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Sheep Home Study Course

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Producer Responsibilities for Scrapie Eradication

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The National Scrapie Eradication Program was started in 2000 with the goal of eradicating scrapie in the United States by 2010. The Eradication Program requires cooperation from all sheep and goat producers to achieve this goal. There are a number of responsibilities that producers should be aware of to comply with this program.

Official Scrapie Identification

In order to monitor the status of the disease and to be able to trace suspect and confirmed cases back to a farm, producers are required to identify their animals with an official scrapie identification (ID). Currently the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires all sheep and goats 18 months of age and older transported across state lines to have official ID. Beginning January 1, 2009 the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) law will go into affect. PDA law requires ALL SHEEP AND GOATS, REGARDLESS OF AGE imported into Pennsylvania or transported within Pennsylvania to be identified by an official form of identification. For Pennsylvania producers this means all sheep and goats must be identified prior to leaving their birth farm. The PDA law is more stringent than the USDA requirement because it requires all sheep and goats to be officially identified. Many other states have either already enacted regulations similar to Pennsylvania's or are in the process of doing so.

There are several forms of official scrapie ID available to producers. Many producers use the free USDA issued ear tags that can be obtained by calling 866.USDA TAG (866.873.2824). There are also custom ear tags available that have been approved by USDA. The tags used in the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program are custom ear tags. A registration tattoo that is clearly readable along with a registration certificate or a USDA registered scrapie tattoo that is clearly readable are two other forms of official ID.

Record Keeping

There are several records that should be kept on each animal that leaves the farm where it was born. These records should be kept for five years after the animal is sold or dies.

- Scrapie identification number
- Birth date
- Date sold
- Name, address and phone number of person who purchased animal

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Flock Inspection

Flocks that are identified through surveillance measures to have a scrapie positive or scrapie suspect sheep will be investigated by official representatives of USDA or the state. During the investigation, a producer will be expected to provide records for inspection and copying. Producers may ask for official credentials from these representatives to prove authorization. In addition to the inspection process, flocks may also be quarantined. Producers will be expected to comply with surveillance and testing procedures as outlined by each state.

Further Information

Information in this fact sheet was obtained from USDA-APHIS. Further information on the scrapie eradication program can be found at the USDA-APHIS website. http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/

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