

scrapie from a to z

sheep produce meat, milk and the best fiber on earth, wool. it is no wonder that you have had success with sheep projects in FFA, 4-H and your own personal flocks. there is a lot of responsibility in caring for sheep, including taking care of your flock's health. one important part is joining other producers in eradicating scrapie by complying with the national scrapie eradication program from the department of agriculture.

what is scrapie?

scrapie is a difficult and devastating disease of sheep and goats that is classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy. it affects the central nervous system of sheep and goats and is always fatal. the american sheep industry association estimates that scrapie costs the american sheep industry more than \$40 million a year. scrapie can even affect your flock.



get the scoop

for more information on scrapie, the national scrapie eradication program or the scrapie flock certification program, go online at:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/scrapie>

<http://www.eradicatescrapie.org>

<http://www.sheepusa.org>



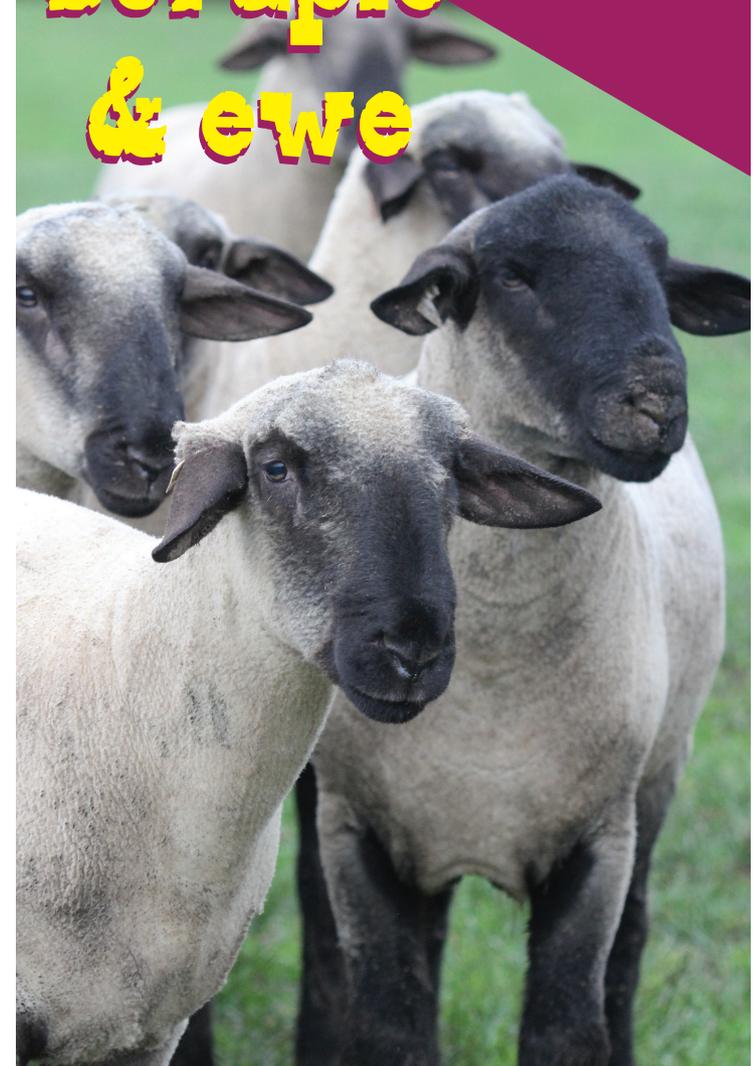
american sheep industry

303.771.3500

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scrapie & ewe



**be a leader
in the fight**

do my sheep have scrapie?

scrapie is a difficult disease to diagnose, and it can take several years for sheep or goats to show signs. an animal will usually behave differently; rub excessively creating bare areas on both sides of the body, rump or head; or have a hard time moving or walking correctly.

you know your sheep the best, so you will be the first to see the signs of the disease.

know the signs

- early signs include subtle changes in behavior;
- scratching or rubbing against fixed objects;
- loss of coordination;
- weight loss despite a normal appetite;
- biting at feet and legs;
- lip smacking;
- high stepping of forelegs, hopping like a rabbit and swaying of the back end
- may appear normal at rest, but if surprised with sudden noises or excessive movement, the animal might tremble or fall down.

if you notice signs in a sheep or goat older than 18 months of age that continues for several weeks or if a mature sheep or goat dies after showing these signs, it is IMPORTANT and required that you report it to your personal veterinarian or the state veterinarian right away, or call the department of agriculture at 866-873-2824.

the animal might need to be tested for the disease. scrapie testing can be done on tissue collected from a live or dead sheep or goat. if the assessment calls for testing, it is available at no cost to you.

can we wipe out scrapie?

yes, producers working with states and department of agriculture have reduced the amount of scrapie in the united states by 99 percent since 2003. you can help by officially identifying animals before moving them, keeping records and being vigilant for sheep or goats showing signs of scrapie.

participating in the effort

if you move sheep or goats interstate or offer to sell them to out-of-state buyers including through a market (or buy sheep or goats that originated in another state), you need to:

- officially identify sheep and goats that you later sell (if they are a class that requires official id) prior to moving them; or
- take your official tags and have them applied at another site in-state before changing ownership; or
- take your sheep and goats to a federally approved market to be tagged with market tags.

group/lot id and owner/hauler statement are required for:

- sheep and goats in slaughter channels (except wethers under 18 months of age)
- sheep and goats not in slaughter channels that do not have an official eartag or other official id (except wethers under 18 months of age).

there are exceptions to individual official id requirement.

- visit eradicatescrapie.org for informational fliers for the sheep and goat industries.

if you haven't received free tags from APHIS before, you can call 1-866-usda-tag (866-873-2824) for information.

- make sure to set up a record system that you will use to record tags and the date you applied them to each animal. record all tag numbers, when you applied the tags and any sales or purchases of your sheep or goats (including names and addresses of buyers or flocks of origin). you are required to keep all records for five years after an animal is sold or has died. your records are CRUCIAL because they can help trace diseased animals to the flock of origin.

going to the show

- ewes and rams must have official id.
- wethers 18 months of age or older must have official id, wethers under 18 months of age may be required to have official id by state or show rules.
- anytime sheep cross state lines to go to a show, they must be accompanied by a health certificate, which you can get through your veterinarian.
- if you sell a sheep at the show, record the scrapie id number, the buyer's name, address and telephone number and keep that record for five years.

protecting sheep

the best medicine is prevention, and there are several precautions you can take to minimize the risk of getting scrapie in your flock. use the following guide to help you in your quest to prevent scrapie in your flock.

prevention tips

- close your ewe flock – don't purchase outside ewes unless their disease status is known.
- genetic resistance – an RR ram has a high genetic resistance to scrapie and will make all of his offspring resistant or less likely to get the disease.
- lambing management – the highest risk period of scrapie transmission is at birth from exposure to infected placenta or birth fluids. remove placentas from birthing areas right away and remove manure and bedding between each birthing.
- purchase ewes that have been tested and have the AAQR or RR genotype. these ewes are unlikely to introduce scrapie to your flock.
- only buy ewes and does from flocks that are likely to be scrapie free. the best way to do this is to buy sheep and goats from flocks that have reached the certified level of the national scrapie flock certification program.
- quarantine all new animals you bring into your flock and watch them closely to see if they are sick.

