

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prince Edward County Farmer Receives Ontario Sheep Pasture Award

October 23, 2020 – Matthew Fleguel and Liz Johnston of Waupoos Island Sheep Farm in the Picton area of Prince Edward County are the recipient of the 2020 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award. The award sponsored by MAPLESEED, the Ontario Forage Council and the Ontario Sheep Farmers, was presented virtually today at the Ontario Sheep Convention. For their environmental and pasture improvements and management, the recipients will receive \$250 and a bag of forage seed.

The sheep operation consists of 1800 ewes that go to grass around May 1st and lamb on pasture. The ewes are loaded on the barge at the local pier and taken across the lake to Waupoos Island. They are rotationally grazed with pasture providing all their feed through the lactation. At weaning in late July, the lambs are moved to hay regrowth and the ewes are moved to graze brush, which allows us to stockpile grass on the permanent pastures. Matthew states, “On many years, we are able to graze our lambs into October and our ewes until late November on hay regrowth and stockpile, respectively. Our grazing season continues in the form of feeding corn stover, using portable electric fence. In ideal conditions, this has been known to continue until the end of January.”

As Matthew comments, “The primary pasture management tool is rotational grazing. All 1800+ ewes are moved as one group, so that grazing periods can be short and rest periods long. Pastures are all scouted on a regular basis to assure rotation speed is matched to growth.

The pastures have a lot of fescue, which is both a strength and a weakness. It grows well in cool conditions, which can make summer grazing limiting, but is great for fall stockpiling. The permanent pastures are all on Waupoos Island, which provides advantages in sourcing stock water, combatting coyote damage and keeping sheep on the pasture instead in someone else’s crops.”

Scott Fisher, Sales Manager (Western Ontario) with MAPLESEED said, “The Waupoos Island Sheep Farm is a unique operation and a worthy recipient for this year’s MAPLESEED Pasture Award.”

Ray Robertson, Manager of the Ontario Forage Council says, “This year’s Ontario Sheep Pasture Award recipient has demonstrated their ability to utilize forages on their farm and utilized the concept of rotational grazing to its maximum.”

The deadline for applications for the 2021 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award is October 1, 2021. 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 Ontario Sheep Farmers’ website at www.OntarioSheep.org.

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