

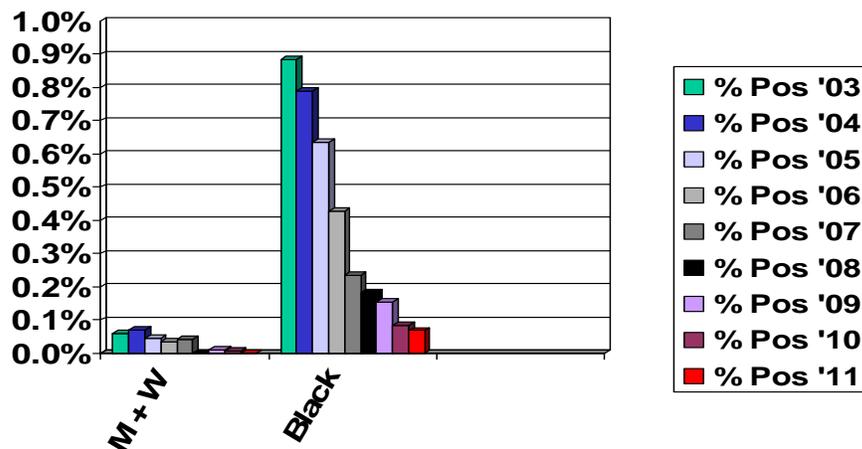
Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health

July 22, 2011

NATIONAL SCRAPIE ERADICATION PROGRAM: TALKING POINTS

- The goal of the national scrapie eradication program is to identify and eliminate the last remaining classical scrapie cases in the U.S. by 2017, and then to maintain surveillance at high levels for 7 years to minimize the risk of delayed detection of any undisclosed cases and so that by 2024 the United States can meet the OIE requirements for scrapie freedom.
- Through the hard work and cooperation of the sheep and goat industries, the States and the USDA, the United States is well on the way to eradicating classical scrapie.
 - Between 2003 and 2010, the prevalence of classical scrapie in the United States has decreased 85 percent, from 0.2 percent to 0.03 percent.
 - The percent positive black face sheep detected at slaughter has fallen 26 percent, on average, each year since FY 2003.

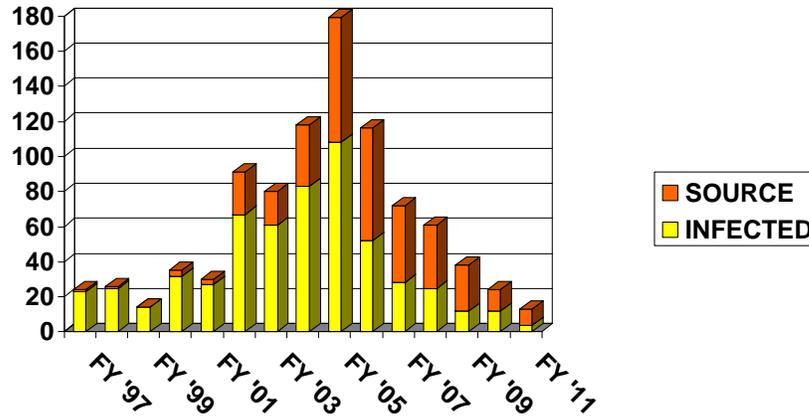
Percent of RSSS Samples that Tested Positive for Classical Scrapie by Face Color during each Fiscal Year (2003 – 2011*)



* Through June 30, 2011—Adjusted to exclude multiple positive animals from same flock. Mottled and white-faced combined. Does not include Nor98-like scrapie cases found through RSSS (2 in FY 2007, 1 in FY 2008, 4 in FY 2010, 1 in FY 2011)

- During FY 2010, the number of new infected or source flocks decreased by 37 percent from the previous year (the total number of new infected and source flocks was 24).

**Infected and Source Flocks
New Statuses by Year
FY 1997 – 2011***



* Through June 30, 2011

- Due to the current economy and large government deficits APHIS is taking a critical look at the funding for all its programs.
 - The scrapie program has sufficient funding for the remainder of FY 2011 to continue program operations -- including providing official eartags to sheep and goat producers. Slaughter surveillance numbers are expected to be lower in FY 2011 due to refinement of the sampling criteria.
 - The FY 2012 President's Budget calls for a \$2,030,000 reduction in scrapie funding, resulting in a proposed scrapie program budget of \$15,876,000 as part of the new equine, cervid and small ruminant health line.
 - In FY 2012, despite the proposed reduction APHIS expects be able to sustain service levels due to the declining need for disease response and indemnity. APHIS intends to utilize a portion of the unused indemnity funds that have built up as a result of the decline in scrapie prevalence to address any critical shortfalls in program operations in FY 2012.
- APHIS will also look for efficiencies in how the Scrapie Flock Certification Program is managed. The SFCP is a voluntary certification program within the broader National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP). It has been identified as an element of the NSEP that may receive less funding as the scrapie budget is decreased for the following reasons:
 - The SFCP is a voluntary component of the NSEP. Currently there are 1,549 participating flocks; this makes up approximately 1% of the total number of sheep flocks and goat herds in the United States.
 - Since 2007, participation in the SFCP has declined by approximately 25%.
 - Since the inception of slaughter surveillance the majority of scrapie infected flocks in the SFCP flocks have been detected through slaughter surveillance either directly or through tracing of exposed animals. No cases have been detected through flock inspection and only a few through reporting of clinical suspects by

owners. Further 0.5 percent of all flocks ever certified have been determined to be infected after certification. From this we conclude that SFCP inspections are not efficient in detecting scrapie infected SFCP flocks.

VS is considering these options for the SFCP.

- Eliminate the selective and complete categories and allow current participants to be grandfathered into the export monitored category similar to what was done when the new category was created.
- Maintain all three categories, but use accredited veterinarians to perform inspections and sampling for all flocks in the SFCP, at the producers' expense.
- Maintain all three categories with modifications to the inspection and sampling requirements for the selective and complete categories, so the program works in the following manner:
 - The selective and complete categories focus on surveillance with a reduced emphasis on inspections; and
 - The export category continues to focus on surveillance *and* maintaining inspections at the level needed to meet OIE recommendations in order to facilitate exports.

APHIS is soliciting input on these possible changes, or any additional options not listed above, from stakeholders during summer, 2011. Feedback has been received from the Veterinary Services field force and State partners, the American Sheep Industry Association, the American Goat Federation, and the National Scrapie Oversight Committee. Additional outreach is scheduled through the summer to obtain feedback from SFCP participants and representatives from the sheep and goat industry. Feedback received to date can be summarized in the following points:

- Ideally, funding for the SFCP would not need to be reduced, but if the option is to maintain current funding for SFCP and decrease funding for surveillance activities or for providing official identification tags to producers it is better to focus on the latter more effective components of the national scrapie eradication program.
- Use of accredited veterinarians will present insurmountable challenges in areas lacking veterinarians with small ruminant expertise, and may be nearly as costly as the current program due to the need to train and oversee the accredited veterinarians doing this work.
- While approximately half of the field force felt that eliminating the selective and complete and categories would be the simplest and most cost effective option, the other half expressed concern that doing so would significantly reduce the interaction between APHIS and sheep and goat producers in the United States.
- APHIS plans to publish a proposed rule that will address gaps in identification requirements, including making the requirements for goats similar to sheep, update program procedures to reflect new scientific information, and require States to meet reasonable surveillance targets to remain consistent States.

SCRAPIE AND THE NATIONAL SCRAPIE ERADICATION PROGRAM: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. First recognized as a disease of sheep in Great Britain and other countries of Western Europe more than 250 years ago, scrapie has been reported throughout the world. The disease was introduced into the United States in 1947 and USDA has had a control program in place since 1952. In the U.S., classical scrapie has primarily been reported in the black-face meat breeds and their crosses. It also has been diagnosed in numerous other breeds and crossbreeds, including wool and hair sheep, and in goats.

It is estimated that the U.S. sheep and goat industries suffer losses of approximately \$10-20 million each year from the presence of classical scrapie, through increased disposal costs and lost revenue from sheep and goat products and germplasm exports.

There are two types of scrapie: classical and nonclassical. Nonclassical scrapie is also referred to as atypical, Nor98, or Nor98-like scrapie. Nonclassical scrapie appears to occur sporadically and has occurred in sheep of all the common genotypes and in goats. It is either not transmissible or poorly transmissible under natural conditions. Given this, it is unlikely to be eradicable; therefore, the National Scrapie Eradication Program focuses on classical scrapie.

The National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP)— The goal of the NSEP is to identify and eliminate the last remaining classical scrapie cases in the U.S. by 2017, and then to maintain surveillance at sufficient levels for 7 years so that by 2024 the United States can meet the OIE requirements for scrapie freedom. The NSEP has two major components: a regulatory eradication program called the Accelerated Scrapie Eradication Program (ASEP) and a voluntary certification program called the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP).

Accelerated Scrapie Eradication Program

Traceability for sheep and goats

- In September 2001, the scrapie regulations were revised to require the official identification of sheep and goats not in slaughter channels (except low-risk commercial goats) and any sheep over 18 months-of-age in interstate commerce. In addition, the revision required States to implement and enforce official identification of most sheep and goats upon change of ownership in intrastate commerce in order to move sheep and goats with minimal restrictions interstate.
- Official identification means to apply an official identification number to an animal using an approved device or method. It also requires creating and maintaining (for 5 years after the animal is sold or dies) a record linking the identification number to the owner of the flock of origin/birth of the animal, if other than the person to whom the official identification numbers were issued.
- APHIS maintains a database in which tag manufacturers enter the distribution records for official eartags. Most eartags are distributed directly from the tag manufacturer to

the end-user. Some tags are redistributed by State or Federal offices who record the end-user in the database.

- Since implementation of the rule, APHIS has provided free official sheep and goat eartags to producers, dealers, markets and accredited veterinarians. Producers can call 866-USDA-TAG toll free to request tags.
- Since implementation of the Federal identification requirements for sheep and goats, only 12 percent of the positive animals identified through slaughter surveillance that did not have official identification were successfully traced to the flock of origin, whereas 94 percent of the positive animals that were officially identified were successfully traced to the flock of origin.
- In FY 2010, 96 percent of scrapie positive animals were successfully traced and estimates indicate that 93 percent of all mature sheep were officially identified when they arrived at slaughter establishments.

Surveillance

- Surveillance is conducted through targeted slaughter surveillance and on farm testing of exposed, suspect and other higher risk animals.
- Slaughter surveillance for regulatory purposes started April 1, 2003. It is a targeted slaughter surveillance program which is designed to identify infected flocks.
- Samples have been collected from 303,801 animals since its start and there have been 454 NVSL confirmed positive animals.
- As of June 30, 2011, 27,079 samples have been collected in FY 2011. Eight black-faced sheep collected in FY 2011 tested positive for classical scrapie and one white-faced sheep tested positive for Nor98-like scrapie.

Disease Management

- Infected sheep are identified through slaughter surveillance, reporting of suspect animals by producers and accredited veterinarians, testing of mature sheep or goats that die on farm or at other locations, and live-animal testing of higher risk animals.
- Infected animals are traced to their flock(s) of origin and exposed animals are traced to the flocks in which they have given birth or currently reside.
- Exposed sheep are tested to determine if they are genetically susceptible to scrapie.
- Susceptible exposed sheep and goats are removed with indemnity and tested for scrapie or permanently restricted and live animal tested.
- Use of genetic susceptibility and live animal testing provides effective flock cleanup strategies that allow producers to stay in business, preserve breeding stock, and remain economically viable.

Stakeholder outreach

- APHIS cooperates with the American Sheep Industry Association and National Institute for Animal Agriculture to distribute educational materials to producers, markets, and veterinarians on identification requirements, genetic testing, and flock cleanup.

Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)—The SFCP is a voluntary certification program that was started in 1992 through negotiated rule making. It is intended to identify flocks that have been free of evidence of scrapie over specified time periods, with the ultimate objective of certifying flocks as scrapie free. Any flock owner may apply to enter the SFCP. Participants in the program follow specified reporting, record keeping, access, and sampling requirements. In June 2007 a new category called the Export Monitored Category was created so that flocks could meet the World Organization for Animal Health Guidelines to qualify as scrapie free flocks to facilitate export.