

SHEEP AND GOAT REGULATIONS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

As a part of a national effort to eradicate scrapie from the United States, starting on November 19, 2001, most sheep and goats moving interstate must be officially identified. While Scrapie is a relatively rare disease, it is estimated to cost the U. S. sheep industry close to \$20 million annually. The goal of the eradication program is to eliminate scrapie from U. S. sheep and goats by the year 2010.

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. It is among a number of diseases classified as Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathics (TSE). TSEs are the subject of increased attention because of the discovery that Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE or "mad cow disease") in cattle is linked to variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) in people.

Following is basic information outlining which animals must be identified, how to obtain ear tags, and how to keep identification records. If you sell your animals through a livestock auction, or move sheep or goats across state lines, such as to show, please call our office (410-349-9708) to obtain a premises identification number and additional information about official identification. We will assign a premise number to your farm and order ear tags for you which will be sent to you FREE of charge. If you would like more detailed information on the identification regulations, or are not sure your animals would be covered, please call our office toll free at 1-866-873-2824 or locally (410) 349-9708.

Here are some general concepts:

- Ear tags need not be applied while your sheep are on the farm. You can keep the USDA ear tags and when you are ready to load your animals onto your truck you can identify them with the ear tags and record it.
- The general idea is that all sheep will be eventually identified to their flocks of birth and we will be able to trace each animal through the ear tags and producer records to all the flocks it has lived in.
- If you are participating in a breed registry and your sheep are tattooed with a breed prefix, you may use that breed tattoo as your official identification. Just register that prefix with our office and we will assign that as your premise number and enter it into our database.

Sheep (over 18 months if age): Basically, all sheep will need to be identified when they move from their farm regardless of where they are going. The exception is if you take your sheep to a local fair or show where there are no out-of-state animals and bring the animal back home with you. If there is even the slightest possibility you may sell your sheep at the show, put an ear tag in its ear!!!

Lambs (under 18 months of age): Wethers do not need identification. For ewe and ram lambs, if they are being sold directly to a slaughter plant or butcher, or in a slaughter ONLY sale, they do not need identification. If they are taken to the livestock market or are entered in any other show/sale where they could potentially be purchased to go back to a farm, they need identification.

The goats which do need official identification are the following:

- Goats used in exhibition/shows except wethers
- Breeding goats
- Goats in contact with sheep
- Registered goats (can use herd tattoo as official ID as long as registered with USDA office)

You may call us at 410-349-9708, or toll free at 1-866-873-2824.