

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USTR Recommends ITC Investigation into Lamb Imports Following ASI's Safeguard Request

ASI's Petition Advances U.S. Sheep Producers' Fight for Fair Trade

DENVER, CO (July 13, 2026) - The American Sheep Industry Association welcomed the decision by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) today to recommend that the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) initiate a global safeguard investigation into imports of lamb meat under Sections 201 and 202 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The recommendation follows ASI's formal safeguard petition, filed October 30, 2025, on behalf of its 42 state associations and more than 100,000 U.S. sheep farms and ranches. USTR's decision draws directly on the market data, import trend analysis, and documented financial injury that ASI submitted as part of that petition.

"This milestone was no accident," said ASI President Ben Lehfeldt. "It has been through the hard work of ASI state member leaders, ASI Legislative Action Council, ASI staff, and sheep producers throughout the country that we reach this point."

The case ASI assembled is grounded in data. U.S. lamb imports grew from 213.6 million pounds in 2020 to 309.3 million pounds in 2024, a nearly 45 percent increase. By 2024, imports captured roughly 70 percent of the domestic market. Imported lamb was sold at prices averaging 10.8 percent below domestic product, with some pricing gaps approaching 19.5 percent. Those disparities have displaced U.S. production, eroded profitability, and put American sheep operations at serious risk.

ASI developed the petition with legal counsel Kelley Drye and Warren LLP and economists at Georgetown Economic Services LLC. The resulting public and confidential reports gave USTR a comprehensive record of the injury domestic producers have sustained.

"We appreciate the leadership of the U.S. Trade Representative's Office in recognizing the serious challenges facing America's sheep producers and taking this important step

forward," said ASI Executive Director Mike Michener. "A healthy U.S. sheep industry supports rural communities, strengthens domestic supply chains, and helps ensure the United States retains the capacity to produce high-quality American lamb here at home. This action also helps protect America's domestic food supply at a time of growing global uncertainty."

Throughout this process, ASI worked directly with Congressional offices to build the bipartisan support this case deserved. That work resulted in Dear Colleague letters filed in both the U.S. House and Senate in January 2026. ASI thanks Representative Celeste Maloy and the late Representative Doug LaMalfa for their leadership on the House letter, and Senator Steve Daines for leading the Senate push.

The ITC will now collect testimony and data from all interested parties, hold a public hearing, and determine whether increased lamb imports are a substantial cause of serious injury to the domestic industry. Under the statutory timeline, the ITC typically issues its determination within 120 days of receiving the petition. ASI will remain fully engaged throughout the process.

Producers and industry supporters can follow the case and contribute to ASI's ongoing advocacy at sheepusa.org/issues/asi-trade-case.

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About the American Sheep Industry Association ASI is the national organization representing U.S. sheep producers, with 42 state affiliates and more than 100,000 farms and ranches. Founded in 1865, ASI is the oldest livestock organization in the United States.

