



Three Bags Full

Canadian Wool Priorities for the 2025 Federal Election

Canadians go to the polls on April 28, 2025. This is an opportunity to help set the course for the coming years and participation is imperative.

The Canadian Wool Collective sees the federal election as an important opportunity to engage with our local candidates and highlight **the importance of making a domestic wool strategy a priority within the agricultural sector.**

This is a critical moment. Canada faces several key challenges, not least of which are threats to national sovereignty, economic uncertainty, and the ongoing global climate crisis. Though the Canadian wool industry might be considered a “niche” issue, there are several important ways that investing in Canadian wool can contribute to easing the pressure of these critical challenges.

Find out who is running in your riding [here](#). Reach out and ask them about their party's stance on the Canadian wool industry. Let's put Canadian wool on the political agenda!



www.canadianwool.org

The Canadian Wool Collective

The **Canadian Wool Collective (CWC)** is a national, grassroots, registered non-profit organization. Established in 2020, we seek to create meaningful connections between members of the Canadian wool community to ignite growth and development in our domestic wool industry.



Our Mission

We promote wool as a valuable renewable commodity.

We advocate for increased innovation, investment in, and development of infrastructure for the growing, processing, and marketing of Canadian wool.

We identify and certify Canadian producers who produce and/or use Canadian wool.

We work to create connections between all members of the Canadian wool community – especially between Canadian farms and the end-users of Canadian wool products.

We provide sheep farmers and wool producers with resource materials, information exchanges, and marketing support.

Throughout our work, we prioritize traceability, transparency, collaboration, accessibility, equity and diversity, and climate resilience.

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Industry Profile

854,400

Sheep in Canada
(2023)

8487

Sheep Farms
(2021)

28

Small and Medium
Mills (2020)



Approximately **3 million pounds** of wool grown annually

The majority of Canadian wool is a bi-product of the meat and lamb industry. It generally has a higher micron count, meaning that it isn't as soft as much of the wool imported for textiles. It is sold into the commodity market and shipped off-shore for production.

Domestic fine- and medium-wool production for textiles and fibre arts is limited to small-scale or niche production.



2025 Federal Election Priorities

1. Investment in Domestic Wool Production Infrastructure

The majority of Canadian wool is purchased from sheep producers and sold on the international commodity market. Though informed by breed, management approach, and volume, ultimately the value of Canadian wool is determined by this market and results in very low return for Canadian sheep producers. Consequently, many sheep producers no longer find it worthwhile to sell their wool, and now burn, trash or otherwise discard their entire clip.

There is a select, and growing, group of farmers that are raising sheep primarily for wool. Many others, while maintaining a focus on meat production, are also prioritizing livestock management practices that improve the cleanliness (and by extension, the quality and yield) of the wool so they have an additional product to add to their offerings. Still, those raising quality wool in Canada consistently face barriers to transformation.

There is no large-scale wool production currently in Canada. Small and medium-scale production is limited, characterized by a lack of infrastructure and equipment (especially for scouring and spinning), a shortage of technical training opportunities resulting in a lack of skilled labour, and a loss of traditional wool production and handling knowledge. As such, the industry cannot adequately handle the annual volume of wool produced in Canada. This is exacerbated by a lack of experience and training at every stage of commercial wool production.

The largest barrier for domestic production, however, is Canada's comparative competitive disadvantage when compared to low-wage, environmentally lenient production countries like China.



In the last five years, Canadians have experienced the fragility of global supply chains due to pandemics and natural disasters related to climate change. This is now being exacerbated by unpredictable tariffs and an emerging trade war with the United States.

Investing in domestic wool production infrastructure and training will build resilience and security in our wool and textile production, while also creating jobs in rural communities, increasing “product of Canada” manufacturing, and reducing transportation emissions

The Canadian Wool Collective recommends that the federal government invest in domestic wool production infrastructure through grants, low-interest and micro loans for regional scouring facilities, wool processing mills (carding, combing, and spinning), textile mills and domestic garment production.

Additional investment is also required in training and education for these wool manufacturing enterprises.



2. Research Investment for Wool Product Development

Wool is naturally temperature-regulating, fire retardant, and carbon-sequestering.

Some wool grown in Canada is fine and soft and perfectly suited to textiles and fibre arts. The majority of Canadian wool, however, is better suited to semi-industrial uses. It is already being used in bedding, upholstery, carpets and other products, but has potential for several other applications.

Unfortunately, little research and development into other potential uses for Canadian wool has been done to date. There are also barriers to product development due to extremely limited research and development funding and bureaucratic red tape. For example, wool insulation, a product that is widely accepted and used in other jurisdictions (such as the UK and the USA), is still not available to Canadian consumers due to a lack of product testing and approvals by the Consumer Product Safety Program.

We know that investments in research drive economic development, as they create jobs and support new business and entrepreneurial opportunities. We also know that investments in rural communities have significant multiplier effects as people in smaller communities are more likely to support local business.



The Canadian Wool Collective recommends that the federal government invest in research and development for products that use Canadian wool:

- 1. Wool Insulation: Undertake the necessary Consumer Product Safety Program testing. Update the Canadian building code to include wool insulation as an accepted option. Support start-ups seeking to bring Canadian wool insulation to market.**
- 2. Roadside stabilization: Explore the feasibility of using Canadian wool felt in construction and roadway sites as an alternative to plastic stabilization mats. Support Canadian manufacturing and distribution.**
- 3. Research and Innovation Grant: Allocate \$3 million for research into new Canadian wool product development.**

3. Reduce Carbon Emissions by Supporting Local Supply Chains

Wool is a natural, renewable, biodegradable resource that offers an outstanding nature-based solution to the climate crisis. With potential uses far beyond personal and household textiles, wool could replace microplastics and synthetics in several applications. Throughout its life-cycle – from sheep to sweater to soil – wool serves as a carbon sink, holding almost twice its weight in atmospheric carbon, thus preventing this stored CO2 from further contributing to climate change.

Currently, however, the Canadian wool industry relies on carbon-heavy supply chains through off-shore shipping and transportation. Canada could reduce its carbon emissions by investing in a local wool supply chain, prioritizing a regional approach to domestic wool production.

The Canadian Wool Collective recommends that the federal government prioritize wool as part of future national climate action strategies in three ways:

- 1. Offer financial incentives to those textile and industrial companies that use wool in their material production instead of synthetic fibres.**
- 2. Invest in regional wool manufacturing facilities across Canada to ameliorate the gaps in production, paying particular attention to underserved areas in Western and Atlantic Canada.**
- 3. Support collaboration between wool industry actors and wool growers to limit cross-country transportation.**



Three Bags Full: Canadian Wool Priorities for the 2025 Federal Election is designed to equip you with some background on the key issues facing the Canadian wool industry.

Here are a few questions to ask the candidates running to be your next Member of Parliament:

What are you wearing today? Has any part of your outfit been grown or manufactured in Canada? Is any of it Canadian wool? If not today's outfit, what about the rest of your wardrobe?

In December 2023, the Government of Canada announced a meagre \$185,000 to support Canadian wool. What will your party do to support domestic manufacturing, specifically around wool and textile production?

Canadian wool holds tremendous potential for textiles and far beyond. Will your party support the necessary testing for semi-industrial wool products, such as wool insulation? Will your party also invest in wool research and innovation?

Wool can be part of Canada's climate solution. Is your party committed to supporting sustainable, renewable textiles and fibres, including Canadian wool?

