



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

www.ablamb.ca

Tel 403 948 8533 Fax 403 912 1455

E-mail: info@ablamb.ca

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I am sure you all have heard the saying “crisis builds character,” but I would suggest over this next year we will see that saying go much deeper and I suspect that “crisis will build community.” This past month has been a whirlwind for myself and Alberta Lamb Producers, full of challenging decisions, made in a short period of time, as I am sure it has been for all industry stakeholders. I want to be very clear that we will only get through this together, as Canadian sheep, lamb, wool, and stock producers. Our market always has some unpredictability but this next year is going to be very tough on lamb prices as millions find themselves unemployed with others looking at a decrease in income and limited markets to shop. We do not yet know the full impact on lamb imports or exports or the other meat commodities, which will all factor into the equation moving forward. Either way, we need to be united as a country in every way and face this together.

Provincially, Alberta Lamb Producers (ALP) and other marketing commissions have been on weekly calls with the Premier and Agriculture Minister. This platform allows for the agriculture industry as a whole to collaborate with each other and gives the opportunity to share industry concerns and provide feedback to the government on proposed, long term solutions as well as looking at the road to recovery ahead, more specifically, what that looks like for the Agriculture industry. We applaud the Alberta Government for their open communication and quick action by deeming Agriculture and Agriculture services as essential and working with Alberta Health Services on alternatives to keep processing plants operating in the event of a COVID-19 case. I also want to thank them for the transparency into the possible scenarios we face in Alberta if we do not work together to minimize the impact of this virus.

Alberta Lamb Producers (ALP) is committed to working for our producers and being a voice to government on sustainment, support, and recovery. We have recently established the ALP Covid-19 Roundtable Committee which allows us to work closely with Producers, Processors, Feedlots, Auctions, Veterinarians, and Feed Companies on identifying stakeholder concerns and risks, communicating information, and understanding where ALP can assist.

Federally, we have been working with the National Sheep Network (NSN), and through our active membership, we are also working closely with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). Through this federal channel, we have been monitoring the situation across Canada and providing feedback to the Government of Canada on many of the moving pieces of this pandemic. The NSN has been working with other National organizations and has been able to identify some of the key issues facing our sector and have been communicating with the Federal government, on behalf of Canadian Sheep Producers on the following items:

1. Ensuring the health and safety of employees across the value chain and addressing potential shortages. Farmers and processors' utmost priority is to take all necessary measures and

“Empowering the sheep industry through education, innovation and advocacy.”

precautions to keep processing plants open in order to guarantee food security and minimize any further problems for our respective supply chains. We feed Canadians, and especially at a time of uncertainty, farmers and processors can ensure food security and do their part to keep grocery store shelves stocked.

2. Considering financial support. Government and Agriculture understand that this global economic shutdown will have serious implications to the ability to maintain production. The NSN has long been an advocate of business risk management tools and firmly believes we will need to come together on existing programs or be creative in adding new programs if we are to have producers weather the storm. Added debt in the form of loans and credit is a band-aid that will only prolong the issues.

To keep yourself up to date on the latest information being released from all levels of government during the Covid-19 pandemic, please visit the ALP website: www.ablamb.ca or the NSN website: www.nationalsheepnetwork.com. Both websites are updated daily or as the updates have been made available, to ensure we are communicating the important information to not just our local Producers, but all Producers across the country. If at any point in time, Producers or Industry stakeholders would like to connect with ALP or the NSN on their concerns or has any questions, I welcome you to visit the 'Contact us' pages on both sites and reach out to either an ALP Director or staff, or to any of the NSN members.

I want to remind you that during these unprecedented times, you are not alone, we are all in this together and united, we will weather this storm. Take this opportunity to be present and in the moment with your family and animals. I would also like to thank the ALP Board of Directors and staff for their hard work and dedication to our Producers, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard and being proactive to advocate on behalf of our industry.

On behalf of the Alberta sheep industry,



Ryan Greir
Chair, Alberta Lamb Producers
Chair, National Sheep Network