

SCRAPIE: ERADICATE IT

The sheep industry's scrapie eradication efforts.



June 2012

The goal of the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and the U.S. sheep industry is to eradicate scrapie from our borders by 2017. In addition, it is the objective to have the United States recognized as scrapie free in accordance with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). This quarterly publication is created specifically for those of you in the field who are also working to achieve this goal.

This newsletter brings together, into one spot, current information from all 50 states, as well as from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and any other organization providing scrapie news, and reports it back to the field.

If you have first-hand accounts that you believe would be relevant for others to read or have information that you would like included in this newsletter, please email judym@sheepusa.org.

Surveillance in Goats

A potential stumbling block to scrapie eradication has been identified that needs to be addressed. Last fiscal year, for the first time, there were more scrapie field cases in goats than in sheep. In FY 2008 and 2011, two significant scrapie outbreaks occurred in goats involving a total of 18 positive goats. The initial case in each outbreak was discovered through owner submission of a suspect animal. In one outbreak, while sheep had resided on the farm years earlier, none of the positive goats had come in contact with sheep. In the other outbreak, the positive goats no longer resided with sheep. This indicates that to eradicate scrapie from the United States it will be necessary to conduct slaughter surveillance in goats similar to what is being done for sheep. The current goat identification rules are inadequate to allow for effective slaughter surveillance in goats. To address this situation USDA is planning to publish a proposed rule that will consider making the identification requirements for goats similar to those currently in place for sheep.

Importance of Record Keeping

It is important for producers to keep good records of sales and purchases. Last year, two positive sheep could not be traced due to poor records. Since the incubation period for scrapie is typically three to five years, it is critical that producers keep purchase and sales records for at least five years.

Producer Help

USDA needs help from producers to get surveillance samples to test from flocks and herds that sell cull animals only through nontraditional markets. USDA is asking for owners of these types of flocks or herds to submit the heads of animals found dead between 30 and 52 months of age to the state diagnostic laboratory for scrapie testing. This is especially true if the sheep are of a black-face meat breed or if they have been commingled with ewes of a black-face meat breed even if the commingling occurred several years ago.

In the recent goat cases, there was a history of Suffolk sheep having been commingled with the goats years before the positive goat cases were found. Likewise it is critical that all producers notify their state veterinarian's office or their area USDA Veterinary Services office (866-873-2824) if they have a sheep or goat over 18 months of age with neurological signs such as incoordination, behavioral changes or severe frequent rubbing with wool loss and thickened or abraded skin.

Producers can prevent scrapie by maintaining a flock/herd closed to female additions, increasing genetic resistance and/or only purchasing ewes that are genetically resistant or from certified scrapie-free flocks/herds.

Animals Sampled for Scrapie Testing Sheep and Goats

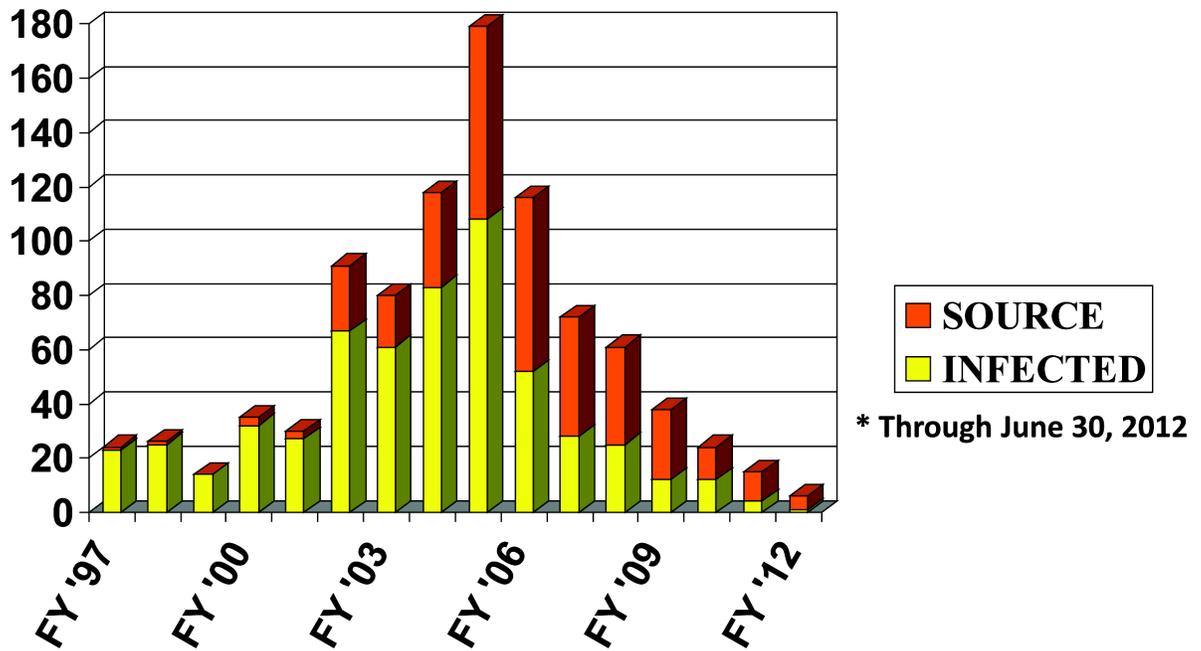
As of June 30, 2012

31,176 animals have been sampled for scrapie testing: 30,117 RSSS and 1,059 on-farm samples

Infected and Source Flocks

New Statuses by Year

*FY 1997 – FY 2012**



Scrapie Confirmed Cases* in FY 2012

As of June 30, 2012



*Reported by State of ID tag. Collected in FY 2012 and confirmed as of July 15, 2012.
 Note: Field cases include animals removed from infected/source flocks, so state totals often include several animals from the same flock.

Classical Scrapie Confirmed Cases in FY 2012 *As of June 30, 2012*

STATE	SHEEP		GOATS	
	RSSS	On-Farm	RSSS	On-Farm
KY	1	0	0	0
MI	1	1	0	0
OH	1	3	0	0
OK	1	0	0	0
PA	0	4	0	0
UT	1	2	0	0
TOTAL ALL STATES	5	10	0	0

Nor98-like cases for FY 2012 as of June 30, 2012 = 0

Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS) Statistics

Since April 1, 2003

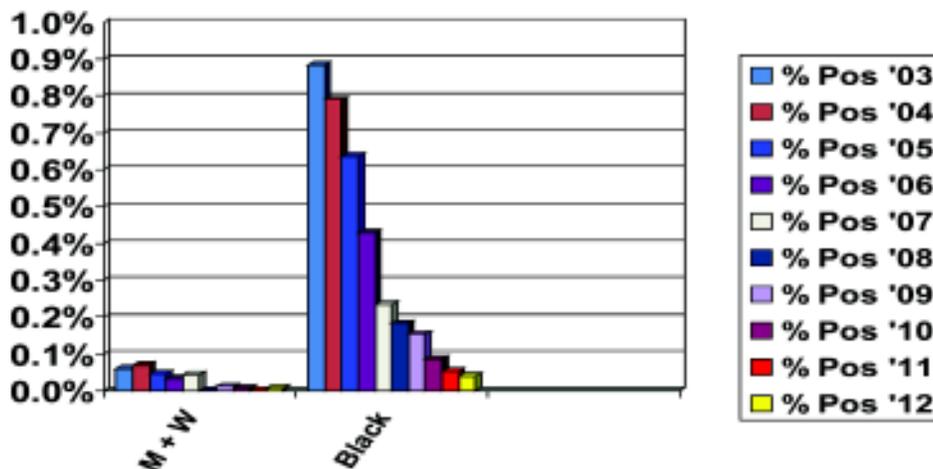
344,009 samples collected
460 NVSL* confirmed positives

As of June 30, 2012

30,117 samples collected (3,229 from goats)
5 NVSL confirmed positives (classical); 1 (Nor98-like)

*National Veterinary Services Laboratories

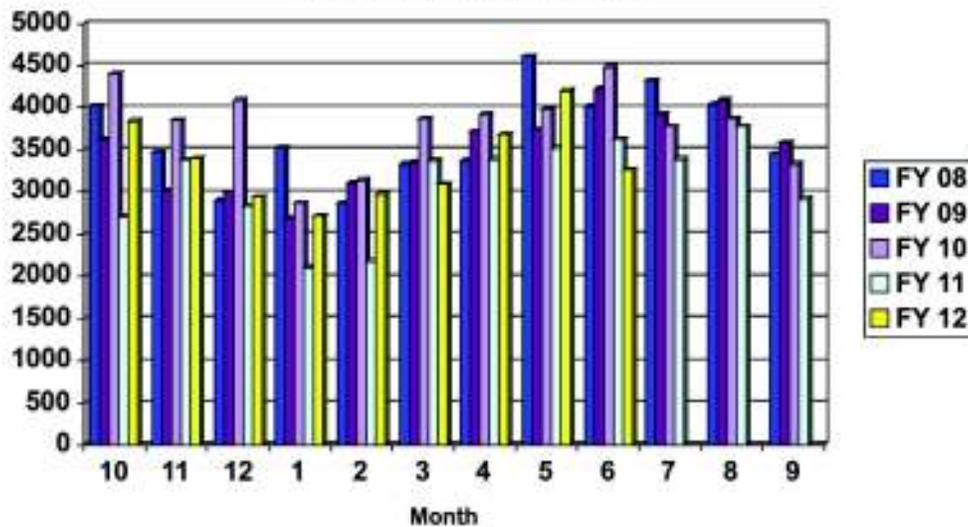
Percent of RSSS Samples that Tested Positive for Classical Scrapie by Face Color *Fiscal Year (2003 – 2012*)*



* Through June 30, 2012—Adjusted to exclude multiple positive animals from same flock. Mottled- and white-faced combined. Does not include Nor98-like scrapie cases found through RSSS (2 in FY 2007, 1 in FY 2008, 4 in FY 2010, 1 in FY 2011). The slight increase in white- and mottle-faced sheep in FY 2012 is not statistically meaningful due to sample size.

Slaughter Surveillance Samples Collected by Month

Fiscal Year 2008 to 2012



Scrapie Flock Certification Program: Participating Flocks As of May 31, 2012



Websites Dedicated to the Eradication of Scrapie

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie

Maryland Small Ruminant Page: www.sheepandgoat.com/scrapie.html

National Institute of Animal Agriculture: www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie/scrapie.htm

Scrapie SharePoint: <http://animalhealth/scrapie/default.aspx>

(Federal employees can access this password-protected site by emailing earl.t.thorpe@aphis.usda.gov to receive a password.

State employees can request a copy on CD.)

