

## Great news - \$300,000 government support for eligible RFID tag readers, software and training

ALP has been working with the Alberta government to provide producers with affordable access to working RFID systems which will facilitate traceability as well as the opportunity to gain management benefits. The Alberta Sheep RFID Technology Assistance Program, from Growing

Forward <http://www.growingforward.alberta.ca/index.htm>, supports producers in purchasing eligible tag readers, software and training, on a 70/30 cost-share basis.

Eligible equipment must be purchased and an application form submitted by March 15th, 2012

Go to [www.sheepcentral.ca](http://www.sheepcentral.ca) for details of eligible equipment, program terms and conditions and application forms

Today, the Alberta Minister of Agriculture made the following announcement:

**News release**

*December 20, 2011*

### **Program helps sheep producers with new technology**

#### ***New grant program improves flock management and traceability***

*Edmonton...* Alberta's sheep and lamb producers will be able to better identify and record movement of their animals thanks to a new Government of Alberta program funded through the federal-provincial Growing Forward initiative.

The Sheep RFID Technology Assistance Program is designed to encourage use of radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies in the sheep industry to improve animal tracking and movement recording.

"A traceability system is a win-win for Alberta sheep producers, the value chain and consumers," said federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "By helping to expand the livestock traceability system, our governments are reinforcing Alberta's reputation for producing safe and high-quality food."

"This is great news for Alberta's sheep industry as they transition to the use of RFID technology for animal identification and movement," said Evan Berger, Minister of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "We have been working with Alberta Lamb Producers to develop this program that helps producers improve flock management and enhances the integrity of Alberta's traceability system."

The Sheep RFID Technology Assistance Program is aimed at improving Alberta's sheep information and traceability systems to support animal health, public health, food safety and industry marketing initiatives and opportunities.

"Alberta Lamb Producers appreciates the support from Alberta Agriculture and Growing Forward in ensuring Alberta lamb producers are well positioned for traceability as well as gaining management benefits from RFID systems," said Phil Kolodychuk, Chair of Alberta Lamb Producers. "The availability of the tag incentive program and now the reader/software grant enables more producers to access RFID tools to increase the productivity and profitability of their operations."

This initiative will help producers purchase RFID equipment and software. Eligible expenses covered under the program include costs for hand-held readers, software and software installation and training costs.

The program, totaling \$300,000, through Growing Forward, will be provided on a cost-shared basis with 70 per cent from the province and 30 per cent from the applicant to a maximum of \$5,000 per sheep operation. The deadline to apply is March 15, 2012, and applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please visit Agriculture and Rural Development's Growing Forward [website](#) for more information, including program application and terms and conditions.

In February 2011, Alberta announced the Sheep Electronic Identification Incentive Program to encourage the sheep industry to transition to RFID ear tags by reimbursing producers who had purchased RFID ear tags for lambs born between December 1, 2010 and November 30, 2012.

**Background**

December 20, 2011

## **The Sheep RFID Technology Assistance Program**

The Sheep RFID Technology Assistance Program is designed to encourage Alberta's sheep industry to use radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies that will improve animal identification and movement recording as a practical way of improving Alberta's traceability system.

### **What expenses are eligible under the program?**

The program is targeted at sheep producers in Alberta. Eligible expenses include:

- costs for RFID hand-held readers;
- RFID software that tracks sheep by the electronic number on RFID ear tags for flock management;
- RFID software installation and training costs, if the installation is done by a licensed service provider.

### **How does cost-sharing work under this program?**

Funding for the program is limited and will be funded by the government at the following levels:

- 70 per cent for RFID hand-held readers;
- 70 per cent for RFID software, to a maximum of \$1,000;
- 70 per cent for all RFID software installation and training costs, to a maximum of \$500.

### **Sheep Facts**

There are approximately 1,900 sheep farms in Alberta. According to Statistics Canada, as of

July 1:

- Alberta's flock size was 183,000, up 2.2 per cent from July 2010. This includes:
  - 4,000 rams;
  - 85,400 ewes;
  - 13,700 replacement ewes; and
  - 79,900 market lambs.
- Alberta's flock accounted for more than 17 per cent of Canada's total flock size.

### **Growing Forward**

Growing Forward is a federal-provincial-territorial initiative that better positions the agriculture industry for success. The national vision is "a profitable and innovative

agriculture, agri-food and agri-products industry that seizes opportunities in responding to market demands, and contributes to the health and well-being of Canadians”.

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**Backgrounder:** The Sheep RFID Technology Assistance Program

**Media inquiries may be directed to:**

Susan Hosford

Business Development – Sheep / Lamb

Industry

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

[780-679-5170](tel:780-679-5170)

To call toll-free within Alberta dial [310-0000](tel:310-0000).

Ag Media Line

[780-422-1005](tel:780-422-1005)

Margaret Cook  
Alberta Lamb Producers  
Agriculture Centre  
97 East Lake Ramp  
Airdrie  
Alberta T4A 0C3

Tel: [403 948 8533](tel:403-948-8533)

Fax: [403 912 1455](tel:403-912-1455)

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