

## **July Statistics Canada numbers show continued increases to National Ewe Flock**

For Immediate Release

Friday, August 26, 2011 – Guelph, ON – The July 2011 Sheep Statistics were released on August 22, 2011, and show that industry has maintained the increases to the National ewe flock that were seen in the January stats. The January 2011 statistics gave the first indication since 2004 that the Canadian ewe flock was no longer shrinking, with an increase from January 2010 numbers of just over 1%.

The July numbers show that increase has been largely maintained by most provinces into the 2011 year, with an increase from the July 2010 ewe numbers of 1%. Sheep flocks in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia all seen increases of anywhere between 1.5% to over 14%. While numbers can change in the next six months, seeing increases in the National ewe flock in both the January and July statistics is cause for cautious optimism that efforts of the national and provincial sheep associations are paying off.

Increasing production in order to meet domestic demand has been an industry focus for some time. The past few years have seen many of Canada's major importers downsizing their flocks due to a variety of factors including increasing production costs and poor environmental conditions. With over half of the domestic market for lamb in Canada being filled with imports, there has been considerable concern as of late that shrinking flocks could equate to a lack of imports and unavailability of lamb on Canadian supermarket shelves.

As prices for lamb remain high and producers are under increasing regulation, retaining lambs to support growth of the industry is not an easy decision for producers to make; however, the decision to increase production will not only help to meet market demand, but will hopefully encourage those further along the value chain to invest in the industry, creating the necessary infrastructure needed to support it.

The Canadian Sheep Federation is a national, non-profit organization that represents all Canadian sheep producers. Its mission is further the viability, expansion and prosperity of the Canadian sheep and wool industry. For more information contact the Canadian Sheep Federation at [1-888-684-7739](tel:1-888-684-7739) or [jennifer@cansheep.ca](mailto:jennifer@cansheep.ca).

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