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September 27, 2018, Washington, D.C. – Throughout FY 2018, APHIS provided metal serial or flock ID ear tags to sheep and goat producers free of charge. Due to significant increases in the cost of metal tags, Veterinary Services will only provide metal serial tags in FY 2019 and limit the number of free tags available to producers in order to keep costs within budget.

Producers and other entities may receive up to 100 metal serial tags every 2 years. Markets will continue to get the number of metal serial tags they require.

In response to industry's request to have the metal tags stand out better on white ears, APHIS will provide orange metal serial tags (versus white) going forward. Slaughter-only metal serial ear tags will continue to be blue.

APHIS remains committed to animal disease traceability and rapid response when scrapie outbreaks occur. These changes allow APHIS to continue equitably distributing metal tags to sheep and goat producers, and the markets, within available funding levels. Limiting the funds spent on ear tags allows APHIS to maintain the surveillance essential to eradicating this fatal degenerative disease.



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