attended from BC and Peace River country. Compared to ALP lamb meeting 22-25 turnout. We had 63 there for the whole day. We gave them a booklet, outlining nutrition physiology, management of sheep. How to enroll in organic production. How to manage shipments - 2 commercial truckers gave a talk. There's never been anything like that offered by ALP. We did it. We went in the hole \$700 on that.</p> <p>The US lambs supported that plant. ALP turned the other way when US lambs came in with no origin. But they've come down like a ton of bricks on lamb identification and property identification. I can't sell a lamb to my neighbors for slaughter. I can't slaughter a lamb and give a loin to a friend. CFIA will be on me right now. In 2012 I have to install RFID tags. Before I had to buy tags that include the check-off in order to obtain the check-off they couldn't claim legitimately, they made it compulsory to buy an identification ear tag which included the price of the check-off. The agency which controls the marketing in AB has pointed out that the RFID tag isn't the best method of identification. Wal-Mart's method - ultra high frequency identification is superior. I'm going to have to buy the tags and an \$1800 reader. The list of things that they've imposed to our disadvantage is far longer than the list of advantages.</p> <p><For compliance the only equipment the Government – not ALP – requires is a \$10 tag applicator and the RFID tags. Electronic readers are optional.></p>
148	<p>Yes. To make sure that they hear my voice and that my opinion on where the industry is headed is counted. C: If they were relevant to things I'm interested in. Maybe not meetings, but if they held seminars more focused on pasture lambing and grass sheep I'd definitely attend. D: Either at the symposium or zone meetings.</p>
149	<p>Yes. I haven't missed an ALP meeting in this zone in 20 years. I also take in seminars. My wife and I haven't missed the sheep symposium ever since we got married - which is 25 years. D: More on nutrition, management, local government initiative (county), talking to the county government regarding issues that farmers - especially shepherds have to deal with. At a local level, county councils have no idea that shepherds need guardian dogs. They view them the same way as a nuisance dog, and I don't think that's right</p>
150	<p>Just the semi-annual thing they used to have, I think it was in Lacombe last time. That's about the only meeting I go to. My wife goes to them more than I do. C: I hate meetings. D: The ones I've been to have been good.</p>

151	No I haven't. They're never available when I have the time. They're always far away. I just don't feel like going that day or whatever. Many excuses I guess. C: No. Just one of these days I'll get down there. D: Not really. I'd have to go to the zone meetings to see what they really do.
152	Years ago I went, but I was discouraged by their politics. C: Not particularly at this point. I'm focused on my job in the marketing I think it's better for them to do their job and I'll do mine. I think it's better that way. I want to keep people in the business. I talk to people who are interested and I tell people what sheep to buy when there's dispersal, and tell people what's going to make them the most money.
153	Try to go to the zone meeting. Have gone to some conferences.
154	Zone meetings. Wanted to learn more about the industry and get more involved. Want to see more producer education at the zone meetings. Don't want to go back to the old style. Want to provide value like at the last one.
155	<p>A. Just a matter of information. I don't go anymore. I may be clawing back my check-off. But I've gone down there to Fort Macleod to see what's going on.</p> <p>B. Just didn't bother going this year, I've gotta go 40 minutes to sit around and talk to guys I know pretty well. They bring in a guy from AB agriculture who tells us how great RFID tags are, only if you're a hobbyist. Waste of time. Really nice people, but the organization does nothing for me.</p> <p>C. I can't imagine. As far as I'm concerned they've failed the producers. I know two colonies close to us who are planning to claw back our check off, which I voted for last go round, to strengthen the SWC and got nothing for it.</p> <p>D. Not interested. I'm quite happy. I've been in the business 35 years, and I won't say I can't learn anything. But the people I'm talking to, they don't have a lot to say. They bring people in, I know I'm harping on RFID, Susan has been flogging the RFID program, ALP is throwing money at it, and it does absolutely zero for us. I don't think these people have been to a packing plant. First thing to come off is the head, that goes to junk. There goes the \$2.50 for the tag. By the time I give \$1.50 to the ALP I'm out \$4. If they wanted the tag, they could spend the 35 cents and read it. For the vast majority, it's of no value.</p>
156	All the meetings. They are of value but the symposium is too long. Can't be there for 3 days. A day and an evening would be better. The last zone meeting was great. Really liked the educational component. Better structure. In the past going through the business portion was boring, had a coffee and went home so a speaker or topics that people can kick around make it worth driving. Speakers are the best. They stimulate the conversation.

Results – Meeting Attendance (2011):

	Zone Mtgs.	Symposium	Educational Sessions	None
# / 56	23	12	8	27
%	41%	21%	14%	48%

Results – Meeting Attendance (2008):

	Zone Mtgs.	Symposium	Educational	None
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			Sessions	
# / 60	8	6	2	31
%	13%	10%	3%	52%

Results – Change Since 2008:

	Zone Mtgs.	Symposium	Educational Sessions	None
%	+ 28%	+ 11%	+ 11%	- 4%

NB: Where it was specified (or known) we have made a note as to which meeting was attended – so this is an indication only.

Suggestions for improving meeting attendance:

- ❖ More educational sessions or educational components of zone meetings (10)

Suggested Topics:

- Important to have social time at meetings (4)
- Nutrition / feeding / grazing (3)
- Vaccinations / Flock health (2)
- Predator control
- New technology – latest advancements
- Breeding stock / Info on different breeds
- Financial education (what options are available)
- Management
- ❖ Do not always hold them at night
- ❖ Hold them at night – not during the day. Or on weekends
- ❖ Have more meetings (with education) in the North part of the province
- ❖ Can't attend late in the year (Oct/Nov) as that is calving season – move earlier in year / Not during lambing season
- ❖ Have more ALP meetings in conjunction with the Symposium
- ❖ One day sessions are better to access because of distance
- ❖ Symposium should be one day and an evening – 3 days is too long
- ❖ More meetings with producers (know it's costly – but valuable) / more zone meetings
- ❖ Create focus groups
- ❖ Do webinars
- ❖ Video tape sessions and make them available through CD or on the web

16. On a scale of 1 to 10, one being LOW and 10 HIGH, where would you place the value that ALP provides in exchange for its memberships fees? (Check-off contributions)

101	More like about an 8.
102	Probably around an 8.
103	I don't know, maybe 10 would say perfection... so give them an 8 anyway. I haven't been involved enough to criticize too much. I'm getting involved more.
104	I would imagine a 7 or an 8.
105	I'd put them about 8- 7.
106	Free information... Probably 9.
107	I know everybody's heart is in the right place, but I don't know about their structure. Probably 6-7, they probably do a lot of good.
108	The only fees are the check-off right? 6.5
109	Probably a 7.
110	I would say about an 8.
111	I would say 9.
112	I think they do alright. I just don't want to put a number on it. I'd imagine a 7.
113	I would say 9.
114	I don't want to answer.
115	I have no idea. I'm such a non-participant so it's hard to make an informed response to that question.
116	I'd go just above average, so 6.5.because there's always room for improvement.
117	Well, I'm going to say on one part of this, on the Canadian side they're probably 7-8, but on the import of our feeder lambs from the states they give me no help at all. On the import part it's not a lot but there's only me doing it in all of Alberta so I can see where they don't want to spend time with that. I know AB Lamb can't promote US lamb but leave me alone when I'm importing everything by the rules.
118	About an 8.
119	I guess 5.
120	High. 10. I don't think they charge very much at all.
121	I don't remember how much they get in the fees. I don't have the problems that other guys do. Don't have wool, coyotes.
122	I pay a lot of fees. Which fees are theirs? <check-off> I'm going to say 5. I'm a hair sheep producer, and they're quite clearly wool focused.

123	7
124	I'd say they're an 8. They're up there. I think they're trying to makes something work anyway.
125	Well, from what I understand, you people are doing a good job with the marketing, I'd put it about a 7.
126	I hate paying them of course, when I have to pay for them in bulk, and now with these new tags, I really get upset when I lose the tags on my sheep because they don't stay in their ears. I think they're doing their best. I think we have to tell them when we think they should be changing. I'm also the one defending them in the Western Producer when somebody else complained about the check-off. I hate to give them a 10 so I'll give them a 9 for effort.
127	I really can't tell you. I'm not sure what it would be. On some things it's high on other things it's low. Value to members is about 2. They have different zone meetings they bring recommendation to the board. One year I asked what did you do with the recommendations? A lot of the recommendations were shot down, and to me that's not representing the membership. Good job on the traceability project and mainly because they're helping farmers get grants to get equipment and stuff. <Put rating in at 2>
128	Probably pretty low, I don't know a lot what they do. <Explained> I know the cattle producers do the same thing to get people to eat beef. I guess you have to make people aware of what's out there. People are smart too. If they want lamb they'll go find it. 3.
129	I would have to say 9.
130	I don't know. 6.
131	I'm not sure. I would give it an 8.
132	They're right up there. 8 or 9, and they manage their money well. I'm very much against our check-off being voluntary. That was done because the beef guys were voluntary. We can get our check-off back and it's a little difficult to get it back. I was worried that too many people will ask for their money back and cripple the Lamb producers. If some of those big guys like the Hutterites get their money back it will cripple the lamb producers and the industry. If some of the guys get their money back it might go down but there's so many lambs out there it should go up. The people who have their nose to the grindstone don't see what ALP is doing, and they say they're doing nothing but they really don't know.
133	Good, because you're getting two things for your money. You're getting your tags, and you have the opportunity for all this information. I'd say an 8.
134	I would say about 9 to 10.
135	Probably a 3.
136	About 6 I guess. I should have let my wife take the survey, but she's not home.
137	I'm gonna say 6, simply because I haven't chose to use it enough to give it a fair assessment. It's not fair when you don't use it to judge it is it. 5-6.

138	I think it's right up there. I'll give them a 9 for sure. There's probably a few things I don't like... Any organization is like that. I think they probably do a good job, I realize with the number of lambs I ship my contribution isn't huge. It's worrisome that people have the option now that you can get your check-off back. If they did where would we be? I'd rather have someone who enjoys it do the political stuff. I don't want to. You can't get a bunch of piecemeal guys standing at the table like that. It'd be a big mess. I'm sure there's some areas they need help with or could do differently, but overall I think they do a good job!
139	I would say there somewhere in the 7 range. I think there's a lot more they could do and I think there's plans in the works to do more in the way of classifieds and advertising. They've had their hands tied in terms of government not allowing them to do some of that stuff.
140	About 7. They can't please everybody. It's impossible. What they do in the south doesn't work in the north, and vice versa. It's hard.
141	I think it's good. It's not a lot of money they're probably getting. They're doing a lot of work. I'm happy. I'll give you a 9.
142	I don't follow it. I don't want to underestimate them and I don't want to overestimate them.
143	I'd give them a 9 +.
144	Probably a 9.
145	We talked about that. I don't see enough being done with that check-off dollar. I'll compare with other provincial organizations. I know they'll do anything under the sun to prove to producers that they're earning their money. They'll do surveys like this one. They'll do a variety of things with marketing and product development. They'll do a lot more with a much smaller budget. That's why I feel like we could get more out of Alberta. We have leverage dollars that we could use too. Sometimes you have to use money for certain things.
146	To me, and I'm probably not taking as much advantage as I could, at the place where I am now, I'd say 3-4. Even if I took advantage of everything I think they might have, it might get up to 6. I don't think they're doing a good job really.
147	0.01
148	I think it'd be an 8 or a 9.
149	8
150	8 or 9. Can't give a 10 you know. I'm one of those guys who can't give a 10. They're incredibly valuable.
151	About 9.
152	I don't know - Because of the limited knowledge I have of the other things they do, it wouldn't be fair to give them more or less than a 5. I know the website, that would be a 9 or 10, As for the rest - I have no interest in working with, for or against them. <No # included in rating>
153	When you look at what they have to work with (money and support) I'd give them a 10.

154	They need to put out more info. to producers about what they do at the government level. The producers don't know. In the short term not a lot of benefit but in the long term there is value because of the relationship with the government. Value – 7. Not going to be a 10 because the value you provide to different producers will be different.
155	2. We get a newsletter.
156	They do a tremendous job. They are concerned that producers will ask for check-off back and we don't agree with that. It's a small price to pay for the ALP. We need them. We can't talk though because as a feedlot we don't pay check-off. For the increased rates that we are getting the producers shouldn't begrudge the small amount they pay for all that ALP does for us.

Results – ALP Value Rating (2011):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
#/ 56	1 (.01)	2	2	1	2	6	9	12	11	3	7
%	2%	3.5%	3.5%	2%	3.5%	11%	16%	21%	20%	5%	12.5%

- 62% of respondents rated their value perception at 7 or more
- 11% of respondents rated their value perception at 4 or less

Results – ALP Value Rating (2008):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
#/60	2	1	2	2	9	3	11	14	4	3	7
%	3%	2%	3%	3%	15%	5%	18%	23%	7%	5%	12%

- 53% of respondents rated their value perception at 7 or more
- 12% of respondents rated their value perception at 4 or less

Results – Change Since 2008:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
%	- 1%	+ 1.5%	+ .5%	- 1%	- 11.5%	+ 6%	- 2%	-2 %	+ 13%	0%	12%

17. What services does ALP provide that you consider the most valuable and why is that important for you?

101	I really can't name anything other than lobbying the government on different subjects to help our import and export.
102	Information - to keep up with current problems or whatever events.
103	I consider our contact with our government and Alberta Agriculture and federal agriculture the most valuable. I know they're our industry voice in programs going forward. If it wasn't for them we wouldn't have as many opportunities, compared to the cattle business.

104	If I need information I could phone someone and find out the information or find out a source to get the information from. That's something that is important, probably even more so to new people coming in that are just starting farming with sheep.
105	They give you the information with the tags. You get it in the brochures. I haven't been attending the meetings, but I know what's going on because I was getting the newsletters.
106	Probably the information, the knowledge. If you have questions you can talk to somebody.
107	Basically the information, the newsletter. But there could be other columns about different aspects of raising sheep. Basically it's Joe Blow went to this meeting and this guy's going to have a shop for hoof trimming or sheep shearing once a week.
108	The most value is the liaisons with government and stuff. Because otherwise we're a small industry and we'll get lost in the shuffle.
109	Government lobbying for programs and support. When there's trouble like the BSE Crisis they helped out with that to get funding.
110	Lobbying government. You have to work in regards to traceability and so forth.
111	The information that I get from Margaret. She's very, very knowledgeable. So I can learn more.
112	I don't use much of it anymore. I don't pay too much attention to them. I read the newsletters to see what's going on, that's all.
113	They help with the traceability project. They even came out to the farm to help me. If I have problems I call them and they can help. They also stand up for us with the political people.
114	The education on what's out there, what's going on.
115	Again, the N'ewesline keeps me more or less in touch. Their support for fiber week is critical to that program's ongoing success. Those are the things I'm involved with, the rest I just don't know what they are. I have to say that Margaret Cook is a gem and a treasure beyond price and I have to say that employing Margaret is the most positive thing that they do.
116	I don't really know.
117	The government voice. To deal with the CFIA and the CDN Sheep Federation. I don't have time for that. I need somebody that's looking out for our interests. I can't be dealing with those people and keeping up with those people and the new rules. I'd say that's the biggest thing that I like about them.
118	Keeping in touch with the industry would be a big one. All the general stuff like sheep health and markets and different things like that.
119	No answer. I don't know what they do for us. I get a piece of paper in the mail every three months or so but I have no idea.
120	I think the information and the resources and how often they send the info out. For a new producer they don't really know where to go. The told the people I sold Ewes to, to go to AB Lamb producers because they'll help you out. That's the most important thing.

121	The tags and the stuff tike this the RFID, they pros.
122	Basically the industry updates via the web. Their projects on traceability have been beneficial. Traceability is a public perception issue and that's everything in a consumer project. Their work on traceability has been outstanding.
123	I think they are in touch with the government programs that are available. They have the RFID program that the Government has given money for and that's important.
124	Like I told you earlier. They talk with the government people. There's stuff that we don't know about. They talk with the government and try to help us out a bit.
125	The general information - and trying to get the word out about sheep and lambs. Info to me and people in general is the biggest thing.
126	They probably would like to hear that they represent the sheep industry to the government somewhat with our dollars, while this is true, and they're doing a good job, it irks me that they have to do these things. I'm not that political. They're using some of our check-off dollars for lobbying. Somebody has to do it like all the other associations... Cattle, pigs, they're all in there. I know the government thinks they're set up to take care of this but anything set up by the government is suspicious.
127	The equipment aspect of it.
128	I don't know how to answer that one, I really don't get involved.
129	Definitely the voice for the producer when it comes to dealing with government, when it comes to grants and funding. When we have a board speaking on our behalf, that's the way to have positive change done through government programs.
130	I don't use them too much on stuff, after hearing what they do I'd say the marketing and making people aware of where it our lamb comes from - not overseas, grown locally. Should be of good quality and that sort of thing.
131	I'm not sure. I would say most important service they provide is communication between the producers and the government.
132	Promotion is a big thing. Promoting our project and making people aware of Alberta Lamb, that's the main role They have lots of main roles. Getting back to their own producers - encouraging them. I don't know of one thing that's more important than any other.
133	I guess just getting the information out there so that the public realizes the value of sheep farming. So that people realize it's not a taboo thing.
134	Oh boy. Good information if a person wants it. Very good information actually.
135	I do use their magazine to keep in touch with what's happening. That's about it.
136	Promoting the industry. The more it gets promoted, around Alberta and the rest of Canada, the more people are aware of the benefits of the industry.

137	I think promoting the sheep industry in general is the best thing they can do for us. Promoting consumption and letting people know about what lamb is, and what it's like to eat, and they've done some good promotion on that.
138	Working with the political aspect of government and industry, and the rules and regulations they make that cost us. When they lobby on behalf of the sheep industry. I think without that we'd probably be sunk. I think that's very important.
139	I think it's mostly the lobbying with government. You've always got a voice at meetings. It keeps the sheep industry in front of our Government so they know what we're doing and we know what they're doing.
140	I think Margaret, the board's negotiation with the government and making sure the producers needs are met are the important things. They help with the research and that stuff.
141	I would say that information, they're really good with information. It could be in the newsletter, but they'll send out an email, for example that Temple Grandon was speaking at the University. Or for the grants - they'll send out something saying 'don't forget the deadline's coming'. Getting information out, keeping you informed. I think they're just doing a good job.
142	No comment there.
143	Probably the most important is they are dealing with government. The bureaucracy and all that and keeping me informed of what's going on. If I have questions they get the answers quickly.
144	I think ALP put the word out that people eat more lamb and how good it is – that is the most important thing for the lamb producer.
145	Advocacy and liaison back to government and letting them know where the producers are and being that voice for Alberta. How good a job they're doing about that, I don't know but that's their most important task. I know it sounds like I don't support ALP but I do. I pay a lot of check-off. I guess that entitles me to an opinion. We run 2500 ewes and lamb out of season so it adds up pretty quick. Smaller numbers of sheep, the producers can't ask for more. They're getting all the value. For them it's awesome. They have no right to complain. We're on a different playing field. \$100 annually in check-off vs. \$10000. It's a big difference.
146	They're doing some education, but I can't get to that. At the zone meetings there wasn't education; it was all PR, electing people and stuff like that. I don't think they're doing anything really well, but what they're doing, education might be the best of it.
147	There are no services. A year ago our ALP rep Phil had a joint meeting of ALP and Peace River Lamb which was a fiasco. He asked why have a producer organization in the region when ALP exists? When there has been no extension opportunities offered by ALP in Peace Country the answer is self explanatory. 2 meetings - Vermilion and Olds to demo RFID tags. I received an email suggesting I tell people in Peace River Country to go to Olds to attend the meeting. 650 miles. They were quite happy to have 20-30 travel to Olds, rather than send 1 person to the Peace Country.
148	Industry representation to the government. As individual producers we won't be heard, but if we have that representation that's important.

149	Government advocacy and education. Lack of advocacy - that's the biggest impediment to the expansion of the industry. Education - it's an impediment when you don't know things that other producers know.
150	Having the unified body that can lobby the government and so on. That's pretty huge. One person alone can't do it, but a unified body - that has a little more clout.
151	The sheep notes - the things they send out - that's very valuable. The newsletter.
152	Website - with the contact to the major buyers out there and the options that they have. The fact they show our market report and the other buyers know that they need to compete against the prices that they're seeing in our market report.
153	That changes. Whatever the flavor of the day that the government is promoting <that makes it harder for producers> we have ALP advocate and raise the alarm for us – that is helpful.
154	Training. Education. Resource materials.
155	None, They don't provide any.
156	The dissemination of information. We know they are there – if we have questions we can ask and if they don't know they will tell us where to go. Getting the information out to everyone in the industry.

18. Are there flock health research, production increase studies, or other kinds of programs you would like them to undertake?

101	I can't think of any off the top of my head.
102	No, they've done some, haven't they - I'm pretty sure they were involved in the Lakeland College one. Just keeping up with the everyday things you have to do. I think they print the map too don't they? There's a breeders map that comes out every so often. I don't know whether that's the lamb producers or somebody else. They do demonstrations I know at least they used to. Cookbooks.
103	The production increase would interest me more than the flock health one. That's what interests me about the traceability. Talking with others about the whole cost of production thing. What is the cost of production? How do you break out the cost of the grain from the livestock? Need coaching to do that.
104	They've done the Scrapie program, I think they did that, There is a flock health manual, and I know that there have been workshops in the past on flock health. I think that's something we'd want to keep in place. Possibly information for new farmers would be something for the 3 young people that are new locally here. We passed on some information to them, but if they had more information it might assist them in being productive.
105	I don't think so. I don't think there's really a problem in the industry that way. From what I read in the AB lamb producers there's not a problem. They do keep a good guard on Scrapie.
106	Not that I can think of off the top of my head.

107	I think they support the Vermilion sheep breeding program don't they? They could have a buy and sell thing but that's only periodically. There could be other information that if they wanted to they could talk about upgrading the herds. Everybody tries that themselves I'm sure. I'm sure there's lots of things they could do if they had the money to do it.
108	Nothing specific that I can think of right now. We're actually involved in one with a specific kind of tapeworm which is probably a good one.
109	Most definitely. Flock health and increase in production.
110	I think health issues have to be undertaken and probably production aspects of it.
111	I'd like to see average daily gains on lamb, increasing production and stuff like that, animal health I guess.
112	Not for myself, no.
113	They did that lamb carcass project - I like that .I don't know if there's anything else.
114	I guess the more a guy learns the better off it is.
115	Sure, the 3 tier market production, genetics behind disease and parasite resistance, trying to do more with what's available in the gene pool rather than chemicals and artificial situations.
116	I don't know much about it, so I don't know how to answer that one either.
117	Production is always a good thing. That's what we're after. We need more lambs, that's probably the best place to go.
118	I'm sure if I sat and thought about for it for 10 minutes after we hang up I'll think of stuff... More help with understanding parasite control. It's a mysterious field for me anyways. As for production increase - I don't know. I like to think I have a pretty good grasp of that. After 5 years I'm starting to figure out what I need to be and what I need to do in order to get there.
119	No.
120	I think any study is good. Even this kind of thing is beneficial in any industry. Scrapie or the on farm... Anything they're collecting information on is good for the industry. All you hear is cattle.
121	N/A - Had to go.
122	They need to increase drug availability. I realize that's a huge issue, hard for them to overcome. Somehow we have to put more pressure on the politicians to pressure CFIA to accept some health studies that have occurred in the US or Europe and allow the drugs for Canadian producers. You take that line on the border and we can't use things that they can in the US or Australia - their diseases must be different than ours.
123	I think the flock health thing is a good thing, also production studies.
124	Nutrition and health.

125	I don't know - when I see articles I'm a little interested, I'm just a small producer. This isn't my livelihood. I don't live so much on the fine details. Some people do.
126	In this day and age of computers, with the identifications that we have I'm programmed up to my neck. I'm on the Scrapie program. The ones that they wasted their time on - I felt it was not organized in the beginning. We could have been ahead of this long ago if they had a federal program. I know it's not what you're asking me it's just an area that's not working that well. I like what they're doing now - the education.
127	I think they could do a little bit more on the pneumonia that sheep get. The pneumonia is devastating for flock health. One thing they did in the past which was good was they'd take your dead cull ewes and the government would pay for autopsies to be done on them. It was a Scrapie program. I think they should bring that program back.
128	I've tried different sheep, and they cross them and get different lambs, and the ewes don't have enough milk. I was happy to get ewes that twins and that was the end of it.
129	One thing I'd like to see more of is investigation into having sheep grazing reserves. There used to be some community pastures many years ago, and that was an effective way to keep a lot of producers in the industry. I'd like to see more possibilities for sheep community pastures.
130	Maybe flock health ones, yeah.
131	I wouldn't mind seeing some on reproductions. Or courses on finishing lambs.
132	Not really. I don't know.
133	Haven't thought about it. I don't know how to answer that either.
134	Not really.
135	Not really.
136	No.
137	I never really thought about it, to be honest. I've found a market for my lambs and I do my business within my bubble.
138	It depends. I wonder if the sire program they had to see which the Suffolk's or the Charollais or whatever was the better meat, it was a bit of a wash. Those studies, you could get a good carcass animal out of all those breeds. It was an easy thing to study. It's hard to study profligacy because of really low inheritability. I think they should work on diseases instead of that. I thought it was money poorly spent. I guess the health of sheep and flock health is important, and biosecurity. Those are things that would benefit our industry as a whole, rather than which ram gets you a better carcass.
139	They've gone through the Lakeland carcass sire project. With access to the internet there isn't a lot that would be new that they could do. They've done most studies in places like England or in the States. I don't know if there's a lot that would be beneficial to our operation.
140	I think they've covered most of them.

141	I don't know. I don't have an answer for that one. I know they're helping work on the on farm food safety certification. Cutting down costs there.
142	No.
143	I can't think of any right now. Because the manual - flock health - covers most of pretty much everything we've run into.
144	No. It's just a waste of money.
145	I know they did a bunch of improvement in Lakeland, and they've taken over the traceability project. Any research we can do for sheep in Alberta would be awesome. We need to find different styles that can be profitable - intensive/extensive. If it's done right, by an accountability group of other producers that would be good but the data needs to accurate. It would be invaluable - permitting the data's accurate.
146	All of the above. There's so little information if you go on the internet you can get a bunch of stuff, but who knows where it's from. For me any education is valuable. The studies could be on anything, it's valuable.
147	No. I want a BUSINESS study. I want the business analyzed. I want figures for people who want to go into the business. What are the returns for flock sizes 50-100-50-200 etc. They've never done a business approach to this. I made this statement... If I hear one more person advocating for a short course on how to pull lambs, I'd get violent. You'd have to be retarded if you're a business man and you don't know your numbers. You don't need a vet lecture.
148	I know there is a cost of production study now, not through ALP - that sort of thing is what would interest me.
149	I would like to see work & labor issues addressed. As in hiring farm labor. That would include foreign workers. Education in general. I'd like to see levels of government being educated about the industry. They make the decisions, and a lot of the time they make the decisions in an intellectual vacuum shall we say.
150	Are they not involved with flock health - I know there's a manual on it. I think they were involved in the different terminal sires between breeds. They have some information out there so you could pick what kind of ram would work best for what kind of ewe. Which is great - they're all over that.
151	Not at the moment. I'm so wrapped up in my own thing here I haven't thought about what the rest of the people in the province need to benefit. One of these days I'll figure out something - or attend a meeting one of these days, years, and decades maybe.
152	There is one disease in sheep that we run into a lot in the auction market, It's similar to pinkeye but it isn't pinkeye. I'd like to see more information about that. When you mix sheep, when you buy from sheep from several farms you always run into this problem. I encourage people to buy sheep from only one dispersal sale. The name of the disease skips my mind, but they'll know it.
153	No. Imagine there are all kinds of things that would be helpful but not that would help us. For others, how to have ewes give birth to twins all the time and how to keep them alive so that we're selling at least a lamb and a half. (Production increases). People lose lambs because they feed the lamb more than they should. Feeding studies would be good.

154	Predation. Nutrition. Johnes. Listreosis. Foot Rot. Chlamydia. Manual is a nice tool.
155	No.
156	No – they are covering everything. I'm not lambing out ewes now – I had lots of questions then.

Results – Suggested Studies / Programs (2011):

	Flock Health	Production Increases	Marketing / Market Development	Predation control	Other Research	No / No ideas
# / 56	20	14	0	1	8	29
%	36%	25%	0%	2%	14%	41%

Results – Suggested Studies / Programs (2008):

	Flock Health	Production Increases	Marketing / Market Development	Predation control	Other Research	No / No ideas
# / 60	6	7	5	4	3	24
%	10%	12%	8%	7%	5%	40%

List of suggested studies / programs:

- ❖ Production increase studies – ways to operate more profitably and efficiently
 - Rate of gain and rate of production programs
 - Would like to know more about breeding, size, and lamb production and the benefits of different combinations of breeds
 - Production studies on ewes i.e. what crosses would make the best ewes production wise
 - Hiring and managing (labor laws) farm labor – especially foreigners
 - 3 tier market production

- ❖ Training of young / new producers
 - More help to young people starting out

- ❖ Predation issues
- ❖ Creating sheep grazing reserves / community pastures

❖ Flock Health

○ Parasites / genetics behind disease and parasite resistance	○ Biosecurity	○ Feeding studies
○ Johnes	○ Chlamydia	○ Listreosis
○ Foot Rot		○ Nutrition

19. Do you get, or read, the newsletter?

- A. If yes, how would you rate the value of it on a scale of 1 to 10?
- B. What could be done to make it better?

101	Yep. I just read certain articles. Depends on what the articles are. Rate it 7. B: I don't know. Not sure. Can't give it a 10 because they'd never try something different have to give it a little lower.
102	Yep. Well I think that's where it comes from. I have it on my table. Yep - I read the whole thing. Not always at one sitting but I grab it now and then for when I have a minute. Rate it a 10 for me. Nothing could make it better - It's always got a bit of everything in it.
103	I get it in my email and a hard copy too. I generally go right through it. There's certainly sections that interest me more than others. A: 9 and a half. That's been one of my prime sources of knowing what's going on. I went to Olds for the traceability, and Lakeland in Vermilion -the Terminal Sire project - because of the newsletter. B: At this point I would say nothing.
104	Oh yes. I read most of it. Anything to do with flock health is a definite. I look to see if there's anything coming up in the Zone meetings. Anything for coming events. Anything that would particularly apply to our flock or anything about the ID program, or the information updates. I probably read about 90% of it. A: Definitely a nine. B: I'm not sure on that one. I don't know. Maybe I should have given it a ten. It's well done, it provides information, Keeps us current in what's going on.
105	Not the newsletter. I get Sheep Canada. N/A N/A.
106	Yes, I read the whole thing. A: 10. B: I don't know.
107	Yes. I read the whole thing, I go through it. A: Probably about 5 or 6. B: Just like everything, get more information out to the people, more topics. I'm not interested in people going to meetings, because they don't really report anything back to the people anyways.
108	I get it, and usually I read it. Does speed reading count? A: Probably 6. B: I can't think of anything right now.
109	No I don't anymore. A: 7 or 8. B: No, it was pretty good.
110	Yes I do. I read the whole thing basically. A: 8 B: Maybe more comments with different breeders of what they do in regards to running operations.
111	Yes, usually the whole thing. A: I put it at a 10. B: They could have a for-sale/classifieds in it.
112	Yes. I get that, I glance through it, to see if anything that interests me, and that's it. A: If there's any new information that's where I get it. The only way I found out anything except for Sheep Canada. Give it 8. B: No. Just let a guy know what's going on the regulations and whatever.
113	Yes I get the newsletter, and I usually read them. A: I would say it's a 10. B: I don't know if it's worth to put lamb prices from the auction mart in. Because they're usually a month or two later than the original but that might help people who don't have internet access.

114	We get it. I think between the two of us we read the whole thing. A: Don't want to answer. B: Not off top of head. We used to like the shepherd's journal when we could get it. If they came out with something along those lines. Different ways to reach our markets. You always want the prices improved.
115	Yes, just sections. A: Give it a 7. B: Lots of the things, the articles on RFID seem to me to be aimed at making sure we accept and buy into the program. That's not for me. Once it's a given, fine, why not figure out how to make sure our competitors also have to do that. They tell us how much money it will save and then it's only if you're a large producer. If you're a small producer you get whacked. We should try to help the smaller producer, because not all producers want to turn into big producers... me for instance.
116	Yes I do, generally, but haven't lately because we've been too busy. Just bought 80 acres and we're trying to get it all set up. I skim through it then usually go back if something catches my eye. A: I'd put that 8.5 or so, they're pretty awesome. B: I would imagine there is, but I couldn't say what.
117	Yes. I try to read the whole thing. Sometimes I just don't get enough time though. It's a good thing to let us know what's going on and what's happening out there. The sheep industry is quite spread out. The closest sheep guy might be an hour away. It's hard to stay in touch with everybody. A: 7. B: Maybe a little more market information. And prices are a hard thing to put in there but market trends could be a helpful thing for people. Market places. People who they could market to, maybe a classified kind of thing.
118	Yes definitely. It usually takes a while but I get around to reading the whole thing. Like the sheep Canada it takes me a while to get through it all. You can probably imagine where it's getting read it. A: An 8. I usually enjoy the articles they have in it. B: You could look at doing a classifieds in it. It's more work, but it would be a good medium for us to market things. It'd give you something extra to put in it, plus it would help pay for it too.
119	Yes I do. Just sections. I flip through and see what's interesting. A: 9. B: Nothing.
120	Yes. The whole thing. It takes me more than one sitting, but I get through it. A: 10. There's always something interesting / helpful in it. B: Nothing.
121	N/A Producer couldn't finish survey.
122	Yes I read it. I read half of it, depending on the articles. A: I'd go back to my advertising thing, if they had sheep advertising \$5 or \$10 for a spot ad... look at what the AB goat producers have done. I look at the goats and they have a publication that's twice/ three times the sheep publication, but the only way that they have to survive is advertising. It also stimulates interest in the industry. That's your target market. Why don't we try to reach our target market? And then if you were to do that, meat buyers would be looking for it too. You could charge outside commercial users a premium, and they'd pay it if there was something worthwhile in it.
123	I read it all. A: It's probably about a 7 too. B: I don't think so. I think they do a pretty good job.
124	Yes, I try to read the whole thing if I get time. I sit in the camp and I read it. A: 7-8. B: They're writing everything in - what else can they do? They try to inform us with anything and everything.
125	Yes. I look through the whole thing, anything that interests me. A: It seems informative. I'd give it an 8. B: That I'm not sure of. It seems good to me.

126	<p>Yes, I read the whole thing. I can't tolerate people who didn't know something happened and they say they didn't read the paper it was in. How can you tell people anything if they don't read it? There might be something in it that I need to know. A: I think it's good, but we'll still give it a 9.</p> <p>B: If I told you they'd probably cost a lot more money, and put the check-off up. I don't know. I like photos, more photos. I like more information about what's happening in Alberta. The things they don't tell you. There's a little more stuff you could do about human interest. I kinda like reading about sheep stuff. Some of it gets dry at times, so they need a little more general interest.</p>
127	<p>Yes, most of it. A: Sometimes instead of information it's lots of PR stuff - why ALP is a good organization. I don't like that aspect of it but I do like the informative sections. What's going on or what you can do. They're probably looking for comments more than the numbers. B: Less political I guess.</p>
128	<p>Yes, I flip through it. A: I'd give that a 6. B: Make me read it more I guess. I just flip through it. I guess more on sheep health. I'd like to read up on different vaccines and stuff like that I guess.</p>
129	<p>Yes. I read as much as I can, I go through every page, I don't read every word. I think it's very informative. I'd say 9 for that as well. B: There's almost too much information there but that might not be a fair criticism. I think it's a well done publication, and there's not much that could make it better than it is.</p>
130	<p>I don't get the newsletter. I don't need it. We're not buying or selling stuff. A:N/A. B: N/A.</p>
131	<p>I get it, I think it's informative. The articles in there keep you up to date. Just the parts I find interesting. A. I would give it a 9 or 10, because I think it's important to keep people informed.</p>
132	<p>I go through it, and look through it to begin with. I don't read it all. It's good. I wouldn't get them to change a thing. It appeals to everybody. There's a lot of good information there. A: 8, 8+. B: I don't really know. They've got good people doing it. Some people will complain but I won't because I know they're on a budget. Some people might complain about the way it's printed, on glossy paper but the information's there and that's what counts. I was very proud of the ALP video - that was well done. I even sent it to my brother in Ontario. It was so well done I just wanted him to see it.</p>
133	<p>I get it and read it occasionally. My husband sometimes reads it more than I do. There's some stuff we've taken and used like the health stuff. A: 8. B: No comment. - Seems to be fine.</p>
134	<p>Yes. I always read the whole works. A: I'd give it a 9. B: I don't think there is anything I can think of anyway.</p>
135	<p>Yes. Generally read it through. A: Probably a 7. B: Hard to say. There probably is when you sit down and think about it, but nothing I can say off hand.</p>
136	<p>Yes. I don't have time to read it.</p>
137	<p>Yes. It's a 7, it's good. I read the whole thing. B: I have never put much thought into that. I'd have to have one in front of me and I'd have to remember.</p>

138	Yes. I certainly do. I read the whole thing. A: It's right up there I think it's a 10. I think they put a lot of info out there. The nice thing is that if you're stuck on something you can call them and they're glad to fill you in. They're very informative. B: No I think as long as they keep you informed on the current things that are happening that affect sheep production or might be coming up, I think that's a good direction to be going into. It keeps me informed because I don't attend the meetings. I think they're doing a good job.
139	Yes. I pretty much read the whole thing. A: I would say it's 7. B: I think they could go into a little more detail on some areas on what directors are doing at certain meetings so we know exactly what's going on.
140	Yes, I read the whole thing. A: Probably 9-10, as long as I'm not in the midst of lambing, then I don't have time to turn around. I keep them. I have a whole stack of them. B: No. I prefer to get the newsletter rather than the email. I like the newsletter, and I don't like the email newsletters. They don't need to improve by going email as far as I'm concerned.
141	I skim through it, my husband tells me then I get the emails. We like the newsletter. A:8. B: I have to ask my husband on that. He reads it more than I do and tells me what's what.
142	Yes, mostly read it... more than once sometimes. A: Give 'em average. B: Just keep working hard. <Entered a 5 rating>
143	Yes. All of it. A: It's good. I'd give it a 9. B: That's a good question. Can't think of anything right now.
144	I read the whole thing. A 8. B: This might sound silly, but why don't they take advertisements in there, for breeding stock or sire problems, replacement ewes or that stuff. Not for anything, just for livestock purposes. Or people who want to buy wool. Not anything personal.
145	I lit my fire with it tonight. I do read it. Sections. A: 4-3. 3 or 4. B: Again, similar to the webinars. Good information-articles that pertain to genetic improvement helping people out with veterinary issues, giving people tips. They do some stuff with pasture and worms and stuff. A guy can always complain. I just read it to see what's happening in the business and see what my zone director has to say. For interest sake not for information. It's good they put it out though.
146	Yes. I read most of it. A: 6. B: To me, more education, and more info about raising sheep.
147	Yes. Whole thing and point out mistakes and got no reply. A: I'm going to couch my reply in a business approach to the industry: Rating – 0 It's full of touchy feely things. The one attempt to bring in a forward specialist to talk about nutrition failed miserably. They brought in someone from AB agriculture who's never raised sheep. ... I read it in eternal hope that it will be valuable. My son just uses it to start the fire. B: Address the business of sheep production. They're skirting all around this. What are the net returns per ewe for flock sizes in Alberta? There's no extension being done. Fairview college has dropped all its AG programs. Dawson Creek College gave it up 20 years ago. Nothing teaching agriculture of any kind in the NW of this province. Some forage associations dealing strictly with cattle. None of the work is done for sheep. AB Agriculture hasn't sent or sponsored a speaker to attend a meeting to ask specific questions about the needs. When Margaret Cook comes up with the annual report I don't classify that as extension. Or when the vet comes to talk that's not business extension. You should repeat the words BUSINESS extension as many times as you can when you're quoting this interview.

148	Yes - whole thing. A: 8. B: I'd like to see more producer profiles.
149	Yes - pretty well all of it - except for the stuff I write. A: 7. B: Make it larger.
150	Yes. I started reading sections, but I usually get through it all. A It's quite informative. 8. B: Not sure.
151	Yes. A: 8. B: It costs more money to print every month... I never thought about that.
152	Yes. Pretty much read the whole thing. A: 8. B: No, not particularly.
153	Yes – read the whole thing. It has improved so much in the last 4-5 years. Used to scan it now you read it front to back. I'd rate it at an 8. It's timely and useful information.
154	Yes. 9.5
155	Oh yes. Read the whole thing. Rate it a 10. At least it tells me what the government's going to come at me with. B. I think the producer organizations should try and find out how the provincial and federal authorities are going to lean on you so you get a little advance knowledge. Little papers about how you pull lambs backwards - that's not a lot of interest.
156	Yes. 8 They are doing the best they can with what they've got. Like to see them highlight a producer every issue. We only hear about a certain few who make the news on a regular basis. Would like to hear about the ones we don't know.

<NB: All producers in the province are on a database and receive the mailed out newsletter.>

Results – Receive Newsletter (2011):

	Yes - Receive	No
#	53	3
%	95%	5%

Results – Newsletter Value Rating (2011):

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
#	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	10	15	10	10	4
%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	5%	18%	27%	18%	18%	7%

❖ 81% of Respondents rated the publication as a 7 or higher – up 11% from original survey.

Results – Receive Newsletter (2008):

	Yes - Receive	No
#	55	5
%	92%	8%

Results – Newsletter Value Rating (2008):

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
#	0	2	0	1	0	5	2	4	24	9	5	8
%	0%	3%	0%	2%	0%	8%	3%	7%	40%	15%	8%	13%

NB. Decimals were rounded up to the next number.

- ❖ 70% of Respondents rated the publication as a 7 or higher.

Results – Change Since 2008:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
%	+ 2%	- 3%	0%	- 2%	+ 2%	- 5%	+ 2%	+ 11%	- 13%	+ 3%	+ 10%	- 6%

What producers appreciate about the Newsletter:

- ❖ Always good articles / good information
- ❖ Great way to get information out to producers
- ❖ Broad info for producers is helpful to those who don't have access to the Internet or broader sheep farming community
- ❖ Good to know what's going on at zone meetings / dates of meetings helpful
- ❖ Good information about the government and what they are planning

Suggestions for improvement / changes to the Newsletter:

- ❖ A classified section / Advertising (5)
- ❖ Feature different breeders and their operations (3)
- ❖ Lamb prices from auction marts (info. may be outdated, but still useful for trends) (2)
- ❖ Ways to reach the market
- ❖ More photos
- ❖ More human interest stories (2)
- ❖ Sheep health articles (6)
- ❖ No director updates (what meetings they are attending) – less information on this
- ❖ More detailed director update on the meetings they attend
- ❖ More information is better than less – make it bigger
- ❖ It's too big

20. What do you think about having the opportunity to advertise in the newsletter (and on the web site)? Why would you want it, or why would you not want advertising?

- A. Do you currently advertise in any other agriculture publications?
- B. Have you ever bought anything from an advertiser in an agriculture publication? (if so what?)

101	As far as the advertising goes it depends on what your operation is and whether the advertising dollars are doing your operation any good or not. By advertising you do let more people know about your operation. At the same time I've done some advertising in the past and I haven't seen results from it. A: Yes - Can't think of the name right now... Not sheep Canada - the other one... That magazine has gone downhill. B: No. Not directly, though I have used it to contact people.
102	It would be OK. Just wondering whether it would change the dynamics of things that it would become more of a newspaper rather than an information sheet. Also depends on whether they would charge for it. Whether it would be free or whether you would have to pay to advertise. It would be a good way to reach everybody though - that would be a plus.
103	I have mixed feelings on that. One of my best resources has been the AB agriculture classifieds. I don't know if duplicating the resource would be good. Maybe just making sure people know about the other one would be good. I know people have gone to the Roping the Web site and not found the classifieds. It's got wanted, for sale, sheep, goats, guard dogs, llamas, alpacas, I check this one and I have an online subscription to the Western Producer. If I was posting I'd post to Roping the Web. B: Most of my purchases have been through this website.
104	We always seem to be looking for dogs or rams or whatever - it's a good way to know who's got some or that they would be willing to sell. It's better if you're buying from someone you've met at one of the symposiums or meetings. I think that it would be an ok idea. A: No. We sell directly to the fellow who goes into Calgary. B: On the internet we have bought Dogs. I believe we got some sheep In either Sheep Canada or Shepherd's Journal. We have a closed flock and usually only buy rams from people we know.
105	I'm into the hair sheep and we're getting pretty skinny. There's not that many producers -10-12% in hair sheep. I haven't tried advertising. I'm stuck with what I've been doing.
106	I think that's a good idea. I think it would bring more people in the circle. We'd get to know more producers. It'd be valuable for that aspect. Good to meet more people.
107	Definitely. Why? You become isolated in your own area, about getting replacements or finding different stock. Even if you had to drive halfway across the province to get something you'd know it'd be there for you. You have the rams that go to the auction mart and somebody down the road is looking for one. B: Not in the lamb end of it but I bought a lot of bee equipment and a couple of tractors. I never bought anything related to sheep.
108	That would be a good thing. It seems like there's so much business happening on the internet now. It's just a different format. People read less magazines and newspapers. It's just a sign of the times. A: No. B: Yes, we found addresses and names and things like that.
109	I wouldn't have any real need to. A: No. B: Yep. I bought stuff from the Wool Grower's lots of times.
110	It's OK if you have something to advertise/sell, or if you're going into value added. A: No advertising. B: Yes, over the years. I had to curtail the operation a little because I had a heart attack.

111	That would be good. It would help me sell, if I had to sell some lambs or something, or if I was looking for something. A: No. B: Yes. Hay.
112	I thought they just sent it out to members. Ads wouldn't hurt at all. A: No I don't advertise at all, I just sell meat, send it to market. B: Yes, I likely have bought rams and that through advertising. That's about all I buy.
113	I would do that if I could. I did that with the Shepherds Journal. I would advertise there if I could. I raise guardian dogs and they always have puppies. I'd like to bring that to the attention of the producers. A: I published on the internet on Ropin' the Web, but not in any paper publications. B: Our first dogs I found in the newsletters.
114	I guess it would be fine as long as it doesn't just turn out to be ads with no meat between. Ours are meat market sheep. We're not raising much breeding stock. It's a grade herd, they're pure Suffolk but they're not registered sheep. As long as we're getting decent prices I don't think you're going to have as much use for advertising.
115	Not sure it would be useful to me because I'm a niche market person not mainstream. There might be some advantages if we were looking at a 3 tiered market production and suggesting that producers consider that as one model going forward, then there might be some merit in me advertising, but the way things are going now, I don't think it would be useful. But remember this is my operation, which isn't a good fit with the way people do things. A: Yes, Sheep Canada. B: Yes, Horse stuff, unrelated to sheep stuff.
116	That would be awesome. You could get exposure you could let people know what kind of stock you could bring forth. Exposure is always good.
117	That would be a good thing to advertise there. There's new producers coming in, no idea what where when to market. It would be a starting point for them. There are guys who drove by me, didn't know I was here. We don't advertise much, but we're going to start a lot more. A: no, except for business card ads and bulletin boards. B: No Don't think so.
118	Yes. It's one of the things that becomes more of a paid thing instead of a freebie. If AB Lamb is looking for a way to keep it <the newsletter> afloat it would certainly cover the cost of production. A: Not yet, but in another couple years I would be. Depends, I've used Kijiji and Ropin the Web for marketing animals and hay and machinery here and there. B: Oh yeah, definitely: One thing was my purebred Clun Forest ram and actually ewe lambs too. I'm sure the purebred breeders would jump all over it. You know it's getting out to everybody. With Sheep Canada, you don't know if they're getting it. This would go to everybody that buys tags in Alberta.
119	No idea. A: No. B: No.
120	That would be good. Because it's a good way for people who have equipment to market. Classifieds would be good. You need round bale feeders but you'd have to look through 20 newspapers to find stuff about sheep. It would be good for networking, for people to sell sheep stuff. A: No. B: I don't think so.
121	Didn't complete survey.

122	I think it would be a good idea. There are two national publications in Canada. One is bi-monthly and the other is quarterly. When you're talking about a live commodity that's not real timely. A: Western Producer. Ontario Sheep and Sheep Canada, I will advertise occasionally in the Canadian Meat Code Journal. Used to advertise a lot in the states too. Primarily Texas sheep publications. B: Yes, definitely: equipment, recipients, computer software.
123	Free or at a cost. It depends on what the cost would be. A: Yes, Canadian Wool Growers, Sheep Canada. B: Yes. Wool growers. Lambing supplies and stuff.
124	Yes, we should advertise our Rambouillet rams our purebreds out here. A: We don't. We started with 10 rams now we're up to 50, but word gets out. We never tried to advertise but it'd be good. B: No.
125	That would help. I find Ropin the Web helpful. We've had sheep and had Maremma dogs for sale. That's the only place where sheep producers can see what's out there. Aside from Ropin' the Web, there's nowhere to go to buy/sell things. A: I have with the AB site Ropin the Web. B: No. I don't believe I have. I've looked at hay, sheepdogs or lambs, but I don't think I've bought anything from there.
126	I think that's ok. I don't see anything wrong with that. If it's going to generate some income from people who want to do it, why not? A: Yes, The only one we have is Sheep Canada. I'm on the AB Sheep breeders website. B: Yes. I don't need to buy much. I bought a tip table, I can't remember if I got my first guard dogs in the papers, but I looked in them. I use it to get in touch with people. I can't remember exactly what I got. I was looking in equipment. I wasn't looking to buy sheep. I'd definitely like to see better advertising of what equipment is available in Canada.
127	It would be a revenue maker, so that would be ok. A: No B: Yes, usually the breeder's lists I'll look at, and get information from that.
128	I wouldn't, I have nothing to advertise. I'd go on Ropin' the Web if I wanted to advertise. Other people advertising in it would be fine. A: No I don't. B: I don't think I ever have, not that I can recall anyway. I'm not saying I wouldn't do it in the future.
129	Possibly, yep. Hadn't thought about it before. I think it has potential for certainly being looked at by a lot of producers in the province. All the producers should have access to both of those things so it would be money well spent for advertisers. A: No. B: Classified ads yes, but I wouldn't say from an advertiser other than that.
130	I think that would be a good thing. If they're looking for something for sale, that would be good. A: No. I never do any advertising at all. Most of the time the lambs are born then I take them for the Easter lamb market. B: Years ago I did. I bought some ewes from a fellow.
131	I think it's a good thing for the advertising, if you're selling ewe lambs or market lambs. Only problem is that it might only go out to people who already have sheep. For the ewe lambs it would be ok but for the market lambs it might not help. A: I have in the Western Producer a bit though. When I sold my ewes I advertised on Ropin the Web and the Shepherds Journal, but haven't advertised lately. B: Yes. Earlier on, I bought some ewes that were advertised.

132	It won't bother me if they want to do it for income. I won't advertise in it because I have nothing to advertise. I'd read the ads. If I was a company I'd want to advertise because all the sheep guys get it. A: No, I don't. We're not in breeding stock. We sell wool and our lambs through the auction mart, so we have no reason to advertise. We haul the wool up to Lethbridge. In some cases I've had large quantities of wool given to me. It won't pay for your shearing but it might pay for half of your shearing. You've gotta shear them anyway, and every bit helps.
133	That would be good. I'd like to see the contact information for the farms. Maybe the website. In the newspaper it would take too much. Maybe a blip that you could find information on the website. A: No. We're too small, but probably should. B: No. I've just found things at local stores.
134	That might spoil it. I don't know. I hate advertising. When there's something that's of interest like that. A: No I don't. B: Not really, no.
135	I wouldn't do it, but I think it would be a good thing. I don't have any reason to do it. It would be a good thing I guess. If there's ads for somebody selling rams or equipment. You've gotta do a lot of searching around otherwise you're pretty much stuck with what they'll sell you out of Lethbridge. A: We have some sheep but they're on the Ropin' the Web. B: We buy goats out of the Goat Keeper magazine.
136	I think it's a possibility. When my daughter comes through this season with a new crop of purebred sheep it's something we'd take a look at. A: No. B: No.
137	It's a business. If they're expecting us to pay for that in the check-offs and they can get some of that back, why not? I guess that's a yes. A: No. B: Yes. More on the grain side of things though.
138	I guess if it's a way of gaining revenue that would help fund these things that's fine. It'd be like the Shepherds Journal; there were a lot of ads and things. I don't see anything wrong with it. A: No. B: I don't know, maybe I haven't I still think lots of people do, and it's a good thing to have.
139	It'd be good for everyone. It's something that other provinces have. We go to the Sask. sheep Breeders Assoc. and look at classifieds just for curiosity. You find other breeders that you might not have known of. With ALP we don't have that opportunity at this point. A: We do most of our advertising through papers in the late summer and fall. We do lots of advertising on Ropin' the Web, the AB government website. B: I think so. Our first sheep that we bought we bought through an ad in the Shepherd's Journal at the time.
140	I don't know what I'd advertise. I would read the advertisements that come in, but I don't know what I would want to put in there. I don't sell rams, or breeding stock. There's no sense... I might put feeder lambs for sale. Depends on what I have when the newsletter comes out, but I can't see using it on a regular basis. A: No. I go to farmer's markets, and I have by word of mouth built up quite a clientele. My customers are my advertisers. I sold one lamb to a lady, and I ended up with 15 more coming. Treat your customers' right and they'll do it for you. I raise turkeys as well, and I can get rid of 250-260 turkeys as well. All without advertising. It's all been word of mouth. B: Yes. I order out of the wool growers, that's an agricultural book... Yeah I have. I've ordered CDs and different stuff. When the green books come in I go through it.
141	That might take up a lot of their time when they'd rather put it towards the government issues or program issues. It'd be ok. A: Right now we advertise in the sheep magazines that come. Ads would be ok, but it's a lot of work too. Would they subscribe then to cover the cost. They'd need additional people to do that - there's extra people that would be involved. I don't have a problem with it though. B: No, there's not a lot of people we can buy from. I bought through Canadian wool growers, in their catalogue, stuff I need.

142	I think they're doing a good job the way it is.
143	We already advertise on the website, but not on the newsletter. With our business it doesn't make sense to do it in the newsletter. We're better off on the website. I have no problem with advertising showing up in there in general. A: Advertising online. They have our name on their website for direct marketing lamb. We have our own website too. No print. B: Equipment that I've seen advertised. To say that I bought it just because it was advertised in there - no.
144	I'm talking about just what has to do with sheep. Breeding stock, replacement whatever, wool if somebody's looking for it or selling it. Just what has to do with sheep production itself? That's what I would want to see. Not cows or anything. This would also be some revenue for producing the newsletter. The membership fees could go down a bit if you produce the newsletter with revenues from advertising. A: No. B: No.
145	That would be great. We just bought some advertising in Sheep Canada. If we can get ad space that's good. It gives people another reason to read it. Looking for buyers/sellers. B: I doubt it. - we bought stuff from people who had ads out, but not necessarily because of their ads.
146	I don't think there's a problem with that. If you're going to get somebody to advertise, I don't want them to have any influence over it. I think Sunterra has too much influence about the sheep industry and the lamb producer's organization. So if Case Tractors or Co-Op food stores wants to advertise no problem, but you just pay your money and put your ad in and that's it. If you have somebody who advertises a lot I think they think they should have extra favor. A: No, not for sheep. I advertise in Western producer - just farm equipment though. I haven't advertised the sheep at all. If I was going to advertise sheep I'd do it in the WP at this point. B: Yes. It was in wheel and deal, and I bought some breeding stock from a guy in the WP this summer.
147	All it would be is breeders selling purebreds... Not at all. You don't need it. It would be purebred breeders peddling purebred stuff. They've done enough damage already. This is a veiled attempt to get money in to ALP. Thinly veiled.
148	I don't see anything wrong with that. A: Not for sheep no. B: Yes. We've purchased bulls, and I bought sheep that way too.
149	That would be good. To provide money to maintain and improve the newsletter. A: The country store part of Ropin' the Web - and the Western Producer. B: Oh yes, many times.
150	I'm not sure whether that would take away from the newsletter or not, having ads all over on it. I'm not sure where I stand on it. I'd probably put an ad in it. I'm not sure if it's the right thing to do or not. They're supposed to be representing everyone. The legalities would be difficult I would think. I would have to vote for no on advertising on it. For personal farm advertisements anyway. Then everybody would have to have an ad on there you'd need a book. I'm not sure they could do that very easily. A: Yes, Shepherds Journal, BC Sheep news. Sheep Canada. B: I don't think sheep-wise I've bought much.
151	I don't advertise. I try to keep a low profile and keep the crazy people away. I don't have to have a trailer sitting around the place 51 weeks a year. I would never try to advertise. It looks like you're trying to impress people. Just trying to be part of the flock. It would be ok if other people advertised though. A: No. B: I buy my rams from Williams - John Williams - I think they advertised somewhere along the line, and I'm buying my rams from them. If they advertised it wouldn't hurt me at all. Have the updated shearers directories included.

152	It just boils down to the politics of it. I've tried to get them to include my market report in the newsletter but they've added it to the website so I'm satisfied with that. A: Not at the moment. - We have an ad through the SK sheep board. B: Oh yes, over the years. I've been in business 25 years. Sheep handling equipment mainly. Before I was running my own sale, I'd check the prices out to see where I could get my best dollar but that's from all sources of agricultural advertising.
153	Nothing wrong with it unless it made it too bulky for mailing or if it put pressure on the staff in the office because they are too busy. If they can do it fine. My son advertises based on circulation.
154	Yes I want it. Puts the newsletter more into people's everyday use. Good producer tool. He doesn't advertise in other publications now but would use it. Paid advertising is fine.
155	I advertise in a couple of magazines and my daughter-in-law puts it on the internet. I can already sell everything I produce. Never bought anything.
156	I think we'll have to do that. I think we'll need to find people with big bucks who would back ALP (through ads) to keep the newsletter going. If we need to put a glossy cover on that would be fine. (with ads). No problem with that. Need some corporate money. They don't advertise with anyone now. They have wondered about doing it in the future.

Results – Classified Advertising:

	Yes	No	Not Sure / No Opinion
#	39	10	7
%	70%	18%	12%

21. Do you subscribe to N'ewesline?

- A. If yes, how would you rate the value of it on a scale of 1 to 10? Do you read it?
- B. What could be done to make it better?

101	No.
102	No. No computer.
103	Yes. I get the two mixed up. N'ewesline is short - last one I got was on a shearing school in March. I find it valuable for my sheep club members - you gotta check your email.
104	No. Want to. <Signed up>
105	No.
106	No. <Signed up>
107	No.
108	No. <Signed up>
109	No.

110	No I don't. Come summertime I'm employed with AFSC, so I'm on the road quite a bit.
111	Yes. They're supposed to email it to me but I haven't been getting it.
112	No.
113	I think I get that from Tony <No> I get monthly things on email but I'm not sure if it's N'ewesline. <Signed up>
114	Maybe.
115	Yes, Give it an 8. B: I don't know. One of the things they could do, Instead of sending things as attachments that eat up your download links are better. Provide a brief description in the email and a link rather than a big attachment that I have to download.
116	Didn't know about it. <Signed up>
117	No. N/A.
118	Yes. A: I'd call it an 8. It keeps you pretty much informed of everything you need to know. Some of the stuff isn't terribly relevant. B: It works pretty well the way it is. One of the main reasons I check the home email is to check what's coming across with that.
119	No. Not interested.
120	Yes. 10. I think it's great. B: I don't know. I haven't been in sheep long enough to know if something is missing.
121	No. No computer.
122	It's up there, it's an 8. It's important. B : Don't know.
123	No. <Signed up>
124	No.
125	No.
126	Yes. A: It's prompt, it comes down all the time, I've even used it on a few occasions. I'd say 9. B: Not unless they're hiding something from me. What I get is what I read, how could they make it better? You don't know what you don't know.
127	I really like the N'ewesline. That could be in lieu of a newsletter. That gives you up to date things that are happening. A: I like it, so it's about a seven. B: I think it's pretty good as it is.
128	No. A. N/A B. n/A.
129	No.
130	No.
131	No.

132	No. We should look it up.
133	No. <Signed up>
134	No. No computer.
135	No. Not interested.
136	No.
137	Yes, we get that. I didn't know we were subscribed but we do get the updates all the time. A: It's a 5. It's a lot of stuff that's old and already gone by. They just regurgitate what's on the AB Government site. It's more lamb specific but it's pretty general information. They've been through some big changes in the way things are done. What they really need to do is invite a bunch of producers to have a round table. They should go around and pick a few producers sit down with them and have a conversation. Get a real feel for what's going on. There's lot s of people like me who don't have time to go to these meetings. B: I think that's a bit unnecessary. I think the newsletter's plenty. It's one or the other in my opinion. Either send out the newsletter online, or send it out in a piece of paper. You don't need both.
138	No. Will sign up online.
139	Yes. A: It's good. Probably 7, something like that. B: I don't know. As for email It's not something that I look at. I don't like reading papers on the internet. They go into enough detail and if there isn't enough detail, you can phone Margaret and get more information about it.
140	Yes. A: It's good. As long as it's not more than a page long, but if it's 4-5 pages long I have to print it off, because I don't take time to read a lot of stuff on the computer. I'd rate it a 9. B: Keep it short.
141	I used to get it. I think I cut it off. I just read the newsletter that comes.
142	No - no computer.
143	Yes. A: It's factual, it's comes out quickly. Give it a 9. B: No. I don't have anything at this time.
144	No. <Signed up>
145	Yes. My dad gets it, I don't get it. A: I don't check it out that often. I think it's better than the other publication. B: n/a.
146	No.
147	Yes. A: 0. I've never found anything of value on it. If I look through the eyes of a greenhorn - maybe. B: Well, In order to improve it they'd have to research the industry. If we are incapable of enumerating the annual expected financial returns from raising sheep what is the point?!?
148	Yes. A 7: B: It's good. A lot of things aren't relevant for me though. But the ones that are relevant I want to see, so I'm willing to put up with the rest.
149	Yes. A. 7 It's intermittent. Some months there's lots, some months not a lot. B: You just have to keep finding things of interest to shepherds and keep putting them in.

150	No idea. Maybe - There's lots on the computer.
151	Never seen it. I don't know what it's like. If and when I get the computer I'll be interested.
152	No. No computer.
153	No
154	Yes. Value 7.5
155	No. Don't subscribe. No email.
156	No – registered but never got anything for it. <signed up>

Results – N'ewesline (2011):

	No	N/A (No Access)	Yes	No - but will look at or sign up now
#	21	8	16	11
%	37.5%	14%	28.5%	20%

Results – N'ewesline Value Rating (2011):

	1 (0)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
#	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	1	4
%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%	25%	19%	6%	25%

NB: Rated only by those who receive it.

- 69% of those who voted rated N'ewesline at a 7 or higher.

Results – N'ewesline (2008):

	No	N/A (No Access)	Yes	No - but will look at or sign up now
#	35	15	8	20
%	62%	24%	14%	34%

Results – N'ewesline Value Rating (2008):

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No #
#	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	2
%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	17%	33%	17%	0%	25%

- 67% of the respondents who rated the value of N'ewesline rated it at a 7 or higher

22. Are there any other ways you think ALP could / should support the future of the industry?

101	I don't have any ideas at the present time.
102	No. They're doing a good job. Support for the producers, but the big thing is the predator control, but that's not something anyone can change without getting rid of all the coyotes. There's compensation for animals killed by wolves, bears, cougars, but not dogs or coyotes. Coyotes just about put me out of business. I had fish and wildlife and AB agriculture out telling me I'm doing everything I can. The guard dogs were whipped, because the coyotes were running in packs of 5-8. It's pretty difficult to deal with.
103	None that I can think of. From what I've seen they're doing it.
104	I can't think of any.
105	No. not right off hand. It's part of what happening in the globe. AB Lamb didn't do everything, but they're still a great part of it. Everything's so global now it's retarded. Right now Australia is flooded, their grain crops are screwed, so western Canada's going to get better for their wheat.
106	Not off the top of my head.
107	I don't really have any opinion on any of that. They could go ask the provincial government for more money but they'd probably tell them to go fly a kite. They've <Government> basically abandoned the agriculture industry. You can't do anything if you don't have the money.
108	That's a good question... I don't have any brilliant ideas right now.
109	More training programs and more info for beginning sheep producers. Make a good book that helps us all covering lambing and diseases and facilities and all that stuff.
110	You gotta try to work hand in hand with any government agency and producers, together, to better the industry.
111	I would say advertise more in popular agricultural newspapers / magazines to increase production or to bring in new people.
112	Can't think of anything right now.
113	I don't know.
114	Expanding markets. That's an important thing for them to keep doing.
115	No. I think I've said everything.
116	Couldn't answer that one.
117	I still think they should go more for the existing producers than the new producers. Just get the existing producers to expand. Most of it is financing. Producers would expand but they can't get financing. They don't know where to go or which banks are the best. When they're asked about rate of gain, they have no idea. They have to have a business plan. They need to help producers become better businessmen rather than just doing this as a fun thing.

118	I think mainly just trying to keep a voice in the government for sure. To keep reminding them that we're a real industry not just a fly-by-night kind of deal because I'm concerned without Florence bugging that Ag minister all the time it might not stay that way. I know Florence Henning she did a lot of lobbying while she was on the board. Make sure the government knows we're here. Keep in touch with the farm credit and AFSC to remind them of the same thing. Need to make sure that if guys like me want to take a chance and get into this seriously that AFSC and Farm Credit are on board with that too. That's got a lot to do with Alberta Lamb.
119	No.
120	When I think of the future of the industry I think of new people getting into sheep. What I wish there was is something like a beginner's package that they could mail out that would have everything you need to get started. Websites, phone numbers, that sort of thing. A zone package would be a really good idea. Maybe a list of what you need for your first lambing. <NB: An informative new producer education package is available by calling the office.>
121	N/A.
122	Other than what I've already mentioned? How much time do they have? The advertising would be good. The interprovincial trade barriers would be good to eliminate. The other thing is international trade and medications. The other thing, as far as meat is concerned, that's generally the primary product, more carcass classes, sire reference ram gestations or market carcass classes.
123	Another idea suggested is to give small producers the opportunity to join the RFID program. It's usually 100 ewes or more. Helping out the smaller producer to have the same opportunities that the larger producers have. Giving the same opportunities to everyone.
124	Not that crosses my mind at this time. They should be advertising all the time. Like the purebred breeders should advertise in the newsletter, to buy rams, or ewe lambs. People don't know where to market their lambs anymore. They get hung up trying to sell their lambs for 1/3 of the price because they didn't know where to go.
125	I'm not sure how. I have no suggestions.
126	I don't know what else they can do. I gave them a pretty good rating. I would have gone more, but I don't want them to think they've done everything they can. Go with the flow, let us know what the changes are, and don't sit quite so comfortably with what the government is telling you, even though they're giving you some support monetarily.
127	I think they're trying to do their best. There again, I think being more encompassing rather than restrictive would be good.
128	I don't know how they would get more people to get in the lamb/sheep business. I know that they're trying but rural Alberta is shrinking. I've seen lots of people move bigger farmers take over the land and turn it into farmland. The average farmer around here is in their 40s to 50s, their kids don't want to farm. If you had a million dollars, that's not even a down payment, and if you had a million dollars, why would you want a farm. How do you keep the kids involved? I don't think anybody knows the answer to that.
129	Certainly a continuation of government lobbying would be good. Exploring new markets would be another way.

130	No. I think it pretty well sounds good with the marketing and health and nutrition, but marketing is the big one with so many other meats out there.
131	Other than what I said about putting the lamb out at some of these fairs, nothing else now.
132	I don't think so. I don't think I have any ideas that they aren't already doing. Their board of directors covers the province pretty well and they've got a lot of experience in the board.
133	Not familiar enough to put any ideas out there.
134	It's pretty good the way it is.
135	Not really.
136	No.
137	I think more grassroots involvement... Again the problem for me is you can't put the cart before the horse. If we're really going to have AB Lamb sold in our larger businesses then you need the facilities here to provide the lamb. If you don't have the processing plants, you can't supply the lamb. My local abattoir does lamb for people but they don't sell it through the meat shop. That would be my big one. As an industry, everyone needs to sit down together. With sheep you have a lot of people who have 10-20 head. They have a different sense of where they want their money spent than somebody with 300-400. It's tough to get everybody on the same page when you have that kind of a demographic difference.
138	Basically they should focus more on the political side and health. Those are the things I think they should be doing mostly. That's just my opinion. It's so important that somebody's there at the table when we're being discussed or decided on. We could get all sorts of arbitrary rules handed down if they weren't around. That's where we should be spending our money.
139	I think they're going in the right direction now with education and promotion of the industry. They just have to make sure they stay in the eye of the producer to make sure that the producer sees that they're making progress with what they're doing.
140	I don't know.
141	My mind's blank because I need to get out there. I'm happy with them and the good work they're doing.
142	If the government can keep supporting them and they can get support from the producers, that's OK with me.
143	No. Nothing at this time.
144	No, not that I can think of right now.

145	We talked about advocacy and liaison. I don't know what it would take to listen to some of the bigger producers then take it forward to government - not just all the smaller producers. I've been there. We started with 20 sheep. I have a pile of suggestions 30 pages long about what they could do with the check-off dollar. Well, only a few suggestions. I know if we could apply check-off to imported lamb we'd solve lots of these problems. US, Australian, NZ lamb, doesn't pay anything. We're taxing ourselves. Until we have a national check-off we can't impose it on other countries. I know it's tough, but keep working at it. Margaret wants to do a good job and I think she does for the most part.
146	When it comes to government stuff and what the government tries to regulate and the rules they try to come up with I'd like ALP to think about how it's going to affect the producers, not just whether it'll benefit the industry. I don't think they're doing that. I think they hear some story from a bureaucrat/politician, and we get saddled with rules and stuff like that. I don't think they're acting in the interests of the lamb producer. A lot of ways they're in the pocket of government and Sunterra. They should get a backbone. Stand up to government tell them when the stuff they're coming up with is wrong, not going to work or whatever. Maybe they are, but I haven't seen any evidence of it.
147	There is one thing - stop the bi-annual seminar of foreign speakers; convene seminars within the 7 AB lamb districts. They would then be the ones that pay for it, seek the needs for that district, work in cooperation with the people in the district, address them at an annual seminar. They can do it without any costs whatsoever if they know how to set up a meeting. They can do it in each of the districts. The districts are so big that one man sitting at home can't promote anything by himself.
148	Just to provide support for the new entrants to the industry and keep lobbying the government on our behalf.
149	No. I don't think so, As a director too the 2 most important functions are the government advocacy part and the education part. There isn't enough money available to do much more than that. If we can keep the government off our back and the producers informed that's about the best we'll be able to manage.
150	I'm not sure of any. They're pretty involved now. I'm not sure what else they could be doing.
151	Not at the moment. Give me a week and maybe I'll be able to tell you.
152	Not really. I'm so distant from them I really don't follow them a whole lot so I really don't have a comment there.
153	There have been times where there was trouble in the cattle industry (feed issues). They have received government pay-outs. Sheep never have except for BSE. Bison can go into the states but not sheep. Can't even go through the states to get to Mexico for breeding – that limits us. More lobbying.
154	No – not really. I focus on running my farm and look after my own thing. My ability to make a profit is not about whether the government pays me enough.
155	Pass. I think they're going to be doing without my buck and a half from here on in.
156	No I can't think of anything.

23. Are there any additional comments and/or questions regarding the ALP or any other topic that you would like to include here?

101	No.
102	We had a wreck this last spring too which should be addressed by somebody but I don't know who. We had a case of BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhea). We had lambed June/July and Nov/Dec, but my big lamb was Feb./March, and that's where it showed up, then we lambed in June w/o problems. But when we had the problems we lost 75% of our lambs and of the ones that survived most never made it to market. When it came it cost \$500 to get the lab and vet consultation done, and then testing the survivors. The vet had little knowledge of it where sheep were concerned. It comes from cattle or wildlife. No vaccine for it. The vet talked to a lot of the experts in different areas of Canada and got varying info where sheep were concerned. Couldn't determine at any point where the sheep could have got it from. Our cattle aren't vaccinated, but never had a problem. Anybody out there raising sheep can have this same economic wipeout problem. I had garbage cans in the barn, and they just kept getting filled up with dead lambs. Instead of 300 lambs, I ended up with about 75. Find out how to fix this.
103	No. If I were to say anything I'd say thank you for doing a good job. There's a software in America called Farmworks that's not the one we're on. Don't get the two mixed up. If you bought the other program it might work for sheep but maybe wouldn't work with the RFID. Margaret's great. Sometimes a short little note is just what we need. When there's something we should know we get a little note.
104	Not that I can think of right now.
105	No. I think that the people are doing pretty well.
106	Nope.
107	No not really.
108	Nope.
109	No, I don't think so.
110	No.
111	No, I think that's everything.
112	No.
113	No, I'm so far pretty deep with them and what they did for the last few years. There's lots of educational stuff that we try to attend.
114	I don't know.
115	I know when they changed their name to Alberta Lamb I wanted them to consider that wool is an important part of the process. Wool is an additional revenue stream and AB Lamb should not forget about the Wool producers.
116	Not that I can think of off the top of the head.

117	I don't think so.
118	I think I've pretty much took care of every thing.
119	No.
120	Nothing I can think of.
121	No.
122	I applaud them for taking time to assess the membership. I think it's a good investment of funds and I wish them every success.
123	Can't think of anything more that we haven't already talked about.
124	No, that's about it.
125	Not really. It's good that somebody's out there looking after business.
126	No, I think I've been fairly vocal, telling you at length at times. It's fairly clear that I support them. I understand the need for new people to have information. Just because I know it all or think I do, I understand that new people need to have the information. I think they're doing a good job. How many people do they have? <NB: ALP has one ¼ and one ½ time staff positions> What can you expect from that amount of people? There's got to be a limit to what they can do with the check-off money. They're doing well. If I ask them for something else they'll have to cut something. I want to keep what we've got rather than having to cut something to do something new. I've never had a problem being vocal and if we don't tell them what to do then how will they know.
127	<p>One thing that I disagree with about ALP is that you have to buy tags every year, and if you don't buy tags you're not a voting member. If you're raising lambs and selling them you should be able to vote, no matter when you buy your tags. That's a rule they put in a couple years ago, and I strongly disagree with it. <Suggested solution?> Have it the way it was before. You should be a voting member of ALP if you can prove that you have sold lambs this year.</p> <p>The reason I'm saying this is because there's only one place you can buy the tags, that's in Lethbridge. If you could go to UFA and buy one whenever you need them that would be different. I won't buy them through the mail. I usually go to a show and buy them there. Their argument is that you only have to buy one tag to be a member... Why would you buy one tag to be shipped from Red Deer, that's pretty ridiculous? The thing I really liked was their Scrapie project. But be able to have an animal that has just died or euthanized at the lab so you can have a fresher carcass that they can look at. Plus it's good for the overall health of the industry.</p>
128	No, not really. Just what I've said.
129	I feel more confident as a producer that if we're good shape as an industry if we have an organization like AB Lamb there for us and lobbying on our behalf.
130	No. I think that pretty well sums her up there.
131	No I don't think so.
132	No. Just tell them they're doing a good job.

133	No.
134	No there isn't.
135	No.
136	No.
137	I don't think so. They'll get something out of this I hope.
138	No. I think that's about it.
139	No. A few years ago we had lots of questions about ALP when they were looking to increase their check-off In the last 3-4 years they've come a long way with the producers letting them know what they're involved in. They've come a long way and they've done well.
140	<p>I think they're doing alright. They're going a good job. They're never going to please everybody. It's up to the producers to go to meetings and give directions. The Directors' duty is to follow directions. Farmers grumble over coffee, but nobody will get up there and say what they really think. <Suggested solution?> I think more round table discussions in groups - handing out a bunch of questions and letting them just sit there and discuss it.</p> <p>I know you're not going to get much generations coming into farming like they used to. They <our kids> can get a better job; they're not going to work like us old fogies. I know the younger generation, people who were farming with our parents can get a 9-5 job and have their evenings free. Society now has as much recreational time as they do work time. They're not going to work hard like us old fogies.</p>
141	There was one issue but I can't remember. I'm very happy with them
142	I would have more questions but my mind is blank right now.
143	No. Just like to repeat that whenever I talk to the zone directors whether it's Lethbridge, former one there, Norine or Margaret in Airdrie, I always find them very helpful. I've met some of the other directors over time and I enjoy working with them.
144	No, not at the moment.
145	Not that I can think of. If I can speak freely about the video, it's a good video. I didn't like how they edited the video to be so pro-ALP. They edited out all the stuff I said. Why do we have to live in a communist society when we live in a democracy? I support the ALP. I just wish we could get more out of them. The person who has 50 sheep they need their say too. The hobbyists aren't in the same boat though. Unfortunately in our zone a lot of producers support the abolition of the refundable check-off. We don't want to be like the cattle industry where check-off is refundable. They see value for their \$100. Limited amounts of money spent and they see good value in return. We could do what SK implemented. For large producers they put a cap on the check-off. I'd be more than willing to pay the average or double the average. This year we paid \$8 thousand. We're set for having piles of animals. We have almost no choice but to ask for some of those costs back because it's so much of an operating cost. If we had a cap on the check-off it would be very beneficial and you'd keep the support of the larger guys.

146	With Lamb producers and government it's time for some common sense. It's time to cut out stupid unproductive regulations and get us real productive information about how to raise sheep. In the last 6 years I bought out several people - not because I was looking, but they wanted to get out because of all the regulations. They were hobby people and it wasn't worth it for them to even do it as a hobby. They're not helping promote lamb production, even though that was one of their goals. On one hand you want to increase lamb production on the other you've got so many rules people are going to want to quit. Maybe one thing that would help is if they got something together if somebody wanted to get into the sheep business, this is something you should be looking at as you buy your sheep. What type of sheep, rams, ewes to be buying. If you want to get to a certain # of sheep, what facilities, labor, and pens will you need? Have a look at this; this is what you're going to need to do.
147	No, I've covered them all.
148	No.
149	The executive director of ALP is one of our greatest assets! It might be more difficult to do the things we do without Margaret's help and Jill. They do a good job.
150	Don't think so.
151	Not really, no.
152	The one thing I'm hearing from producers now is because of the retagging of sheep with the RFID tags the producers are going to have to pay the premium charge again. A lot of producers have paid that (check-off) anyway. Some have paid it twice or more if they've lost the tags for sheep that the check-off has already been paid on.
153	Nope.
154	Should try to give kudos to Margaret. She is breathing, thinking, and living sheep and without her we wouldn't have as good an organization. She is a humungous asset.
155	No. I think our 15-20 minutes are about up.
156	No I think you have sucked me dry. ☺

Conclusion: Key Findings

This survey is part of ALP's ongoing commitment to communicating with members and industry. It allows everyone involved to not only hear what concerns and suggestions producers have now, but to also see what changes have happened over the last 3 years.

Overall, in every area measured statistically, there is an improvement in value perception or utilization. That is a strong indication that what ALP is doing is meeting with producer approval.

That is not to say that there are not several concerns—some quite vehement—about what ALP is doing, or not doing. While ALP will never be able to meet the needs or desires of 100% of members there is always room to improve. 62% of producers rated the value provided as a 7 or higher – a 9% increase from a few years ago. Given that the trend is upward, that is further indication that what ALP is doing is A) working B) what producers want.

While it is extremely valuable to solicit member input it is important to remember that producers are providing input based on what they are aware of in the industry. Even ALP with its vast involvement on dozens of committees, thousands of hours of industry meetings annually, and extensive research do not have the entire picture. We all do the best we can with what we know or understand at the time.

ALP has consistently communicated with producers (via meetings, the newsletter, N'ewesline, and director communication to their zones) regarding progress on their strategic initiatives – and progress made on initiatives proposed by producers. The fact that the majority of producers are still not aware of many of those accomplishments or efforts on their behalf indicates the need to continue, and perhaps increase, those communication efforts. However, as the old saying goes – “You can lead a horse to water...” It is very important to note that the awareness is growing.

Equally important to the success of this initiative is closing the feedback loop. ALP must not only report back to the members on the results of this survey and process, but act on key recommendations if they hope to keep the lines of communication and trust open. Nothing will alienate people faster than asking for their input and then ignoring it.

Continued transparency on the part of ALP lays the foundation for building an even stronger community and industry.

Perhaps the most compelling and telling statistic from this survey is the fact that 95% of producers are optimistic about the future. That is up 50% from 2008. While increased profitability is a factor—that alone cannot account for this significant shift.

Producers, ALP, and industry can take pride in making many strides towards creating an even stronger and more vibrant sector.

Significant Changes Since 2008 Survey & Recommendations

- Almost 20% more producers are using email and internet and over 39% now have access to a high speed connection. This will continue to improve the ability to communicate across a vast province where in-person conversations are not always possible.
- 53% of producers support the use of webinars as a cost- and time-effective way to receive valuable education although it must be noted that 86% have never participated in one. Many producers say they are not highly comfortable with technology so there will be a steep educational curve. Consequently if ALP elects to do webinars we recommend that you stick with it even if there is a low initial response. People will need time to get used to the potential value of this educational format.
- Less than 20% of members have recently accessed the web site (Keep in mind that almost 20% do not have internet). Consequently most members are not aware of the vast resources (contacts, information, extension, history, and management support) they can find there. Given how much members value education and extension, ongoing and perhaps increased efforts should be made to encourage producer use of the web site.
- 86% of producers endorse ALP's strategic initiative to support the increase of production of lamb to meet the current and growing demand. That is up 13% from 2008. It is widely recognized that there is a lot of opportunity given that we are currently supplying less than 50% of local demand for lamb.
- **Perhaps most telling about perceptions of the current state of the industry is the fact that 95% of producers are optimistic about the future. That is up 50% from 2008.**
- While there has been a slight increase in awareness of zone representation, ALP and members would benefit from continuing to support this grass-roots connection. Although Directors are volunteers and already invest hundreds of hours in supporting ALP and its members, any opportunity to connect directly with their zone constituents would be beneficial. Local round-table discussions, focus groups, and zone educational sessions have been encouraged by producer members.
- Marked increase in awareness of what services ALP provides. Still a long way to go for producers to be clear about the wealth of resources and services that the Association provides, but progress has been made on that front.
- Producers are accessing more services as well. Whether it's a 9% increase in meeting attendance or a 36% increase in the use of information services; producers are more actively taking advantage of the many benefits ALP provides.
- Substantive increase in meeting attendance. Increased involvement and communication in the industry was set as a key objective in both strategic plans created by the ALP Board of Directors (in 2008 and 2010).
- When rating the value ALP provided to members and the industry, 62% of producers rated them a 7 or higher. (on a scale of 1 – 10) That is an increase of 9% since the original survey.
- When asked about desired studies or research many producers indicated appreciation for the studies already conducted. In addition to the usual requests for more flock health research and extension there was a marked increase in a focus on production and management requirements. More producers want support on the business side of the equation than ever before indicating a maturing and growing industry.

While ALP has collected what little information and tools are already available in the market, and the costs of these types of studies are typically high—it is strongly recommended that ALP focus on soliciting support for business education. Cost of production studies, breakeven analysis, and profitable operations practices for varying sizes and types of operations would be highly valued by members. Recognizing that this is a major undertaking that would involve significant government funding, it may not be feasible given the limited resources the association currently has. However members are asking that this become a strong focus for the future.

- Of the 95% of producers that receive the newsletter 81% rated the publication as a 7 or higher – up 11% from the original survey. It is widely appreciated as a significant source of valuable information and connection to the industry.
- 70% of the membership would like to see some form of advertising available – although only approximately 32% currently advertise in other publications or websites. 54% have bought farm products or services from advertisements.
- 69% of those who voted valued N’ewesline at a 7 or higher.

What Producers Value

In order of priority, the most valued service ALP provides their members from the member’s perspective is information and education. They also value the role ALP plays in advocating and communicating with the government on behalf of producers.

- Extension. While it is not ALP’s mandate they stepped into that role as much as time and funding would allow when the government virtually withdrew from providing extension and education resources. The challenge is that now producers see that as ALP’s role. This is a key area where the association is over-extended. There are not sufficient resources to do all that can, and probably should, be done to support producers in this area. While good information is critical to a healthy industry, based on current resources available, ALP must increase their capacity (more staff or contract resources and therefore more funding if available), decrease other efforts or initiatives, or decrease their focus in this area. During the strategic planning retreat it was determined that the current work-load for the staff is non-sustainable without having adverse effects.
- Increased influence on government regulations – keep working on reducing limitations.
“ALP is our government voice. To deal with the CFIA and the CDN Sheep Federation. I don’t have time for that. I need somebody that’s looking out for our interests. I can’t be dealing with those people and keeping up with those people and the new rules. I’d say that’s the biggest thing that I like about them.”
- Producer Comment -
- More focus on production and management support. Business studies and management tools would help producers of all sizes increase profitability and productivity.
 - Specifically some would like to see more information on accessing financial support. Or tools for being able to secure financial aid or funding.
- Predator control, extension, support. This is one of the biggest challenges for Alberta sheep producers.

- Continue being a source of connection and information. Many producers mentioned the benefit of being able to call a supportive and knowledgeable staff person for answers, information, or even just encouragement. The newsletter and meetings are a strong asset in connecting a dispersed industry.
- Access to funding and the results of funding. Studies such as the Traceability, Scrapie, Lakeland and other programs have directly or indirectly benefited producers. While there are a few that argue that projects like that are not appropriate or beneficial, the majority would like to see more.
- Marketing and awareness. Many members appreciated efforts to make consumers more aware of Lamb, and specifically local lamb, as a healthy and tasty alternative.
- Increased pride in the industry. Several commented on the increased media coverage that Sheep have been receiving and the fact that the sector is starting to come out from under the shadow of other commodity groups to be taken seriously as a viable business.

Conclusion

The information and analysis gathered from this process will allow ALP to make more informed decisions that can support the organization's strategic focus.

Not all ALP members will agree with that focus. Many won't understand the reasoning behind it because ALP has more information and context than they do. Some simply do not care or are not involved with what goes on beyond their operation. Whatever position the producer takes, what is critically important is that they have a chance to participate in the direction of their representative body and that they all ultimately benefit from the work ALP does.

Communication efforts such as this survey encourage important discussions and provide an opportunity for participation creating solutions that serve the industry.

A large percentage of ALP members (and industry stakeholders) acknowledge that ALP has done an excellent job of doing a lot with a little. Overall, members encourage ALP to keep up the good work as the association is seen as a critically necessary part of the industry – and one that is bringing significant benefits to its members.

Appendix 1 - 2008 Data – not included in 2011 Survey:

Please note: Only the summaries are provided here. For a detailed breakdown of this data – please see the original final report on the survey.

1. How long have you been involved with Agriculture?

Results - # of Years in Agriculture:

/60	0 - 5	6 – 10	11 - 20	21 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	50+
#	1	2	9	12	15	13	8
%	2%	3%	15%	20%	25%	22%	13%

❖ 80% of Producers have 20 or more years experience in agriculture

2. **What kind of operation do you have now?** Type and primary business, for example: (*Hobby, business, commercial, collective, etc.*) Ranching, mixed, grain, full time, part time (do you also work off-farm)?

Results – Type of Operation:

	Sheep Only	Mixed	Hobby	Commercial or F/T Business	One or more work off-farm	Other
#	20	34	6	24	27	4 **
%	33%	57%	10%	40%	45%	7%

** Agri-Tourism & Other businesses (sell farm equip. / Ferrier / unspecified)

(NB: Numbers will not add up to 100% as not all respondents indicated full information for this question and may be counted under multiple categories. However, this will provide an indication of proportional distribution of types of operations)

3. How long have you owned and sold sheep?

Results - # of Years

/60	0 - 5	6 – 10	11 - 20	21 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	50+
#	8	11	19	10	5	3	4
%	13%	18%	32%	17%	8%	5%	7%

- ❖ Over 67% of respondents have owned and sold sheep between 6 and 30 years
- ❖ A significant number (32%) have been involved between 1 and 2 decades
- ❖ 13% of respondents are new producers who may want support with growing their operation or making it more efficient

4. How many sheep do you have? (Breed)

Results – Flock Size:

	0 - 10	11 - 50	51 - 100	101 - 250	251 - 500	501 - 1000	1001+	Unknown
#	2	17	12	13	8	2	4	2
%	3%	28%	20%	22%	13%	3%	7%	3%

❖ Where flock size was specified - 73% of respondents had less than 250 sheep

NB: This survey took a random cross-section of producers of various sizes from various zones or regions of the Province. These numbers are therefore indicative only.

Results – Breed Distribution:

	Suffolk	Dorset	Dorper	Charollais	Arcott	Ile de France	Katahdin	Cheviot	Mixed	Other (potentially pure breeds)
# of Farms	15	5	4	4	4	2	5	4	32	1 ea. Hampshire / Polypay (100) / Romanov / Rambouillet / Grazier (?) / Finn (?)
# of Sheep	2448	207	526	1	2128	?	331 (est.)	82	4738	13,510 - 14,560 Total Sheep (where #'s were given)

NB: As most of the breeds are mixed – and flocks are mixed – we were unable to achieve a specific breakdown from most producers. Therefore these breed statistics are meant to be indicative of general distribution vs. a specific census.

- ❖ Approximately 17% of the sheep specified by breed are Suffolk
- ❖ Approximately 15% are Arcott
- ❖ Approximately 34% are Mixed breeds

5. How many people are in your operation? (Family, staff, p/t time help, etc?)

Results - # of People in Operation:

	1	2	2 + Children	1 or 2 + P/T Employees	1 or 2 + F/T Employees	5 or More
#	12	21	11	10	5	1

- ❖ 27% of Respondents regularly hire full- or part-time help
- ❖ 55% of Respondents are sole or spousal operations

What are your plans for the future of your operation?

- a. Succession, retiring, selling, and all relevant details?

Results – Plans for Disposition of Operation:

	Sell w/in 1-5 yrs	Sell w/in 6-10 yrs	Sell w/in 11+ yrs	Expand w/in 1-5 yrs	Expand w/in 6-10 yrs	Maintain Status Quo	Pass on to Children	Don't know / No plans
#	7	7	3	20	2	15	4	4
%	10%	10%	5%	33%	3%	25%	7%	7%

- ❖ 32% Plan to dispose of their operation
- ❖ 36% Plan to expand operations

6. What is your age? If applicable, Spouse's age?

Results – Producer Ages:

	0 - 20	21 – 30	31- 40	41 – 50	51 – 60	61- 70	71+
#	1	3	13	26	37	16	6
%	1%	3%	13%	25%	36%	16%	6%

- ❖ Average Producer age: 51.3 years old
- ❖ 61% of the Producer base is between 41 and 60

NB: This number may not be an accurate reflection because we were able to reach and interview more full-time farmers than those who also work off-farm. The average age for those working off-farm is often younger than those retired or working full-time on the farm.

7. How long have you been a member?

Results – Membership Terms:

	1 - 5 Years	6 – 10 Years	11 - 20 Years	21+ Years	Unknown
# / 60	14	10	10	16	10
%	23%	17%	17%	27%	17%