National Scrapie Eradication Program: Animal Identification and Recordkeeping Guide for Sheep and Goats

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. There is no cure or treatment for scrapie. The National Scrapie Eradication Program, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has reduced the prevalence of scrapie in adult sheep sampled at slaughter by more than 99 percent. However, the cooperation of sheep and goat producers is needed to find and eliminate the last few cases in the United States.

Producers are required to follow federal and state regulations for officially identifying their sheep and goats. Producers must also keep herd records, showing what new animals were added and what animals left the herd/flock. This guide helps producers follow the regulations.

How to Get Official Eartags
In response to feedback from and collaboration with the sheep and goat industry, the National Scrapie Eradication Program provides a limited number of free official ear tags to producers and other stakeholders. APHIS will provide up to 100 free, plastic tags to first-time participants in the sheep and goat identification program and metal serial tags at no cost to markets and dealers through fiscal year (FY) 2022. Producers who are not eligible for free tags or who prefer another type or color of tag can purchase official tags of their choice directly from approved manufacturers; see the "Approved Tag Manufacturers" section below for more information.

Visual tags (where the official identification (ID) must be read) and electronic tags (where the official ID can also be electronically scanned) are available. APHIS is working with sheep and goat organizations to transition toward electronic official identification to improve our nation’s ability to quickly trace exposed and diseased animals in the event of an outbreak.

To find out if you are eligible for the free tags and/or get flock and premises ID numbers assigned to your farms and flocks so you can obtain official tags, call 866-USDA-TAG (873-2824). This number will direct you to the appropriate state or APHIS office that can help you. The scrapie eradication program pre-dates our Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Program.
As a result, there have been changes in the premises ID numbers that may be assigned by the states and APHIS for sheep and goat premises to now include PINs and LIDs.

Types of ID numbers:

- **Premises ID**: ID permanently assigned to a specific, identifiable geographic location. Can include APHIS or state-assigned scrapie premises IDs, national Premises Identification Numbers (PINs), or state Location IDs (LIDs). Some premises may have more than one premises ID (i.e., they may have a scrapie premises ID AND a PIN or LID). NOTE: A PIN or LID is required to order electronic ID tags or implants (a historical scrapie premises ID cannot be used). In most states PINs and LIDs are assigned by the state office; contact information can be found at [www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/traceability/state-pin/state-pin](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/traceability/state-pin/state-pin). PINs contain seven alphanumeric characters, and LIDs contain six, seven, or eight alphanumeric characters.

- **Flock ID**: ID assigned to a group of sheep or goats managed as a unit on one or more premises and under the same ownership. In most states, flock IDs begin with the state postal code. In some cases, the flock ID may be the same number as the scrapie premises ID.
Animals Requiring Identification
The animals listed below are required by federal* and/or state regulations to be identified as part of the National Scrapie Eradication Program before they enter interstate commerce or if ownership changes. Some states have ID requirements that are stricter than federal requirements, so the exceptions listed below do not apply in all states. For information on each state’s ID and movement requirements, contact the State Veterinarian’s office.

All sheep and goats must have official ID when moving off their premises of origin, EXCEPT*

- Sheep or goats moving with a group ID and owner/hauler statement. This includes:
  - Sexually intact sheep and goats under 18 months of age in slaughter channels;
  - Sheep and goats of any age shipped directly to a slaughter establishment or a federally approved market that has agreed to act as an agent for the owner to apply official ID and when all the animals in a section of a truck are from the same flock of origin; or
  - Sheep or goats moved for grazing or similar management reasons without a change of ownership when the animals are moved from a premises owned or leased by the owner of the animals to another premises owned or leased by the owner of the animals. The premises must be recorded in the National Scrapie Database as additional flock premises and commingling must not occur with unidentified animals born in another flock or any animal not part of the flock.
- Castrated sheep or goats under 18 months of age.
- Sheep or goats moving within a state that have only resided on premises and in flocks in the same state and where the animals and premises are owned by persons who do not engage in the interstate commerce of sheep or goats and where the sheep or goats are of a class exempted from official ID by the state while in intrastate commerce.
- Sheep or goats moving within a state to a facility were the animals will be officially identified with official ID assigned to the owner.

Official Identification
Official identification devices, including ear tags and injectable transponders, must be approved by APHIS as being sufficiently tamper-resistant for the intended use, have good retention, and provide a unique identification number for each animal.

An owner may substitute tattooing for an official identification device under certain criteria, which are explained in the “Tattooing” section on the next page.

Tips for Tagging
- Sheep and goats only need to be officially identified when leaving the premises or when being sold to another owner.
- Do not buy or sell animals of any age that may be used for breeding, or animals over 18 months of age for any purpose, unless they are officially identified.

* For more details on exemptions to the federal sheep and goat identification requirements, review the regulation at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/scrapie
Plastic tags are preferred for animals that require shearing. If metal tags are used, the preferred placement is in the left ear, about a third of the way down from the head—where it is more visible and easier to keep out of the way when shearing. This reduces the risk of the tag being struck by the shears and potentially damaging the headpiece or injuring the animal or the operator. For young lambs, leave enough space for growth by leaving one-third of the tag overhanging the edge of the ear.

Official tags may not be sold or given to another person. If you no longer need the tags, they should be destroyed or returned to the APHIS Veterinary Services District Field Office for your state. Locations for field offices can be found online at: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/contact-us

Approved Tag Manufacturers
APHIS has approved several companies to manufacture and sell official devices, including tags and injectable transponders. Producers should consider the different devices available—including metal or plastic tags, radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, RFID implants (there are restrictions on the use of implants**)—and choose what works best for them. For the list of approved tag manufacturers, visit www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/scrapie (click on “Sheep and Goat Identification” from the list at the bottom of the page).

Tattooing
Registered animals may be identified with a registration tattoo instead of a tag, as long as the animal is accompanied by a copy of the registration certificate issued by an APHIS-approved registry listing the current owner or the registration certificate and a completed transfer of ownership form dated within 60 days that lists the current owner. If the registry you use is not approved, you can still use your tattoos if you provide your tattoo prefix and registry to APHIS for inclusion in your flock record and include a copy of your confirmation email or letter with the animal.

In addition, the flock identification number assigned by APHIS may be tattooed (along with an individual animal number) to officially identify sheep or goats that are not registered. If you have a registered herd prefix, you may request that APHIS assign it as part of your flock identification number.

Tattoos may not be used as the sole form of official ID for animals moving to slaughter or through a livestock market. ***

Owners must ensure the legibility of tattoos. Owners should also be prepared to assist with the tattoo reading process, including using a flashlight or other light source to assist with reading when animals are inspected.

** For more details on the restrictions on the use of implants and tattoos see the NSEP Standards at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/scrapie
*** For a list of approved registries see the list at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/scrapie
Recordkeeping
Records must be kept for five years after the animal is sold or otherwise disposed. Ideally, producers should keep records in an electronic format, such as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. You must record the following information:

When you apply official ID:
- The flock ID number of the flock of origin, the name and address of the person who currently owns the animals, and the name and address of the owner of the flock of origin, if different;
- The name and address of the owner of the flock of birth, if known, for animals born in another flock and not already identified to flock of birth;
- The date the animals were officially identified;
- The number of sheep and the number of goats identified;
- The breed and class (i.e. cull ewes, feeder lambs, breeding does etc.) of the animals. If breed is unknown, for sheep the face color and for goats the type (milk, fiber, or meat) must be recorded instead;
- The official ID numbers**** applied to animals by species or the Group Identification Number (GIN) applied in the case of a group/lot;
- Whether the animals were identified with “Slaughter Only” or “MEAT” identification devices; and
- Any GIN with which the animal was previously identified.

When you buy or sell animals:
- The number of animals purchased, sold, or transferred without sale;
- The date of purchase, sale, or other transfer;
- The name and address of the person from whom the animals were purchased or otherwise acquired, or to whom they were sold or otherwise transferred;
- The species, breed, and class of animal, and if breed is unknown, for sheep the face color and for goats the type (milk, fiber, or meat) must be recorded instead;
- A copy of the brand inspection certificate for animals identified with registered brands or ear notches;
- A copy of any certificate or owner/hauler statement required for movement of the animals purchased, sold, or otherwise transferred.

**** The official identification number is the complete number on the official USDA sheep/goat tag, official tattoo, or approved RFID device. It is acceptable to list the first and last number in a sequential series, rather than each individual number.
USDA Approved Official Identification Companies for Sheep and Goats

**Allflex USA, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 612266  
2805 East 14th Street  
Dallas Ft. Worth Airport, TX 75261-2266  
Phone: (833) SCRAPIE [833-727-2743]  
Fax: (972) 338-3445  
Email: scrapiefulfillment@allflexusa.com  
Website: [www.scrapietags.com](http://www.scrapietags.com)  
(RFID and plastic ear tags in several colors - regular and SFCP)

**Alliance ID, USA**  
2199 Manton Drive  
Covington, LA 70433  
Phone: (985) 898-0811; (800) 434-2843  
Email: answers@microchipidsystems.com  
Website: [https://www.microchipidsystems.com](http://https://www.microchipidsystems.com)  
Contact: John Wade, DVM  
(RFID 840 microchip transponders in syringes, universal scanners)

**EZid, LLC**  
4412 West 4th Street Road  
Greeley, CO 80634  
Phone: (970) 351-7701; (877) 330-3943  
Email: Sales@EZidAvid.com  
Website: [http://www.EZidAvid.com](http://www.EZidAvid.com)  
Contact: Elsie McCoy  
(RFID - Avid microchip transponder implants, scanners)

**National Band & Tag Company**  
721 York Street  
P.O. Box 72430  
Newport, KY 41072-0430  
Phone: (859) 261-2035  
Fax: (859) 261-8247  
Email: tags@nationalband.com  
Website: [http://www.nationalband.com/](http://www.nationalband.com/)  
Contacts: Kevin Haas, Sarah Fields  
(RFID tags and metal tags in many colors)

**Premier 1 Supplies LLC**  
2031 300th Street  
Washington, IA 52353  
Phone: (800) 282-6631  
Fax: (800) 346-7992  
Email: info@premier1supplies.com  
Website: [https://www.premier1supplies.com/c/ear-tags-and-tattoo-supplies/ear-tags-for-usda-scrapie-eradication-program](https://www.premier1supplies.com/c/ear-tags-and-tattoo-supplies/ear-tags-for-usda-scrapie-eradication-program)  
Contact: Customer Service  
(Plastic ear tags in several colors - regular and SFCP)

**Shearwell North America Inc.**  
5444 Westheimer Road, Suite 1000  
Houston, TX 77056  
Phone: 1-800-778-6014  
Email: SalesUSA@shearwell.com  
Website: [www.shearwell.com](http://www.shearwell.com)  
(RFID and Plastic ear tags in several colors - regular and SFCP)
What’s New in Sheep ID?
March 25, 2019 Federal Regulation Changes

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).

Other changes include:
If you engage in interstate commerce:
(WHICH MEANS 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.

Moving sheep or goats that are not in Slaughter channels?
Official Individual ID (official eartag, registry or flock ID tattoo, or official Electronic Implantable ID) is required for sheep and goats in interstate commerce moving for purposes other than slaughter with some exceptions.¹

There are additional requirements for use of tattoos and implants. View the presentation at www.EradicateScrapie.org for more information. Official eartags, rather than other forms of official ID, are required for sheep and goats moving through markets or buying stations.

Call 866-USDA-TAG to get official tags and Tag it!

Created for the Goat Industry by staff at the University of Minnesota, College of Veterinary Medicine and NIAA Staff with support from the USDA NSEP.
Do not buy or sell sheep or goats 18 months of age or older for any purpose unless they have official ID.  

### Moving sheep or goats in slaughter channels?
- Complete an Owner/Hauler Statement to accompany the animals (except wethers under 18 months of age); and
- Eartag sheep and goats 18 months of age or older unless moving them as a single source group/lot.

**NOTE:** Tattoos and electronic implants may not be used to officially ID sheep or goats that are in slaughter channels or that are moving through a livestock market or buying station.

### Exceptions to individual official ID requirement:
- Wethers under 18 months of age: NO ID or Owner/Hauler Statement required.
- Sheep or goats in slaughter channels under 18 months of age accompanied by an Owner/Hauler Statement and Group/Lot ID (may be mixed source).
- Sheep or goats moving as a single source group/lot accompanied by an Owner/Hauler Statement to:
  > an approved livestock market.
  > slaughter establishment.
  > other premises of the flock listed in the National Scrapie Database, or
  > another site in-state where they will be officially identified prior to change of ownership.

### Q. Sheep or goat crossing a state line and not in slaughter channels?
A. Get an ICVI: Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection issued by an Accredited Veterinarian.

**Exceptions:**
- wethers under 18 months of age;
- sheep or goats moving to another premises of the same flock listed in the National Scrapie Database;
- sheep or goats moving to a federally approved market.

Note: Some states also require an ICVI for in-state shows and wethers for exhibition.

### A record must be made when official ID is applied to a sheep or goat, or a sheep or goat is acquired or disposed.

The record must be kept for five years after the animal dies or is no longer owned by you.

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National Institute for Animal Agriculture  
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Phone: 719-538-8843 • Fax: 719-538-8847   Email: scrapie@animalagriculture.org
What’s New in Goat ID?
March 25, 2019 Federal Regulation Changes

The slaughter and low-risk commercial goat exemptions have been eliminated.

This means official Individual ID (official eartag, registry or flock ID tattoo, or official Electronic Implantable ID) is required for goats in interstate commerce moving for purposes other than slaughter or feeding for slaughter. Official eartags, rather than other forms of official ID, are required for goats in slaughter channels that are 18 months of age or older. See exceptions below.¹

There are additional requirements for use of tattoos and implants. View the presentation at www.EradicateScrapie.org for more information.

Other changes include:
If you engage in interstate commerce: (WHICH MEANS 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.

Call 866-USDA-TAG to get official tags and Tag it!

If you own a premise where interstate commerce of goats or sheep occurs: (DEFINED AS: a premises which receives sheep or goats that have been in interstate commerce or from which sheep or goats move in interstate commerce)
• Goats (of a class that requires official ID) that are not already officially identified need to be officially identified when they are unloaded.

Group/Lot ID and Owner/Hauler Statement are required for:
• Goats in slaughter channels (except wethers under 18 months of age)
• Goats not in slaughter channels that do not have an official eartag or other official ID (except wethers under 18 months of age)

Created for the Goat Industry by staff at the University of Minnesota, College of Veterinary Medicine and NIAA Staff with support from the USDA NSEP.
Q. Goats crossing a state line and not in slaughter channels?
A. Get an ICVI: Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection issued by an Accredited Veterinarian.

Exceptions:
• wethers under 18 months of age;
• goats moving to another premises of the same flock listed in the National Scrapie Database;
• goats moving to a federally approved market

Note: Some states also require an ICVI for instate shows and wethers for exhibition.

Moving goats in slaughter channels?
Complete an Owner/Hauler Statement to accompany the animals (except wethers under 18 months of age). Eartag goats 18 months of age or older unless moving them as a single source group/lot.

Tattoos and electronic implants may not be used to officially ID goats that are in slaughter channels or that are moving through a livestock market or buying station.

Exceptions to individual official ID requirement:
• Wethers under 18 months of age: NO ID or Owner/Hauler Statement required.
• Goats in slaughter channels under 18 months of age accompanied by an Owner/Hauler Statement and Group/Lot ID (may be mixed source).
• Goats moving as a single source group/lot accompanied by an Owner/Hauler Statement to:
  > an approved livestock market.
  > slaughter establishment.
  > other premises of the flock listed in the National Scrapie Database, or
  > another site in-state where they will be officially identified prior to change of ownership.
• Earless goats may have the eartag applied to a neck collar as long as the collar or eartag must be cut to be removed (be careful to allow for the growth of the animal).
• Backtags may be used for direct slaughter movement from a market:
  > When applied near the poll on earless goats, or
  > When applied on the back or near the poll on horned buck goats deemed too dangerous to eartag.

A record must be made when official ID is applied to a goat or a goat is acquired or disposed.

The record must be kept for five years after the animal dies or is no longer owned by you.