

Sheep & Goat HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Spring 2005

Transitioning Scrapie Eradication ID to NAIS

With the announcement of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) "thinking paper" on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), the sheep and goat industries are in a unique position with the success of the Scrapie Eradication Program. The program currently manages premises and individual identification for sheep and goats, which could make for an easy transition into NAIS.

"The main comments we're hearing from sheep and goat producers are to 'take care of it,' as the NAIS-relevant information has already been reported to the scrapie database," said Dr. Diane Sutton, senior staff veterinarian for USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection

Service (APHIS). "Over the next year and a half, we expect that producers will see very little change in sheep and goat ID requirements."

APHIS will be providing states the opportunity to automatically assign NAIS premises identification numbers (PIN) based on information collected in the scrapie database. States may also contact producers and register them manually. Sutton says approximately 98,000 premises are in the scrapie database, and estimates that approximately twice that many exist across the country.

In terms of tags, several research projects are evaluating electronic tags, looking for a cost-effective solution that will not hinder commerce. However an inexpensive electronic tag is not yet available.

"Long term, we want one identification program," said Sutton. "The tags we will use for NAIS will also be compliant within the scrapie program."

USDA has addressed some frequently asked questions regarding scrapie IDs transitioning to NAIS.

What is the difference between the scrapie premises identification number (PIN), also known as the flock ID, and the NAIS PIN?

The NAIS PIN is based on the physical location where animals are housed. Animals and individual animal numbers are then associated with this location during the timeframes they reside there.

A scrapie PIN is assigned to an epidemiologic unit of animals.

USDA Unveils "Thinking Paper" on NAIS

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Scrapie PINs are often referred to as flock IDs by producers and are currently printed on official scrapie program ear tags. Unlike the NAIS PIN, the scrapie PIN—or flock ID—does not necessarily tie directly to a single location. It is assigned based on whether a group of sheep or goats is managed as a distinct unit with respect to scrapie risk or to facilitate program management. Animals assigned to one flock ID could be housed at three or four geographically distinct premises.

The flock ID is linked to another number in the Scrapie National Generic Database (SNGD) that represents the actual location of the flock. Currently, this SNGD "location number" is not the same as the NAIS PIN.

What can NAIS Administrators/State Veterinarians do to assist during the transition?

- Register premises for the NAIS using the information currently in the SNGD and provide the newly assigned NAIS PIN to APHIS.
- Ask sheep and goat producers for their scrapie PIN, record that number, and provide APHIS with an associated NAIS PIN.
- If, when registering a premises for NAIS and assigning a NAIS PIN to a

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USDA Unveils NAIS "Thinking Paper"

Seeks Comment from Industry by July 6

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has unveiled a "thinking paper" and timeline on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and called on agriculture producers, leaders, and industry partners to provide feedback. Both documents are available on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's NAIS Web site at www.usda.gov/nais and have been published in the *Federal Register*.

"The documents we're releasing today offer a draft plan to move the public discussion forward on this important initiative," said Johanns

on May 5. "We created these documents with guidance from the NAIS advisory committee and with a great deal of input from producers. We're proposing answers to some of the key questions about how we envision this system moving forward. Now, I'm eager to hear from farmers and ranchers so we can develop a final plan."

A comprehensive description of system standards will be determined over time through field trials, user experience and the federal rulemaking process. These documents lay out in more detail projected timelines and potential avenues to achieve system milestones. For example, these documents propose requiring stakeholders to identify premises and animals according to NAIS standards by January 2008. Requiring full recording of defined animal movements is proposed by January 2009.

The *Federal Register* notice acknowledges the outstanding concerns of some stakeholders and frames questions for which USDA will be seeking answers as it moves forward with the NAIS. These ques-

To comment...

Via mail...

Send an original and three copies of comments to Docket No. 05-015-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Via the Internet...

An easy link to the NAIS docket and comment form will be available on the NAIS home page at www.usda.gov/nais.

tions pertain to funding for the system, confidentiality of data in the system and flexibility of the system, among other things.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before July 6, 2005.

Once USDA receives feedback on the documents, it will follow the normal rulemaking process before any aspects of the NAIS become mandatory. The public will have the opportunity to submit additional comments on any proposed regulations. ●



Sheep & Goat Health Report

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Sheep & Goat Health Report provides the latest information on issues pertinent to sheep and goat health initiatives, strategies, research and regulatory action.

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2009 Goal for Mandatory ID

In giving a progress report on development of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS), U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Bill Hawks, reassured the industry that mandatory

participation would not be put in place until all confidentially issues had been resolved, though the administration hopes to make this a reality by 2009.

Hawks addressed the members of the Animal Identification and



Undersecretary Hawks

Information Systems Committee for the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) at their annual meeting in April.

Regarding the confidentiality issue, which has been a concern for some in the industry, the Bush Administration has sent a bill to Congress that would exempt the data collected for NAIS from the Freedom of Information Act.

Hawks urged the industry to actively support this legislation. ●

Scrapie Transition *(continued from page 1)*

premises with sheep or goats, it is determined that a producer does not have a scrapie PIN, encourage the producer to call 866-USDA-TAG and request a scrapie PIN and provide their NAIS PIN.

- Advise producers to continue to order USDA-provided sheep and goat tags by calling 866-USDA-TAG. Also, inform them that the producer-purchased sheep and goat tags can still be acquired directly from the approved tag companies.

What will happen after the transition to NAIS?

- After the transition, the NAIS PIN will replace the scrapie location number in the SNGD. So when a flock moves as a unit, the scrapie

PIN may remain the same and can be associated with a new NAIS PIN.

- By August 2005, APHIS projects that companies producing scrapie-approved tags that are NAIS compliant will become NAIS animal identification number managers.
- Should NAIS become mandatory, official sheep and goat tags that are not compliant with NAIS will no longer be provided.
- However, scrapie program tags acquired by producers before the transition will remain valid for the identification of sheep and goats.

The complete NAIS: Sheep and Goat Q & A can be viewed on the Internet at www.animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/audiences/sheep_qa_factsheet.shtml. ●

PREMISES by the Numbers...

47 states have premises registration capability, recording more than 76,997 premises across the country as of May 26.

Canada, U.S., Mexico Announce Harmonized BSE Approach

On April 1, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that Canada, Mexico and the United States have established a harmonized approach to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) risk mitigation to more effectively address any BSE risk in North America.

This science-based framework of risk management measures for BSE was developed with the objective to help normalize trade in ruminants and ruminant products within North America and to promote an international BSE strategy consistent with World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines. The strategy also represents the integrated North

American approach that will be presented to the OIE as part of any further discussions to promote international harmonization of BSE risk mitigation measures through the OIE.

The minimum standards defined in the report have not been codified throughout North America. Rather, they will be considered by the appropriate animal health and public health officials in each country through their respective regulatory processes. These recommendations do not change the requirements in place for products currently being traded. The report is available on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov. ●

ID/INFO EXPO 2005 Slated for September in Chicago

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) will host ID/INFO EXPO 2005, September 27-29. The event will be held at the Crown Plaza Chicago



O'Hare Hotel.

A conference and trade show devoted to animal identification and information systems technology, ID/INFO EXPO 2005 will focus largely on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), an industry/state/federal collaborative effort, under development by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The one-of-a-kind trade show will showcase a variety of animal identification manufacturers and information systems service providers.

"With the success of the 2004 meeting, NIAA considered the need for an ID/INFO EXPO in 2005," said Dr. Robert Fourdraine, NIAA Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee chair. "Based upon overwhelming interest and support to host another meeting, we see it as a valuable forum to advance implementation of a national system."

Preliminary program and registration information is currently available from NIAA. Individuals seeking more information can log on to the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org. Early registration and NIAA member discounts are available. ●

Cost-Share Program Helps Sheep Owners Control Scrapie

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made available funding for states to conduct genotype testing to control the spread of scrapie. Indiana is one of those states with a cooperative agreement to help producers share in the cost of the testing. The program, launched in early May, tests sheep for susceptibility of scrapie.

Under the program, sheep owners will be reimbursed for testing fees and some veterinary expenses for up to five animals within a flock. While that doesn't sound like a lot of animals, Indiana Board of Animal Health (BOAH) Scrapie Director Cheryl Miller, DVM, explains that the test results can be far-reaching.

"We're encouraging, but not requiring, flock owners to test their rams for scrapie susceptibility. Because a ram will sire many more off-spring than any individual ewe, the genetic makeup of that male will have a broader impact on a flock, or multiple flocks, if he's leased or loaned to other flocks," explained Dr. Miller.

What's more, by providing expense reimbursement for five animals per flock, the available USDA dollars that are underwriting this program can be extended to a greater number of farms.

According to Dr. Miller, Indiana's program differs somewhat from those in other states because producers who do not have five rams can still participate by testing ewes. "Many Hoosier flocks do not have a resident ram," she said, "but we still want to provide an opportunity for those owners to participate."

The blood test, known as codon 171 testing, identifies genetic markers that make an animal susceptible to scrapie and may be passed on to lambs. Owners who know the genetic makeup of their breeding stock can make better management decisions to eliminate the susceptibility trait from their flocks. By selecting scrapie-resistant bloodlines, shepherds can add value to their flocks.

Producers who want to participate must call BOAH for pre-approval. A licensed and accredited veterinarian must collect blood samples for tests to be completed at any of nine USDA-approved laboratories.

After testing is complete and results are received, the flock owner must submit a payment request to BOAH, along with copies of paid receipts and test results, for reimbursement.

Not all states have a cooperative agreement with APHIS, but the American Sheep Industry Association is cooperating with APHIS to provide cost-sharing for producers in those states. ASI will reimburse \$12 per ram tested in the program, with the submission of APHIS, VS Form 5-29. Log on to the Internet at www.sheepusa.org for more information, or contact your state veterinarian. ●

Quarterly Scrapie Report

The latest scrapie statistics are available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. As of March 31, there were 70 infected and source flocks in the U.S. that are not cleaned up (this number includes flocks identified last year and FY2005). They reside in the following states: California (1), Utah (2), Idaho (3), Montana (1), Colorado (7), South Dakota (12), Kansas (1), Texas (3), Minnesota (8), Missouri (1), Illinois (5), Indiana (3), Michigan (6), Ohio (10), Kentucky (2), West Virginia (1), Virginia (2), Delaware (1) and Maryland (1). Eleven new infected and source flocks were reported, found in Idaho, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky.

For FY 2005, a total of 51 flocks have been identified as infected

and source flocks, while 39 have been released this year. A total of 225 cases have been reported through field cases, the Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS), necropsy validation and 3rd eyelid for FY 2005. In March, a total of 57 new scrapie cases were reported.

From Oct. 1, 2004 to March 31 2005, 14,229 animals were tested for scrapie. The report breakdown is as follows:

- RSSS: 11,995
- Regulatory Field Cases: 1805
- Necropsy Validations: 80
- 3rd Eyelid Biopsy Validations: 10
- Regulatory 3rd eyelid biopsies: 339

More information on the Scrapie Eradication Program is available on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/sheep.htm.

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Emerging Zoonoses and Pathogens Review Available

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has made available a scientific and technical review, titled *Emerging Zoonoses and Pathogens of Public Health Concerns*. The interdependence of people and animals and the many different factors controlling this relationship have converged to create an environment that is conducive to the emergence of zoonotic pathogens. Understanding this relationship and the ability to create new and more effective relationships with the public health sector is crucial

for those involved in animal health.

The OIE's review describes and explains a numbers of important emerging zoonoses and the factors that have both created their emergence and challenged national veterinary services, and the OIE itself, to become more engaged and responsive to these issues. The review also highlights the dangers of constant adaptability of pathogens to survive and infect populations of animals and people, and to rapidly move between these host populations.

The review can be ordered on the Internet at www.oie.int, or via email at pub.sales@oie.int. The cost

is 50 Euros, or about \$65 USD.

Sheep Numbers Increase in 2004

U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Jim Butler delivered good news to participants at the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) annual convention when he announced that the number of replacement lambs under one year of age had increased 10 percent over the last year. Butler provided this information from the newly published Sheep and Goats Report released in January by the National

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ASI Supports Scrapie Appropriations

The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) has announced support for President Bush's 2006 appropriations budget request of \$19.2 million for scrapie eradication.

In a statement submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies, ASI President Paul Frischknecht began by emphasizing the industry's appreciation for the increased appropriations for the eradication of scrapie to \$17.7 million in the fiscal year 2005 budget.

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), along with industry and state regulatory efforts, is now in the position to eradicate scrapie from the United States with a multi-year attack on this animal health issue," stated Frischknecht.

As the collective and aggressive efforts of federal and state eradica-

tion work has expanded into slaughter-surveillance and other methods and systems, the costs are, as expected, escalating. The industry urged the Subcommittee to support the President's request of \$19.2 million for scrapie eradication in the 2006 budget.

Scrapie is one of the families of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy's (TSEs), all of which are the subject of great importance and interest around the globe. USDA, APHIS, with the support and assistance of the livestock and allied industries, began an aggressive program to eradicate scrapie in sheep and goats three years ago.

The plan will eradicate scrapie by 2010 and with subsequent monitoring and surveillance would allow the World Animal Health Organization (OIE) to declare the United States scrapie-free by 2017. Becoming scrapie-free will have significant, positive-economic impact

to the livestock, meat and feed industries and, of course, rid flocks and herds of this fatal animal disease.

Essential to the eradication effort being accomplished in a timely manner is adequately appropriated funds. According to ASI, the program cannot function properly without additional personnel, diagnostic support and surveillance activities that depend upon appropriated funds. Funding of \$19.2 million will provide for an achievable scrapie eradication program and the eventual scrapie-free status for the United States.

"In an effort to support the President's increased appropriations for the key USDA sheep programs, including the National Scrapie Eradication Program, I encourage state associations to continue contacting congressional delegations on this critical issue," said Peter Orwick, ASI executive director. ●

NIAA Sheep & Goat Health Committee Announces Johne's Position

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) Sheep and Goat Health Committee met during the organization's annual meeting in St. Paul, Minn., on April 5. Key outcomes from the meeting include the adoption of a new position statement by the committee focusing on Johne's Disease and its relationship to sheep and goats. The position reads:

Johne's Disease

POSITION STATEMENT: *In light of the needed progress for existing small ruminant-based Johne's research, NIAA encourages expanded financial support for diagnostic, surveillance, and immunologic research programs.* The committee also reaffirmed five existing resolutions. All NIAA Sheep and Goat Resolutions and Position Statements can be found on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/aboutNIAA/Resolutions/Sheep&Goat.asp.

A variety of speakers also addressed the committee on key issues facing the sheep and goat industries. Presenters included:

Dr. Susan McClanahan discussed Q-Fever. Q-Fever is a significant zoonosis of unknown prevalence in this country. Dr. McClanahan suggested that the industry needs to gain a better understanding of the pathogen.

Dr. Meg Oeller spoke on the plans and activities of the newly formed Office of Minor Use Minor Species as it pertains to sheep and goats.

Dr. LaRue Johnson provided an overview of foreign animal diseases that potentially threaten sheep and



Dr. Larue Johnson

goats in the USA including an orientation to the existing materials (CDs) dealing with the subject: Dr. Johnson cited the three most useful references for learning about and staying current regarding sheep and goat foreign animal diseases.

- "Gray Book" produced by USAHA and available online;
- "Color Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of the Sheep and Goat" by Linklater, K.A. and Smith, M.C.; Mosby-Year Book Europe Limited, England. The book offers a very thorough color atlas of lesions; and
- Jim Reynolds' PowerPoint presented at 2004 ADGA meeting, found at www.aasrp.org.

Dr. Mike Bishop presented "The Use of RFID in Sheep Operations, Sales and Shows: Tags, Readers and Computer Software." Dr. Bishop outlined the WLIC-funded Sheep ID project. The objectives of this project are: To date the investigators are testing 5 EID tags (134.2 kHz and 13.56 MHz) and readers. They will continue to investigate the function of EID in ewes and lambs including 600 show lambs.

Drs. Diane Sutton and Gary Ross provided a review of the Accelerated Scrapie Eradication Program activities. Dr. Sutton presented the Eradication Program statistics. Dr. Ross presented information on the DNA collection tags. He also presented the application of the handheld computerized field equipment as well as proposed refinements for the future, such as the potential use of the digital pen.

Dr. Sutton distributed a USDA memo explaining details of the transition from Scrapie flock ID number to the NAIS premises number (*see page 1*).

Vince Maefsky, spoke from a producer's perspective, offering a visit to a large goat dairy in the U.S.

Dr. Cindy Wolf, discussed the U.K. sheep electronic ID activities and how the U.S. can benefit from the U.K. experience. Dr. Wolf presented a brief synopsis of a fact-finding trip to the U.K. to learn about the U.K.'s electronic identification/electronic data transfer (EID/EDT) field trials, noting that the EID/EDT technology appears to need improvement to be a reliable source for on-farm use.



Dr. Gary Ross, left, and Dr. David Glauer discuss a tag during a session break.

These presentations can be viewed on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/Proceedings/2005AMProceedings.asp, simply click on the "Sheep & Goat Health Committee" link. The committee is chaired by Dr. Cindy Wolf, University of Minnesota, and Dr. Larue Johnson, American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, serves as vice chair. ●

Dealing with Parasite Drug Resistance

Drug resistance has become a serious problem in the major sheep and goat rearing areas of the world. Resistance to all the chemical classes of dewormers has also been described in some flocks of sheep and goats in the United States. If resistance develops to all three chemical classes of dewormers, it may be very difficult to graze sheep on that property. We now have evidence that indicates that resistance to the macrocyclic lactone (avermectins and moxidectin) class of anthelmintics (a medication capable of causing the evacuation of parasitic intestinal worms) may be widespread in goats, and further evidence that it is present in sheep flocks in several areas of the U.S. Alarming, the international literature suggests that no new chemical classes of anthelmintics are being developed for the sheep (and goat) industries.¹ If producers and veterinarians are not willing to address this issue beyond that of expanded extra label drug use, we may soon be in crisis.

Total reliance on anthelmintics for worm control will inevitably result in resistance. Given that we probably have no new anthelmintic classes in the pharmacologic pipeline, sustainable parasite control will only be possible by relying on a reduction in the use of chemicals and adoption of other forms of control that lessen their need or reduce selection pressure in the worm population.

Alternate species grazing takes advantage of the species specificity of sheep trichostrongylids and allows a reduction in drug usage. Work in Australia has suggested that alternating sheep and cattle on pastures can significantly reduce drug use and still maintain an acceptable level of productivity in both species.

If sheep (especially lambs) are likely to be infected, they can be treated and moved to pastures previously used by cattle. Depending on the particular grazing situation, they may remain with low worm burdens and relatively low pasture larval buildup for several months. Although this is somewhat like a treat and move strategy, there is a reduced opportunity for selection for drug resistant worms because the pasture is subsequently used again by cattle that tend to remove the larval burden. By the time the pasture is again used by sheep, residual larvae from eggs deposited by sheep are few-to-none.

A newer strategy parasitologists and some producers are employing involves leaving some parasites "in refugia". This means that a portion of the worms is not subjected to anthelmintics at any given deworming, and they remain to help dilute the resistance genes in the population. The strategy employed takes advantage of the fact that parasite burdens and egg output are not normally distributed but are skewed. Only a few of the sheep in the flock put out most of the eggs. If it was practical to collect samples from all the sheep and deworm only those that were shedding large numbers of eggs, we could keep pasture contamination low, reduce production losses, and minimize selection of worms for anthelmintic resistance. Obviously, this is not practical, and we need a surrogate for the detection of heavy egg shedding/infected individuals.

One of the best studied approaches is called the FAMACHA system which was developed in South Africa.^{2,3} It is currently used for *H. contortus* management only. In this system, a patented eye color chart is used to assess the relative

anemia of sheep and only those with visible signs are dewormed. The cutoff for deworming appears to be when the hematocrit reaches about 18-19 percent. Work thus far indicates that perhaps as few as 25-30 percent of sheep may need to be dewormed during a typical summer, and treatment costs are reduced by about half. In addition, it would appear that tracking sheep that have been dewormed several times may provide a tool for culling those animals that have the least resistance to infection. This system has been introduced to the USA and eye color charts and opportunities for training are available from Dr. Ray Kaplan at the University of Georgia. Experience in the U.S. with typical production systems and trained producers will be necessary for full evaluation of this program. ●

Resources, Additional Reading

1. Sangster NC. *Anthelmintic resistance: past, present and future. Int J Parasitol* 1999;29:115-124; discussion 137-118.
2. Vatta AF, Krecek RC, van der Linde MJ, et al. *Haemonchus spp. in sheep farmed under resource-poor conditions in South Africa--effect on haematocrit, conjunctival mucous membrane colour and body condition. J S Afr Vet Assoc* 2002;73:119-123.
3. van Wyk JA, Bath GF. *The FAMACHA system for managing haemonchosis in sheep and goats by clinically identifying individual animals for treatment. Vet Res* 2002;33:509-529.

Adapted from The Eyes Have It: Modern Approaches to Internal Parasite Control Using Body Condition and the FAMACHA Scoring Systems, William P. Shulaw, Extension Veterinarian, The Ohio State University.

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Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

As of January 1, 2005, replacement lambs under one year of age increased from 702,000 in 2004 to 771,000 in 2005, an increase of 10 percent.

"Reports of growth in sheep numbers is great news for the entire industry and hits a priority goal of ASI to strengthen our industry," stated Peter Orwick, ASI executive director. "It is gratifying to see such positive results in the lamb and wool business from the nine different incentive programs that ASI has provided over the last four years, including the retained breeding ewe-lamb program.

"Industry leaders have committed vast resources to incentives and national programs in an effort to grow the U.S. sheep business, so

this announcement of an increase in the inventory numbers was very positively received," continued Orwick. "The last time the industry experienced a boost in the inventory was back in 1990. More sheep strengthens all sectors of the industry from suppliers to lamb and wool processors and sheep seedstock producers."

First Goat Inventory Released

The National Agricultural Statistic Service has released its first report on goat inventory. The results within the report represent the first annual goat survey. Survey procedures used can be found on page 15 of the report, found at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/nassr/livestock/pgg-bb/shep0105.txt>

All goat inventory in the United States on January 1, 2005, totaled 2.5 million head. Breeding goat inventory totaled 2.1 million head and market goats totaled 0.4 million head. On January 1, 2005, meat and all other goats totaled 1.97 million head, milk goats totaled 283,500 head and angora goats totaled 274,000 head. The 2004 kid crop was 1.67 million head for all goats.

Referendum Keeps Lamb Checkoff Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced the continuation of the Lamb Promotion, Research, and Information Order. Lamb producers, feeders, seedstock producers and first handlers of lamb and lamb products participating in a national referendum from Jan. 31 through Feb. 28 voted in favor of

the order.

Of the 3,490 valid ballots cast, 2,807, or 80 percent, favored the program, while 683, or 20 percent opposed. Additionally, of those persons who cast valid ballots in the referendum, those who favored continuing the program accounted for 84 percent of total lamb production, and those opposed accounted for 16 percent of the total lamb production. The passage of the referendum now makes refunds no longer available.

The goal of the program is to strengthen the position of, and to develop and expand the markets for, ovine animals and ovine products. Under the program, producers, seedstock producers (breeders), feeders and exporters are required to pay an assessment of one-half cent (\$.005) per pound when live ovine animals are sold. The first handler, primarily packers, will pay an additional 30 cents per head on ovine animals purchased for slaughter. Importers are not assessed.

ALB Announces 2005 Grant Program

The American Lamb Board (ALB) is now soliciting 2005 Matching Grant Program proposals. The new application is available at www.americanlamb.com or by calling Rae at (866) 327-5262. According to Chairman Spence Rule, the ALB developed the Matching Grant Program to expand their marketing and promotions activities by creating collaborative partnerships with industry organizations. The projects that have been funded in 2004 have expanded ALB's efforts to educate consumers, retailers and chefs at the local level. ●

**Sheep & Goat
Health Report**
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