



# SCRAPIE



How Does It Affect Sheep and Goat Producers in Alabama?

## WHAT IS SCRAPIE?

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. It is in the same class of diseases as bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle and chronic wasting disease in elk and deer. There is no cure or treatment for scrapie. Since 1947, when scrapie was first diagnosed in the United States, more than 90 percent of all cases have occurred in black-faced sheep (primarily in the Suffolk and Hampshire breeds). However, scrapie can infect all breeds of sheep, as well as goats. Most cases of goat scrapie have been related to goats coming in contact with infected sheep. Disease transmission occurs primarily from an infected female to her offspring and other lambs or kids exposed to the birth fluids, placenta, or bedding soiled by the birth fluids. Male sheep and goats can contract scrapie but cannot spread the disease. Only Australia and New Zealand are recognized as “Scrapie Free” by the U.S.

## WHAT SIGNS SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

Clinical signs of scrapie include:

- Weight loss despite a healthy appetite,
- Increased sensitivity to noise/motion,
- High-stepping gait of the forelimbs,
- Bunny-hop movement of the rear limbs,
- Swaying of the back end,
- Loss of coordination,
- Biting at legs or side,
- Behavioral changes,
- Intense rubbing that results in wool loss,
- Wool pulling,
- Tremors,
- Lip smacking,
- Weakness (may be unable to stand), and
- Death.



These symptoms may be confused with pregnancy toxemia, lice, mites, brain abscesses or tumors, trauma, pneumonia, toxins, rabies, and pseudorabies.

## GENOTYPING: A TOOL FOR CONTROLLING CLASSICAL SCRAPIE IN SHEEP

- Genotyping is used to identify the genes that control classical scrapie susceptibility or resistance.
- Genotyping is DNA testing. A simple blood/tissue test is used to determine a sheep's genotype. It can be determined at any age.
- Each parent contributes one copy of the gene to the lamb.
  - QQ—*highly susceptible*
  - QR—*less susceptible*
  - RR—*resistant*
- Classical Scrapie is spread to susceptible sheep (QQ) and goats through contact with infected placenta/birth fluids.
- How can producers use genotyping as a tool in preventing Classical Scrapie?
  - Selecting Rams which are RR or QR
    - RR rams will always sire RR or QR lambs
  - Selecting Ewes which are RR or QR
    - A ewe will pass on her resistance/susceptibility traits, but only to her lambs.
  - Genotyping rams is more cost effective.

## WHAT IS THE SCRAPIE ERADICATION PROGRAM?

### Mandatory Program

The National Scrapie Eradication Program, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), is a mandatory program that began in 2001 and requires participation by **ALL** sheep and goat producers. Producers must follow federal and state regulations for officially identifying their sheep and goats. Some states have ID requirements that are stricter than the federal requirements. Please check your state's identification requirements. In Alabama, sheep and goats must be identified prior to a change of ownership.

### Voluntary Program

The Scrapie Free Flock Certification Program (SFCP) has two categories: the export category (export monitored and export certified flocks) and the select category (select monitored flocks). The SFCP program provides sheep and goat producers an opportunity to increase the marketability of their animals through demonstrating scrapie freedom in their flock or herd. For more information, please visit [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/sheep-and-goat-health/national-scrapie-eradication-program/ct\\_free-certification](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/sheep-and-goat-health/national-scrapie-eradication-program/ct_free-certification)

## ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY (ADT)

ADT is important to ensuring a rapid response when animal events take place. It reduces the number of animals and response time involved in a disease investigation. It also reduces the economic impact. ADT efforts in sheep and goats revolves around the disease Scrapie. The goal of the National Scrapie Eradication Program is to eradicate classical scrapie from the United States and to meet World Health Organization for Animal Health (OIE) criteria for disease freedom.



Official identification are those approved for use in sheep and goats **with the US shield printed onto the tag or USDA approved devices.**

**YOU ARE THE KEY TO DECLARING  
THE U.S. FREE OF SCRAPIE**

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<http://agi.alabama.gov/divisions/animal-industries/scrapie>

## WHAT IS REQUIRED?

### ALL Sheep and Goats

- ✓ Must be officially identified at change of ownership.
  - ✓ EXEMPTION: Alabama sheep and goats moving from farm directly to an in-state slaughter establishment or moving to an in-state livestock market.

Sheep and goats moving through a livestock market must have visual ID (i.e. ear tag).

## ANIMALS WITH ABSENT OR INJURED EARS?

Animals that cannot be ear tagged **because of absent or injured ears** may have the official ear tag attached to a durable neck strap or collar that can only be removed by cutting the strap, collar or ear tag and which must accommodate the expected growth of the animal. The neck strap or collar with ear tag must be treated the same as an ear tag and **may not be removed or replaced.**

Breed registry or flock ID tattoos are accepted as official identification for animals that are not moving through a livestock market or concentration point. Breed registry prefixes must be approved by USDA and registered with our office.

## HOW TO OBTAIN FREE TAGS?

USDA-APHIS will provide **up to 100 plastic tags**, free-of-charge, to owners of flocks/herds that have not been assigned a flock ID or been issued free tags previously. Tags are from Shearwell Data USA, but the tag applicator must be purchased directly from Shearwell. After the initial order of free tags, you will be responsible for purchasing any additional tags needed from USDA approved tag manufacturers. A list of approved tag manufacturers can be found on APHIS' website. Producers that have received tags previously *may* be eligible to receive tags by submitting a scrapie sample.

## RECORD KEEPING

- ✓ Records must be kept for 5 years after animal sold or otherwise disposed.
- ✓ Information to record:
  - Official identification number
  - Breed, sex, species
  - Date official ID applied
  - Date animal was acquired or year of birth if natural addition
  - Name/address of previous owner (if applicable)
  - Date sold
  - Name/address of buyer (or stockyard sold at)
  - Copy of owner hauler statement (if required)