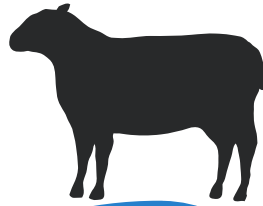


At a Glance: Sheep Code Top-of-Mind Survey Results



PROVINCES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATE

British Columbia 71%
Ontario 15%
Alberta 5%



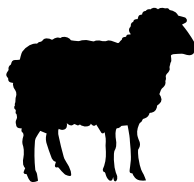
1,056 SURVEY RESPONSES
2,886 Welfare Comments



**A FEW FINDINGS
TAKEN FROM THE
SURVEY
JULY 2024**

MAIN WELFARE THEMES IDENTIFIED

Painful Procedures, Pain Migration
Housing & Environment
General Care & Handling
Euthanasia & Slaughter
Feed, Nutrition, & Water



TOP 3 CATEGORIES OF SURVEY TAKERS

Concerned Citizen 71%
Sheep Producer 31%
Consumer 22%



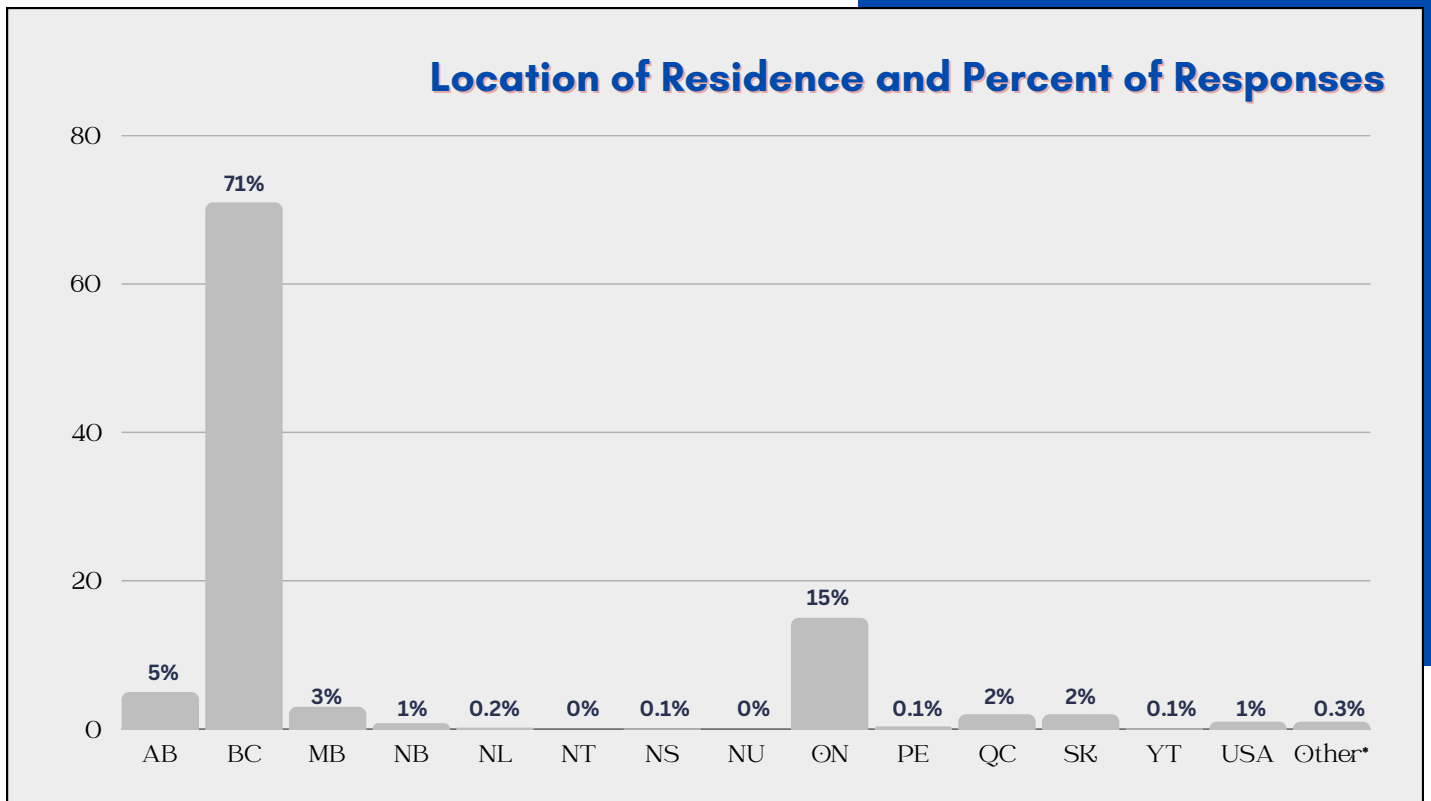
Background

The Canadian Sheep Federation initiated a revision to the 2013 Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Sheep using the process coordinated by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). Once completed, the updated Code will reflect revised requirements and recommended practices for the care and welfare of farmed sheep in Canada.

Survey

In July 2024, industry members, general population, and any other interested individuals were invited to participate in a survey to provide any top-of-mind thoughts around sheep welfare as a lead-in to the Code update process. The input received through this early public engagement helps the Code Committee understand the top issues that people, especially Canadians, consider important.

Where do the survey respondents live?



*Other responses included Germany, Britain, and France.

Who took part?

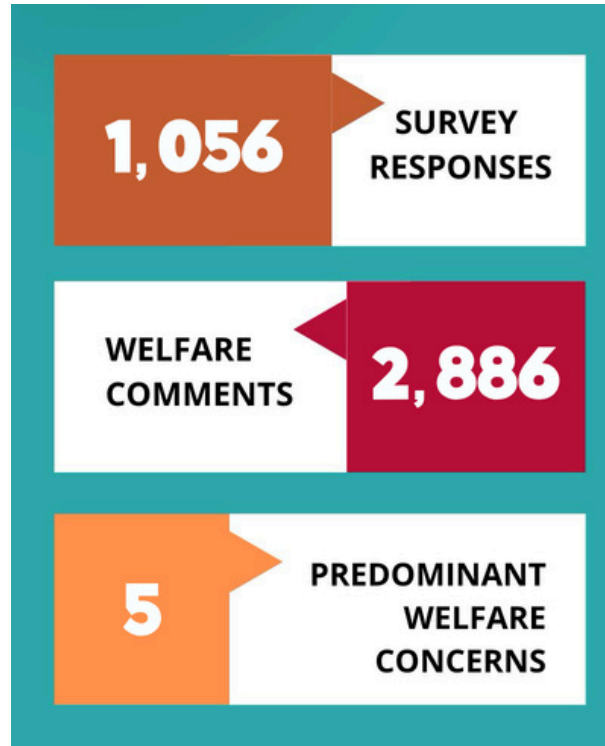
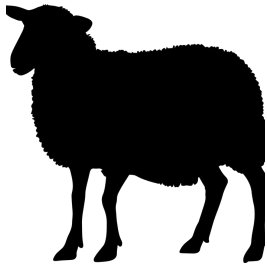
We were pleased to hear from a diverse range of voices. Note that respondents were able to identify as belonging to more than one group.



Perspective	# of Responses	Percentage
• Allied industry representative	19	2%
• Animal welfare enforcement	109	10%
• Auditor	0	0%
• Concerned citizen	746	71%
• Consumer	236	22%
• Dairy sheep producer	15	1%
• Feed specialist/nutritionist	6	0.6%
• Feedlot producer	10	1%
• Government	19	2%
• Lamb producer	194	18%
• Livestock assembly yard/auction	8	1%
• Processor - dairy	4	0.4%
• Processor - meat	22	2%
• Producer - other commodity	35	3%
• Purebred producer	92	9%
• Researcher/academic	22	2%
• Retail and/or food service	11	1%
• Transporter	18	2%
• Veterinarian	27	3%
• Wool producer	13	1%
• Other	4	0.4%

What was top-of-mind?

From the **1,056** survey responses received, **2,886** individual welfare comments were extracted, and from those, **5** predominant welfare concerns were identified.



1. Painful Procedures & Pain Mitigation

Many respondents shared concerns about common painful procedures, especially castration, and tail docking. There were suggestions to eliminate or phase-out these procedures or use pain control medication if elimination was not possible. There was also some concern about confusion around appropriate tail length when docked, and desire for clarity in the Code. Below are some sample comments:

Quotes:

"Eliminate painful procedures and require pain control during phase out period."

"Tail docking is NOT required if proper pest management and monitoring is done."

"Pain management for necessary procedures e.g., tail removal, castration."

"Tail docking - far too high into the spine. Cruel and inhumane."

"Ambiguity surrounding tail docking regarding acceptable length."

2. Housing & Environment

Housing and living conditions were among the top comments. Grouped in this category were also comments about sheep requiring protection from the elements (both during the summer and harsh winters), explicit space requirements, concerns around confining animals and/or the use of feedlots, enriching environments, as well as pasture access. Below are some sample comments:

Quotes:

"Canadian sheep need access to shade from heat, shelter from extreme cold."

"Providing enough space for optimum mental and physical well-being of the animal."

"Overcrowding of lamb pens and ewe pens in confinement and often no bedding."

"Protection from all elements for winter and summer. Plus, lots of grass to graze."

"Welfare in high density environments such as feed lots."

"Good grazing opportunities."

"Improve space and enrichment activities."

"Outdoor shade, shelter, dry resting; explicit indoor space allowances."

3. General Care & Handling

Participants were concerned with how sheep were cared for and handled in general. Calls for gentle handling and low-stress management were among the top comments. Below are some sample comments:

Quotes:

"Treated with respect, no abuse, rough handling that isn't necessary, etc."

"Respect and calm, gentle, careful handling of the sheep."

"Improving practice in low stress handling/stockmanship from farm to abattoir."

"Overall treatment and care of animal."

4. Euthanasia & Slaughter

Not surprisingly, humane end-of-life care was top-of-mind for many respondents. In particular, the use of blunt-force trauma as a euthanasia method was commonly brought up as unacceptable. Below are some sample comments:

Quotes:

"Prohibit blunt-force trauma euthanasia."

"Ensuring "end of life" processes are as humane / painless / not traumatizing as possible."

"Humane euthanasia and slaughter practices."

"More ethical and effective methods of euthanasia and/or slaughter."

5. Feed, Nutrition and Water

Respondents mentioned access to good, clean feed and water and some were concerned with duration of feed/water withdrawal periods prior to, or during, transport and/or shearing. Below are some sample comments:

Quotes:

"Adequate water, feed & space."

"24-hr fresh water, good feed, access to sheep mineral."

"Feeding, including pastures and legumes to protect its health."

"Food and supplements for health and welfare."

"Proper access to water and rest during transport."

"Clearer/stronger language surrounding # of hours off feed/water prior to shearing sheep."

Were there any other issues identified?

Several other concerns were identified, though with less frequency than the key issues noted above. These additional welfare concerns were as follows:

- Veterinary Care, Medicine, and Health
- Lambing and Neonatal Care, including Weaning
- Transport
- Shearing
- Abuse and Cruelty
- Enforcement and Audits
- Education and Training
- Genetics and Breeding
- Foot Health
- Auctions and Sales Barns
- Biosecurity
- Social Interaction
- Animal Testing
- Body Condition
- Natural Disasters and Safety
- Sustainability
- Growth
- Pregnancy Checks
- Tagging
- Prod Use
- Human Contact
- Skin Disorders
- Prolapse

How will the survey results be used?

The input received during this survey period is a valuable part of the Code development process. Collaboration between all stakeholders is important and the insight provided from the survey helps inform the Code Committee. The revision process is careful, considerate, intentional, and rigorous, encompassing all aspects of on-farm care for sheep, while emphasizing key welfare issues.

Once the Code Committee produces a draft revised Code, it will be open for public comment. NFACC strongly encourages feedback during the 60-day public comment period. All comments are reviewed and taken into consideration.

Thank you!

Thanks to all respondents for sharing your concerns, thoughts, and suggestions related to sheep care and welfare. Your voices and opinions play an essential role as the Code Committee initiates the updates to the Code that reflect current concerns about sheep welfare.

For more information on NFACC and the Code development process, please visit www.nfacc.ca.

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