

Questions and Answers: Testing for Scrapie

Q. What tissues can be used for scrapie testing?

The **only** diagnostic tests currently available to determine if a sheep or goat has scrapie require brain or lymphoid tissue (lymph nodes, tonsil, third eyelid, or rectoanal lymphoid tissue). Brain or lymphoid tissues may be collected from dead animals. Lymphoid tissues may be collected from dead animals or through biopsy of live animals.

Q. How is a scrapie infection determined?

A. Infection with the scrapie agent is determined by the detection of abnormal prion protein accumulation in nervous tissue and/or lymphoreticular tissues and/or histopathologic lesions in central nervous tissues.

Q. What are the scrapie confirmatory tests?

A. The abnormal prion protein can be detected by the use of an approved screening:

- Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA)
- Western-blot
- Performing immunohistochemistry (IHC) on CNS and/or lymphoid tissues (i.e. third eyelid or rectoanal lymphoid tissue, tonsil or lymph node, obex, cerebellum or other brain tissue).

Q. Who conducts the scrapie testing?

A. Scrapie tests are conducted at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) or at an APHIS-contract laboratory. A case must be confirmed positive by NVSL or a laboratory to which NVSL has referred a case for such testing.

Q. Who can collect samples for scrapie testing?

- Producers
- Accredited Veterinarians
- APHIS representatives and State animal health employees

Q. How do I, or my accredited veterinarian, collect samples for scrapie testing?

- [Producers](#) can remove and submit whole heads.
- [Accredited veterinarians](#) can either remove and submit [whole heads](#) or collect and submit specified tissues.

Q. Who will pay for the supplies, shipping boxes and labels required for submission and for testing the samples?

- APHIS provides shipping boxes and labels for the submission of heads or tissues for scrapie testing at no cost to the producers or accredited veterinarians.
- Labels are preprinted so shipping expenses are billed to USDA.
- APHIS will pay for scrapie testing of up to 30 animals per flock per year.

Q. Where do I ship the samples?

- [Whole heads](#). Ship the cooler containing the head with frozen cold packs overnight to Remington Locker, the Veterinary Services (VS) sample collection facility. Be sure to inform the facility of the shipment's delivery date.

Shipping Address

Veterinary Services
Remington Facility
18795 S 580 W
Remington, IN 47977
(Or as directed by your VS Contact)

Phone and E-mail Address

Phone: (317) 347-3100
Fax: (219) 261-2357
Remington.Locker@aphis.usda.gov

- All Other Samples. Ship tissue samples overnight to an APHIS-contract laboratory. Contact the [VS Office for your State](#) for submission instructions and for which laboratory to send samples to.

Q. Whom do I contact with my questions regarding shipping or supplies?

- To request a box or for more information on scrapie or the eradication program contact the [VS Office for your State](#) or the [Designated Scrapie Epidemiologist](#) in your state.
- VS Area Offices can also be reached through the toll free number, 866-873-2824.

Learn More

For more information on Scrapie, please visit USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Website at www.aphis.usda.gov. Click on "Animal Health," then "Animal Disease Information," and then "Scrapie".