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The 2007 CSF Annual General Meeting will be held in Victoria, British Columbia November 12th-15th. For more information please contact Jennifer Fleming at 1-888-684-7739. The AGM is open to the public Tuesday to Thursday.

Where do we want to be?

By Jennifer Fleming, Executive Director

I was having a conversation with someone recently and I was compelled to write down what they were saying as it struck me that these two sentences should set the tone for the CSF over the next 12 months.

“We will not make any progress if we focus on where we are. We have to focus on where we want to be.”

This theme will be central to this year’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held November 12-15, in Victoria, British Columbia. While this AGM will focus on some of the recommendations coming out of Market Development Project – primarily increasing the consistency in supply and quality of Canadian lamb – this theme can be carried through all projects that the industry is currently working on.

In fact, this has become my mantra as we’ve worked through the Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) over the past 12 months. There have been several articles in *From the Flock* outlining the work that the CSF has engaged in with the Industry Government Advisory Council on proposed changes to the CSIP. The March 2007 article outlined some of the changes that the industry is being asked to make.

In May the sheep industry submitted the *Sheep Identification Implementation Plan* which addresses the industry’s current ability to meet the animal identification standards and any support and changes that are necessary. It should be noted that while we haven’t yet completed an implementation plan in relation to animal movement standards, we will be expected to have one completed by December 2007.

The industry put together a list requesting support from the government (financial and regulatory) for: cross-country consultations; communication plan development and implementation; research and development; implementation of traceability systems; training; pilot projects; database costs; decreasing the costs of traceability for the producers; and, a National Coordinator.

The reality is that if we wait to find out if the government will grant these requests, it could be another 18 months before any changes are made to the CSIP. That clearly isn’t an option. There is a sense of urgency to act, as the office has been fielding questions lately from producers and auction marts about the program and requesting that the industry address issues such as: What happens to the tags at the processing plant? or Should auction marts be official tagging stations?

And so, with the AGM, comes the industry’s annual opportunity to visit our CSIP Strategic Plan and the questions/concerns being raised by individuals. Later on in this publication, you’ll see a questionnaire regarding the identification program. I know there are some people who question the need to have a questionnaire circulated annually, however, in order to ensure that the changes made to the program adequately reflect the needs of the industry your feedback is essential. Please take the time to review it and submit your feedback. I thank you in advance for your contribution. **Questionnaire on Pages 11-14.**

DISEASE PREVENTION: KEEPING YOUR FLOCK & YOURSELF HEALTHY

By France Lanthier, On-Farm Food Safety Coordinator

We often think of flock health in terms of the economic loss incurred by the loss of animals, poor conception rate, or poor lamb growth. While poor flock health is a very legitimate reason to be concerned about animal disease, we often overlook poor producer health as a reason to prevent disease in our flocks. Many diseases can be transmitted from animals to humans; they are called zoonoses. For the most part there is no cause for alarm, and most that will contract an illness from their flock will escape the ordeal with a fever, chills, and mild diarrhea. However, it is important to note that in some cases serious illnesses such as meningitis, pneumonia, or even abortion in pregnant women, can result. Before we ever have to sound the alarm bells, there are a few steps that can be taken to help prevent an unfortunate bout of illness.

PREVENTING DISEASE IN YOUR FLOCK

Implement a Biosecurity Protocol: If a disease doesn't get on the farm no one (animal or human) will get it. If your flock is currently healthy then there is a good chance you want to keep it that way. If you are introducing new animals to your flock it is recommended that you get information on the disease status of its previous flock(s). If information from previous owners is not available you can quarantine the animal. Quarantining may not always allow you to pick up a condition as some may have extended latency periods, or, if an animal is simply a carrier they will not show symptoms. If you have any doubts on an animal's health status it is best to consult your veterinarian.

Keep Feed and Water Clean and Other Animals Out: If you are using cats as a method of rodent control there is a risk for your flock to contract Taxoplasmosis. Wild rodents, while they pose no direct threat of transmitting Taxoplasmosis to the flock, are the real culprits. Unlike cats rodents transmit the disease to their unborn young and display no symptoms, thus creating a pool of disease for generations. Once the cat has eaten the infected rodent, the second phase of Taxoplasmosis development will occur. This phase of development occurs uniquely in cats. Through the contamination of feed, water, or pastures with cat feces the flock can be exposed to Taxoplasmosis. While cats may be a reliable method of rodent control, other options such as traps might be best for sheep operations. Feed and water, as much as possible, should also be protected from birds or any other animals.

Know what you're Dealing With: It is important to consult with you vet and properly diagnose a disease. Improper diagnosis could result in improper treatment or changes in management that ultimately do nothing to control the disease. For example, Campylobacteriosis and Taxoplasmosis can both result in ewes aborting however their methods of propagation differ. If one were to diagnose Taxoplasmosis following a wave of abortions when the cause of aborting ewes is in fact Campylobacteriosis, the following management mistakes could occur. Taxoplasmosis is not spread from ewe to ewe while Campylobacteriosis is. Therefore failing to isolate ewes with Campylobacteriosis could infect the whole flock. Furthermore, if one were to relocate the barn cats as a prevention measure against Taxoplasmosis when the cause of aborting ewes was Campylobacteriosis ... then one could unnecessarily end up with 10 house cats. Conversely, if the cause of abortion were Taxoplasmosis then there would be no need to add labour to your day by isolating the aborting ewes, as your time would be better spent relocating the cats.

PROTECTING YOURSELF AGAINST ZOOZOSES

If we view the list of zoonoses below, we will notice that most diseases are passed through contact with open lesions, mucus, fetal membranes, blood, or feces. Essentially the goal here is to prevent anything from inside the animal to come into contact with us. While it may not be practical or comfortable to wear disposable gloves all the time, it might be prudent to wear them at specific times i.e. assisting a ewe to lamb, handling an animal with diarrhea, handling an animals with lesions, sores, or scabs. Wearing coveralls or changing your clothes when leaving the barn can also help prevent the spread of zoonoses. Some diseases can be airborne. Good ventilation in the barn will help keep you and your animals healthy. And finally, the number one tip to prevent the spread of any disease... wash your hands. If a hand washing station is not available or you are in a situation where you can't get to one (out in the field!) then carrying a small bottle of hand sanitizer in your pocket is also a good option.

Disease prevention and management need not be complicated or an onerous task. Like many things, it's a matter of identifying when and where we are at risk and making sure the proper precautions have been taken.

Online Resources:

The Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food-Safe Farm Practices online training (aussi disponible en français): <http://fsfp.cansheep.ca/>

The Ontario Sheep Health Program: http://www.uoquelp.ca/~pmenzies/OSHP_Home.htm

The Western Canadian Flock Health Program: <http://www.absheep.com/wcfhp.htm>

DISEASE PREVENTION: MAJOR ZONOSSES IN RUMINANTS

PATHOGEN	ANIMAL DISEASE	TRANSMISSION FROM SHEEP TO HUMANS	HUMAN DISEASE
<i>Brucella spp.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abortions, epididymitis in sheep • abortions, arthritis, spondylitis, mastitis, orchitis in goats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact urine, semen or by handling fetal membranes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever, chills, sweating, anorexia, constipation, insomnia, headache • neurologic signs
Campylobacteriosis (<i>C. jejuni</i> , <i>C. fetus</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • late-term abortions or very weak neonates in sheep • metritis, placentitis leading to septicemia and death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact, contaminated water, or fecal-oral route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acute enteritis, bloody/mucoid diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting • headache, muscle and joint pain
<i>Candida spp.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • white plaques on oral mucosa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact with secretions from mouth, skin, feces or carriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • white plaques on oral mucosa • immunosuppressed individuals may have systemic disease • skin fold dermatitis
Colibacillosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “white diarrhea” in lambs • septicemia, neurologic signs, ascites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fecal-oral, direct contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profuse, watery/bloody/mucoid diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting, dehydration • urogenital infections
<i>Corynebacteria spp.</i> “Caseous Lymphadenitis”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abscessation of regional lymph nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fecal-oral, direct contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ulcer, lymphadenitis, tonsillitis
Dermatophilosis “Lumpy Wool”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry, serous exudates at base of hair shaft leading to moist alopecia • secondary infections and death in lambs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact with lesions or via insect vectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yellow pus-filled pimples or pustules on hands, arms
Contagious ecthyma, “Orf” (<i>Pox virus</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually young sheep/goats • papular, vesicular, pustular, crusty lesions on lips mouth nostrils, eyelids, ears, udder, teats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact of animal or fomites • virus may remain viable in scabs for months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vesicle or pustule on hands, arms • axillary (regional) lymphadenopathy • usually self-limiting, remission in 2-4 weeks
<i>Rotavirus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anorexia, diarrhea in young animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fecal-oral, direct contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vomiting, then watery diarrhea • self-limiting, recovery in about 10 days
<i>Clostridia spp.</i> (“Malignant Edema”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extensive hemorrhagic edema in subcutis and muscles, interfascial gas formation • fever, stupor, lameness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puncture, laceration wound infection, direct contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gas gangrene, myositis, localized pain • tachycardia, hypotension followed by fever, edema, serous exudate
<i>Leptospirosis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever, anorexia • jaundice, hemoglobinuria, anemia • abortion, infertility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact with urine, contaminated water, aerosol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infection may resolve asymptotically or develop severe icterus, fever, headache, conjunctivitis, gastrointestinal signs, gastrointestinal hemorrhage
<i>Listeria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encephalitis, septicemia • depression, paralysis of facial muscles, profuse salivation, strabismus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fecal-oral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meningitis, septicemia, abortions • very severe in immunocompromised individuals
<i>Pseudomonas pseudomallei</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abscess in viscera, joints, lymph nodes • weight loss, polyarthritis, cough • neurologic signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close contact, contaminated water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asymptomatic to fever, pneumonia, severe gastroenteritis • necrosis, lung granulomas if chronic

DISEASE PREVENTION: MAJOR ZONOSSES IN RUMINANTS

PATHOGEN	ANIMAL DISEASE	TRANSMISSION FROM SHEEP TO HUMANS	HUMAN DISEASE
Pasteurellosis (<i>P. haemolytica</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Shipping Fever”, secondary infection • purulent nasal discharge, cough, diarrhea, malaise, hemorrhage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inhalation, fecal-oral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bronchiectasis, bronchitis, pneumonia
Q-Fever (<i>Coxiella burnetii</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually asymptomatic • abortions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aerosol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever, chills, anorexia, ocular pain • pneumonitis, gastroenteritis
<i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually infests face, ears, forelimbs • vesicle or papule formation, keratinization • alopecia with intense pruritus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact, fomites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually infests face, ears, forelimbs, torso • vesicle or papule formation, keratinization • alopecia with intense pruritus
Vesicular Stomatitis (<i>Rhabdovirus</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mammary, interdigital, and oral vesicles with fever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact, insect vectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flu-like signs • vesicles in mouth, hands, feet
Tetanus (<i>Clostridium tetani</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wound infection • rigid paralysis, neurologic signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wound infection by feces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tonic spasms of jaw, neck • rigid abdominal muscles, retention of urine, constipation
Tularemia (sheep) (<i>Francisella tularensis</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lymphadenopathy of head, neck • pneumonia • high mortality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact, wound infection, flea/tick vector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lymphadenopathy, necrotic ulceration • fever, conjunctivitis, bronchopneumonia
Toxoplasmosis (<i>Taxoplama gondii</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ewes not immune risk: abortion, mummified lambs, still-born lambs, or weak lambs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact with infected animal • eating improperly cooked meat of an infected animal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swollen glands • aching muscles • fever or chills • can cause miscarriage and stillbirth in pregnant women
<i>Yersinia pseudotuberculosis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abortions, suppurative orchitis, abscessation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fecal-oral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acute abdominal pain, fever, vomiting, diarrhea • arthritis, iritis, nephritis • septicemia if immunocompromised
Salmonellosis (<i>S. typhimurium</i> , dublin, newport etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion • Acute and chronic enteritis • Septicemia in young animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fecal-oral • direct contact • fomites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe Diarrhea and debilitation • Increased severity in the very old, the very young, and the immunocompromised.
Zygomycoses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • granulomatous, ulcerative disease of the abomasum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct contact, ingestion, wound infection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subcutaneous granulomas, eosinophilic infiltrate • nasal infection, conjunctivitis meningitis, encephalitis • can be fatal

SCRAPIE CANADA UPDATE

Both the National Genotyping Survey and the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program require producers to work with laboratories across the country. As a participant of the National Genotyping Survey, producers complete genotype testing; and as a participant of the VSFCP, producers complete obex (brain) testing.

Genotype Testing Under the National Genotyping Survey:

There are five laboratories nationwide that complete genotype testing under the National Genotyping Survey. Producers submit blood samples, submission forms and money (\$10 plus tax/sample) to the lab of their choice. Any blood samples sent to the lab without the completed sample submission forms will be charged to the producer at full price (approximately \$28/sample depending on lab). Sample submission forms can be found on the Scrapie Canada website at <http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/images/English/genotypesubmissionform.pdf> or by contacting Scrapie Canada. A full list of laboratories are available at www.scrapiecanada.ca/genotyping.html or contact Scrapie Canada.

Obex Testing Under the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program:

As part of the VSFCP, all deads over 12 months must be submitted for obex (brain) testing. If there are no deads in a given year, producers must submit a cull that is over 24 months of age for obex testing. The cost of the brain test is covered by the program. However, in order for the cost to be invoiced to Scrapie Canada, producers must include a cover letter when submitting samples to the laboratory. The cover letter must include the following information: ***producer contact information, animal identification information and the VSFCP enrollment number.***

If submitting the entire head to the laboratory, please note that most laboratories charge an extra fee to remove the obex from the head (approximately \$15.00 depending on the laboratory). This removal fee is **not** covered by the program and producers are responsible for paying this cost. If submitting the entire head, producers should contact the laboratory in advance and inquire about the cost of the obex removal. Although entire heads may be submitted to most laboratories, shipping and analysis costs will be lower if only the obex is sent to the lab. This is actually the only portion of the brain that will be used in the analysis.

Some producers may prefer to have their vets remove the obex. For producers willing to learn the technique, instructions on how to remove the obex are available on the Scrapie Canada website at <http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/images/English/brain.pdf> or by calling Scrapie Canada. Producers who choose to remove the obex must include the animal identification with the sample (i.e. place the ear tag in the bag/container with the obex and clearly label the bag/container with the date and animal ID, including the lab submission form in the shipping package). For a list of laboratories completing obex testing, check out the Scrapie Canada website at <http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/updateMay2007.html> or contact Scrapie Canada.

Genotype Testing Under the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP)

Under Pathway 2 and Pathway 3 of the VSFCP, producers are asked to genotype two blood samples from participating rams. One sample must be tested at an **approved** laboratory, while the second sample can be tested at a laboratory that is **non-approved**. It is of the utmost importance to send your samples to the appropriate labs to meet program requirements for Pathway 2 and 3. If you have any questions regarding which labs you are required to send your samples to, please contact the Scrapie Project Coordinator before you get your samples tested. For a list of both approved and non-approved laboratories that complete genotype testing under the VSFCP, check out the Scrapie Canada website at <http://www.scrapiecanada.ca/updateMay2007.html> or contact Scrapie Canada.

For more information regarding both scrapie programs being run by Scrapie Canada, please contact Courtney Denard at 1-866-534-1302 (Local: 519-766-9761) or by e-mail at admin@scrapiecanada.ca.

LAKELAND CARCASS SIRE PROJECT—YEAR 1 RESULTS

Preliminary results from the first year of the Lakeland Carcass Sire Project are now available. In the first year of the project, lambs sired by Suffolk rams grew faster than rams of the four other terminal sire breeds from birth to weaning, and faster than all of the other breeds except the Canadian Arcott from birth to 12 weeks after weaning. Lambs sired by Charollais, Texel and Ile de France rams were slower-growing but outperformed those sired by Suffolk and Canadian Arcott rams when it came to traits evaluated on the carcass. For details on the project and the results from the first year, go to Alberta Agriculture's Ropin' the Web website at www1.agric.gov.ab.ca and type 'Lakeland Carcass Sire Project' into the search engine.

LABELLING FAD: IT'S ALL ABOUT EWE; PRODUCTS' PROVENANCE AND MORE NOW ON TAGS

The days of following mom's advice not to touch something because "you don't know where it's been" might be numbered thanks to labels that describe **products'** origins and manufacture. From a designer whose **wool** sweaters are labelled with the donor sheep's photograph to an olive oil manufacturer whose bottles come with their own "identity cards" -- each disclosing geographic origin, place of pressing and more -- companies are responding to increased consumer interest in social responsibility, status and sense of place.

Reinier Evers, founder of Trendspotting.com, describes these merchandise memoirs as "life story labels." "In a world that is seemingly ruled by globalization, mass production and 'cheapest of the cheapest,' a growing number of consumers seek out the local, and thereby the authentic, the storied, the eco-friendly and the obscure," reports Evers, a marketing strategist based in the Netherlands.

Christien Meindertsma, the designer behind Flocks traceable wool sweaters, says the tagging of her knitwear with passport-like information about each sheep -- everything from its date and place of birth to its photo and weight -- is a matter of accountability. "I think that designers have a responsibility to think about the materials they use and where those materials come from," she says. The labels also make good business sense. "Knowing where your products come from adds value," explains Meindertsma, whose sweaters start at EUR 475 (about \$685 Cdn).

Bottles of Aceites Borges Olive Oil come with enclosures that describe the product's geographic origin, date and place of pressing, date of bottling and tasting notes. An organization called Nature and More labels organic food products with unique codes that, when entered online, reveal information about the grower, the cultivation process, CO2 emissions associated with transport and handling, and the grower's commitment to social projects raising local living standards. Dole Organic offers a similar service, labelling its orange juice with three-digit "farm codes" that unlock stories about the company's workers and each product's provenance. And Timberland, a popular footwear manufacturer, last year began placing "nutritional labels" on every box chronicling the environmental footprint of the shoes inside.

Pankaj Aggarwal, associate professor of marketing at the University of Toronto, says life story labels are a "very smart" way to strengthen the buyer-brand relationship. "It's giving the product almost human-like characteristics," says Aggarwal. "You tend to relate to the product much better, your involvement gets much higher, and you have stronger bonding with it as a consumer" According to Barry Schwartz, an expert on the psychology of shopping, life story labels are little more than a faddish way for consumers to differentiate similar **products** from one another. "It really isn't relevant which **sheep produced** the **wool** but if you feel it is, you'll enjoy what you buy more," says Schwartz, a professor of social theory at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. "It gives you a story to tell other people, who will no doubt think you're slightly crazy for buying an ugly sweater because you liked the sheep on the label."

Source: Edmonton Journal, Misty Harris

IBM SURVEY REVEALS ERODING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN PACKAGED GOOD BRANDS

In a new IBM survey, a majority of consumers revealed the level of information Consumer Products companies provide on the contents, origins and environmental impact of their products greatly impacts their level of trust in those companies.

Recent product contaminations and recalls coupled with confusion over marketing claims have contributed to an erosion of consumers' trust in Consumer Product manufacturers, according to the IBM survey of 1,676 consumers in the United States and United Kingdom.

- Nearly 70 percent of consumers expressed a low overall level of trust in the claims 'branded food products' make about their environmental impact and health and wellness benefits.
- Almost half of consumers are more concerned about safety, and nearly two of every five consumers said they buy different brands today because of these concerns.
- Nearly 60 percent of respondents also said they have more knowledge about the contents of the food they buy now versus two years ago, but despite this increased awareness, 72 percent now want even more information about the source, the production methods and the contents of the packaged food products they buy.

In a complementary IBM study, released today in conjunction with the survey results, the company identifies a new breed of consumer that is driving this shift. The study, titled "Establishing Trust through Traceability," calls this new catalyst group the "Omni Consumer." These consumers are concerned, empowered and more connected than ever -- with sophisticated technologies at their fingertips.

According to this study, the Omni Consumer is also purchasing a wider range of products and is actively and frequently tuning in and out of unwanted marketing messages. "Clearly the factors influencing consumer purchasing behaviors have changed dramatically over the past five years," said Bill Gilmour, Global Consumer Products Lead, IBM Global Business Services. "While product, packaging and branding are still key, their significance has been topped by a number of other factors. The Omni Consumer wants products that deliver incremental health and wellness benefits coupled with an understanding of the impact of these products on individuals, society and the environment."

IBM suggests in the new study that companies align a roadmap to "Full Value Traceability" with their brand vision to set themselves apart from the pack. These new systems can both safeguard the food supply and enable the trust and transparency necessary to instill consumer confidence and, in turn, protect and empower individual companies' brands. The linkage of the physical and information supply chain coupled with engaging all the relevant stakeholders, is an imperative in building a "Full Value Traceability" system.

"To date, most traceability investments have been driven by regulation," said Tom Peterson, General Manager, IBM Consumer Products Industry. "We're recommending our clients expand these initiatives beyond a defensive posture and leverage them for brand empowerment. This enables them to better protect their brands against contaminations, counterfeits and recalls. At the same time, it builds a platform to restore consumer confidence and aggressively enter new high-value segments like functional foods and organics. The era of the Omni Consumer is requiring a deeper commitment to transparency, and the companies who deliver on this will be the clear winners."

IBM has deep experience in the Consumer Products industry and expertise around the management of global supply chains and procurement systems. The company offers a comprehensive portfolio of software, hardware and services which effectively link the physical and informational supply chains. IBM also works directly with industry bodies such as GS1 and GCI to support the definition, adoption and implementation of global data standards.

IBM Global Business Services consultants can provide an analysis and plan for implementing a Full Value Traceability system and solutions like the IBM Food Safety Manager. The company is also a leader in deploying technologies like Service Oriented Architectures, 2D Barcodes and innovations around Radio Frequency Identification, which can be key components in delivering transparency to consumers. As part of its ongoing consumer research efforts, IBM is making the full study on "Enabling Trust through Transparency" available for free download at: www.ibm.com/consumerproducts.

PACKAGED GOOD BRANDS CONTINUED

IBM Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive on behalf of IBM between February 13 and 21, 2007, among 1,064 U.S. adults and 612 U.K. adults, ages 18 and over. Qualified respondents were classified as grocery decision makers, based on their purchase responsibility for groceries within their household. U.S. figures for age/sex, race, region, education, and income, and U.K. figures for age/sex, region, education, and Internet usage, were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the United States and United Kingdom populations. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

With a pure probability sample of 1,064 and 612, one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/- 3.1 and +/- 4.0 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data based on sub-samples would be higher and would vary. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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OTHER NEWS

SUFFOLK SHEEP SOCIETY ADOPTS THE USE OF GENE MARKER TESTS

GENE markers for cold tolerance and footrot – developed at Lincoln University, New Zealand – have been adopted by the Suffolk Sheep Society to help its breeders produce superior animals. Blood tests for the two traits have been used on 70,000 sheep in New Zealand, Australia, Germany, Uruguay, Argentina, Canada and the USA – but never before in the UK.

Dr Jon Hickford from Lincoln University said no test was a 'magic bullet to get the perfect sheep' but would 'improve breeding accuracy and efficiency, which speeds up genetic gain'. The tests have been developed, trialled and used in New Zealand over a period of 10 years and, according to Dr Hickford and the Suffolk Sheep Society, are transferable to the UK flock. Dr Hickford said: "Our driving policy has been to work closely with ram breeders to improve sheep breeding; focus on traits that are difficult to breed for conventionally; and introduce technologies through breeders to add value to the commercial sheep industry."

The test for footrot tolerance ranks animals from 1-5 (more tolerant to less tolerant), with farmers advised to breed away from sheep with scores of four or five, which are considered to be susceptible sheep.

Dr Hickford said the gene marker could only eradicate the disease if used in conjunction with other control strategies. The cold tolerance gene marker indicates the ability of progeny to survive at birth. Sheep are ranked A (average), B (below average) and C (compromised) with farmers advised to breed away from C grades. "Our tests work despite the considerable variation in climatic conditions, skin thickness and birth weight," said Dr Hickford. "We have discovered a four-fold difference in survival from best to worse."

Robyn Hulme, commercial director of the Suffolk Sheep Society, said the cold tolerance test tied in with work the society was doing with the SAC. "The society recognizes that whether lambs are born indoors or outdoors, good vigour and survivability are critical elements of any profitable sheep enterprise," he said. "The cold tolerance gene marker test will be of considerable interest to our breeders and their commercial customers."

Source: <http://www.farmersguardian.com/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=11195>

OTHER NEWS

Manganese levels increase in scrapie-infected sheep before clinical symptoms develop. Sheep infected with scrapie and cows infected with BSE have elevated levels of manganese in their blood before clinical symptoms appear, according to new research. The findings, published in the *Journal of Animal Science*, also show that scrapie-resistant sheep produce elevated levels of the metal when “challenged” with the disease.

This suggests that elevated manganese levels in the blood and central nervous system are caused by the animal’s initial response to the disease. The findings raise the possibility of using manganese levels in the blood as a potential diagnostic marker for prion infection. At present, only post-mortem examination of the brain tissue gives a certain diagnosis.

Scrapie, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) are neurodegenerative diseases that affect the brain and nervous system of sheep, cows and humans respectively. They are transmitted by mis-formed prion proteins which cause tiny loss of brain cell in different regions of the brain, leading to impairment of brain function, including memory changes, personality changes and problems with movement that worsen over time. “Definite diagnosis of prion disease is currently only possible post-mortem,” said Professor David Brown from the University of Bath who led the study with colleagues from the universities of Hull and Edinburgh. “These findings suggest that elevated blood manganese could be used as a robust diagnostic marker for prion infection, even before the onset of apparent clinical disease.

“In practice, however, it would be difficult to implement a widespread screening programme, given that the mass spectrometry we use to measure levels is expensive and labour intensive.” The research builds on the 2002 discovery that mice infected with scrapie have higher levels of manganese. This is the first time that tissue from farm animals infected with prion diseases have been studied in this way.

One of the most interesting findings from this study came from the analysis of blood samples from scrapie-resistant sheep. When challenged with the disease, these sheep showed similar levels of manganese as non-resistant sheep challenged in the same way. “Elevated levels of manganese in scrapie-resistant sheep imply that the change in blood manganese is a result of the scrapie challenge and not a consequence of scrapie pathology,” said Professor Brown, from the University of Bath’s Department of Biology & Biochemistry. “Although these sheep are considered to be resistant to scrapie, they do show some indications that scrapie challenge results in similar metabolic changes as occur in non-resistant sheep.” Another interesting finding was that although levels of manganese were elevated, there were differences in the blood levels of selenium and molybdenum in experimental and field cases of BSE in cows.

This suggests that the way a cow acquires the disease affects the metabolic processes involved. “The origin of the increased manganese in the brains and blood of infected animals remains unknown,” said Professor Brown. “The three possibilities are that there is decreased secretion of manganese from the body, release of manganese from other tissues or increased absorption of manganese from the environment. “Currently there is insufficient evidence to favour any of these three theories.”

Source: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/news/2007/7/2/scrapie.html>

Sheep ID rules will not be gold plated says DEFRA

Sheep farmers will be able to sleep easy knowing that they only need to count their flock and not record each individual number. That's because the nightmare scenario of farmers having to record the individual number of every sheep in Britain now looks certain to be avoided on the back of an intensive lobbying campaign by the NFU in Brussels and Whitehall.

The requirement for individual ID for sheep had been on the cards following the announcement from Brussels that the UK would not be granted an extension to its derogation to European sheep ID regulations. Defra officials have now told sheep representatives that they intend to introduce a much simpler ID system from the start of next year. Alistair Mackintosh, regional livestock chairman said: "The NFU's national team has met the Commission almost weekly during the past month and a half to persuade them that the original proposals to move to introduce individual ID would cripple the British sheep sector.

"As a sheep producer, I recognize that some farmers will be disappointed that we will have to double tag breeding sheep. However we won't have to record individual numbers and it also looks likely that lambs entering the food chain at under 12 months of age will be able to move on a single tag."

Breeding animals born on or after 1 January 2008 will require double tags although no direct reference to the flock numbers or individual numbers will have to be recorded on movement documentation. Instead, farmers will only be required to record the total number of sheep being moved and the relevant holding numbers – where the sheep are moving from and where they are moving to. The decision to discontinue the existing S-tag system comes on the back of a determined lobbying campaign by the NFU and other industry stakeholders to simplify the sheep identification rules.

Alistair added: "I was very disappointed that the Commission did not recognize the enormous efforts that most farmers had undertaken to comply with the existing rules. "We had always privately recognized that extending the derogation was going to be difficult and that the final decision was ultimately out of the control of our government. However, our firm stance in Brussels and Whitehall has paid dividends for sheep producers in Britain when Defra conceded not to gold-plate EU rules.

"Whilst the devil is in the detail, I'm confident that common sense will prevail." The next step, he says, is to persuade the Commission that the need for electronic individual ID in sheep is no longer justified. This has been on the cards for some time and was set to be introduced in January 2008.



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CSIP Questionnaire—Page 1

The coming years are going to be important in the evolution of the CSIP as the industry is asked to meet standards that have been set in terms of animal identification and animal movement. Given that, your input is especially important this year as the CSF Board of Directors reviews the CSIP Strategic Plan this November at the AGM.

Please take the time to answer the following questions. If you have any comments that have not been addressed through these questions, please feel free to send them in as well.

You can email the questionnaire into admin@cansheep.ca or fax it in to 866-909-5360

Or mail it to 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, ON, N1K 1B1

Are you comfortable with the current CSIP?

What do you want to get out of a national ID program?

What problems, if any, do you have with the current national ID program?

Would you rather that the government help to cover the cost of ID tags or the cost of maintaining the database?

Would you be willing to tag your animals prior to them being 5 months of age or before they leave the premises of origin?

Would your answer to question 6 be different if the RFID tags were mandatory?

How concerned are you about the confidentiality of the information kept in the CSIP database?

How easy/difficult would it be for your electronically report animal identification information to a database provider (tag activation, tag retirement, animal movement)? What would be your preferred method of reporting information – electronically, fax, phone?

If RFID tags were mandatory, would you use them for management purposes (i.e., would you invest in a reader)?

Where does traceability fall on your list of issues you're concerned about in the sheep industry? What are the other issues you're concerned about?

How soon would you like to see RFID tags made mandatory?

How familiar are you with provincial plans for premises identification, and is this something you are concerned about?

Are you concerned about what happens to the ID tags at the processing plant?

Do you think auction marts should be tagging stations?

Thank you for your participation. Please forward to the CSF Office.