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Alberta Lamb Producers
97 East Lake Ramp NE
Airdrie, AB
T4A 0C3

Alberta
Producers





# N'ewesletter

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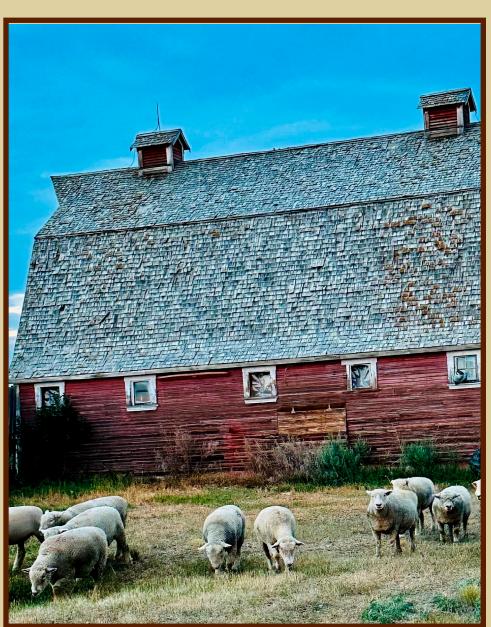
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PM#40050072 Photo Credit: Andrew Paisley



## **MF-99**

\*No Oiler Tip Proof Weather Resistant Compartment Feeder



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### ALSO:

**Sheep & Goat Specials**-Every First Saturday sale of the month

### **UPCOMING SALES**

Sheep & Goat Special- October 4 at 10 am Sheep & Goat Special- November 1 at 10 am Sheep & Goat Special - December 6 at 10 am

### Odd 'N Unusual Sales

-Last Saturday of April, May, June and September **Equipment Sales** 

-As Announced Through the Summer

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### Alberta Lamb Producers





Phone: 403-948-8533 Email: info@ablamb.ca Websites: www.ablamb.ca and www.albertalamb.ca



Cover photo: Andrew Paisley

### N'ewesletter Policy

Hard copies of N'ewesletter will be mailed to all producers who have purchased CSIP tags and paid check-off within the last two years. Producers who have not purchased tags within the last two years will be removed from our mailing list, but may continue receiving hard copies in the mail for \$25 + GST, paid annually. Please contact the office for an invoice. ALP offers each issue of N'ewesletter on our website for free access: link: https:// ablamb.ca/index.php/newsadvertising/n-ewesletter . ALP continually strives to responsibly use check-off dollars to benefit lamb producers in Alberta.

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### **Message From Your Vice** Chair: Martin Winchell

### Why Networking Among Sheep Producers Is So Valuable

(Why You Should Attend the 2025 Alberta Lamb Producers AGM)

Alberta is a vast province—stretching roughly 1,223 km from top to bottom, about the same distance as Calgary to San Francisco. With that kind of scale comes a wide range of climates, soil types, and agricultural zones, which means no two sheep operations are exactly alike.

Sure, the internet has made the world smaller. But when you search for sheep-related advice and end up with results from Kansas, it's not always helpful. Talking to a fellow Albertan producer, someone who understands your conditions and challenges, can offer insights you didn't even know you needed.



I've been in the sheep industry longer than I care to admit. And while experience counts, it's the network I've built over the past five years that's truly helped my operation. When something goes sideways (and let's be honest, it usually does), I now have a list of people I can call—people who've been there, done that, and are generous enough to share what worked.

That's why the 2025 AGM is such a valuable opportunity. This year's event features tours of two different facilities on Friday, and I'd bet every attendee will walk away with ideas to improve their own operation. We've also lined up some of the most compelling topics ever showcased at an AGM (check out the agenda in this newsletter). And don't underestimate the value of the people sitting right next to you—your tablemates may be your next great resource, if you're willing to engage.

### **Shared Knowledge = Smarter Farming**

- Sheep farming is full of variables—weather, feed costs, lambing rates, parasite control. Realworld solutions come from real-world conversations.
- Fellow producers often share tips on breeding, pasture management, and flock health that you won't find in textbooks or online forums.

### **Stay Ahead of Industry Trends**

- Whether it's new regulations, market shifts, or emerging technologies, your network—and the ALP—will keep you informed.
- Events like AGMs, trade shows, and producer panels help you build a personal knowledge network that pays dividends.

Continued on Page 2...

# Alberta Lamb Producers Alberta Lamb Producers

### **Innovation Through Collaboration**

Some of the best ideas come from casual conversations.
 You might learn about a new grazing technique or a cost-saving feed alternative just by chatting over coffee.

### **Access to Resources and Support**

- A strong network connects you to grants, mentorships, equipment sharing, and even emergency help during tough seasons.
- It's also a gateway to partnerships—joint ventures, co-marketing, or group purchasing can reduce costs and expand your reach.

### **Mental Health and Community**

 Farming can be isolating. Sharing stories, successes, and setbacks builds camaraderie and resilience. (And if you haven't had a wreck... I suspect you're not being entirely honest.)

### **Amplify Your Voice**

- When producers band together, they have more influence on policy, pricing, and public perception.
- The AGM gives you direct access to board members—this
  is your chance to help shape the future of sheep farming
  in Alberta.

Whether you're a seasoned producer or just starting out, investing time in relationships with fellow sheep farmers is one of the smartest moves you can make.

It's not just about swapping stories—it's about building a stronger, more sustainable future for your flock and your business.

### Why It Matters

The Alberta Lamb Producers AGM is more than a meeting—it's your best opportunity to network, learn, and grow within the Alberta industry.

I encourage you to listen to a few Real Ag Radio podcasts before the event to get a taste of what our keynote speaker will be discussing. Who knows—maybe after this AGM, we'll start hearing more sheep-focused content on the airwaves.

I'm looking forward to a great AGM, and to meeting some of the local experts in the audience.

Marty Winchill

# Message From Your Director: Darlene Hawco

Walking across the yard the other day I heard a flock of geese flying overhead and couldn't help thinking about how fast this year has gone by. It seemed like only yesterday the snow was melting, the days were getting longer, and I had a list of all the things I wanted to get done this year. The geese flying overhead remind



me how short the summers can be up here on the farm in the northeast of Alberta.

It's turned out to be another dry year in this part of the province. The late Spring snow helped refill some dugouts and got the pastures off to a good start, but a dry July set the tone for what now seems like an early harvest. A few early August rains did help green things up for a while.

The hay crop turned out better than I expected and even though the crops around here might be considered average for this year, there will be enough feed grain for the winter for the flock.

I did have some great opportunities to take some time away from the farm and attend my first two fiber festivals this year and had an amazing time meeting so many new people and learning so much about the fiber industry.

Both events I attended here in Alberta showed me how much interest there is out there for home grown wool. I was able to bring my own fiber to these fiber festivals, and I can definitely say I can't wait for next year's festivals.

My flock of sheep have allowed me to meet so many wonderful people in preparation for these festivals, starting with John who's been shearing my flock for many years now, right through to the amazing people at the wool mills who help make all that raw wool into amazing fiber which filled the back of my vehicle for those road trips across Alberta.

The fiber festival marketplaces were filled with so many colourful yarns, and so many inspirational people who are just as passionate about this sustainable and natural product. The energy, innovation, and connections made at these gatherings have left me inspired and hopeful for this new component of my sheep farm.

The festival's buzzed with activity with so many vendors show-casing everything from raw fleeces to hand dyed yarns. Merino, Romney, Icelandic and many more and all from farms just like mine. I spoke with many customers who shared stories of their own projects, from cozy sweaters to intricate rugs.

There was a sense of camaraderie, and we were all united by the love for wool's versatility.

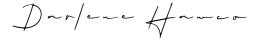
# Alberta Lamb Producers

But these festivals were not just markets, they turned out to be great educational opportunities with skills shared, fostering what I believe will be a new generation of fiber enthusiasts, and any challenges of drought for this year's growing season didn't seem so bad after all.

Now back on my farm as I watch the leaves turn colour and the flocks of geese heading south, I'm trying to get the last little projects done from the list I made this spring.

There are still bales to haul, some fence posts to put in the ground, and my raised bed garden to harvest. But I am confident that the upcoming winter won't seem as long this year as now my flock has given me a whole new reason to look forward to next season.

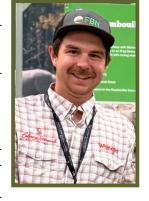
Hoping for a mild winter to come, plenty of snow, and more sunny skies. Have a wonderful day.



# **Message From Your DIT: Cody Legault**

As fall is in full swing—with combines rolling through the fields, hay being hauled into the farmyards, and pastures starting to turn—I'd like to introduce myself as the new Directorin-Training.

My fiancé and I run a flock of 100 range ewes in southern Alberta. On our growing farm, we focus on keeping the flock self-sufficient with minimal inputs, relying on mixed-grass hays, green feed, and grain screen-



ings from a local seed-cleaning plant. While our range ewes aren't the most prolific, we're working on improving genetics to increase productivity while keeping costs low.

Our breeding season starts around Thanksgiving, when the bucks go in for about 50 days. We don't feed added grain or additives, other than providing new pasture—except for our ewe lambs, who do get some screenings. Lambing begins in mid-March, where we manage with only an outdoor shelter and a 20x20 uninsulated barn. Once ewes lamb, they stay in the barn for 12–24 hours to be paint-branded and have tails docked, before heading back outside with access to a lean-to shelter and a wind fence. By mid-May, the ewes go to pasture with their lambs, and in June the lambs are weaned and started on grain screenings.

I began my role as Director-in-Training at the end of June to get a feel for the committee and to ensure that, if I put my name forward as a Director this fall, I'd be able to fully commit to the board and to our producers. Some of our meetings have even happened in the cab of the combine or tractor while baling hay.

I've found the board to be made up of great people from across Alberta.

I'm excited to keep learning about the work Alberta Lamb Producers do and the many ways we support the industry. Most of all, I look forward to hearing from producers about their operations and how the ALP board can continue to serve them and strengthen our industry.

Cody Legant

## **Producer Spotlight: Insights from Our Producers**

We are currently seeking producers to feature in our N'ewesletter!

Last year, ALP introduced the Producer Spotlight section in our quarterly N'ewesletter to help our producers connect and learn about the diverse sheep operations across Alberta.

We invite you to share your story. Would you like to contribute an article about your business and activities? Please express your interest by contacting us at info@ablamb.ca or calling 403-948-8533.



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**Roger Bos** 306-716-2404 Jayden Hofstra 306-292-7071

email: zubotmfg@gmail.com www.zubotwelding.ca

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS! ALP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

Coast Hotel Lethbridge, 526 Mayor Magrath Dr S, Lethbridge, AB, on November 14–15, 2025. Join us for speakers, a farm tour, banquet, AGM, producer panel, and trade fair. AGM attendance is free with registration There is no charge to attend the AGM, but advance registration is required, with the attendee registration deadline set for October 30, 2025.

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OR EMAILING INFO@ABLAMB.CA

**ALP 2025 AGM & CONFERENCE** 





# **Alberta Lamb Producers** 2025 Annual General Meeting and Conference

### Friday, November 14

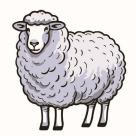
Time		
8:00am - 8:45am	Registration & Trade Fair	
9:00am - 10:00am	Speaker - Dr. Laverne Seib "Identifying and Treating Common Diseases in Alberta Sheep Flocks"	
10:00am - 10:30am	Break & Trade Fair	
10:30am - 11:30am	Speaker - Dr. John Gilleard "Current trends and future opportunities in sustainable small ruminant parasite control"	
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Bagged Lunch on Bus and Travel to Farm Tour	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	Farm Tour - Hejo Farms and Wilson Colony	
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Cocktail Hour	
6:00pm - 8:00pm	Banquet Featuring Alberta Lamb	
8:00pm - 10:00pm	Cash Bar/Networking	

### Saturday, November 15

Time	
8:00am - 8:45am	Registration & Trade Fair
9:00am - 10:30am	Annual General Meeting
10:30am - 11:00am	Refreshment Break and Trade Fair
11:00am - 12:00pm	Speaker - Jared Epp, Stock Dogs and Targeted Grazing
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch and Trade Fair
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Keynote Speaker - Shaun Haney, RealAgriculture
2:00pm - 2:30pm	Refreshment Break and Trade Fair
3:00pm - 4:30pm	Producer Panel – "Opportunities in the Industry" Moderated by Shaun Haney
4:30pm	Closing Remarks



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## **Annual General Meeting, 2025**

Alberta Lamb Producers Annual General Meeting & Conference 2025

### **Annual General Meeting**

All eligible Alberta Producers are invited to attend the AGM and will be entitled to one vote per producer at the meeting.

To be an eligible Alberta Lamb Producer, you need to have purchased CSIP tags within the last two years from our fiscal year end (Aug 31).

ALP is your organization, and the AGM will provide you:

- A full transparent review of ALP activities, financial statements and the 2025-26 budget.
- An opportunity for producers to discuss resolutions and direct ALP activities. (Brought forward by the deadline of September 30, 2025 - resolutions will not be accepted from the floor.)

### Date and Location: Saturday, November 15, 2025, at 9:00 am.

Join us In-person at the Coast Conference Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta OR virtually on the Zoom Platform.

There is no charge to attend ALP's AGM, however registration is required.

All documents needed for the AGM will be emailed to all registrants and posted on the ALP website when they become available. These documents will include:

- AGM Agenda
- 2024 AGM Minutes
- 2024-25 Annual Report
- 2024-25 Financial Statements
- Acclaimed Directors Bios

### **Conference and Farm Tour**

ALP is hosting our 2025 Annual General Meeting in conjunction with an educational conference and farm tour.

ALP's 2025 educational conference is a paid event, has no eligibility requirements and is open to anyone to register for and attend. If you cannot attend the entire event, there are options to choose from!

Date and Location: Friday, November 14 and Saturday, November 15, 2025 at the Coast Conference Centre, Lethbridge.

For those who wish to register for and attend the AGM and/ or Conference you will find the registration form to download, fill out and send into the ALP office on our website under the "About" heading, and selecting "ALP AGM and Annual Report."

For more information or to register please email <u>info@ablamb.</u> <u>ca</u> or call 403-948-8533 by October 30, 2025.

# Alberta Lamb Producers Director Acclamation for 2025–2026 & Director-in-Training (DIT) Program

Alberta Lamb Producers (ALP) is pleased to announce the acclamation of five Director-at-Large positions for the 2025–2026 Board term. Five eligible producers submitted valid nomination forms prior to the August 15, 2025 deadline. As the number of nominations matched the number of available positions, no election will be held this year. The nominated individuals will be officially acclaimed to the Board during the ALP Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 15, 2025.

### **Director-in-Training (DIT) Program**

The ALP Director-in-Training Program was established to foster member engagement and support Board succession planning. Through this initiative, an appointed eligible producer participates in Board meetings as a non-voting member, gaining valuable insight into Board operations and key industry issues.



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In 2025, ALP had the pleasure of working with our current Director-in-Training, who will be acclaimed as a full Director at the upcoming AGM.

We are also pleased to announce that a successful candidate has been selected for the incoming Director-in-Training position. Their term will officially commence at the 2025 AGM.

Registration Form on Page 8

## **ALP Activities**

April 2: Olds College Technology Access Centre for Livestock Production Meeting, Olds - 1 staff

April 8: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff

April 9: Calgary Stampede Agri Food Exhibitor Meeting, Calgary - 1 director, 1 staff

April 10: Marketing Council Meeting, virtual - 1 staff

April 16: AEPA Advisory Committee Meeting, virtual - 1 staff

April 22: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff

April 23: CFA GM/ED Meeting, virtual - 1 staff

May 3: Terroir Symposium, Calgary - 1 staff

May 13: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff

May 14: Review of Animal Protection Act and Animal Protection Regulation, virtual 1 director, 1 staff

May 22: AEPA Advisory Committee Meeting - 1 staff

May 27: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff

May 29: NSN Meeting, virtual - 2 directors, 1 staff

June 6 & 7: ALP Directors' Meeting, Airdrie - all directors

June 11: RDAR Roundup 2025, Carstairs - 1 director

June 16: AEPA Advisory Committee Meeting, virtual - 1 staff

June 16: TACLP June 25 Advisory Panel - 1 director

June 24: WeCAHN Small Ruminant Network Meeting, virtual - 1 staff

June 24: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff June 26: Agrivoltaics Canada - Alberta Caucus Meeting, Olds - 1 staff June 26-30: 4-H Alberta Provincial Sheep Show, Stettler - 1 staff June 28: Cache Valley Virus Workshop: virtual & Airdrie- 2 directors, 1 staff

July 6: AB Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors Reception, Calgary - 1 director, 1 staff

July 8: Gov't of Alberta Agri-Business Reception, Calgary - 1 director, 1 staff

July 9-12: All Canada Sheep Classic, Brandon, MB - 1 director, 1 staff July 16: CAHSS Small Ruminant Network Meeting, virtual - 1 staff

July 22: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff

July 23: Ag Leadership Initiative - Board Governance Fundamentals Workshop, Red Deer - 1 staff

July 30: AEPA Advisory Committee Summer Tour, Southern AB - 1 staff July 30: NSN Meeting, virtual - 2 directors, 1 staff

August 12: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff

August 21: Ag Leadership Learning Series Webinar, 1 staff

August 19: Small Ruminant Grazing Seminar, Strathmore - 1 staff

August 19: ALP 2025-26 Draft Budget review - Finance Chair, Vice Finance Chair, 1 Staff

August 26: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff September 4: WeCAHN Small Ruminant Network Q2 meeting, virtual 1 staff

September 5: Pre-FPT Roundtable w/ Minister Sigurdson, Stakeholders & Staff, virtual – 1 staff

September 9: ALP Director Video Conference - all directors, 1 staff September 10: Campaign For Wool Board Meeting, virtual - 1 staff Sept 10: AEPA Ecosystem Services Grant Program (ESGP) and the Private Land Conservation Program (PLCP) – Presentation -virtual, 1 staff September 16: Ag Leadership Learning Series Webinar: Building Team Culture - 1 staff

September 25: NSN Meeting, virtual - 2 directors, 1 staff

September 26-27: ALP Directors Meeting, Airdrie – all directors, 1 staff



# **Attendee Registration Form**

2025 Annual General Meeting and Conference November 14 & 15, 2025 Coast Hotel Lethbridge, Alberta

Attendee Name(s):		
Address:		
Email:		
Contact Number:		
Representing Business Name:		
in person virtual	· ·	
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION RA	ATES *Includes Farm Tour, Meals & Speakers (UNTIL Aug	ust 31, 2025)
<b>^</b>		<b>©</b>
\$225 per Individual	x \$225.00 (+ GST below)	Ψ
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Please email your completed Early Bird Registration no later than August 31, 2025 to:

Group Number - 9507272 Guest Rooms Block Name - Alberta Lamb Producers - Attendees

EMAIL: info@ablamb.ca

Registration deadline is October 30, 2025

### **Alberta Lamb Producers**



# **ALP 2025 Photo Contest Results!**

A huge thank you to all the producers who submitted photos we received so many great entries, and the winners were tough to choose!

Stay tuned for the launch of our new website, where many of these incredible photos will be featured.

### **Congratulations to our winners:**

### First Place: Andrew Paisley



Second Place: Gina Heidecker



### Third Place: Barbara Muller



Runner Up: Jody Morris



Runner Up: Cactus Farms



Congratulations to our winners! UFA gift cards are headed your way!



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# Lamb and Sheep Market Update: Ann Boyda

Provincial Livestock Market Analyst | Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation | August 28, 2025

### Sheep and Lamb Inventories

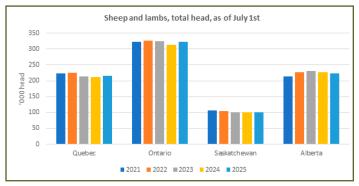
Alberta lamb inventories continue to decline despite strong prices.

This update looks at the current size of Alberta's sheep sector, the price trends it faces and some of the global dynamics influencing the industry.

Recently published Statistics Canada data on the number of sheep and lamb on farms, as of July 1, 2025, reports the national inventory at 1.037 million head, a one per cent increase over July 1, 2024.

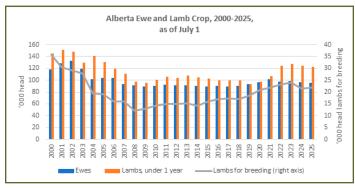
The growth in the total inventory is attributed to increases in Ontario and Quebec, 3.0 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively. Alberta still maintained its position as the second largest producing province with 222,700 head, however total inventory declined by 1.6 per cent from last year.

This marks the second consecutive year of contraction in the Alberta sheep sector.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0129-01 Number of sheep and lambs on farms

Over the last twenty-five years, the Alberta ewe flock and the lamb crop have experienced a slight decline from their peak in the early 2000s. Productivity however has increased from 1.22 lambs per ewe to between 1.28 and 1.29 lambs in the last four years. A greater proportion of ewe lambs are being retained for breeding (nearly 18 per cent) resulting in accelerated genetic progress and improved performance. These replacement lambs will continue to impact future flock productivity.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0129-01 Number of sheep and lambs on farms

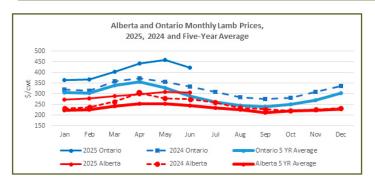
### **Prices**

Lamb prices in 2025 have exceeded those of last year and the five-year average. Data from Statistics Canada shows an average Alberta lamb price of \$291.92 per hundredweight (cwt) for the first half of the year, which was over ten per cent higher than the same period 2024. Ontario, Canada's largest lamb market, reported an average of \$409.70 per cwt, nearly 20 per cent higher over same period. Lamb prices typically spike around Easter, however strong demand continued to support prices later into Spring.

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0077-01 Farm product prices, crops and livestock

### **Producer Resources**





Alberta's estimated weekly live price equivalent for lamb continued its strong performance through the first half of 2025 but has now returned to average seasonal prices comparable to that of last year and the five-year average. The average yearto-date (Aug. 15, 2025) price of \$299.08 per cwt remains 8.5 per cent higher than the same period last year. Market volatility is less evident in 2025 than in 2024 but prices have trended down since early June to the current price of \$256.26 per cwt for the week of Aug. 15, 2025.



Source: Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation

Prices at the auction markets also show greater volatility. Market lamb estimates based on the average at select Alberta auction markets ranged from a weekly average of \$266.59 per cwt to \$353.70 per cwt over the year-to-date (Aug. 15, 2025). The spread, or difference in the low and high range price, was an average of \$87.11 per cwt over this period. The average low weekly price for feeder lamb was \$315.94 per cwt and the average high price was \$416.55 per cwt, year-to-date.

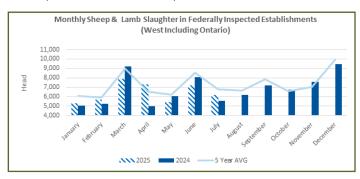
Source: Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation



### Slaughter

For the first seven months of 2025, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency reported 45,098 head of lamb and sheep

slaughtered in federally inspected packing plants in the West (including Ontario), a 2.1 per cent increase from 2024 for the same period. Of note, the Canadian International Merchandise Trade Database indicates that Alberta imported 4,718 live sheep from the United States (U.S.) in the first half of 2025, the greater share of which were in March and April. No live sheep were imported into Alberta for the same period in 2024. Sourcing live lamb from the U.S. helps to meet the seasonal demand. Data indicates that January to June imports from U.S. ranged from 6,900 head in 2023 to 13,300 head in 2022.



Source: Canadian Food Inspection Agency

### **Global Situation**

Despite greater uncertainty in the global economy stemming from rising trade tensions demand for lamb meats remained strong. As of August 1, 2025, U.S. retaliatory tariffs on Australia, Uruguay and Argentina stayed at ten per cent, while Brazil's tariff rate rose to 50 per cent. New Zealand red meat exports to the U.S. face a 15 per cent tariff. The U.S. and China agreed to extend a pause on higher tariffs until November 10, keeping the lower rate of 30 per cent in place. Under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, most Canadian agricultural goods including live sheep and lamb and sheep products are tariff-

Australia and New Zealand continue to lead global sheep meat markets and have focused efforts on the higher value markets of Europe and North America. Australian lamb exports are expected to decline in upcoming years as the Australian Government is phasing out live sheep exports by sea. According to the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board of the United Kingdom, European sheep meat imports are forecast to rise by six per cent in 2025.

Meat and Livestock Australia reports that for the first half year of 2025, Australian sheep meat exports were 305,556 tonnes with China as the main market (69,403 tonnes), followed by U.S. (46,570 tonnes). Over this same period, Beef + Lamb New Zealand reports lamb exports of 181,224 tonnes.

There are about one million sheep producers in the European Union (EU) producing over 67 million sheep and goats, but the EU is only 85 per cent self-sufficient in sheep meat. The major producing states are Spain, Greece, France and Ireland. The European Commissions summer outlook forecasts a two per cent

# Alberta Producer Resources



year-over-year decline in sheep meat production to 518 thousand tonnes for 2025. Heavier carcass weights will help offset the reduced slaughter numbers. Lamb prices have been strong due to the tight supplies of lamb.

In the U.S., sheep and lamb slaughter and meat production are larger than last year, and prices are forecast to be lower. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) outlook for lamb and mutton production (as of August 2025) estimates an annual production of 137 million pounds for 2025, an increase of 2.2 per cent over 2024. The 2025 forecast price of Choice-Prime slaughter lambs of US\$180.30 per cwt represents a 5.8 per cent decrease from 2024 prices.

Market access is a major concern to the global sheep industry and incidences of contagious animal diseases have resulted in greater trade restrictions. News of New World Screwworm in Central America and Mexico and its continued spread northward, resulted in the U.S. closing its border with Mexico for the second time on July 10th.

Bovine tuberculosis discovered in a Manitoba herd also raises concerns due to the susceptibility of sheep to the disease. The CFIA is conducting an investigation. Globally, diseases like Footand Mouth Disease and lumpy skin disease are present worldwide. Cache Valley Virus in Western Canada (a mosquito-borne zoonosis), although not a reportable disease in Canada, also threatens the gestating ewe population.

With a continually evolving disease landscape, it is ever important that industry and government collaborate to enhance biosecurity, develop surveillance capabilities and ensure emergency response plans are readied.

## **Targeted Grazing Course**

### **New Sheep Specific Grazing Course a Success!**

As Fall is upon us, it can be a good time to look back at our pasture management from the past growing season. There are many resources available regarding grazing, but many of them often focus on cattle. ALP was pleased to partner with Lakeland College to develop a learning opportunity specific to grazing sheep and goats, and the unique grazing opportunities that continue to emerge.

Continued on Page 14



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### **Producer Resources**



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- Repayment dates as long as 18 months

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# LETHAL BACTERIA FOUND IN WILD SHEEP



wsfab.org

Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae, or Movi for short, can be found in seemingly healthy domestic sheep and goats. This bacteria is transmissible typically from nose-to-nose contact to wild Bighorn Sheep. With deadly consequences, most Bighorn Sheep are dying within a week. This can have devastating impacts on Bighorn populations for many years to follow, due to low lamb survival rates.

Funding may be available from GoA for producers to test their sheep and goats for Movi in high-risk areas of the province



Report any sightings of Bighorn Sheep near domestic sheep and goats, or domestic sheep and goats in crown land/forestry areas. Report any sick bighorns to WSFAB or Fish & Wildlife

check-in points that are scheduled for discussion and idea sharing. Mulholland emphasized "Getting the chance to talk with people that are actually in the field is a great opportunity to learn without having to make costly mistakes."

The course is offered twice each year, September to December and January to April. Producers are encouraged to register early within these periods to ensure they do not miss any online sessions. For more information, please contact admin@ablamb.ca.

Maximizing the use of available land and exploring unconventional grazing opportunities can help both new and experienced sheep producers expand their operations. Designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of grazing management for sheep and goats, the Targeted Grazing Course focuses on vegetation control, land sustainability, animal welfare, and business planning. The final module includes detailed Canadian case studies on grazing under solar panels, in cut blocks, in forested and urban areas, and to control unwanted vegetation.

The course was successfully launched last winter, and Paul Mulholland was one of the participants. "I really enjoyed taking the course. I learned a ton of stuff, and most importantly I learned what I didn't know, I didn't know... if that makes sense?" Paul laughs. He continues, "Some of the things covered were really basic, but when put to use, change your day! It's been quite a while since I finished the course, however I am still trying to digest the huge amount of information that was made available."

Offered by Alberta Lamb Producers, the Targeted Grazing Course is available to anyone wanting to further their knowledge in grazing and those wanting to explore unique grazing opportunities. Offered online, the course costs \$250 and takes 10-15 hours to complete. Support is provided by Marisa Schuebel, a Lakeland College instructor and a wealth of knowledge. Schuebel has practical experience as an urban grazier of goats in the Vermillion area and brings her enthusiasm to the online

# Alberta Sheep Industry Revitalization **Project**

As mentioned in our May producer email, the Alberta Lamb Producers was able to secure research grant funding through Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) through Sustainable CAP Program funding to update some of our key business and extension materials.

The specific materials included business tools that were originally developed in 2012 by the Alberta Lamb Producers, Alberta Agriculture, and SWC Consulting. These tools included a detailed, sheep-specific business guide, an advanced cost of production computer program, and a comprehensive sheep producer resource guide that links to over 100 extension documents.





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We are pleased to announce that the business tools are in their final stages of being updated and that we are now ready to **demonstrate** these tools to Alberta sheep producers.

Learning how to use any new tool is hard when you have not used them before, and business tools are no different. By adopting a hands-on approach to teaching business tool use, this training demonstration will showcase how to use these tools to increase your sheep operation efficiency and profitability. Likewise, these tools will be useful helping new producers become profitable as they enter the industry.

The long-term goal for this project is to increase the size of the Alberta flock, thereby reducing Alberta's reliance on imported lamb. We believe we can do this by giving producers the tools they need to expand their operations and to help new producers as they enter the business. In this era of political instability, tariffs, and trade uncertainty, Canadian consumers now, more than ever, want to buy Canadian made products. This is the right time for Alberta to expand its flock!

As mentioned last in our update, every project needs a "big hairy goal". The goal for this project is to engage about 10% of the approximately 1,700 lamb producers we have here in Alberta. We hope that these tools will help existing producers lower their costs and/or start or expand their production to achieve a 10% improvement.

If we can achieve this admittedly ambitious goal, it would mean the Alberta flock could grow from it's current (roughly) 100,000 ewes and 130,000 lambs, to 110,000 ewes and 143,000 lambs! This increase, if realized, would be worth \$5 million dollars for the ewes, plus up to another \$3.9 million dollars for the lambs at today's market prices. We are keeping our fingers crossed!

### How to attend this demonstration

- When 1 PM, Wednesday, October 22nd
- Where
  - On-line Zoom Registration (https://us02web.zoom.us/ meeting/register/W0OHlrS0TJudeJHY2XQ8kA)

- In-person Airdrie Agriculture Centre 97 East Lake Ramp Northeast, Airdrie, AB
- In-person Producer sites (Alberta) Depending on demand, we will also be setting up producer sites for this webinar for those who prefer to attend this session as a group exercise!
- 3. Register Please call or email the Alberta Lamb Producers to register for this event and let us know how you would like to attend (in-person or on-line).

## **Transitioning Sheep Off Pasture to Feed:** Ken Van Driesten

MSc, CCA (Prairie Provinces), an Albertan, shepherd, and forage specialist for More Than Just Feed.

### Winter is Coming! Considerations for Fall Feeding **Transitions**

Across most of the sheep producing world, shepherds discuss grazing strategies for each of the four seasons. On the prairies, two or three of the four seasons are winter, and if we do have a grazing strategy at all, it's just a summer one. Grazing is often utilized to cheaply maintain dry ewes in winter-lambing flocks, or to raise lambs on their dams with minimal purchased feed in spring-lambing flocks. Either way, fall means changes in feeding strategy for sheep farms across the prairies.

Hopefully most of us managed our grass in a way that brought us into fall with a good pasture stockpile, allowing us to graze into the winter. My irrigated pasture allows a limited version of this type of management. If I'm strategic about my grass recovery periods in late summer, stockpiling gives me an extra month of grazing after the growing season has ended. In dry regions your grass may have disappeared earlier than you hoped, especially if you are over-stocked for your land base, and a transition onto stored feed occurred months ago out of necessity. Pastures allowed to rest and recover all summer can

# Alberta Cart Industry Information





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provide cost-effective winter stockpile grazing, but it's all context dependant.

Allowing your ewe flock to graze as long as possible will keep costs down in most economic scenarios. Fall grazing can look guite different across farms and regions, whether it be stockpiled pasture, crop residues, winter-annual weeds, cover crops, or swath-grazing. As long as these forages are all low- to moderate-quality forages, quick transitions across different pastures can be pretty painless. Quick switches from low-quality to high-quality fall pastures such as brassicas or legumes must be managed more carefully. Sheep adapt to dietary changes more quickly than cattle but slower than goats. This does not mean that you can't kill sheep with a quick dietary change; acidosis and clostridial disease can be fast and deadly. If you're buying in new animals or if you don't keep up a regular clostridial vaccination program, gradual feed transitions become much more important, as any stress plus quick feed changes can be the right equation for a sudden death by clostridial toxins.

Transitioning to stored feeds occurs at some point in the fall or winter for almost every sheep producer. For winter-lambing flocks, stress-induced losses can be minimized by moving ewes from grazing to feeding during mid-gestation, as opposed to directly after breeding or in late gestation. Spring-lambing flocks can time their transition off pasture to coincide with flushing ewes for breeding. This is a good opportunity to closely manage ration changes, but also to get your breeding groups sorted ahead of flushing, to allow pecking order and

routine to be established before the rams are introduced. I like to divide ration transitions into difficulty levels, or maybe "attention requirement levels". For beginner sheep producers and for those who prefer a more hands-off approach, find a winter forage source that matches your pasture in feed type and quality. The obvious example is going from average grass pasture to average grass hay. Ensure the ewes have good access to water when transitioning from very wet forage (pasture) to very dry forage (hay). It doesn't have to be more complicated than that for many operations. Even in this simple scenario, testing the forage quality of the pasture and hay to make sure that they do have similar quality on a dry matter basis is beneficial.

Intermediate level transitions are those that require some attention from the shepherd, but the associated risks are more related to animal performance than to acute health concerns. The most common scenario I'd see at this level would be moving from low quality forage to high quality forage. Moving ewes off of mature or overgrazed pasture onto a legume, brassica, or even a high-quality grass are examples. This scenario holds true whether we're talking hay, silage, or pasture. There are a few keys to a successful transition in this situation. Never move ewes onto new feed on an empty stomach. Limit access to the new forage while providing access to their previous pasture, or if that's not possible, make them fill up on grass hay. Slowly increase daily allocation of the new forage over a couple of weeks to let the rumen microbiome adapt with minimal stress.

Any scenario where the rumen bugs have to shift between energy substrates will be the most advanced level of ration transition. Moving from low quality pasture to a starchy TMR, such as a one based around corn or cereal silage or grain, would fit in this category. Gradual transition is not just beneficial but crucial in this situation. Limit-feeding the TMR or grain-based ration and transitioning using a step-up program is the preferred strategy here to minimize health risks to the sheep. Talk to your nutrition consultant about setting up the right program to match the needs of your flock while safely shifting the rumen from a fibre-digesting environment to a starch-digesting environment.

The two scenarios where a quick switch from maintenance forage to high-energy, starch-based diets occur at the same time as sheep come off of pasture, are around late gestation and pre-breeding (flushing). These two situations require more targeted management, with steps that should be taken to achieve success.

# Steps for transitioning onto a pre-breeding (flushing) ration:

- Assess ewe body condition. Lean ewes will respond much more positively to flushing rations.
- 2. Choose how to increase diet quality, and compare it to their current diet.
- 3. For ewes coming off low-quality pasture, just transitioning to a digestible, high-protein hay or fall pasture may give





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- some flushing effect. Feeding a high-quality mineral at this time can also promote an increased ovulation.
- 4. If using grain as a flushing ration, start with ¼ lb per ewe per day and increase over a couple of weeks to allow time for rumen adaptation. The final concentrate allocation will depend on ewe condition and rate-of-gain targets, ewe size, length of flushing period, and so on. Best to chat with your nutrition consultant on the specifics.
- Consider digestible-fibre by-product feeds such as beet pulp, soy hulls, or distillers' grains to increase the plane of nutrition while still using pail-feeding-style supplementation and reduce rumen transition risks compared to starchbased feeds.
- 6. Keep ewes on the flushing program for several weeks into the breeding season, and ideally maintain a higher plane of nutrition until a few weeks after breeding is complete. Dropping back down to maintenance level feeding too quickly will not help those extra eggs that the flushing generated to become successful lambs.

# Steps for transitioning onto a late-gestation (close-up) diet:

1. Assess ewe body condition. A moderate BCS (3-3.5) is ideal for most flocks at this point. Ewes carrying multiple lambs should be in better condition (3.5-4). Ewes coming off of

- fall pasture lean at this stage of gestation can be a concern, so monitoring BCS during fall grazing is critical.
- Choose how to increase diet quality to achieve nutritional requirements for late gestation (4-6 weeks pre-lambing).
- 3. If using grain or a concentrate supplement to increase ration quality pre-lambing, start with ¼ lb per ewe per day and increase over a couple of weeks to allow time for rumen adaptation.
- 4. Final concentrate allocation depends heavily on number of lambs, ewe size and type, length of feeding period, and must focus on mineral nutrition in addition to protein and energy requirements. Work with your nutrition consultant on a plan for your farm.

Ration changes are just one piece of the puzzle in fall management of your ewe flock. Having a plan and understanding the risks and benefits of your farm-specific strategy are critical to a low-stress transition into our longest season. Feeding season!

## **Myiasis Project (Flystrike Bands)**

In 2022/2023, Alberta Lamb Producers received funding through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to partner with Chinook Contract Research Inc. (CCR) to modify the anesthetic delivering elastration ligation band (the Care-Ring™) for use in Alberta's lamb industry. The product is now available as a



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prescription product through your veterinarian in Alberta as the LidoBand™ www. lidoband.com. At the project's conclusion, it was identified that the incorporation of an insecticide to prevent fly strike would be a welcome and important feature of the Care-Ring™ technology.



Picture of the <u>LidoBand</u>™ lidocaine loaded elastrator band in use

today. The product is available in a patented Care-Ring™ blister pack design to allow for hands free loading of the bands onto standard elastrator pliers.



The sheep blowfly, Lucilia cuprina, is the primary cause of

fly strike in sheep. Fly strike is a serious financial and animal welfare issue for the sheep industry, costing up to \$175 million per annum due to production losses (i.e., reduced wool growth and bodyweight gain, and animal death) and costs associated with treatment and prevention . Fly strike control relies largely on the use of insecticides . These chemicals are generally applied as prophylactic treatments given in advance of fly waves, although some are also used as dressing treatments in existing cases. A product that provides long-term fly strike prevention

in combination with local anesthesia at the targeted site of action would offer tremendous advantages to the industry.

1) Lane J, Jubb T, Shephard R, Webb-Ware J and Fordyce G, Priority list of endemic diseases for the red meat industries. Project Report BAHE0010 Meat & Livestock Australia Limited, Sydney, 282 pp.(2015). 2) Kotze AC and James PJ, Control of sheep flystrike: what's been tried in the past and where to from here. Aust Vet J 100:1–19 (2022).

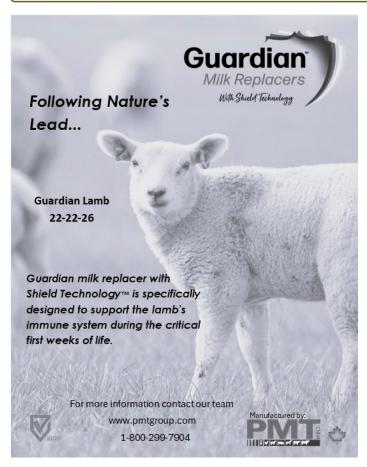


Image showing the life cycle of the black soldier fly. Provided by: Obies Worms.

Presently CCR has developed a patented prototype insecticide-containing version of the Lidocaine Loaded Band (LLB), coined "I-LLBs", to provide pain mitigation and work against the development of fly strike-related pathology through the prevention of myiasis (a parasitic infestation of maggots in livestock tissue). Preliminary data has shown promise, and, if successful, such I-LLBs would be tremendously useful, given that their use creates castration and/or tail docking wounds in animals under

### **Industry Information**





field conditions over a prolonged time (i.e., weeks). CCR has recently received additional funding through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, administered by Research Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) 2024N3436R, to collaborate in a private-public partnership to investigate the adaptation of the Care-Ring™ to prevent myiasis and flystrike for use in the Canadian Lamb Industry. CCR is partnering with Alberta Lamb Producers, Lakeland College, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, and Alberta Veterinary Laboratories (AVL)/Solvet of Calgary, Alberta to develop and eventually manufacture the device in Alberta.

The project has four objectives:

- Objective 1: Stakeholder engagement with the membership of Alberta Lamb Producers to gather input for product adaptation to the lamb industry (i.e. what insecticides to incorporate, rotation of classes etc.).
- 2. Objective 2: Expand on the research and development efforts adapting the anesthetic releasing technology to accommodate the loading and delivery of potentially multiple classes of insecticides, repellants, and anesthetics.
- 3. Objective 3: Facilitate pilot adaptation studies to evaluate the suitability of the Care-Ring<sup>™</sup> for use in Alberta's lamb industry for insecticide and anesthetic delivery during tail docking and castration applications. A series of small field trials in Alberta flocks will be designed and conducted. Early stakeholder engagement will be critical to the success of this work.

Objective 4: The ultimate technology transfer goal of this work is to provide producers with the Care-Ring™ anesthesia band with a specific label claim for insecticide and anesthetic delivery during lamb castration and tail docking.

Are you interested in making this great product even better? We will be conducting two producer surveys during this project to get valuable input on what you want to see in this product (i.e. insecticides or repellants you are interested in being added to the band). The surveys will be conducted in November 2025 and November 2026. If you are interested in participating in the survey, or learning more about the project, please feel free to contact us directly: Jolene Airth, Executive Director, ALP - jolene@ablamb.ca Andrea Hanson, Lakeland College andrea.hanson@lakelandcollege.ca

This initiative (project) was made possible from funding provided by the governments of Canada and Alberta through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) and the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The funding was administered by Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR).









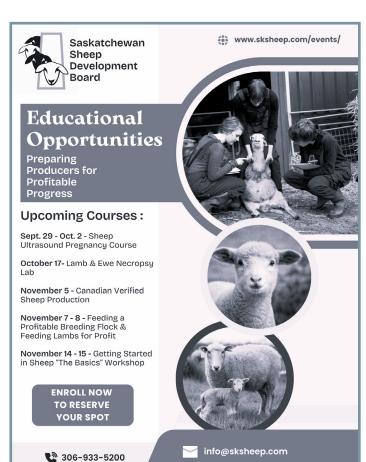


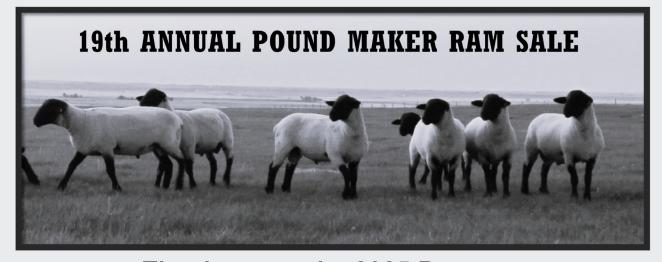












# Thank you to the 2025 Buyers You Make Our Sale a Success!

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- \* High selling ram: Canadian Arcott ram, Whisky Gap 248M, from the Mandel family was purchased by Jason Struck for \$4100.
- \* High Volume buyer: Hejo Farms, Coaldale, AB with the purchase of 44 rams.
- \* Charity: 2 yearling ewes donated by Cool Ally Livestock of Tompkins, SK raised a total of \$20,350 for the Alberta Children's Hospital.

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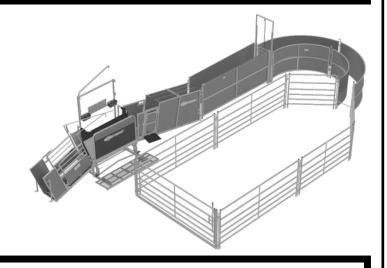
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# BRIEF COMMUNICATION COMMUNICATION BREVE

Ewe litter size and lamb birth weight: Effects on lamb health, performance, and carcass traits

Joyce Van Donkersgoed

### **ABSTRACT**

### **Objective**

A retrospective analysis was conducted using data from a large commercial sheep operation to determine if selection for larger litter sizes affected lamb birth weight, health, and performance.

### Animals and procedure

Data on lamb health, performance, and carcass traits were collected during 2 vaccine trials conducted at a large commercial sheep operation. Data from each trial were analyzed for simple associations between ewe litter size, lamb birth weight, and lamb health, growth performance, and carcass traits.

#### Results

Increased litter size was associated with decreased lamb birth weight, and both were associated with higher mortality rates, including starvation and enteritis, and poorer growth performance and carcass traits

### Conclusion and clinical relevance

Increasing ewe prolificacy can reduce lamb birth weight, growth performance, and carcass traits and increase mortality losses. Veterinarians and sheep producers should consider the negative effects of selecting breeds with very large litter sizes when trying to optimize the production of lamb meat per ewe per year.

### **RESUME**

Taille de la portee et poids **a** la naissance des agneaux : effets sur la sante, les performances et les caracteristiques de la carcasse des agneaux

### **Objectif**

Une analyse retrospective a ete menee **a** partir des donnees d'un grand elevage ovin commercial afin de determiner si la selection de portees plus grandes affectait le poids **a** la naissance, la sante et les performances des agneaux.

### Animaux et procedure

Des donnees sur la sante, les performances et les caracteristiques de la carcasse des agneaux ont ete recueillies lors de 2 essais vaccinaux menes dans un grand elevage ovin commercial. Les donnees de chaque essai ont ete analysees pour rechercher des associations simples entre la taille de la portee, le poids a la naissance des agneaux, la sante, les performances de croissance et les caracteristiques de la carcasse des agneaux.

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### Resultats

Une taille deportee plus importante etait associee a une diminution du poids a la naissance des agneaux, et ces deux facteurs etaient associes a des taux de mortalite plus eleves, notamment par inanition et enterite, ainsi qu'a de moins bonnes performances de croissance et a de moins bonnes caracteristiques de la carcasse.

### Conclusion et pertinence clinique

L'augmentation de la prolificite des brebis peut reduire le poids a la naissance, les performances de croissance et les caracteristiques de la carcasse des agneaux, et augmenter les pertes par mortalite. Les veterinaires et les producteurs de moutons devraient tenir compte des effets negatifs de la selection de races avec des portees tres nombreuses lorsqu'ils tentent d'optimiser la production de viande d'agneau par brebis et par an.

Can Vet J 2025;66:911-914

(Traduit par or Serge Messier)

here is a trend in western Canada to select highly prolific meat-sheep breeds with litter sizes > 3 lambs to increase the total number oflambs raised (personal communication). Previously published research has reported variable effects of increasing ewe litter size on lamb birth weight, health, and performance (1-8), with few studies following lambs to slaughter to evaluate long-term effects.

Two large, randomized controlled field trials were conducted in a large, intensively managed commercial sheep operation in Alberta (9000 breeding ewes and a 25 000-head finishing feedlot) to evaluate the effectiveness of 2 respiratory vaccines on lamb health and performance (9-11). Due to concerns about increasing producer selection for highly prolific breeds in intensively managed sheep operations lambing year-round, the manager of the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board requested an analysis of these trial datasets to evaluate the simple associations between ewe litter size and lamb birth weight and lamb health and performance. As such, the findings presented herein from these datasets can be considered the results of a retrospective observational study.

During each trial, health and performance data were collected from trial ewes and lambs from birth to slaughter (9–11). Lamb data from each trial were entered separately into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by individual lamb and analyzed using Statistix 10 software (Analytic Software, Tallahassee, Florida, USA). All continuous variables were normally distributed. Simple associations among litter size, birth weight, and pre- and postweaning health, performance, and carcass traits were evaluated using the X² test, the 2-sample t-test, ANOVA with Tukey HSD all-pairwise comparisons test, or Pearson correlation coefficients. A linear regression analysis evaluated variation in weaning weight explained by birth weight.

Simple associations are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Larger litters had increased numbers of stillbirths and deaths before and after 2 d of age to weaning at 8 wk of age (Trial 1 only). Colostrum supplementation and starvation deaths were higher in larger litters in the 1st but not the 2nd trial. Trials 1 and 2 were similar with respect to colostrum management and which lambs were left on the ewe (9, 11). In Trial 1, 52% oflambs born were from litter sizes 2:: 3, whereas in Trial 2, 39% of lambs born were from litter sizes 2:: 3, which may partly explain the differences observed in colostrum supplementation and starvation deaths between the trials. In addition, potential insufficient labor in Trial 2 compared to Trial 1 could explain the differences observed in these rates. Lambs moved into the nursery were excluded from the vaccine trial datasets and were not included in these analyses, so they do not explain the differences observed here (9, 11).

As litter size increased, birth weight, weaning weight, and preweaning average daily gain (ADG) decreased. The distribution of ewe and ram lambs was similar across different litter sizes and did not explain the weight differences observed with increasing litter size.

Birth weights were lower in lambs supplemented with colostrum, those dying before and after 2 d of age, and those dying of starvation or enteritis. In the 2nd study, those that died of pneumonia and were treated for pneumonia had lower birth weights. Birth weight explained 21% of the variation in weaning weight in Study 1 and 19% of the variation in Study 2. Reducing litter size could improve birth weights, reduce stillbirths and preweaning mortality losses, and improve growth performance based on the production data from this commercial flock. Large litter sizes in this operation created additional management issues because a nursery had to be built to manage the extra lambs that the ewe could not raise. This resulted in increased labor, colostrum/milk, and infrastructure/equipment costs.

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TABLE 1. Associations between litter size and preweaning lamb health and performance in a commercial sheep flock.

Litter size	Singleton	Twins	Triplets	Quadruplets	Quintuplets	Overall	P-value
Trial: 2021 to 2022							
Lambs, n (%)	449 (9)	1974(39)	1777 (35)	645 (12.8)	209 (4.1)	5054	
Stillbirths, %	0	3.1	13.8	30.2	48.8	12.0	< 0.0001
Birth weight, kg (SE)	5.2 • (0.04)	4,4b(0,02)	3.8' (0.02)	3,5d(0.03)	3.2 • (0.06)	4.1	< 0.0001
Colostrum supplementation, %	4.8	8.2	18.2	22.3	29.7	14.0	< 0.0001
Death < 2 d of age, %	0	2.6	11.7	31.8	46.4	11.1	< 0.0001
Preweaning death > 2 d of age, %	11.6	12.9	13.3	19.7	24.0	14.4	< 0.0001
Enteritis death rate, %	3.8	4.7	4.7	6.7	7.2	5.0	0.09
Starvation death rate, %	3.1	3.3	2.7	4.8	5.7	3.4	0.04
Pneumonia death rate,%	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.4	0.11
Pneumonia treatment rate, %	23.8	23.2	24.3	27.2	27.8	24.3	0.20
Weaning weight, kg (SE)	17.8 • (0.19)	15.6b(0.09)	15.0' (0.10)	14.1',d(0.17)	14.ld (0.30)	15.4	< 0.0001
Average daily gain, kg/d (SE)	0.26 · (0.003)	0.23b(0.016)	0.23b,c (0.002)	0.22' (0.003)	0.22b,c (0.005)	0.23	< 0.0001
Trial: 2022 to 2023							
Lambs, n (%)	658(13.5)	2296 (47.1)	1521 (31.2)	358 (7.3)	41 (0.8)	4874	
Stillbirths, %	0	2.5	12.8	40.0	68.2	8.6	< 0.0001
Birth weight, kg (SE)	4.7 • (0.04)	4.2b(0.02)	3.8' (0.03)	3.6d(0.05)	3.1 • (0.16)	4.1	< 0.0001
Colostrum supplementation, %	9.3	9.5	10.1	14.2	7.3	10.0	0.07
Death < 2 d of age, %	0	2.1	9.7	25.1	34.1	6.2	< 0.0001
Preweaning death > 2 d of age, %	8.7	9.8	9.9	10.1	2.4	9.7	0.41
Enteritis death rate, %	0.9	2.1	2.7	2.8	0	2.2	0.08
Starvation death rate, %	1.2	2.4	2.1	2.8	0	2.1	0.31
Pneumonia death rate, %	1.8	2.2	2.1	2.2	0	2.1	0.87
Pneumonia treatment rate, %	26.3	25.4	22.7	24.9	17.1	24.6	0.19
Weaning weight, kg (SE)	17.0 • (0.16)	15.6b(0,08)	15.0' (0.10)	14.4' (0.22)	14.lb,c (0.64)	15.5	< 0.0001
Average daily gain, kg/d (SE)	0.24 · (0.003)	0.22b(0,001)	0.22b,c (0,002)	0,21' (0.004)	0,22a,b,c (0,01)	0.22	< 0.0001

a,b,c,d,e p < 0.05.

**TABLE 2.** Associations between lamb birth weight and preweaning health in a commercial sheep operation.

	Average bi kg (		
Outcome	Yes		P-value
Trial: 2021 to 2022			
Colostrum supplementation	3.7 (0.03)	4.2 (0.02)	< 0.0001
Death < 2 d of age	3.5 (0.03)	4.2 (0.01)	< 0.0001
Death > 2 d of age	3.7 (0.04)	4.2 (0.01)	< 0.0001
Starvation death	3.4 (0.08)	4.1 (0.01)	< 0.0001
Enteritis death	3.8 (0.06)	4.1 (0.01)	< 0.0001
Pneumonia death	4.0 (0.13)	4.1 (0.01)	0.41
Pneumonia treatment	4.0 (0.03)	4.1 (0.02)	0.09
Trial: 2022 to 2023			
Colostrum supplementation	3.7 (0.05)	4.1 (0.02)	< 0.0001
Death < 2 d of age	3.6 (0.06)	4.1 (0.02)	< 0.0001
Death > 2 d of age	3.8 (0.05)	4.1 (0.02)	< 0.0001
Starvation death	3.6 (0.10)	4.1 (0.02)	< 0.0001
Enteritis death	3.8 (0.11)	4.1 (0.02)	0.004
Pneumonia death	3.8 (0.10)	4.1 (0.02)	0.004
Pneumonia treatment	3.9 (0.03)	4.1 (0.02)	0.0009

For brevity and due to similarity of findings, only post-weaning results from Trial 2 are presented herein. During the growing phase, birth weight was positively correlated with weaning weight (r = 0.39; P < 0.0001), body weight at the end of the growing phase (r = 0.33; P < 0.0001), and weight gain (r = 0.22; P < 0.0001). Animals that died had lower weaning weights (12.8 *versus* 15.6 kg, 95% CI: 2.18 CVJ / VOL 66 / AUGUST 2025

to 3.38; P < 0.0001) than survivors, as did those that died of pneumonia (12.7 *versus* 15.5 kg, 95% CI: 1.95 to 3.69; P < 0.0001).

In the finishing period in the feedlot, birth weight was positively correlated with ADG (r = 0.16; P < 0.0001) and negatively correlated with days on feed (DOF) (r = -0.33; P < 0.0001), carcass yield grade (r = -0.12; P < 0.0001), and carcass fat cover (r = -0.12; P < 0.0001). Animals that died had lower entry weights (24.9 versus 26.5 kg, 95% CI: 0.47 to 2.76; P = 0.006) than survivors, as did those that died of pneumonia (22.7 versus 26.5 kg, 95% CI: 1.88 to 5.89; P = 0.0002). Weight gain was positively correlated with DOF (r = 0.33; P < 0.0001), hot carcass weight (r = 0.38; P < 0.0001), yield grade (r = 0.26; P < 0.0001), and fat cover (r = 0.23; P < 0.0001). Hot carcass weight was positively correlated with yield grade (r = 0.26; P < 0.0001), fat cover (r = 0.25; P < 0.0001), DOF (r = 0.23; P < 0.0001), and ADG (r = 0.12; P < 0.0001). Fat cover was positively correlated with DOF (r = 0.24; P < 0.0001).

These findings from the feedlot and slaughter plant revealed long-term effects of birth weight on lamb health and performance. Therefore, improvements in birth weight can have significant positive effects on lifetime lamb health, performance, and carcass traits.



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How can producers improve lamb birth weights to improve lamb survivability, growth performance, and carcass traits? Based on data from this flock, individual lamb birth weight can be increased by reducing litter size - but will that reduce the total pounds of lamb meat produced per ewe each year? Birth weight is influenced by many other factors, including dam and sire breeds, dam age, dam nutritional status, environmental factors, and lamb sex (6-8). Except for lamb sex, these factors were not evaluated in this study. Ram lambs were heavier at birth than ewe lambs (9,11). In this commercial flock, between Trials 1 and 2, management began culling highly prolific ewes with 4 or 5 lambs per litter to improve lamb health, dam and lamb survivability, lamb growth rates, and carcass traits. Culling highly prolific ewes that could not raise their own lambs reduced labor needs for nursery lambs. It also reduced ewe mortalities, because the highly prolific ewes were at higher risk of death from pregnancy toxemia, hypocalcemia, and toxic mastitis (data not shown).

Progressive meat producers want ewes to have long survivability and raise their own lambs, without incurring extra labor, feed, and equipment costs, while cost-effectively producing the largest amount of saleable lamb weight per year. Based on the data from this large flock over 3 y, twins accounted for 40 to 48% and triplets accounted for 30 to 34% of saleable weaned feeder lamb weight and hot carcass weight, confirming that culling highly prolific ewes with > 3 lambs per litter was a good management decision for this flock. The ideal litter size for this large, intensively managed sheep flock, based on the production of saleable carcass meat and bearing in mind lamb/ewe health, performance, and labor/facility needs, was twins. Whether these findings are generalizable to other sheep flocks is unknown. Determining optimum genetics and litter size for each flock, along with other factors that influence lamb birth weight, health, and performance, is complex. Analysis of production and financial records while considering available facilities and labor and the producer's market goals can help veterinarians and producers make objective, informed decisions that are tailored to each flock.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I thank the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board for asking the question that led to this paper and interesting findings. Those who participated in the 2 vaccine trials that generated the health and production data are acknowledged (9-11).

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# Alberta Carb Industry Information



# **Producer Spotlight: Wilson Colony**

### The F10 Ultra Saddle Pad - An Alberta Wool Success Story

The Wilson Colony hails from Coaldale, Alberta, and is a success story in producing quality wool and breeding stock. The pride and passion are obvious when Paul Wurz talks about their flock and the success they have had raising Danish Merino sheep, a Rambouillet cross known for its exceptional wool, milking ability and crossing for fast rate of gain feeder lambs. These genetics and a desire to see the high quality wool marketed to its full potential have fueled the growth of their saddle pad business.

Wilson Colony was fortunate to gain expertise from Mike Easton, one of the original founders of the wool felt contoured saddle pad business and someone who had designed a "one piece" contoured saddle pad but never developed it. In true Hutterite hospitality, an agreement was reached with fresh coffee and apple pie, and Easton agreed to help develop saddle pads using the premium wool from Wilson Colony.

The goal was to create an all natural product that resonates with professional cowboys and working horsemen. "If the horse isn't happy, the rider isn't happy," Wurz says. The cowboys at the Colony were the first to test the one piece, contoured pad using "unity technology," a design that emphasizes comfort, fit and performance. These pads are made entirely of pure micron wools, with no synthetics, and have tremendous moisture wicking abilities. They also hold their shape and have amazing compression resistance. Not all wool felts are created equally because of the wool micron count and manufacturing process. Thus, the better the wool, the better the felt when combined with the right manufacturing techniques. Wilson illustrates the pad's effectiveness by comparing it to wearing a wool sweater during shearing time. "I'm dry, but my pure wool sweater feels wet. The same is for the horse, keeping him more comfortable."

Care is taken throughout the year to minimize debris in the fleece. Shearing day requires extra effort and attention to be sure the fleeces are clear of tag and skirted. The Colony partners with a felting company to process and felt the wool. The pads come back to the Colony to be fitted with wear pads and then marketed as the F10 Ultra by Wilson Equine. In an effort

to utilize the cut off waste, the Colony also produces felt shoe in-soles and linings for the leather gloves they make.

The journey of marketing a wool saddle pad has been a learning process but with only a few years under their belt, the Colony has had impressive sales. Currently saddle pads have been sold across Canada and the US, and now into Australia. The Colony has hopes of reaching sales of 2500 pads a year.

The Wilson Colony has focused on selecting genetics for fine micron wool and low maintenance animals with a phenotype that will produce lambs with a high rate of gain for the feeder market and replacement development. Rams have been sold into the US and across Canada, helping to raise the standard for wool sheep genetics throughout North America. Customers have been happy with their finished lambs and are often earning a premium of \$30-\$50 per head. Wurz credits the Rambouillet genetics for producing a finished lamb in 90 days at 125-135 pounds that is not over fat.

By successfully marketing both high-quality wool products and premium rams, the Wilson Colony stands out as a true success story in Alberta's sheep industry, proving that with the right focus on genetics, sustainability, and innovation, excellence is more than achievable.

# **4-H Provincial Sheep Show**

The 14th Annual 4-H Alberta Provincial Sheep Show was an excellent display of the sheep projects from across Alberta. 54 4-H Sheep Project members came together in Stettler, AB from June 27 to 30, 2025.

They displayed Ewe Lambs, Yearling Lambs and Mature Lambs with lambs at foot. We watched the camaraderie among Beef and Sheep 4-H members as they displayed and showed 12 flocks.



Youth participants at the provincial 4-H sheep show in Stettler

Congratulations to these 4-H members:

Champion Ewe Lamb - Savannah F. - St. Paul 4-H Multi Club

### **Industry Information**



- Reserve Ewe Lamb Karla O. Irricana 4-H Beef & Multi Club
- Champion Yearling Ewe Kurt Y. St. Paul 4-H Multi Club
- Reserve Yearling Ewe Ayden B. Cremona 4-H Club
- Champion Mature Ewe Tori A. Bow Valley Beef & Multi Club
- Reserve Mature Ewe Evangeline H. Crestomere 4-H Multi Club
- Supreme Champion Female Kurt Y. St. Paul 4-H Multi Club
- Reserve Supreme Female Tori A. Bow Valley Beef & Multi Club

Senior Aggregate - Tori A. - Bow Valley Beef & Multi Club 2nd - Scott A. - Bow Valley Beef & Multi Club

Intermediate Aggregate - Ethan Y. - St. Paul 4-H Multi Club 2nd - Bronwyn Z - Meadowview 4-H Multi

Junior Aggregate - Kiara M. - Irricana 4-H Beef & Multi Club 2nd - Cassidy W. - Eagle Beef & Multi 4-H Club

Congratulations to Kurt Y. from St. Paul 4-H Multi Club with his Champion Flock and Sophia S. from Claresholm 4-H Beef Club with the Reserve Champion Flock.

This was an incredible exhibit that took many hands - thanks to all that helped out, and a special thank you to the 4-H members coming from the beef barn to help out. Thank you to all the sponsors who help put on the events!! 4-H Alberta

# **Suggested Lambing Supplies:**

### **Alberta Lamb Producers**

As lambing season approaches take time to put together a lambing kit.

Having the right equipment on-hand when you need it can save you time and prevent lamb losses. Suggestions for your lambing kit are listed below.

### **General Supplies**

- Supply tote to keep supplies together
- Thermometer
- Ewe gestation calendar
- Flashlight
- Marking spray or paint
- Halter
- · Heat lamp
- Barn flock record book
- Syringes and needles (various sizes).



### **Processing Lambs After Birth**

- Iodine for navels
- Weigh bag
- Elastic rings and applicator
- Selenium and Vitamin E
- Small scale
- Ear tags, pen and tagger

### Starving, Hypothermic, Orphaned or Fostered Lambs

- Bottles and nipples
- Milk replacer
- Lamb coats
- Towels
- Stomach tube
- Hot box
- Dextrose 50%
- Colostrum

### **Difficult Births**

- Disposable gloves & sleeves
- Disinfectant scrub
- Lubricant
- Lamb pullers
- Lamb head snare

# Alberta Carlo Carl

### **Ewe Prolapse/Aftercare**

- Prolapse retainers
- After lamb bolus
- Pain management (e.g. ASA, Metacam)
- Antibiotics (consult with your veterinarian)

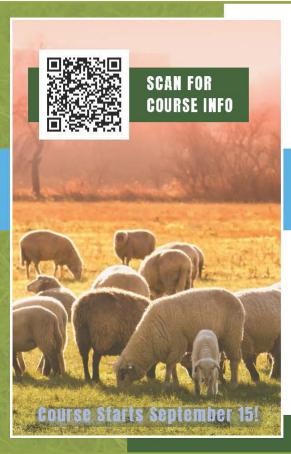
### **Lamb Post-Mortem**

- Scalpel
- Garbage bag
- Small container
- Gloves

For more management resources, please visit the Alberta Lamb Producers website at <a href="https://www.ablamb.ca">www.ablamb.ca</a> or call the ALP office at 403-948-8533.









# **EDUCATION. RESEARCH. ADVOCACY.**

# Targeted Grazing Course With Unique Grazing Scenarios

- Online + Self-Directed
- Grazing Management Specific to Sheep and Goats
- Canadian Case Studies on Grazing Solar Sites, Cut Blocks, Urban Areas and MORE!

### **CLASSIFIEDS**

Selling or buying Purebred Registered Sheep?

The Canadian Sheep Breeders' Association (CSBA) is dedicated to representing the Purebred Sheep Breeders across Canada. Purebred Registered Sheep signifies they have been registered with the Canadian Livestock Records Corporation (CLRC) and a certificate of registration will be provided with the sale of the animal. These records can be found online at

www.clrc.ca and is the responsibility of the seller to pay for and initiate the transfer of the registration to the buyer.

These records will indicate the pedigree information and ownership status. We encourage you to confirm the animals you are interested in, are in fact purebred registered animals.

Under the Animal Pedigree Act, it is an offense to offer to sell, contract to sell or sell, as a purebred, any animal that is not registered or eligible to be registered as a purebred by the association authorized to register animals of that breed or by the Corporation.

Classified ads are available free to Alberta producers. In addition to being published in the newsletter, they are available on-line under News and Advertising at <a href="http://www.ablamb.ca/index.php/news-advertising/advertising">http://www.ablamb.ca/index.php/news-advertising/advertising</a>.

Email info@ablamb.ca or call 403-948-8533 to place, amend or delete your classified ad. Alberta Lamb Producers does not endorse or promote any of the advertisements or advertisers in the N'ewesletter.

### 4-H LAMBS

Contact one of your ALP Directors if you have lambs suitable for 4-H projects or are looking for 4-H lambs.

### **SHEEP & LAMBS - For Sale**

**Registered** Gotland sheep for sale (proven 3yr old ram, 1-2yr old ewes, spring lambs). Hardy, beautiful fleeces and personalities. Located near Okotoks. Contact Carissa 403-629-9394

**Grass** fed butcher lambs available October 2025. **Contact**Terra Weaver at <a href="mailto:r.weaver@mcsnet.ca">r.weaver@mcsnet.ca</a> or 780-808-1397

**Dry** Lake Ranch AB Ltd., Rod & Bernadette Nikkel, Registered Canadian Arcott breeding stock available. Please contact <u>robenikkel@gmail.com</u>, 780-674-6805 or 780-284-9805 cell

**Polled** and Horned Dorset breeding stock available. www. coyoteacresranch.com. Contact coyoteacres@gmail.com or call 780-614-0569

Shropshire breeding stock available. www. <a href="mailto:coyoteacres@gmail.com">coyoteacres@gmail.com</a> or call 780-614-0569

Sheep Trax Canadian Arcotts available. <a href="www.coyoteacresranch.com">www.coyoteacresranch.com</a>. Contact <a href="sheepncats66@hotmail.com">sheepncats66@hotmail.com</a> or call 403-741-8597

**Suffolk** and Dorset yearling rams & ram lambs. Grande Prairie, AB. Email <a href="mailto:heartvalleysheep@gmail.com">heartvalleysheep@gmail.com</a>. Call or text 780-978-4705

Rideau Arcott ewe lambs and yearling ewes for sale.

Commercial breeding stock, non-registered, available from a closed flock. Frisco Farms, Siemen & Terah Vandermeer. Located in Rocky Mountain House, AB.

Contact Terahydmeer@gmail.com or 403-418-6441

Sheep and Lambs for sale, Sky Blue Farm - Contact Donald Johnston. Registered Canadian Arcott yearling and lamb rams and yearling and ewe lambs available. Delivery available. Donnelly, AB 780-837-1770 or <a href="mailto:donaldallan1770@gmail.com">donaldallan1770@gmail.com</a>

**Canadian** Rideau Arcott lle de France cross ewe lambs for sale. Age is 8-12 months. Please contact Paul at 403-332-2267

Purebred Suffolk Breeding Rams – not registered. Born mid Feb/24. British influence strong & thick rams. Have a few with American influence. Great sires for weight gain & fast growth. From twins or triplets; fully vaccinated & dewormed. Available for sale beginning of July/24. Also available breeding stock rams & ewe lambs. Email <a href="https://www.wrwierenga@hotmail.com">wrwierenga@hotmail.com</a> or call or text 780-674-4760

Purebred Charollais Yearling rams for sale. Well-muscled, long bodied rams with excellent ADG for superior butcher quality lambs and great easy lambing replacement ewes. fieldstone@telus.net. 780-499-0066

# Alberta Classifieds

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Cheviot Ram Lambs and Ewe Lambs available. Our
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at <a href="https://www.isleofskyecheviots.ca">www.isleofskyecheviots.ca</a> or <a href="https://www.facebook.com/isleofskyecheviots403-588-3808">www.isleofskyecheviots.ca</a> or <a href="https://www.facebook.com/isleofskyecheviots403-588-3808">www.facebook.com/isleofskyecheviots403-588-3808</a>

Purebred Suffolk yearling & lamb rams for sale. Yearlings have been semen & vet checked. Long, deep bodied, well-muscled rams. Charles Iwan, Taber 403-331-7984, charles.iwan@live.com

Purebred Canadian Arcott registered Rams for sale. If you want to improve your genetics – here is your chance!

Ready to breed in the fall. Purebred ewe lambs are also available. Email <a href="mailto:sheep@veterancolony.com">sheep@veterancolony.com</a> or 403-575-7794

**Sheep** Lake Suffolks - Registered Suffolk ram lambs & ewe lambs for sale. Contact Mike 780-307-3385 and follow Sheep Lake Suffolks on Facebook

**Moonshine** Dorsets - Registered and purebred Dorset ram and ewe lambs. Traditional conformation. Call Raelyn at 403 746-2140

Parker Stock Farm. Glen and Kathy Parker. GenOvis performance tested Suffolk breeding stock. www. parkerstockfarm.com, parkerstockfarm1@gmail.com, 403-443-7220

Alberta Sheep Breeders' Association (ASBA) members are your source for registered breeding stock in Alberta. Join today! Visit <a href="https://www.albertasheepbreeders.ca">www.albertasheepbreeders.ca</a> or 1-866-967-4337

### **SHEEP & LAMBS - Wanted**

**Wanted:** Feeder or fat lambs, cull sheep and all classes of goats in Acme or Stony Plain, AB. Call Roger Albers 780-777-7416 | <a href="mailto:alberslamb@hotmail.com">alberslamb@hotmail.com</a>.

**WANTED:** Feeder lambs in Provost, Alberta. We pay a premium for Preconditioned Lambs. Please contact us for details. Rick Cromarty, SOUTH CARA FARMS LTD. 780-753-1276 | SCFLSHEEP@mcsnet.ca

### **DOGS**

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Australian Shepard/Kelpie male born March 2025 ready to go. Also a three year old male Kelpie, ready to go to a working home. Contact 780-993-2037

**Purebred** Kangal pups, born September 7, 2025. Veteran, AB. Contact 403-575-7794 or <a href="mailto:sheep@veterancolony.com">sheep@veterancolony.com</a>

# MISCELLANEOUS (EQUIPMENT, EMPLOYMENT, SERVICES, ETC.)

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Sheep Calendar					
What	Where	When			
Targeted Grazing Course for Sheep and Goats	Virtual	Ongoing, with course completion by December 17 admin@ablamb.ca			
Alberta Livestock Expo	Lethbridge, AB	October 15-16 www.albertalivestockexpo.com			
Alberta Sheep Breeders Symposium	Camrose, AB	October 15-16 www.albertasheepbreeders.ca			
Alberta Lamb Producers Farm Tour and Banquet	Lethbridge, AB	Registration Deadline Oct 30, Event is November 14			
Alberta Lamb Producers AGM and Conference	Lethbridge, AB	Registration Deadline Oct 30, Event is November 15 www. ablamb.ca			
Field of Mind: Supporting Men's Mental Wellbeing	Virtual	November 25 https://www.domore.ag/events			
FarmFair	Edmonton, AB	November 5-8 https://www.farmfairinternational.com/			
AgriTrade	Red Deer	November 5-7 https://www.agri-trade.com/			
Deadline for January 2025 ALP N'ewsletter		December 4			
Deadline for April 2025 ALP N'ewsletter		March 12			
Please e-mail info@ablamb.ca or call 403-948-8533 to provide details of your event for the N'ewesletter and website sheep calendar.					

# **ALP BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025**

Director	Phone	Email	Location
Jordan Allen, Board Chair	403-923-4858	jordan@ablamb.ca	Rocky View County
Martin Winchell, Vice Chair	403-845-2577	martin@ablamb.ca	Clearwater County
Adam French, Finance Chair	780-872-9908	adam@ablamb.ca	Vermillion River County
Darlene Hawco, Vice Finance Chair	780-292-4607	darleneh@ablamb.ca	St. Paul County
Richard Van Driesten, Director	403-715-9324	richardvd@ablamb.ca	Vulcan County
Alison Neale, Director	306-914-1362	alison@ablamb.ca	Mountain View County
Director Position - Vacant			
Cody Legault, Director in Training	431-557-9594	cody@ablamb.ca	Vulcan County
		Mary MX ,	

ALP Office - Executive Director, Jolene Airth 403-948-8533 info@ablamb.ca Address: Agriculture Centre, 97 East Lake Ramp NE, Airdrie, AB T4A OC3 www.ablamb.ca for producer information, www.albertalamb.ca for consumer information





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