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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 the year 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 ID. Beginning January 1, 2009 all sheep and goats raised in PA must be identified with official scrapie ID if they leave the farm property or properties where they are housed. This includes animals that are transported both within the state they are born as well as transportation across state lines. This law is more stringent than the USDA requirement that sheep and goats age 18 months and older be identified.

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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