

# What Producers Need To Know About Scrapie

## What Is Scrapie?

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. It is in the same class of diseases as bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle and chronic wasting disease in elk and deer. There is no cure or treatment for scrapie. Since 1947, when scrapie was first diagnosed in the United States, more than 90 percent of all cases have occurred in black-faced sheep (primarily in the Suffolk and Hampshire breeds). However, scrapie can infect all breeds of sheep, as well as goats. Most cases of goat scrapie have been related to goats coming in contact with infected sheep. Disease transmission occurs primarily from an infected female to her offspring and other lambs or kids exposed to the birth fluids, placenta, or bedding soiled by the birth fluids. Male sheep and goats can contract scrapie but cannot spread the disease.

## What Signs Should I Look For?

Clinical signs of scrapie include:

- Weight loss despite a healthy appetite,
- Increased sensitivity to noise/motion,
- High-stepping gait of the forelimbs,
- Bunny-hop movement of the rear limbs,
- Swaying of the back end,
- Loss of coordination,
- Biting at legs or side,
- Behavioral changes,
- Intense rubbing that results in wool loss,
- Wool pulling,
- Tremors,
- Lip smacking,
- Weakness (may be unable to stand), and
- Death.

These symptoms may be confused with pregnancy toxemia, lice, mites, brain abscesses or tumors, trauma, pneumonia, toxins, rabies, and pseudorabies.

## What Is Required?

The National Scrapie Eradication Program, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), is a mandatory program that began in 2001 and requires participation by all sheep and goat producers. Producers must follow Federal and State regulations for officially identifying their sheep and goats. In Alabama, sheep and goats must be identified with an eartag or tattoo prior to selling them or transporting them from their place of birth. Records of tags or other official identification applied, sales, and acquisitions must be kept for 5 years. White plastic eartags and a tag applicator are available free of charge from USDA-APHIS' Veterinary Services office. When you request tags, your flock/herd will be assigned an Alabama Flock/Herd ID number (AL number) that will be printed on the tags. See information at right for other key details about the requirements.

## All Sheep and Goats

- Must be identified **before a change of ownership** by any method (private treaty, transport to livestock market, transport to slaughter facility) and **prior to transport across State lines.**
- Must be identified **before transport to a show, fair, petting zoo, or exhibition.**

## Registry Tattoos

- Registered goats that have a legible registry tattoo accompanied by a copy of the registration certificate do not require a scrapie tag if their tattoo is registered as a unique entity with the breed association and USDA-APHIS' Veterinary Services office.

## What Else Can I Do To Protect My Animals?

The Scrapie Certification Program (SFCP) is a voluntary program. Producers must submit a specific request in writing to participate. There are two categories within the SFCP: the Export Monitored Category, which can qualify the flock/herd for export out of the United States, and the Select Monitored Category, which has less stringent requirements. The SFCP may be advantageous to purebred sheep and goat producers, club lamb producers, and those producers interested in export.



**Alabama Scrapie Eradication Program  
Flock ID Application/Tag Order/Tattoo Registration Form**

For questions about scrapie or ordering your tags,  
please call 866-USDA-TAG (1-866-873-2824).

Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Street Address (where sheep/goats are located): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_, AL Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Adult Goats: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Adult Sheep: \_\_\_\_\_

My goats are identified with a registered tattoo. My tattoo is: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Breeds of Sheep and/or Goats: \_\_\_\_\_

Send me information on the Scrapie Flock Certification Program:

- Select Monitored Category
- Export Category

Have you ordered Scrapie Eradication Tags previously?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what is your USDA-assigned Flock/Herd ID? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have been assigned one, what is your

National Premise ID? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tags requested:

10  20  40  60  80  100  Other amount \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form to the following address:**

Animal Industries  
1445 Federal Drive, Room 126  
Montgomery, AL 36107

**Or, you may email or fax this form to:**

scrapie@agi.alabama.gov  
(334) 240-3793



### Learn More

For more information about scrapie, the National Scrapie Eradication Program, or the SFCP, contact:

Dr. Cindy Brasfield  
Designated Scrapie Epidemiologist  
USDA/APHIS/Veterinary Services  
1445 Federal Drive  
Montgomery, AL 36107  
Phone: (866) 873-2824  
Fax: (334) 240-3793  
Email: [cynthia.m.brasfield@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:cynthia.m.brasfield@aphis.usda.gov)

A wealth of information is also available on APHIS' Web site at [www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_diseases/scrapie](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie).

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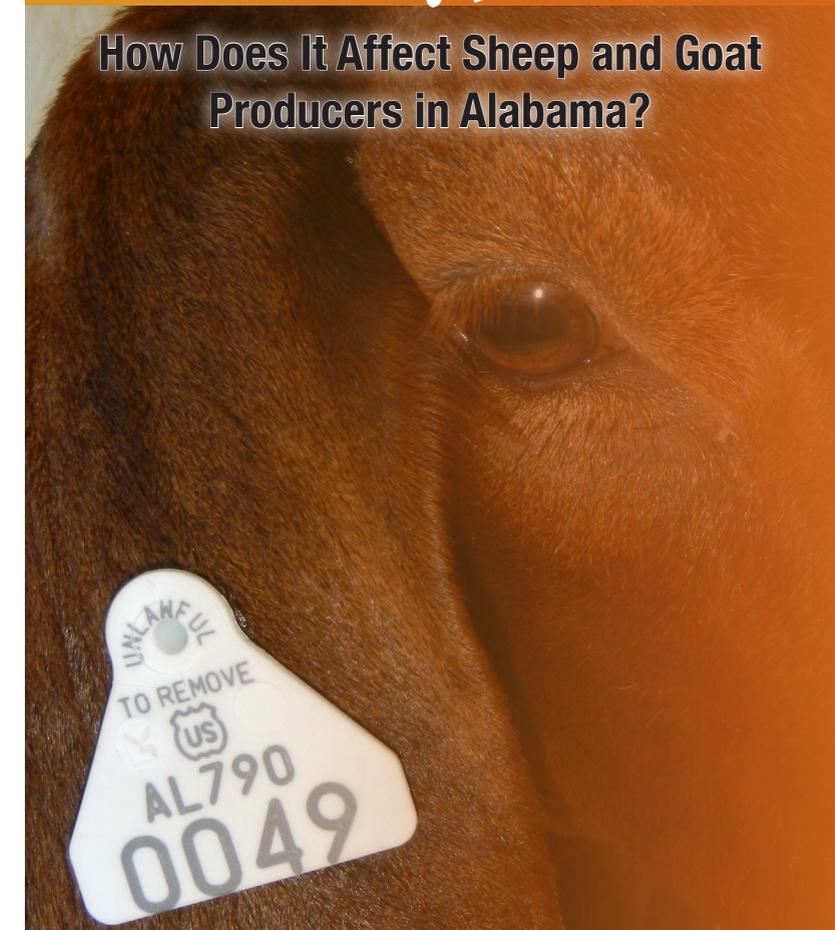


Animal Industries  
1445 Federal Drive, Room 126  
Montgomery, AL 36107  
Phone: (334) 240-7215  
Fax: (334) 240-3793

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture  
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# SCRAPIE

## How Does It Affect Sheep and Goat Producers in Alabama?



**ALABAMA**  
**MEAT GOAT & SHEEP PRODUCERS**  
A DIVISION OF ALABAMA FARMERS FEDERATION