

Scrapie Program

Since 1952, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has worked to control and eradicate scrapie, which entered the United States in 1947 from English-origin sheep imported from Canada. Today, USDA uses two approaches to eradicate scrapie: flock certification and an eradication program.

Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP)

The SFCP has been in place since October 1992. The certification program is a voluntary, cooperative effort among producers, allied industry representatives, accredited veterinarians, State animal health officials, and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The program provides participating producers with the opportunity to protect their sheep from scrapie and to enhance the marketability of their animals through certifying their origin in scrapie-free flocks.

As of April 30, 2004, there were 1,849 flocks participating in the SFCP. Of these, 123 were certified flocks, and 124 were newly enrolled. During fiscal year (FY) 2003, there were 310 flocks newly enrolled or certified in the certification program.

National Scrapie Eradication

Operation of the accelerated eradication program was initiated in FY 2000 through the use of emergency funding. Federal regulations put the program into effect in August 2001. In FY 2003, USDA received \$15 million in appropriated funding to conduct the scrapie program.

Summary—FY 2003

In FY 2003, the Scrapie Eradication Program focused on: (1) developing a genetics-based approach to flock clean-up plans; (2) cleaning up infected and source flocks; (3) tracing and testing exposed animals and flocks; (4) completing the *Scrapie: Ovine Slaughter Surveillance* study to determine the prevalence of scrapie in mature cull ewes; (5) implementing regulatory slaughter surveillance; (6) implementing producer education; and (7) reaching a consensus on and finalizing the *Scrapie Eradication UM&R* for FY 2004. The *Scrapie Eradication UM&R* is posted at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie/umr-scrapie-erad.pdf>.

Infected and Source Flocks

As of April 30, 2004, there were 48 scrapie-infected and source flocks; at the end of FY 2003, a total of 50 scrapie-infected and source flocks identified. As of April 30, 2004, 38 newly-infected flocks were reported. Of these, 32 infected and source flocks were released. In FY 2003 there were 73 newly-infected flocks reported. Sixty of these flocks, or 82 percent, were released or put on clean-up plans. Additionally, 351 scrapie cases were also confirmed and reported by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) for FY 2003, with 172 cases confirmed so far for FY 2004. No case of scrapie in goats was reported in FY 2003; however, one new case was reported in January 2004.

Scrapie: Ovine Slaughter Surveillance (SOSS)

APHIS' Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) released the results of the SOSS study. The objective of SOSS was to estimate the national and regional prevalence of scrapie in mature cull ewes. Prior to the SOSS study, the prevalence of scrapie in the United States was estimated to be 0.07 percent (based on information from NAHMS Sheep '96, unpublished data). The SOSS study estimate for the national prevalence in mature ewes is 0.20 percent. The prevalence phase of the SOSS study started April 1, 2002, and continued through March 31, 2003. During this time period, samples were collected from 12,508 mature sheep at 22 slaughter facilities, as well as a major livestock market. Of the sheep tested, 33 were found to be scrapie positive. Of these, 27 were black face, 3 mottled face, 1 white face, and 2 unknown face color. A complete report and analysis is available at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/cahm/Sheep/SOSS.pdf>.

Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS)

RSSS started April 1, 2003. RSSS is a targeted slaughter surveillance program designed to identify infected flocks for clean-up. Since April 1, 2003, 18,700 samples have been collected from 29 slaughter plants, and the results have been reported for 16,319. There were 44 positive sheep: 5 white face, 1 mottled face, and 38 black face.

Scrapie Testing Summary

During FY 2003, 16,803 animals were sampled or tested for scrapie. This includes 3,724 regular field necropsy cases, 42 third eyelid biopsies for the test validation project, 244 necropsy test validations, 579 third eyelid biopsies for the regulatory program, and approximately 12,214 animals for SOSS and RSSS.

As of April 30, 2004, (for FY 2004) 12,456 animals have been sampled and/or tested for scrapie: 11,054 RSSS; 1,227 regulatory field cases; 85 regulatory third eyelid biopsies; 13 third eyelid validations; and 57 necropsy validations.

Assignment of Premises ID Numbers

There were 85,242 sheep and/or goat premises listed in the Scrapie National Generic Database (SNGD) as of May 18, 2004. Of these, 59,939 have requested and been shipped official premises ear tags.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the scrapie eradication program will depend largely on the thought, effort, and care given to program implementation by those involved and will need the continued support of the industry. APHIS looks forward to working with industry, individual producers, accredited veterinarians, and approved laboratories to make these projects a success.

Contact Information

Additional information on scrapie can be found at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie/>. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your local Veterinary Services area office (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/>) or e-mail scrapie_program@aphis.usda.gov.

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