

Update on Free Official Eartag Options for Sheep and Goat Producers in Fiscal Year 2018

To support animal disease traceability (ADT) and scrapie eradication efforts, the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has provided both metal and plastic ear tags and applicators to sheep and goat producers—at no cost—since FY 2002. After a funding reduction in FY 2012, APHIS used specific, no-year funding (for scrapie and ADT) to continue purchasing the tags and distributing them free of cost to producers.

These no-year funds were exhausted in FY 2017. While the Agency remains committed to ADT efforts, beginning October 1, 2017, APHIS will only provide metal tags free of charge to producers and others who handle sheep and goats. Plastic tags and applicators for metal and plastic tags will remain available for purchase directly from approved tag manufactures. These changes will reduce APHIS tag and applicator costs while still providing sheep and goat producers with a free identification device. APHIS will provide a limited number of plastic tags to producers newly enrolled in the Scrapie Free Flock Certification Program who submit tissues for scrapie surveillance in order to encourage on-farm scrapie surveillance.

The Agency will continue to work closely in partnership with States and industry to achieve scrapie eradication. Ultimately, these changes ensure that APHIS has the resources to continue to effectively conduct scrapie surveillance and maintain traceability for sheep and goats, which is essential to the eradication of this fatal, degenerative disease.

For more information on how to purchase tags and applicators, visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animalhealth/scrapie-tags>

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