



25 June 2010

Re: CSF votes to adopt mandatory RFID tags

To: All Canadian Sheep Producers

The traceability of Canadian sheep has been the topic of much discussion in our industry in recent years. Like all food producers, Canadian sheep farmers face an ever-evolving food production system that demands ever-increasing accountability at each step of the supply chain.

The federal government has committed to having a national traceability program in place by December 31, 2011 to allow for the tracing and tracking of products and food animals from the point of origin (the farm) to the consumer.

To meet the requirements set out for a national traceability system, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF) has investigated a number of tracking options that would best suit the unique size and structure of our industry, with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems and electronic RFID ear tags emerging as the best option of those currently available.

Not only does an RFID system help sheep producers meet traceability requirements, it also gives producers an opportunity to move this industry forward in many ways. On the farm, the RFID system gives producers a powerful tool to collect, manage and analyze information for the purpose of increasing production efficiency and productivity. Currently, Canadian producers only supply 41 per cent of the lamb that Canadians consume. We have a market ready and waiting for Canadian lamb and an RFID system gives us one of the tools we need to increase production to fill that demand.

The traceability that an RFID system provides also helps us measure up to the standards being set by competitors such as Australia, which has adopted its Livestock Identification Scheme – designed to trace animals for biosecurity, food safety, product integrity and market access purposes. There is a need for a similar commitment in Canada that can't be ignored. More and more, major Canadian processors are asking for traceability. These processors have a major investment in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and they have identified risk in the industry's lack of traceability. They have indicated that they will not be willing to buy Canadian lamb in the future without the tracking and tracing ability an RFID system provides.

After due consideration of these facts, the CSF Board of Directors has approved a motion that will make RFID tags mandatory for all sheep produced in Canada and require the decommissioning of all other tags. The timeline is as follows:

- **July 1, 2011:** Ketchum Kurl lock and Allflex dangle tags will no longer be available for sale to sheep producers as Canadian Sheep Identification Program (CSIP) tags.
- **Jan. 1, 2012:** All animals born or tagged after this date must be tagged with approved CSIP RFID tags.
- **Jan. 1, 2012:** CSIP approved tags will include the Allflex RF ID tag and Shearwell RF ID tag.
- **After Dec. 31, 2012:** The Ketchum Kurl lock and Allflex dangle tags will no longer be accepted at sales, abattoirs or by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for shipping, transfer or sale of sheep in Canada.

At this time, the Kurl Lock #3 and the Allflex Panel tag will be officially removed from the list of approved tags for the CSIP.

CSF's next step will be to work closely with the CFIA and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to ensure regulations support a system that is practical, delivers ease of application and ensures traceability on-farm and throughout the value chain.

CSF is also committed to working closely with provincial organizations to provide producers timely communication, and information and education required to make sure the RFID system provides a positive return for your farm and the industry. You'll be hearing and seeing much more about RFID in association newsletters, including *From the Flock* as well as information brochures. And the CSF monthly *Points of View* newsletter will provide a forum for discussion.

We strongly believe that this is the right decision for our industry. And we're confident it will play a key role in helping us realize our tremendous potential.

Regards,

Dwane Morvik
CSF Chairman

Ward Harden
CSF Representative