

## **CSF RFID Pilot Project is now looking for producer co-operators**

In response to BSE and the ripple-effect damages to the Canadian livestock industry, a federal and provincial task team is working with livestock industry to build a national agriculture and food traceability system.

<[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/fs11671](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/fs11671)>

A traceability system is made up of: premise identification – where were the animals born; animal identification – unique identifiers (usually eartags) for each animal; and animal or product movement tracking.

Around the world, in particular in the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia, pilot projects and trials are underway trying to work out the logistics of tracking animals from farm to plate.

### **Here in Canada a pilot project is starting this fall. Goals for the pilot are:**

- To identify and provide solutions to the challenges that the industry faces in implementing RFID systems
- To demonstrate the benefits of linking producers and processors (carcass feedback)
- To improve supply chain management (focus on a target market and its criteria for lamb)
- To use new technology on-farm to determine if it is practical and if there are management benefits to balance the costs (in dollars, training, time)
- To provide an analysis of the costs/benefits of implementing RFID systems
- To determine the capacity of RFID systems to aid in the industry's ability to meet the animal identification and movement standards

We are looking for co-operating producers who are keenly interested in working together to learn about new technology.

### **To participate effectively producer co-operators must:**

- Have sheep flock and be either stable or in a growth phase of production
- Attend training and producer sessions
- Maintain records of time spent on project related items
- Provide financial records of transactions and expenditures on farm
- Be willing to share financial details relating to the project (for cost/benefit analysis)
- Attend meetings with project staff (may be conference calls or face to face meetings)
- Be available and open to holding producer 'field days' to demonstrate and discuss the systems installed on your farm – both during and for a period following the completion of the project
- Have access to high speed internet (non-specific - Air cards, wireless, cable or satellite)
- Be willing to share information and experience with the project team
- Have a reasonable level of computer knowledge and/or experience
- Be willing and able to cover up to 50% of certain expenses as not all equipment can be fully funded

**Benefits of participating as a producer co-operator include:**

- Testing new technology: producer co-operators will learn, test, and evaluate RF ID equipment and will have the option of retaining the equipment after the project ends. Equipment may include:
  - RF ID ear tags (ewe flock, market lambs, rams)
  - RF ID handheld tag reader
  - Flock management software
  - IT support to get the RF ID system working
  - Management assistance and analysis through group activities
  - Experience working with cutting edge sheep management tools, systems and producers

If you would like to become involved in the RFID Traceability Pilot Project and think you may meet the criteria described above, please contact:

**Sean McKenzie, National ID and Traceability Coordinator at 888.684.7739 or email at [sean@cansheep.ca](mailto:sean@cansheep.ca) as soon as possible, but definitely before November 13<sup>th</sup>.**