

Welcome to the Alberta Sheep Industry!

Thank you for your interest in the sheep industry in Alberta.

At Alberta Lamb Producers (ALP) we are excited about the future and are committed to helping you be as successful as possible!

Funded and directed by producers, ALP is your voice in the industry. We support you by providing communication, community and resources; advocacy with government and other groups; and liaising with the entire supply chain. We work with our members to grow a productive and profitable industry for everyone involved.

This package has been designed to help you find the key information you need to make smart decisions about getting into the sheep business, expanding your operations, or improving productivity and profitability.

Because we are all so busy, and inundated with information these days we have chosen not to send you a binder full of paper, brochures, flyers, and factsheets—but rather to point you to where you can find the specific contacts or information you need.

In your orientation package you will find the following valuable information:

1. **Web Site Overview** – Find out what is available on your industry portal www.ablamb.ca. It is one of the most comprehensive sheep specific web sites in the world with hundreds of free resources available to you [View Page](#)
2. **Producer Management Resources** – You can access free factsheets, educational resources, and comprehensive management modules on topics such as health, infrastructure and nutrition. This content has been specifically developed for Alberta producers [View Page](#)
3. **Important Industry Events** – A calendar of upcoming training, meetings, and industry events. Further details will be found on the web site and are updated regularly. Also see this sheet for a listing of the specially developed sheep-specific courses offered in a variety of locations [View Page](#)
4. **Industry Contacts** – A one-stop listing of important sheep groups and websites as well as contact information for your ALP Zone Director [View Page](#)
5. **Getting Started** – A brief description of what you need to know when setting up your sheep operation and links to the legislative and legal requirements [View Page](#)
6. **Key Industry Programs** – Find out about industry programs, grant opportunities, leading edge research, and what it all means to you [View Page](#)
7. **Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions** [View Page](#)

We are happy to answer any questions you may have and are here to help co-create a profitable industry with you.

Regards,



Margaret Cook, Executive Director



Our Mission:

Alberta Lamb Producers is a dynamic partner in building a sustainable, thriving industry for sheep producers.

Our Vision:

Alberta lamb: leading in quality and innovation. Growing a profitable industry together.

Contact us at: 403.948.8533
or info@ablamb.ca
www.ablamb.ca



ALBERTA SheepSmart

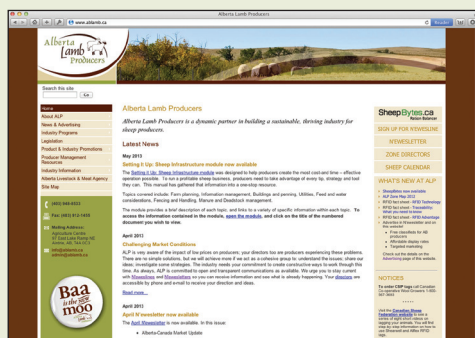
RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD

www.ablamb.ca

Your Industry Portal

Welcome to the ALP web site! We are committed to making this a resource-rich, one-stop location for everything you need to know about sheep and our industry.



HOME PAGE

You will find the most recent industry news and updates here as well as navigation information and contact details.

ABOUT ALP

Review where we have been—our industry's proud history; where we are going—a strong future; and who is involved—your dedicated team. Your zone director would love to hear from you so find their contact information here. You can also see how your check-off dollars are being used to benefit you and the industry as a whole.

NEWS & ADVERTISING

In addition to current news you can find archived copies of N'ewesletters as well as classified advertising for the products and services you need in your operation. **Make sure you sign up today for N'ewesline**—our complimentary email notification service. Receive brief, timely updates on important breaking news. www.ablamb.ca/news/newesline.html.

INDUSTRY PROGRAMS

Everything you need to know about Traceability, CSIP Tags, On-Farm Food Safety, and other research, grant, health and government programs.

LEGISLATION

What you need to ensure your operation meets provincial and federal legal requirements.



[Back to Index](#)

Alberta
Lamb
Producers

<http://www.ablamb.ca>



You may be wondering about
this button...



When we asked our
members what they
were proud of
you said

*"Our industry and
how much we have
grown!"*

Frankly, in a province
renowned for cattle,
sheep producers
have sometimes felt
overshadowed. This
slogan is a lighthearted
reminder of our
serious contribution,
our growth, and our
progress!

PRODUCT AND INDUSTRY PROMOTIONS

Beyond raising the level of pride we take in the sheep sector, we are committed to raising awareness about our great Alberta Lamb product. Whether with consumers, children (the producers and consumers of tomorrow), our supply chain, government, or within the agriculture industry in general—we are proud to represent our members.

PRODUCER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Years of work, thousands of hours of expertise, and hundreds of thousands of dollars has gone into the research and resulting educational materials developed for our members. See your package for an overview of the Management Modules available.

Technology is critical to increasing efficiency and performance. Alberta leads the country in flock managers who use RFID technology and data management systems to manage costs and improve productivity.

Over 50 **Factsheets** have been provided on key topics as well as numerous videos. You will also find production and operational templates. A **Virtual Tool Box** for getting started in the industry is available from the Canadian Sheep Federation.

There is also a wealth of information on Flock Health and the Alberta Farm Animal Care Association's work and programs.

INDUSTRY INFORMATION

Find important **industry contacts** ranging from auctions and feedlots to shearers and equipment suppliers. Industry websites and contact information for Alberta, provincial and national sheep groups are listed.

You'll also find **Lamb Market Reports** from across the country, and the Alberta Lamb Producers 'Marketline', a weekly summary table of prices from Alberta and Ontario.

Current Sheep, Goat & Pig Market Report - Westlock		
Period Ending:	Last Auction Sat May 18, 2013	Previous Auction Wed Apr 24, 2013
Sheep (Wool & Hair) - Head Sold:	69	169
0 - 69 LB	---	\$1.30 - \$1.50
70 - 85 LB	---	\$1.25 - \$1.39
86 - 105 LB	\$0.93 - \$1.25	\$0.93 - \$1.24
106 & Over LB	\$0.87 - \$0.94	\$0.92 - \$1.02
Ewes	\$0.30 - \$0.55	\$0.36 - \$0.52
Rams	\$0.30 - \$0.70	---
Bred Ewes	\$125.00 - \$185.00	\$130.00 - \$185.00
Ewe/Lamb Families	---	---

ALBERTA LIVESTOCK AND MEAT AGENCY

Find out how we are leveraging your check-off dollars to secure hundreds of thousands of dollars that are invested directly back into our members and our industry.

We are constantly adding, and updating, content on this website. If you have suggestions on how we can improve the site please let us know by calling the office at: 403.948.8533 or emailing admin@ablamb.ca.

ALBERTA SheepSmart

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD

Producer Management Resources

Relevant information can help you make better decisions. That is why we have invested so much in compiling the latest research and tools to help our members increase their know-how and decrease costly mistakes.

Whether you are a new or experienced producer, looking for information on sheep facilities, health or markets, www.ablamb.ca is the place to start.

- Do you know how to select a great terminal sire?
(Or what makes it a terminal sire?)
- Have you got a handle on your cost of production?
- Do you know the best, and legal, ways to protect your sheep and lambs from coyotes?
- Are you aware of the latest rules for distributing your lamb meat directly to consumers?

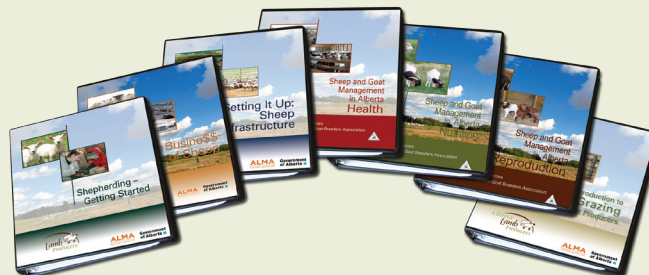
The answers to these questions and many more can be found on your industry portal. There is a powerful search engine to help you locate what you need.

If you don't have access to the internet, call the office Monday to Thursday, or your local zone director (see the enclosed contact list for their phone number), and the information you need can be mailed to you.



You will find the following categories of information on the website:

Management Manuals



These extensive manuals have been written by industry experts and have a wealth of information relevant to Canadian sheep production

- An Introduction to Managed Grazing
- Setting It Up: Sheep Infrastructure
- Shepherding 101 - Getting Started
- The Busine\$\$ of Sheep
- Flock Snapshot
- Sheep and Goat Management in Alberta
 - o Reproduction
 - o Health
 - o Nutrition

The manuals are free to view online. Print and electronic copies are available for purchase by calling the office.

[Back to Index](#)

SheepBytes.ca

Ration Balancer



Be aware.
Animal care
is everyone's duty.

LIVESTOCK CARE
ALERT
Action Line & Resource Team

To report livestock care concerns
CALL
1-800-506-2273

- ALERT is a confidential call line for anyone to report livestock care concerns.
- ALERT strives to assist before animals are in distress.
- ALERT Resource Team includes farmers and other rural community members. They offer solutions to help farmers and their animals.
- ALERT has an on-call veterinarian who provides knowledgeable counsel.
- ALERT is available for self-reporting to assist those who may be experiencing problems in caring for their livestock.
- ALERT works closely with Alberta SPCA and RCMP.

afac.ab.ca
For information on Alberta's Animal Protection Act visit afac.ab.ca/lawsregs.htm

TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

SheepBytes Ration Balancer

From RFID to the latest Precision Flock Management data, you will find factsheets on what works, and what to consider when it comes to automating your operation and improving your productivity.

The SheepBytes software program was developed to assist producers in building feed rations that are cost effective and provide optimal nutrition for every sheep in every stage of production. You can use SheepBytes to fine-tune flock feeding: to improve flock productivity; to reduce feed wastage and to manage feed costs.

Flock Snapshot

The Flock Snapshot was developed to assist producers to analyze flock performance. The FSS pulls together financial and production data to provide a "snapshot in time" of flock performance.

Producer Information

Access extensive, targeted Fact Sheets as well as audio visual resources. This electronic and print resources pool is constantly being updated to provide you with the latest data and findings in the sheep industry.

Flock Health

Become informed on prevention and treatment of everything from C. Ovis to Foot Rot. Review biosecurity protocols and learn how to keep your sheep healthy and productive.

Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) Information

Find out how AFAC supports livestock production and how they advocate on your behalf internationally.

For more information about these topics see www.ablamb.ca under the **Producer Management Resources** tab

Be sure to check out our new YouTube Channel: SheepCentral



Check out the educational
videos on our sheep industry
YouTube channel.



www.youtube.com/user/SheepCentralAlberta

[Back to Index](#)

www.ablamb.ca

ALBERTA SheepSmart

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD



Important Industry Events

Dates will vary from year to year but important events happen each year around this time. Please go to our online calendar for current dates.

www.ablamb.ca/news/calendar.html

January, April, September

Meet the Board

This is an excellent opportunity to provide direction to your representatives and learn more about ALP activities. Open discussion is followed by a presentation from top industry experts. Past topics have included: nutrition, keeping your lambs alive, ram soundness, handling, and grazing best practices. These educational meetings are made possible by check off dollars.

February – April & October – November

Based on producer interest, ALP offers education courses at different locations throughout the province. See reverse side for course details.

March

Shearing School

A two day shearing school packed with instruction and hands on learning.

AFAC's Livestock Care Conference - www.afac.ab.ca

June / July

Alberta Sheep Breeders Association (ASBA) Annual Barn Burner – www.albertasheepbreeders.ca

Fibre Week at Olds College – www.oldscollege.ca/fibreweek

All Canada Classic Sheep Show & Sale – www.sheepbreeders.ca

Canadian Sheep Breeders Association (CSBA) – www.sheepbreeders.ca

October 2013 & alternate years

ASBA Symposium – www.albertasheepbreeders.ca

October / November

Fall Round-Up Zone Meetings

Four to seven meetings conducted by ALP throughout the province during Oct. and Nov., these meetings are a chance to connect with your fellow producers, receive updates on all ALP activities and provide input in person. While ALP reports on progress and activities regularly in the N'ewesletter, these meetings also include a review of the association's financials and a summary of the year's challenges and achievements. There is often an educational component to the meeting as well; a guest speaker or expert on a topic of interest to sheep producers. The meetings are also an opportunity to chat socially with neighbours near and far over a meal or refreshments.

Zone meetings may also include elections for a seat on the ALP Board of Directors. Your vote matters. If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering with ALP, on the Board or in other capacities, please contact the office for information about what is involved. 403-948-8533

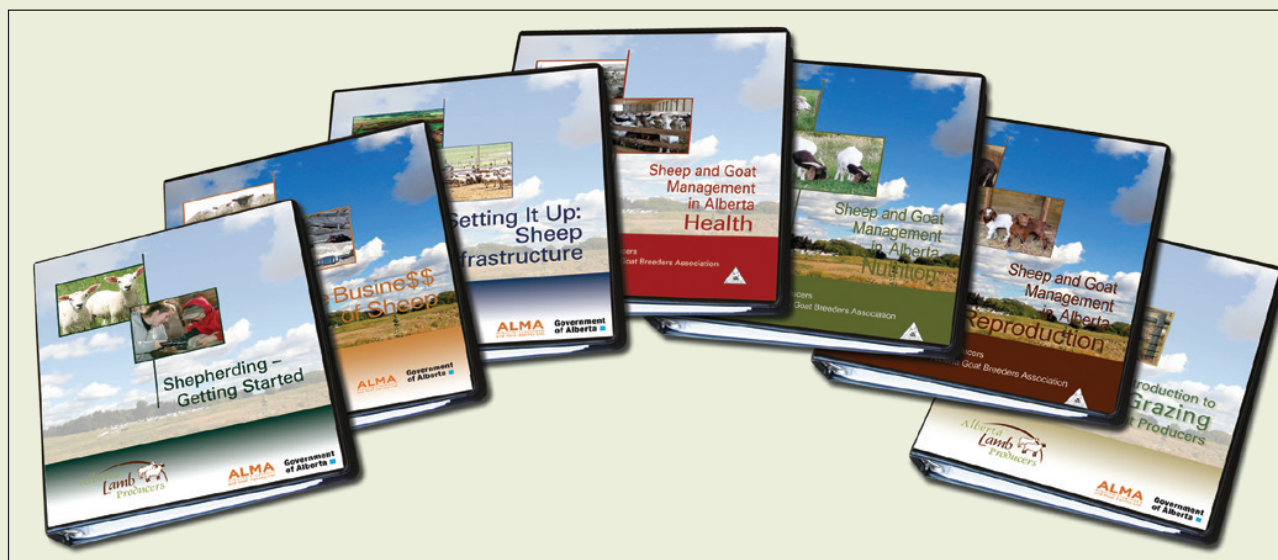
December

Canadian Forage & Grassland Association Conference & AGM - www.canadian.fga.ca

Please take advantage of these industry specific events, and networking opportunities. Meet with producers and other members of our supply chain. Provide your input and gain first hand knowledge of the latest developments that affect your business. We look forward to seeing you at your zone meeting and other industry events!

Remember to check the online calendar for the current dates or call the office for details.

[Back to Index](#)



Leading Edge Education

Alberta Lamb Producers has worked with industry experts to develop courses based on the Resource Modules. These courses are delivered by instructors with extensive experience and are designed to benefit all producers whether they are new to the industry, expanding their operation or streamlining their management systems. Contact the ALP office to learn about dates and locations of upcoming courses.

Shepherding 101: Getting Started

Start on the road to success. Topics include:

- Health
- Reproduction
- Facilities
- Feeding
- Marketing
- Identification

Business 101: Making Money from \$heep

New and experienced producers will be encouraged to improve their business management skills leading to increased productivity and profitability. Course workbooks provide the information and tools needed to fine tune all aspects of your business and create your personalized business plan.

Business 201: Making MORE Money from \$heep

This course is designed for experienced sheep producers that want to improve the financial performance of their business.

Practical and interactive, Business 201 uses advanced tools and techniques including Flock Snapshot to ensure that you understand your own flock finances.

For this course you must have one year of sheep financial and production information so you can work on your own business.

Nutrition: Feeding Your Sheep Right

Based on the Sheep and Goat Management in Alberta Nutrition Module, this course will ensure that you have a strong grasp on the basics of sheep nutrition, forage options, feeding requirements of different animals, and introduce you to SheepBytes, a sheep specific ration (feed) formulation program.

Health for Productive Sheep

Learn about common sheep health concerns and develop strategies to help keep your flock healthy and productive.

Sheep Reproduction: Making More Lambs

Based on the SGMA Reproduction Module, this course will provide you with a solid understanding of the steps required to successfully bring your flock through the reproductive cycle; from breeding, through lambing and back again.

Setting It Up: Sheep Infrastructure

There are many things to think about when setting up or expanding a sheep farm. This workshop is about ideas and options for the physical pieces that make up the operation and how these pieces work together as a system.

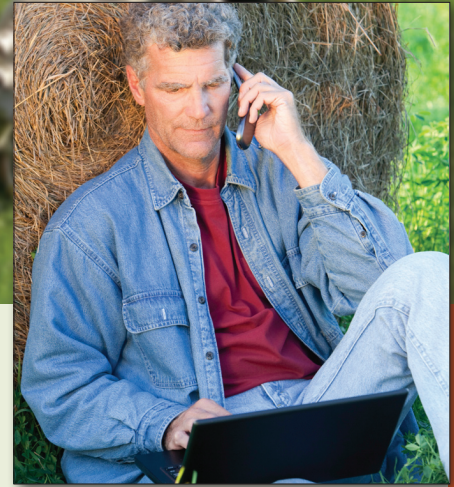
This course aims to assist producers in assessing options, evaluating costs and making decisions for their individual sheep business. The workshop includes a comprehensive resource binder, pictures, and a video tour of a modern, large-scale sheep operation.

[Back to Index](#)

ALBERTA SheepSmart

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD



Industry Contacts

For industry contact information
in the categories listed below, please go to:

www.ablamb.ca/links/industry_contacts.html

*Disclaimer:
While care has
been taken to
ensure that the
information
provided is as
accurate and
as up-to-date
as possible, ALP
cannot be held
responsible for
missed information
or errors.*

*ALP in no way
endorses any
of the service
providers or
services listed.*

Supply Chain

- Auctions
- Markets for Your Lambs and Sheep
- Processing Plants in Alberta
- Sheep Feed and Equipment Suppliers
- Shearers
- Wool Buyers and Depots
- Canadian Co-operative Woolgrowers (CCWG)
Distributor of CSIP tags for Alberta

Industry Information

- Alberta Farm Animal Care – www.afac.ab.ca
- AFSC - agricultural loan and risk management
programs including Agri-Insurance, Agri-
Stability, & Agri-Invest – www.afsc.ca
- Alberta consumer website – Includes recipe
cards, producer listings and other promotion
of Alberta Lamb – www.albertalamb.ca
- Ropin' the Web – Livestock: Sheep & Goats
www.agric.gov.ab.ca
- Growing Forward
www.growingforward.alberta.ca

- AAFC Cash Advance Program
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Livestock Genetics Association
- Canadian On Farm Food Safety Program -
Food Safe Farm Practices
- Alberta Environmental Farm Plan
- Ropin' the Web – General Store for more
classified ads (you'll also find ads on our web
site in the News & Advertising section)
- Scrapie Canada

Sheep Groups

- Alberta Sheep Breeders Association
www.albertasheepbreeders.ca
- Canadian Sheep Breeders Association
www.sheepbreeders.ca
- Canadian Sheep Federation
www.cansheep.ca

Check out www.ablamb.ca/links/sheep_groups.html or call the office for details of local, and breed
specific, sheep groups from Lethbridge to High Prairie and their current contact information.

[Back to Index](#)

**You have a dedicated team of producers working on your behalf.
Please contact your Zone Director with any questions or feedback you may have.**

ZONE #1

*Nanton, Pincher Creek,
Cardston, Fort Macleod,
Vulcan*



TONY LEGAULT

Phone: 403-646-3276
Email: zone1@ablamb.ca

ZONE #2

*Brooks, Lethbridge,
Medicine Hat,
Manyberries, Milk River*



JEREMY HONEYSETT

Phone: 403-345-5644
Email: zone2@ablamb.ca

ZONE #3

*Olds, Calgary, Red Deer,
Drumheller*



CHRIS VAMMEN

*Vice Chair Finance
Chair*
Phone: 403-994-0556
Email: zone3@ablamb.ca

ZONE #4

*Wetaskiwin, Lacombe,
Coronation, Rocky
Mountain House*



BILL GIBSON

Phone: 403-788-2883
Email: zone4@ablamb.ca

ZONE #5

*Athabasca, Wainwright,
Vegreville, St. Paul,
Lloydminster, Thorhild*



ERIN YAREMKO

Phone: 780-645-6550
Email: zone5@ablamb.ca

ZONE #6

*Barrhead, Edmonton,
Drayton Valley,
Whitecourt*



**RONALD DEN
BROEDER**
Chair

Phone: 780-674-4050
Email: zone6@ablamb.ca

ZONE #7

*High Level, Grande
Prairie, Valleyview,
High Prairie*



VIRGINIA GLOVER

Phone: 780-356-2800
Email: zone7@ablamb.ca

ALP OFFICE

*Agriculture Centre,
97 East Lake Ramp NE,
Airdrie, AB T4A 0C3*



MARGARET COOK

Executive Director
Phone: 403-948-8533
Email: info@ablamb.ca

BETH KYLE *Project
co-ordinator*

Phone: 403-948-1522
Email:
admin@ablamb.ca
Fax: 403 912 1455
www.ablamb.ca
www.albertalamb.ca

We look forward to seeing you at a Meet the Board event, your Zone meeting, and other industry gatherings.

If you would like to be more involved, we welcome volunteers at a variety of levels of involvement from manning the ALP booth at a local trade show, to serving on the Board of Directors.

**Our industry needs strong leaders who are committed to
making a difference—is that you?**

[Back to Index](#)

ALBERTA SheepSmart

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD



Getting Started

OVERVIEW

Agriculture can be a challenging business. But being part of such a critical industry is more than just a career... it's a lifestyle and a legacy. Like every other part of agriculture, the sheep sector has its ups and downs. Lamb can be the most profitable livestock to raise and provides quicker returns than most other animals. It has one of the lowest start-up, and operating costs, and product demand exceeds current supply.

If you are new to the sheep industry this sheet reviews the key requirements to consider and provides starting points for your research.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As with any business being strategic and practical supports your success. If the operation is not designed to be profitable it is simply an expensive hobby. Here are some important questions to consider when starting out:

Business Requirements

As in any business, knowledge of financial management principles such as net worth, production and marketing plans, cash flow, debt servicing, and accrued income would be valuable. It will allow you to manage both your top line revenues, what your operation generates, and your bottom line results—what you get to keep.

- Do you have enough start-up capital? It often takes longer than anticipated for new businesses to become profitable.
- What type of production suits your business, marketing, financial and personal goals?
- Do you have a written business plan and a tactical implementation plan?
- Do you have support? A mentor, expert advisors, and a solid education will save you tremendous time, money and stress.

For information on tools and resources that will help you with the business side of your operation, please go to: www.ablamb.ca/producer_mgmt/resources.html You will find items such as: Cost-of-Production calculators, Resource Modules, and information on various technologies such as the Sheepbytes Feed Rationing application.

Useful Resources

- **Producer Management Resources** available for free viewing or download at www.ablamb.ca/producer_mgmt. Learn from modules on: Getting Started, Health, Nutrition, Reproduction, Business, Infrastructure and Grazing... more will follow. Print copies are available from the ALP office at nominal charge.
- **National Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep:** The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. They serve as our national understanding of animal care requirements and recommended practices. Codes promote sound management and welfare practices for housing, care, transportation and other animal husbandry practices. For your copy, visit www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/sheep_code_of_practice.pdf or contact ALP.
- The Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has created a complimentary **Virtual Tool Box** for producers getting started in sheep. Go here to download the information: www.cansheep.ca/cms/en/Resources/VTBox/VTBox.aspx
- Farm Management Canada -www.fmc-gac.com
- Farm Credit Canada – Prepare your Business Plan - www.fcc-fac.ca/en/tools-and-resources.html
- CIBC - Farm Business Planning Guides - www.cibc.com/ca/small-business/article-tools/farm-biz-planning-guides.html
- Farm Start – Ready to Farm? -www.farmstart.ca

[Back to Index](#)

Marketing

- What is your marketing strategy?
 - o Marketing strategy requires the understanding of price, product, placement, and promotion of farm production in relation to the competitive environment.
 - o Each niche market has different product requirements. Catering to that market can give you a competitive and price advantage.

Your market should determine your management system. Then you can produce what will bring the best returns from your chosen market rather than try to find a market for what you have chosen to produce. For more information on marketing, management best practices, and cost-of-production tools and research please go to: www.ablamb.ca/links/industry_contacts.html.

Human Resources

- What are your human resource needs? Both in terms of workers on your operation, as well as all of the additional people and organizations involved in getting your lambs to market?
- What is your succession plan? What kind of operation will best suit your family and your objectives?

Please see the Industry Resource List in this package for an abbreviated listing of the various parties involved in sheep production from abattoirs to sheep shearers.

Operational Tools

In addition to all of the management information provided on the ALP website you can also find information on ways to mitigate risk. Here are some examples:

- On-Farm Food Safety Program -www.cansheep.ca/cms/en/Programs/
- Health management programs
 - o Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program - www.scrapiecanada.ca
 - o Western Canadian Flock Health Program - www.absheep.com/producer_mgmt/flock_health.html
 - o National Sheep On-Farm Biosecurity Standard and Planning Guide & other biosecurity resources - www.ablamb.ca/producer_mgmt/biosecurity.html

Legal Requirements

Please note: This list is not exhaustive—check with professionals such as an accountant and lawyer before starting any new enterprise. As with any livestock, there are federal and provincial laws that producers must comply with.

ALL SHEEP PRODUCERS IN ALBERTA MUST:

• Have a Premises Identification

Premises identification is a way of linking farm animals to geographic locations for disease, health and food safety purposes and effective emergency response. For further information on the Premises Identification Program contact the Ag-Info Centre at 310-FARM (3276). If you want to check on the progress of your PID application, call 780-422-9167.

• Apply tags before any animals leave the farm of origin

The Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) is an industry-led initiative to develop a trace back system designed to address producer concerns about sheep health and meet consumer expectations for quality assurance and food safety. CSIP Tags and program participation has been mandatory since January 2004. In Alberta, CSIP tags are purchased from the Canadian Co-operative Woolgrowers 1-800-567-3693.

For full details of the CSIP see www.ablamb.ca/programs/csip.html

This program is transitioning to the mandatory use of RFID tags. For latest transition dates see www.cansheep.ca

• Complete an Alberta Manifest.

You can learn how to complete the manifest at: www.ablamb.ca/legislation/legislation.html#lica

All sheep transported within or out of Alberta are required to be accompanied with an Alberta livestock manifest. They are available from auction markets, some ARD offices, Livestock Identification Services, and ALP.

• Comply with other legislation, both federal and provincial.

You can find details on key programs at: www.ablamb.ca/legislation/legislation.html#lica

Starting any new venture can be daunting particularly when you add in the challenge of dealing with a live product, seasons, variable markets, and a host of other considerations unique to agriculture. However, it can also be a very rewarding business. Both in terms of the economics and the lifestyle!

You are producing a product that millions happily consume worldwide and you are part of a proud tradition of independent, strong, and committed producers who contribute to Alberta's economy and to our wellbeing.

Welcome to our industry!

ALBERTA SheepSmart

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD



Key Industry Programs for Producers

The following is a partial list of major programs developed by, and for, producers. Of course new research initiatives, funding programs, and financial incentives become available on an ongoing basis so be sure to read your N'ewesletter, sign up for N'ewesline and check the web site for the latest releases.

GRANT PROGRAMS

Growing Forward

Growing Forward 2 is a federal-provincial-territorial partnership with a mandate to drive an innovative, competitive and profitable Canadian agriculture and agrifood sector.

The five-year Growing Forward 2 policy framework, which came into effect on April 1, 2013, focuses on three priorities: innovation, competitiveness and market development.

The Growing Forward suite of programs is being updated on a continual basis. Growing Forward 2 has hundreds of thousands of grant dollars available on a matching basis for producers. Programs can include grants for fencing, equipment, education, business improvements.

Check the Growing Forward site often for the latest information www.growingforward.alberta.ca or call 310-FARM. Watch ALP communications for details of other grant programs that may become available.

INDUSTRY PROGRAMS

MANDATORY

Canadian Sheep Identification Program

The Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) is an industry-led initiative to develop a trace back system that will address producer concerns about sheep health and meet consumer expectations for quality assurance and food safety. All sheep and lambs must bear a CSIP ear tag before they leave the farm of birth or other location; even temporarily such as shows, veterinarian, community pasture. www.ablamb.ca/programs/csip.html

Premises Identification (mandatory in Alberta)

The Premises Identification Program is being established in order to track the location of animals in case of an animal disease occurrence, a public health related emergency, or an emergency such as a natural disaster affecting animals and people. Regulations requiring premises identification became law January 1, 2009 as part of the Animal Health Act. For more information go to [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/trace12354](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/trace12354) or call the Ag Info Centre at 310-FARM.

Transportation Manifests (mandatory in Alberta)

Anytime you transport sheep, you must complete an Alberta manifest. For more information, go to www.ablamb.ca/legislation/legislation.html#lica

NATIONAL PROGRAMS - VOLUNTARY

On Farm Food Safety Program (OFFS)

OFFS –The Food Safe Farm Practices (FSFP) program, managed by the Canadian Sheep Federation, is a voluntary program that was developed through a partnership between producers, industry and government personnel from across Canada.

The program identifies and addresses potential food safety challenges facing the sheep producer. To apply for the Growing Forward 2 On Farm Food Safety grants, you must have attended a workshop or completed online training. You can go the Canadian Sheep Federation's website for more information.

www.cansheep.ca/cms/en/Programs/FoodSafeFarmPractices/FoodSafetyFarmPractices.aspx or call FREE 1-888-684-7739

[Back to Index](#)

National Scrapie Surveillance Programs

Scrapie is a fatal disease that affects the central nervous system of sheep and goats. The Canadian Food and Inspection Agency (CFIA) and several provincial agricultural ministries have launched a surveillance program to detect scrapie in the national sheep flock and goat herd. The goal of this program is to identify infected animals in Canada to ensure that proper steps can be taken to completely eradicate the disease from our country. General requirements include reporting deads on farm over the age of 12 months and complete brain testing.

Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP)

The VSFCP is a national flock/herd scrapie risk management program for the Canadian sheep and goat industries and is available to any sheep or goat producer who agrees to meet the requirements of the program.

The primary benefits to participating producers include the individual risk protection against scrapie in their flock/herd. Over time, producers will have their flock/herd recognized as being at a much lower risk for scrapie than the rest of the farms in the national herd. This recognition will increase trade opportunities within Canada and allows increased access to the import of live animals from the United States. The long term goal of the VSFCP is to eradicate scrapie from the national flock and herd and help open up market access.

Go to www.scrapiecanada.ca for more information or call 1-866-534-1302

National Sheep On-Farm Biosecurity Standard and Planning Guide

A biosecurity plan includes all the management practices you use to prevent and control disease on your farm. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency developed the national biosecurity standards, protocols and strategies in collaboration with producer organizations, provincial/territorial governments, and academia. The standard provides a uniform approach to improving on-farm biosecurity in Canada, while the planning guide allows producers to develop individual plans, within the framework of the standard, specific to the goals and risks facing each flock. Visit www.inspection.gc.ca or contact ALP for your copies of the Standard and Planning Guide.

ALBERTA PROGRAMS - VOLUNTARY

Alberta is a leader in the Canadian sheep industry, developing new resources, technology and tools to support producers in productivity and profitability.

Alberta Sheep Industry Development Strategy

A collaboration between Alberta Lamb Producers and Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development to provide a comprehensive strategy for the development of the sheep industry.

Alberta Environmental Farm Plan

Sustaining production, managing risks, providing a healthy landscape for the next generation, and maintaining market access are just a few of the reasons for creating an EFP. An EFP is required before applying to Growing Forward 2 for Stewardship grants and frequently before loans can be made for land purchase. If you don't have an EFP, contact your local MD or County to ask about the process. www.albertaefp.com

The Alberta Lamb Traceability Pilot Project

Lamb industry stakeholders, from producers to government, collaborated in the Alberta Lamb Traceability Pilot project (LTP) to find practical benefits from new Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology on Alberta sheep farms. A great deal of experience and information was generated by the group of co-operating producers who were assisted with implementation of RFID systems for management using the identified top performing equipment. www.ablamb.ca/programs/traceability_pilot.html

Precision Flock Management (PFM)

PFM put the new technology to work. PFM is a systematic management approach for getting the most from your flock. It uses information, tools and technology to gather, record, and analyze data for improved decision-making. www.ablamb.ca/producer_mgmt/technology_tools.html

Lakeland Carcass Sire Project

The purpose of the project was to identify the terminal sire breeds that produce the highest value lambs for the premium lamb market. For more project information, please visit [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sg10536](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sg10536)

The ***Building Better Lambs Terminal Sire*** factsheet series is available at www.ablamb.ca/producer_mgmt/factsheets.html

Western Canadian Flock Health Program

Healthy animals raise more lambs more efficiently. This program provides a guide to standardised health practices that can help you maintain a healthy flock.

WCFHP is currently under review and not available for registrations. Available for free download at www.ablamb.ca/producer_mgmt/flock_health.html

Enhanced Scrapie Surveillance

Alberta Lamb Producers has been working with the provincial government for a number of years in developing scrapie surveillance programs to provide international import and export opportunities for producers. For details of Alberta surveillance programs visit www.ablamb.ca/programs/avssp.html

ALBERTA SheepSmart

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCERS

Photo: THagedorn, AARD

Top Ten Most Frequently Asked Questions

1 Where do I go to buy sheep?

- From reputable producers
- Open or closed flocks
- Dispersal sales
- Reduction sales
- Designated auction sales

Remember, there are no disease-free sheep.

2 How much land is required?

The answer to this is dependent upon:

- Intention to grow or buy winter feed
- Productivity of the land
- Cost of land
- Intention to graze or feedlot all, or part of, the flock
- Long range plans for expansion
- Type of farm operation



3 How much time and labour is involved?

This depends on:

- Type of farm operation: the more intensive the system, the greater the daily input
- Lambing season. Weather conditions and facilities will have an impact
- Time spent monitoring lamb growth rates for marketing
- Time spent maintaining flock records: health, lambing ease and percentage, ewes for culling, selection of ewe lambs

The more time spent on the health and management of your flock (pen checking, deworming and vaccination), the greater your chances of success.

4 What is biosecurity?

There are different levels of biosecurity (A, B, and C). The overall aim is to eradicate specific diseases from your flock and then keep them out. To do this:

- Keep a closed flock
 - Ensure that sheep do not come in contact with other sheep. If they leave the farm, they don't return
 - Document health status for selling breeding stock
 - Designate specific steps for people visiting farms

[Back to Index](#)

5 When is the best time to sell lambs?

There is no simple answer to this question.

- Prices fluctuate from year to year, season to season, even week to week
- Timing is based on supply and demand—you must schedule lambing to meet your chosen market's needs:
 - o Early spring market. Usually higher prices but requires winter lambing with its higher feed costs, higher lamb losses, increased housing cost, and more labour
 - o Fall sales. Usually lower prices but spring lambing has a higher lambing percentage, lower feed costs, lower lamb losses from cold, reduced housing required, higher deworming costs, and is less labour intensive
- It also depends on the type of operation you have. If it is mixed, you may want to ship animals at the same time so that you have a less labour intensive period – or stagger your sales to even out revenue peaks and valleys.

6 What is the optimum flock size?

Consider these questions when determining the flock size that is right for you:

- What is your standard of living?
- What are your expectations?
- Is your operation a hobby or business?
- Do you have off farm income? Generally, 600 to 1000 ewes with once a year lambing are necessary for a full time living

Remember that net dollars per lamb and number of lambs marketed are more critical than the number of ewes. Advice to new producers: Start with a small flock (30 to 50) and build up.

7 What are the different types of sheep operations?

Types include:

- Extensive or pasture-based
- Intensive or total confinement
- Farm flock— combination of intensive and extensive
- Feedlot lamb production

8 What breed or type of sheep should I purchase?

Choose from over 1000 breeds of sheep world-wide, over 40 breeds available in Alberta.

Choose the type of sheep that fits:

- Your farm facility and land size
- Your farm operation (intensive versus extensive)
- Your labour and time availability
- Check out the LTPP study for information on Terminal Sires and breeding options at: www.xxxxxxxx.ca Also check out the Sheep and Goat Management In Alberta – Reproduction manual for in-depth information.

Don't buy the sheep and then adapt your operation!

9 What sheep should I avoid?

Stay away from sheep with:

- Missing teeth
- Lumpy udders, abnormal shape
- Untrimmed feet, limping sheep
- Eye problems
- Rough condition wool
- Very thin, poor condition
- Signs of vaginal prolapse or Caesareans
- Abscesses or sores
- Signs of worms

10 What facilities and equipment are needed?

Things to remember when you make your plans:

- Modest equipment and good planning will work better than expensive equipment and poor planning
- Understand what is required before you begin
- Visit a few sheep farms before you start
- Think about sheep behaviour when planning
- Consider your lambing season—winter, spring, fall
- Consider your type of farm operation
- Good equipment makes handling safer, easier and faster with less stress on animal and operator. Find what works best for you.

[Back to Index](#)