

Official USDA Sheep and Goat Identification

A report on quantity of and number of orders for official identification (ID) distributed to or purchased by sheep and goat stakeholders

Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 to 2021 (as of January 11, 2021)

Introduction

This report is provided in response to an industry request for information to better understand the influence of APHIS policy on providing official sheep and goat ID free of charge to stakeholders on the quantities of and number of orders for official ID distributed to or purchased by stakeholders.

The figures below display, from FY 2008 to FY 2021, the quantity of official sheep and goat ID distributed to stakeholders and the numbers of official ID orders.

Prior to FY 2018, all sheep and goat stakeholders could receive certain contract-specified metal or plastic official eartags free of charge sufficient to meet their needs. If the stakeholder wanted a particular brand or type of official ID that was not provided free of charge, they could order it and pay for it themselves.

Policy Changes

The following are pertinent policy changes that occurred starting in FY 2018. Stakeholders are informed of policy changes through stakeholder announcements, website postings, and information sharing with industry associations.

FY 2018

- On November 17, 2017, APHIS stopped providing plastic eartags to stakeholders free of charge. Plastic eartags were still provided free of charge for disease response and surveillance testing. This is designated on the figures by a blue arrow with vertical stripes . Metal serial and flock tags were still provided at no cost to stakeholders.

FY 2019

- On September 12, 2018 APHIS stopped providing metal flock ID eartags free of charge to stakeholders but continued to provide metal serial ID eartags free of charge. This is designated on the figures by a red arrow with horizontal stripes .
- On October 1, 2018, APHIS limited the number of serial metal tags provided free of charge to producers to 100 tags every 24 months. This is designated on the figures by a green arrow with downward diagonal stripes .
- On February 19, 2019, APHIS agreed to provide up to 80 plastic tags to new producers (those producers who had never obtained official ID before) free of charge. This is designated on the figures by a purple arrow with upward diagonal stripes . As of September 1, 2019, metal serial eartags were no longer provided free of charge to producers but continued to be provided to markets and dealers.

FY 2020

- On October 2, 2019, the number of plastic tags provided free of charge to new producers was increased to 100. This is designated on the figures by an orange arrow with white dots . Metal serial eartags continued to be provided free of charge to markets and dealers. 5,227 RFID eartags used for a USDA funded eartag trial are no included in the charts.

FY 2021

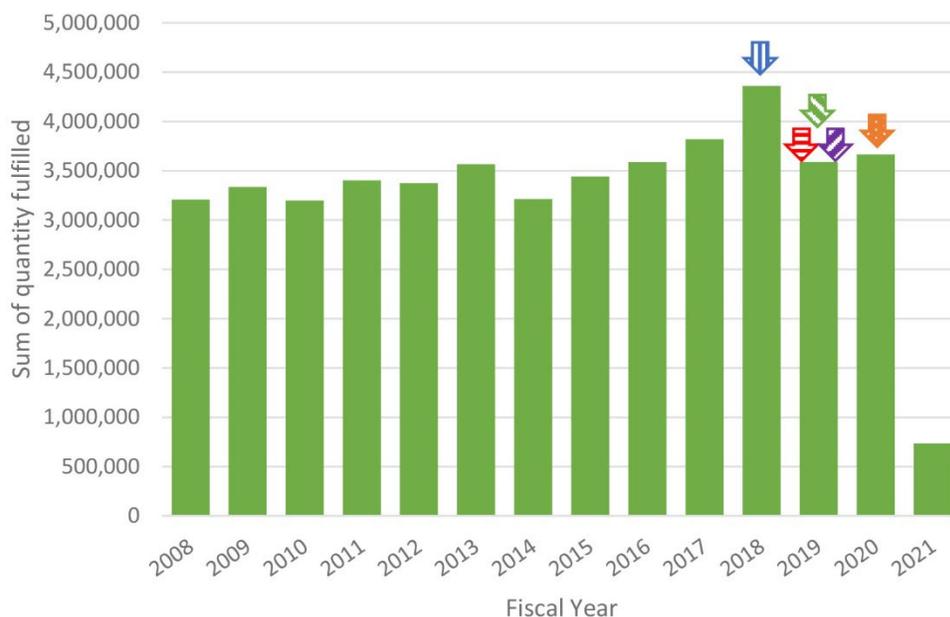
- No significant changes in APHIS tag policy have occurred (as of January 11, 2021).

Conclusions

1. Policy changes have not decreased the use of official ID by sheep and goat industry stakeholders.

As shown in figure 1, there was no significant difference between the number of official ID purchased or distributed in FY 2019 and FY 2020 and the mean number of official ID purchased or distributed from FY 2008 to FY 2017 ($p = 0.20$ and 0.12 respectively). The number of official ID purchased or distributed in FY 2018 was significantly higher ($p=0.0005$), indicating that policy changes have not decreased the use of official ID by sheep and goat industry stakeholders.

Figure 1: Quantity of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID distributed, by fiscal year.



-  Plastic tags no longer free
-  Metal tags no longer free
-  Limited free serial metal tags to producers
-  Up to 80 free plastic tags to new producers
-  Up to 100 free plastic tags to new producers

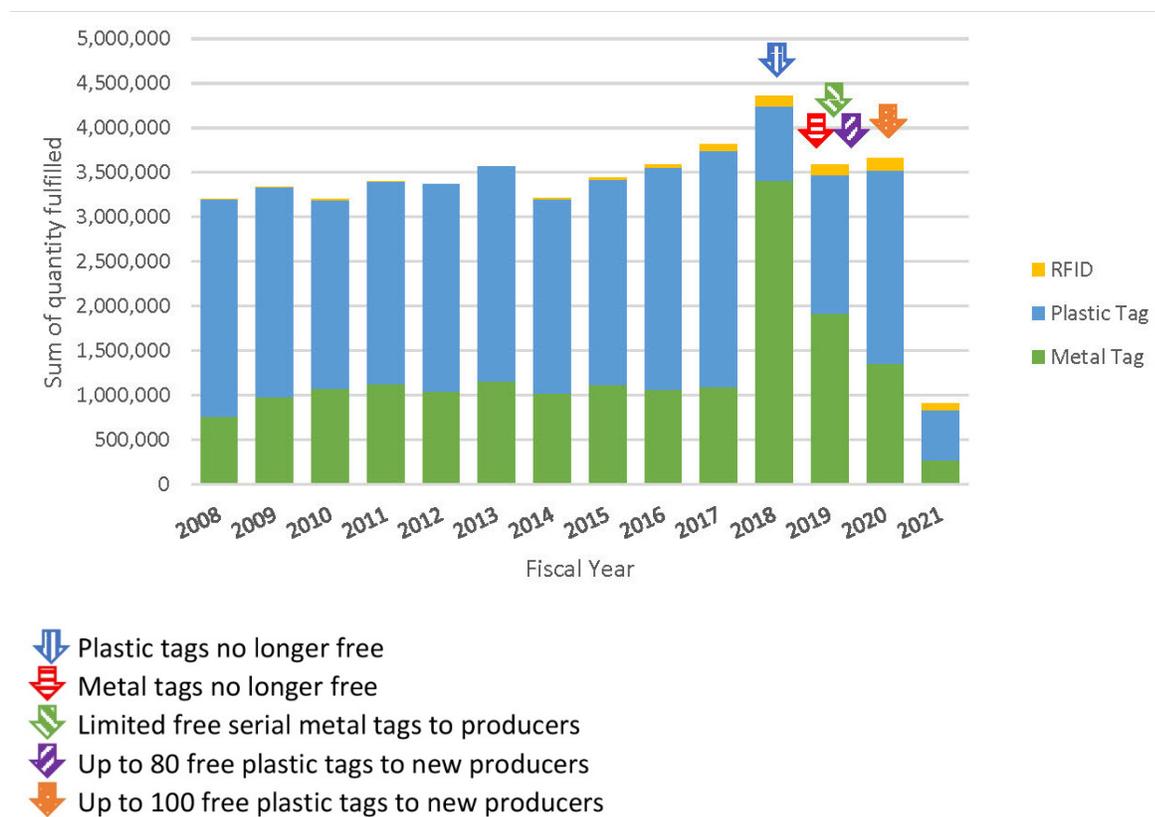
2. A higher number of metal tags were purchased and distributed in FY 2018, contributing to the overall increase of official ID sales and distribution that year.

The relative increase in sales and distribution of official ID in FY 2018 may be because a significantly higher number of metal tags were purchased or distributed ($p < 0.0005$) in FY 2018 (compared to the mean number of metal tags purchased or distributed from FY 2008 to FY

2017) and metal tags have to be ordered in quantities of 100 or more in increments of 100. Sales and distribution of metal tags in FY 2019 and FY 2020 continue to be significantly increased ($p < 0.0005$ and $p = 0.01$ respectively) but are trending downward and are becoming closer to the previous mean.

The sales and distribution of non-metal ID (plastic ID and RFID combined) was significantly decreased in FY 2018 compared to the mean number of non-metal ID purchased or distributed from FY 2008 to FY 2017 ($p < 0.0005$). Sales and distribution of non-metal ID continued to be significantly decreased ($p = 0.001$) in FY 2019 but increased to a level not significantly different from the previous mean in FY 2020 ($p = 0.375$).

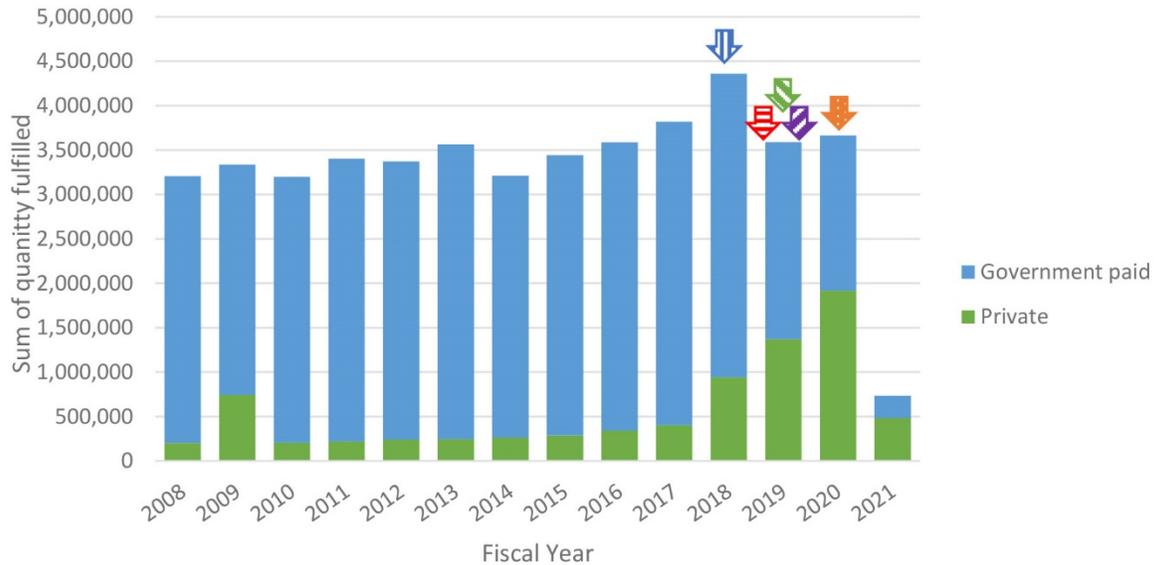
Figure 2: Quantity of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID distributed, by fiscal year and type of ID (metal, plastic, and radiofrequency ID [RFID]).



3. Increases in privately purchased official ID may be related to policy changes that decreased the availability of ID free of charge to producers.

As shown in figure 3 below, the number of official ID that was purchased privately increased significantly in FY 2018 to FY 2020 compared to the mean number of official ID that was privately purchased FY 2008 to FY 2017 ($p < 0.002$) and appears to be trending upward. This could be related to policy changes decreasing the availability of ID free of charge to producers.

Figure 3. Quantity of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID distributed, by fiscal year and source of funding for purchase (private or government [APHIS])



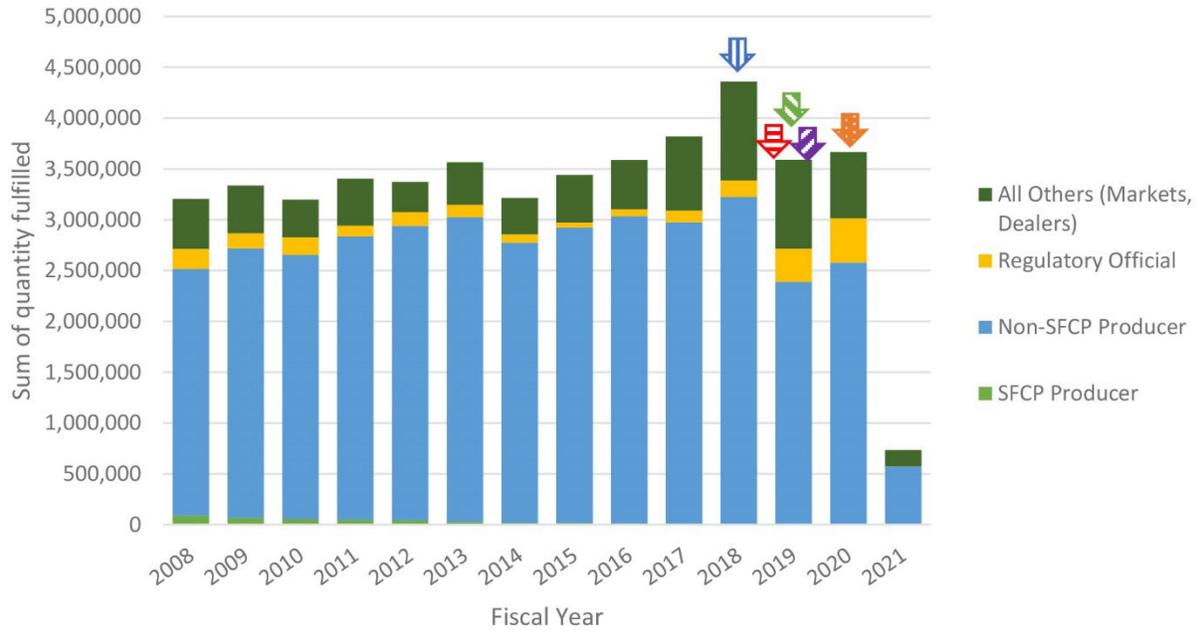
-  Plastic tags no longer free
-  Metal tags no longer free
-  Limited free serial metal tags to producers
-  Up to 80 free plastic tags to new producers
-  Up to 100 free plastic tags to new producers

4. Policy changes may have caused slight fluctuations in official ID sales and distribution to producers in FY 2018 and 2019, but they returned to previous levels in FY 2020.

The sales and distribution of official ID to producers was slightly increased in FY 2018 and slightly decreased in FY 2019 compared to the mean number of official ID purchased by or distributed to producers from FY 2008 to FY 2017 ($p=0.03$ and $p=0.01$ respectively) but increased to a level not significantly different from the previous mean in FY 2020 ($p=0.08$). This suggests that policy changes may have resulted in slight fluctuations in sales and distribution of official ID to producers but that it has increased back to previous levels.

The sales and distribution of official ID to regulatory officials/veterinarians and markets and dealers has been significantly increased FY 2018 to FY 2020 compared to the mean number of official ID purchased by or distributed to these same stakeholders from FY 2008 to FY 2017 ($p<0.001$). These two groups are combined because in many cases regulatory officials distribute official ID to markets and dealers.

Figure 4. Quantity of official sheep and goat ID distributed, by fiscal year and customer type (Scrapie Free Flock Certification program participant [SFCP], producer not participating in SFCP [Non-SFCP], Regulatory Official/Veterinarian (note most of these tags were redistributed to markets or dealers), and All Others [Markets, Dealers])



-  Plastic tags no longer free
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5. Official ID orders increased slightly in FY 2019 and 2020.

There was no significant difference between the number of orders of official ID in FY 2018 compared to the mean number of official ID orders from FY 2008 to FY 2017. However, there has been a slight increase in the number of orders of official ID in FY 2019 and FY 2020 compared to the previous mean ($p=0.01$).

Figure 5. Number of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID orders, by fiscal year.



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6. Numbers of orders of metal ID increased as expected based on quantity of metal ID distributed or purchased in FY 2018 and 2019; in FY 2020 number of orders of metal ID decreased while quantity increased, reflecting larger individual orders.

The numbers of orders of metal tags increased significantly in FY 2018 compared to the mean number of orders for metal tags from FY 2008 to FY 2017 and remained increased in FY 2019 ($p<0.0005$). The numbers of orders of metal tags in FY 2020 decreased slightly below the previous mean ($p=0.0015$), while the actual quantities of metal tags distributed and sold in FY 2020 is slightly above the previous mean (see figure 2 above). This may be related to the relative increase in the sales and distribution of official ID to regulatory officials/veterinarians and markets and dealers, where individual orders may tend to be larger.

Numbers of orders for non-metal ID decreased significantly in FY 2018 ($p=0.006$), then returned to levels not significantly different to the previous mean in FY 2019 ($p=0.1$), then increased to levels slightly above the previous mean in FY 2020 ($p=0.003$).

Figure 6. Number of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID orders, by fiscal year and type of ID (metal, plastic, and radiofrequency ID [RFID]).



- ⇓ Plastic tags no longer free
- ⇓ Metal tags no longer free
- ⇓ Limited free serial metal tags to producers
- ⇓ Up to 80 free plastic tags to new producers
- ⇓ Up to 100 free plastic tags to new producers

7. Numbers of orders of official ID purchased privately are trending upward and may be related to policy changes that decreased the availability of ID free of charge to producers.

The numbers of orders of official ID purchased privately mirrored the quantities of ID purchased privately (see Figure 3), increasing significantly in FY 2018 to FY 2020 compared to the mean number of official ID that was privately purchased FY 2008 to FY 2017 ($p < 0.0005$), and appears to be trending upward. This could be related to policy changes decreasing the availability of ID free of charge to producers.

Figure 7. Number of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID orders, by fiscal year and source of funding for purchase (private or government [APHIS])

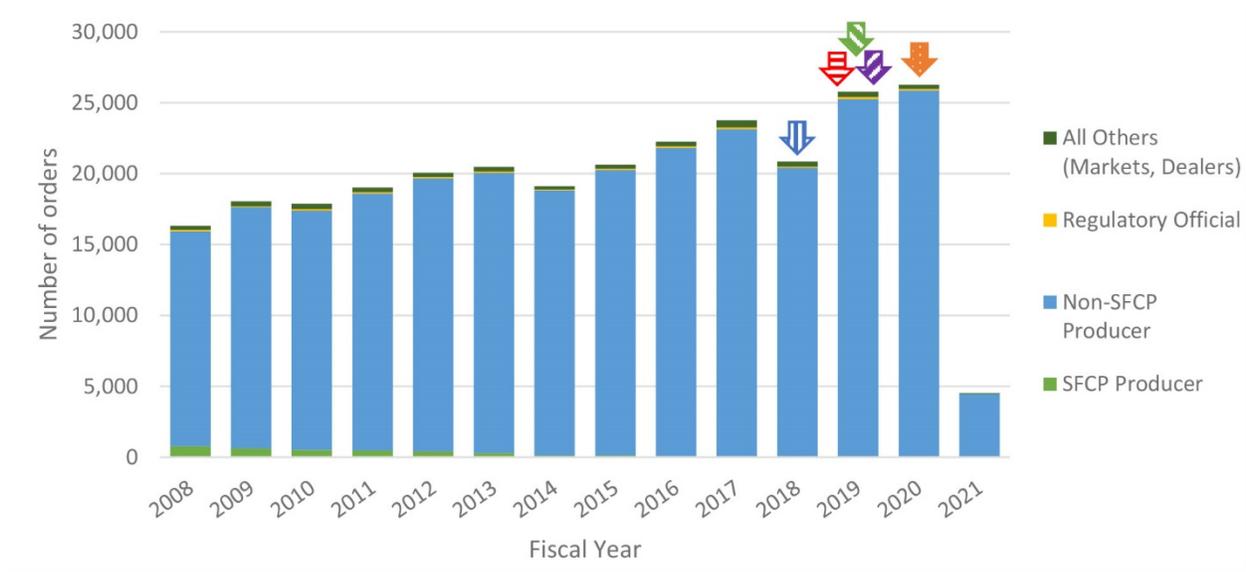


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8. The size of individual orders of official ID made by regulatory officials/markets/dealers has increased since FY 2018.

The number of orders of official ID by regulatory officials/markets/dealers was unchanged in FY 2018, 19, and 20 ($p=0.5, 0.16, 0.28$ respectively) while, as indicated in figure 4 above, the total number of official ID distributed to these groups has increased during the same time period, indicating that the size of individual orders by these entities has increased.

Figure 8. Number of APHIS funded and privately purchased official sheep and goat ID orders, by fiscal year and customer type (Scrapie Free Flock Certification program participant [SFCP], producer not participating in SFCP [Non-SFCP], Regulatory Official/Veterinarian (note most of these tags were redistributed to markets or dealers), and All Others [Markets, Dealers])



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