



Scrapie Eradication Program

Free Ear Tags for Sheep and Goats

Who: Sheep and/or Goat Producers

If you own, buy, sell, trade, or show sheep and/or goats you can order free scrapie tags and an applicator by calling 1-866-USDA-TAG or directly at 360-864-6320.

Why:

The National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) is a mandatory program that went into effect in 2001. The program's goal is to eliminate scrapie in the United States. The identification and record keeping requirements of NSEP will enable the traceback of scrapie-infected animals to their flock of origin.

Scrapie is a fatal, contagious disease affecting the brain and central nervous system of sheep and goats. Affected animals usually show behavioral changes such as tremors, rubbing and scratching, loss of coordination, stumbling, lip smacking, weakness, weight loss, and eventually death. Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE). Other TSE's include bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle and Chronic Wasting Disease in deer and elk.

When to scrapie tag or id?

- The majority of sheep and goats that enter into commerce require identification. Commerce includes change of ownership, attending shows and exhibits, going to sales or livestock auctions/markets, or going to slaughter.
- Registered goats traveling, sold or shown with registration papers that match legible registration breed tattoos or microchips are considered scrapie identified if you are signed up with USDA, (please note that other states may have different requirements.)
- Goats traveling, sold or shown without registration papers require an official scrapie tag, or a tattoo which lists the entire scrapie flock ID and individual animal ID; for example, WAABC 001 or WA1234 001. Livestock markets request that goats be tagged.
- Sheep and goats under 18 months of age moving directly to a slaughter facility or an approved terminal feedlot do not need to be scrapie identified.
- Sheep or goats that never leave their farm of origin do not need to be scrapie identified.

How to help protect your herd or flock?

- Make sure your sheep and goats have scrapie ear tags before leaving the farm. Well kept records are vital to flock/herd management and scrapie disease eradication. **Scrapie tagging records should be retained for 5 years.** Flock record keeping examples and optional formats are available to producers.
- **Recognize the signs of scrapie in sheep and goats.** Call your private veterinarian, the Washington State Veterinarian's office (360) 902-1878 or the USDA Veterinary Services office (360) 753-9430 to report suspects.
- **Keep a closed flock/herd.** Scrapie is usually transmitted by females during lambing/kidding.
- **Genetic resistance.** Use RR rams to pass on genetic resistance to scrapie to lambs.
- **Flock/herd additions:** Select replacement females from within your own herd/flock; purchase genotyped sheep that are scrapie resistant; or buy from Scrapie Flock Certification Program certified flocks/herds which have taken extra measures to lower the risk for scrapie infection.

Where to get information and free scrapie tags?

Sources of information on scrapie and the National Scrapie Eradication Program include the National Institute of Animal Agriculture (NIAA) website, www.eradicatescrapie.org; specific department of agriculture websites for each state; and the USDA animal health website, www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/.

If you have questions about the program, your scrapie flock id number, or need to order free scrapie ear tags, please call USDA APHIS Veterinary Services in Washington at 360-864-6320 or 1-866-USDA-TAG.