NATIONAL SCRAPIE ERADICATION PROGRAM:
PRODUCER IMPLICATIONS

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 Procedures for Identifying Sheep and Goats

The final rule Scrapie in Sheep and Goats; Interstate Movement Restrictions and Indemnity Program was published August 21, 2001. This is a summary of the identification methods and requirements of the final.

When will the ID requirements become mandatory?

November 19, 2001 for most sheep and goats. September 20, 2001 for all scrapie exposed, suspect, high risk, and positive animals. February 19, 2002 for commercial whiteface breeding sheep under 18 months of age.

Which animals will need ID tags?

- All breeding sheep regardless of age
- All sheep over 18 months of age
- All exposed, suspect, test positive and high risk animals
- Breeding goats, except low risk commercial goats
- All sexually intact animals for exhibition

The USDA will provide tags, without charge, to producers. Tags will be available through the APHIS, Veterinary Services Area Office and/or the State Veterinarian’s office in each State. Metal tags or plastic tags may be provided when requested. Producers who prefer to use a different type of tag may purchase official tags through specified, approved tag companies, a list of approved tag companies are maintained on the APHIS scrapie web page.

What will the tags look like?

There are two different classes of tags:

1. USDA tags that are provided free to producers. These tags will have the U.S. Shield and either:
   - A premise identification number, and
   - The State postal abbreviation and a six digit alphanumeric serial number or up to a 5 digit production number unique to the farm
   Or
   - The State postal abbreviation and a six digit alphanumeric serial number.
2. Official tags purchased from approved tag companies by producers. These tags will have the U.S. Shield, the producers assigned premise identification number, and a production number unique to the farm. The tags may also have any other printing, such as the farm name, desired by the producer as long as the required printing remains legible and distinct.

What do the different colors represent?

Yellow metal tags are for use by State and Federal personnel to identify scrapie exposed animals.

Red metal tags are for use by State and Federal personnel to identify scrapie-positive animals.

White and other color plastic or metal tags are for use by sheep and goat producers, markets, dealers, and veterinarians

How does the system work?

It’s called premise-based individual identification and here is an example of how it works:

- There will be a state postal abbreviation followed by up to a five-digit alphanumeric code such as:
  NM55675 (New Mexico farm or ranch number 55675)

  And,

- An individual animal production number or serial number such as:
  00157 (a production number) or NMAA0001 (a serial number)

Or,

- In situations where it is not practical to have a premises ID number printed on the tag the postal abbreviation, the US shield, and serial numbers such as TXAA0001 will be used and the tag series assigned to the premises or person in the Scrapie National Generic Database (SNGD).

How are tags ordered?

USDA provided tags - The producer, market, dealer, or veterinarian contacts his local USDA,APHIS, Veterinary Services Area Office or State office and requests a Premises ID number and tags. (1-866-USDA-TAG)

USDA approved tags – The producer contacts his local USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services Area Office or State office and requests a Premises ID number then the producer purchases tags from an approved tag company.
Tag pliers

Producers that request USDA provided tags during FY 2001 and 2002 will receive one tag pliers with their first order. They may buy additional pliers directly from the company if desired. Markets and persons who identify over 500 animals per year will be provided with a reasonable number of pliers for the number of animals tagged.

Who assigns the premises number?

- Either the State Veterinarian’s office or the local APHIS, Veterinary Services Area Office will assign the premises ID number.
- The premises ID number must be the State postal abbreviation followed by numbers and/or letters. Two and 3 digit codes should generally be reserved for owners who tattoo.

NOTE:

1. VSFCP identification is official identification for interstate movement.
2. Premise only identification is allowed for limited uses such as grazing and low risk commercial flocks that used registered brands.
3. Individual registry tattoos issued by breed associations may be used as official identification. Holders of registry assigned tattoo prefixes should have these linked to their premises in the Scrapie National Database through their local APHIS, Veterinary Services Area Office.

Where do I find additional information?
On the internet at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/scrapie/ or by calling your local area Veterinary Services Office. Phone numbers can be found in the government section of your phone book or at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/vsoffice2.html
THE DRAFT SCARPIE ERADICATION UM&R AND THE FINAL RULE --
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR GOAT OWNERS?

This is a summary of the identification methods and program requirements in the Interstate movement Final Rule for goats and that is also discussed in the DRAFT: Scrapie Eradication UM&R that is available on the internet. Because the incidence of scrapie in goats is very low and sampling of goats at slaughter is not considered cost effective at this time, certain specific categories and guidelines are described in the Rule and in the draft UM&R for goats.

Goats in slaughter channels will not be required to carry individual identification numbers when they are moved in interstate commerce unless they are scrapie-positive, high risk, exposed or from an infected or source flock.

Commercial low risk goats may be moved in interstate commerce without identification or a certificate of veterinary inspection. Commercial low-risk goats are goats raised for fiber or meat that are not registered or exhibited and that have not been exposed to sheep and that are not scrapie-positive, high risk, or exposed animals, from an infected or source flock, or from a state that has scrapie in goats that is not related to exposure to sheep.

Sexually intact goats used for exhibitions such as fairs, shows, demonstrations and petting zoos where out of state sheep or goats are exhibited or that move interstate will be required to be officially identified and have health certificates. (Note: Goats with legible registry tattoos that are registered with a goat registry and that are accompanied by a copy of their registry certificate or a health certificate listing their registration numbers do not require any additional identification.)

Restrictions on interstate movement of goats:

Goats that fall into any of the following categories will need to be officially identified to move interstate or in interstate commerce:

- Sexually intact registered goats and goats used primarily for milk production moving or sold for breeding or exhibition. Note: registration tattoos are acceptable for ID when the goats are accompanied by their registration certificate
- Sexually intact goats that have resided on the same premises as sheep.
- Goats that have been exposed to animals that are affected with scrapie.

Goats that do not have to be identified in interstate commerce:

- Castrated goats that have not been exposed to scrapie
- Goats moving in slaughter channels that have not been exposed to scrapie
- low risk commercial goats
When is a health certificate required?
- For any sexually intact goat moving interstate or in interstate commerce for breeding or exhibition that does not meet the definition of a low risk commercial goat.

If I don’t use registration tattoos or I am selling a goat without papers, how do I identify my goats?
- Request a premises ID number from your local APHIS, Veterinary Services office or call 1-866-USDA-TAG
- Determine whether ear tags or tattoos will work best for you and either purchase ear tags from an approved tag company, request USDA ear tags free from your local APHIS, Veterinary services office (in Texas contact the Texas Animal Health Commission), or tattoo your APHIS assigned premises ID number and an individual production number in the ear, flank, or tail fold. If you have a registered prefix in most cases your prefix preceded by the state postal abbreviation will be assigned as your premises ID number.

If my goats are exposed to scrapie, what will happen?
- A State or federal veterinarian will do an investigation. Based on the exposure risk of the herd, applicable regulations, and the owners needs the veterinarian will determine what cleanup and monitoring actions that will be taken. This may include depopulation of part or all of the herd with indemnity and/or testing at necropsy of the highest risk goats and those found dead at over 14 months of age. If your flock is determined to be infected or source some or all of your goats will be restricted to the premises except movements to slaughter until the cleanup plan is completed.

If my herd is determined to be an infected or source herd, can I participate in a pilot project?
- No, the live animal test has not been validated in goats and genetic resistance has not been adequately studied in goats so there is no scientific basis for a pilot project for goats.

Where do I find additional information?
- On the internet at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/scrapie/ or by calling your local area Veterinary Services Office. Phone numbers can be found in the government section of your phone book or at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/vsoffice2.html