

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Norfolk County Farmer receives Ontario Pasture Award

October 24, 2019, Alliston – Carrie Woolley & Brett Schuyler of Schuyler Farms Ltd. in Norfolk County is the recipient of the 2019 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award. The award sponsored by MAPLESEED, the Ontario Forage Council and the Ontario Sheep Farmers, was presented today at the Ontario Sheep Convention. For their environmental and pasture improvements and management, the recipient will receive \$500 and a bag of forage seed.

The entire sheep operation on Schuyler Farms is pasture based from spring pasture lambing to fall and winter grazing as the animals are on some type of pasture/cropland 365 days of the year. Lambs are born during May on permanent pastures and ewes stay on these pastures until about October. Lambs are weaned around mid-August at which point they graze sour cherry and apple orchards post-harvest of the fruit. Feeder lambs are either finished in the orchard pastures and then processed for their own marketing, Wooley's Lamb, or are sold to a feedlot. The ewes graze corn stover and orchards up until the snow is too deep to allow for grazing. Introduction of the sheep to our farm has allowed us to utilize over 350 acres of unutilized land and that they owned.

The permanent/regular pastures are a combination of abandoned pastureland and woodlots. Both were not being utilized /managed for profit and are now a key source of feed for the sheep. Both have benefited from the removal of the understory overgrowth, and unfavourable trees in woodlots, ditching, and seeding. All silvopastures have been seeded using aerial frost seeding. Rotational grazing has been a key point of their grazing since the beginning in 2013.

Stocking rates are adjusted throughout the year and according to pasture type and animals to allow for pasture optimization. Interior fencing in pastures allows for animals to always have shelter/shade and high ground with access to lower flood plain areas where available.

Removal of animals from the permanent pastures in late summer/early fall allows the pastures to have a rest & recovery period before winter, hopefully minimizing winter/frost damage.

*Jon Gough, Vice President with MAPLESEED said, Carrie & Brett are deserving candidates for the 2019 award because of the innovative steps they have taken in their pasture management system over the past few years."*

*Ray Robertson, Manager of the Ontario Forage Council says, "This year's Ontario Sheep Pasture Award recipient has demonstrated their ability to make the maximum use of every acre on their farm and utilized the concept of rotational grazing to its maximum.*

*The deadline for applications for the 2020 Ontario Sheep Pasture Award is October 1, 2020. 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](http://www.ontarioforagecouncil.com) or Ontario Sheep Farmers' website at [www.OntarioSheep.org](http://www.OntarioSheep.org).*

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