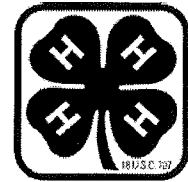


What 4-H'ers need to know about the Scrapie Eradication Program



Scrapie is a disease of the central nervous system in sheep and goats. It is always fatal (always results in death), and there is no cure for it. Sheep and goats are usually exposed to it when they are newborns, but don't show symptoms until they are older, sometimes not for five years! Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE). Other TSE's include bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), sometimes called mad cow disease, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in people. Although there is no evidence that scrapie can spread from animals to humans, it does create negative perceptions for consumers. Scrapie cost US sheep producers \$20-25 million each year in reduced sales of breeding stock for export. There are only two countries free from scrapie and this puts the U.S. at a market disadvantage to Australia and New Zealand. Because of the cost to the industry, the long time between exposure and symptoms, and the prevalence in the US, all sheep and goat producers, including 4-H'ers, must help to eradicate this disease.

Following is a simplified summary of how this program affects Iowa 4-H'ers. For more information about the nationwide program, go to the National Scrapie Eradication program web site at <http://www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie/Scrapie.htm>. The program in Iowa will have its own regulations distinct to Iowa, and may differ somewhat from what other states are doing. The information listed here represents Iowa's scrapie program requirements:



1. 4-H'ers fit into two basic categories; those who purchase lambs and goats and those who raise them. If you purchase your 4-H animals at a few months of age and sell them immediately after the fair, be sure that any ewe lambs or does already have a scrapie flock tag in their ear when you purchase them from the birth flock or herd. Record the date, flock number (on the tag) and name and address of the person you purchase the animal from. If you sell your ewe lamb or doe to someone else, record the dates, name, and address of that transaction. Keep your records for five years. (If you were to keep your ewe or doe and use her for breeding, you would be required to order your own scrapie ear tags, and use them before selling the animals.) Wether lambs and kids do not need to be tagged (unless required for entry into some states).

If you or your family have your own ewe flock or goat herd, all reproductively intact animals (ewes, does, rams, bucks), must be tagged before exhibition (at county or state fairs) or before being sold, unless going direct to a slaughter facility. This would include any ewe lambs shown in market classes also. All reproductively intact goats (does, bucks) that have been housed or kept with sheep, or that are used as part of a milking herd, or are registered and/or exhibited must also be tagged. (Registered goats may use officially approved unique tattoo numbers instead of scrapie ear tags provided

Certificates of Veterinary Inspection include documentation of participation in the scrapie program.) These animals should be tagged just prior to leaving your flock/herd.

2. If you have a flock or herd, you will need to order scrapie program tags from USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. Tags can be ordered by calling 1-866-873-2824. When you call they will assign you a flock premise number, and how many. Tags are available free of charge. Each flock that orders tags will be given one free tagger.

3. Record keeping is essential!! Your records can become a part of your 4-H project record. The following information must be kept for 5 years. Your flock ID number, the date you tagged animals, the number of the animals tagged. If you purchase reproductively intact animals, be sure to record the date, the premise number and name & address of the person you purchased them from, and the official ID number of the animal on the attached form signed by the owner. Also record sales of tagged animals. If a sheep or goat loses their tag, retag it with a new scrapie program tag, but record all the above information so it can be traced back to the flock it was born in. Record keeping forms will be provided along with scrapie program tags.



4. All breeding and intact (ewe, doe, ram, buck) animals must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (health certificate) issued within 30 days of any change of ownership. Some shows will also require a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, so be sure to check with the show rules in advance. The Certificate of Veterinary Inspection will require both the scrapie tag number and the individual animal identification number.

As has been the case for many years, Iowa animal health rules require that any change of ownership requires a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection prior to movement (except for animals sold through an auction market (market vet does inspection), or direct to slaughter). Be sure to ask for a health certificate that includes the scrapie tag information on any lambs you purchase before transporting them home. This also serves as documentation of purchasing the lamb and the scrapie number and flock of origin.

If you have questions about this program there are several resources available to help. One is the USDA Animal Plant Inspection Service, which is where you order tags from. The web site also includes additional information about the program although keep in mind that Iowa's regulations may differ somewhat from the national guidelines. You can also call your area livestock specialists, Dan Morrival, state sheep specialist, or the state 4-H office.