



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario Pasture Award winner named

October 29, 2015 – *Alliston* – Albert Botha of Shropshire Hills Farm in Northumberland County are the recipient of the 2015 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award. The award sponsored by MAPLESEED, the Ontario Forage Council and the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency (OSMA), was presented today at OSMA's Annual Meeting. For their environmental and pasture improvements and management, the Botha's receive \$500 and a bag of forage seed. The Botha crew at Shropshire Hills Farm consists of Albert, his wife Meg and their 17 year old twins, Matthew and Megan, as well as one part time employee, Jeff DeJong.

Together, they manage a flock of approximately 700 ewes, plus their offspring on 200 acres of rolling pastureland, on the rolling hills of Northumberland County. As Albert says, "We are proud to produce naturally raised Ontario lamb. The lambs are born on pasture in the spring and remain on pasture until weaning which helps create the rich, lean, tender and succulent flavour.

Shropshire Hills Farm practices continuous and actively managed rotational pasture approach; combined with designed water stations on the farm, which has created sustainable production.

Albert is pleased with the way he has been able to create some fenced riparian areas along the creeks and ponds to control erosion and protect water quality, which has enhanced the ecosystem and at the same time has improved ewe health and feed intake. It has also resulted in improved birth rates; lamb health and weaning weights.

The Shropshire Hills Farm pasture season is typically May 1 to November 30, but stock-piling some pastures has enabled them to extend the pasture season into December. .

Lawrence Leveque, District Sales Manager (Western Ontario) with MAPLESEED said, "The Botha's are ideal candidates for the 2015 award, because of the continuous improvements they have shown in their farming operation and their willingness to share ideas for the benefit to agriculture and the industry in general."

Ray Robertson, Manager of the Ontario Forage Council says, "This year's Ontario Sheep Pasture Award winner has demonstrated excellent environmental protection practices and at the same time have been able to improve animal health and productivity.

The deadline for applications for the 2016 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award is Oct 1/16. For details call the Ontario Forage Council at 1-877-892-8663 or visit either the Ontario Forage Council's website at www.ontarioforagecouncil.com or the Ontario Sheep Management Agencies website at www.ontariosheep.org.

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