Sheep and Goat Identification

Last Modified:

The National Scrapie Eradication Program is providing up to 100 plastic flock ID tags free-of-charge to first time participants in the sheep and goat identification program until available funds are expended. Producers will need to purchase the compatible applicator from the tag manufacturer.

APHIS is working with sheep and goat organizations to encourage the use of electronic identification to improve our Nation’s ability to quickly trace exposed and diseased animals in the event of an outbreak.

We discontinued the availability of no-cost metal tags for producers on August 31, 2019. Dealers and markets may continue to receive metal serial tags at no cost until the available funds are expended. Flock ID tag numbers are the producer’s flock ID assigned by APHIS or the State followed by an individual animal number. Metal serial tag numbers have the State postal abbreviation, two letters followed by four numbers. Plastic serial tags have the State postal abbreviation, a letter and a number in either order, followed by four numbers.

Resources

Using the Telephone Tree

1. When prompted, you will either key in or say the numbers on their telephone keypad corresponding to the two-letter postal abbreviation of the State or Territory where the flock or herd about which you are calling is located. For example, if you're calling about your flock or herd in Texas, you will key in or say “8, 9” to indicate “T, X.” If you're calling about your flock or herd in California, you will key in or say “2, 2” to indicate “C, A.”
2. Once the proper State is identified, you will be asked to key in or say “1” to confirm that it is the correct State. If you inadvertently identified the wrong State, you can key in or say “2” to return to the main menu to identify the correct State. If more than one State is represented by the number combination (for example, both Utah and Vermont are represented by “8, 8” for “U, T” and “V, T” respectively), then you will be asked to select the correct State from the list of options.
3. You will then be routed directly to the correct person to help you.

If you don’t know the postal abbreviation or have difficulty with the tree, you will be routed to a voicemail box where you can leave a message with your name, phone number, and the State or Territory where your sheep or goats are located. These inquiries will be forwarded to the correct State or APHIS Veterinary Services office within 2 business days. **Note: Using this message feature will add significantly to the time required to obtain an answer to your questions because your message must be manually routed to the correct office.**

Please provide any feedback about the routing system to scrapie@usda.gov.

Expand All

Request Official Sheep and Goat Tags

By Phone

To request official sheep and goat tags, a flock or premises ID, or both, call 1-866-USDA-Tag (866-873-2824).

1-866-USDA-TAG has a telephone tree that will gather information to route you to the correct APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) or State office to answer your questions about sheep and goat identification. Learn more about using the telephone tree.

Directly From Approved Tag Manufacturers

Producers and others who handle sheep or goats in commerce who need additional tags or want a different type or color of tag may purchase official plastic, metal, or radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags directly from approved tag manufacturers. A flock or premises ID is required to order tags from these sources. A national premises ID is also required to purchase official 840 RFID tags or implantable devices.

For those who use the APHIS-provided tags, please note that you will need to purchase a compatible applicator.

- Plastic Shearwell tags require the V6 Sheep SET Tag Applicator. Order the applicator by calling 1-800-778-6014 or by completing this order form: Shearwell Data Ltd Sheep Tag Applicator Order Form
- Metal National Band and Tag official identification devices require the 505S applicator. This applicator is available for purchase from the National Band and Tag Company at 859-261-2035.

The companies listed below are approved. These eartags and devices are approved for the official identification of sheep and goats in interstate commerce. There are restrictions on the use of implantable devices; refer to page 55 of the National Scrapie Eradication Program Standards (1.46 MB).

SFCP tags may only be purchased by owners of flocks participating in the Scrapie-Free Flock Certification Program. Regular program tags may be purchased by any producer who has a flock or premises ID.

Approved Companies

Use the dropdown menu to look up approved companies by tag type.

- Select a Term -

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Sheep and Goat Identification Contacts

Popular Links

Importing Live Sheep, Goats, and Germplasm

APHIS regulates the importation of all ruminants and their germplasm (embryos/oocytes, semen, cloning tissue) to prevent the spread of animal diseases.

National Scrapie Eradication Program

Learn about the National Scrapie Eradication Program and related disease information, including the Scrapie-Free Flock Certification Program and submitting samples for scrapie testing.

Registry Tattoos Approved for Use as Official ID for the Scrapie Program

The Code of Federal Regulations part 79.2 and the National Scrapie Eradication Program Standards allow sheep and goats to be officially identified with registry tattoos for movement in interstate commerce with some exceptions.

Interstate Animal Movement Requirements

View information about State import requirements for livestock.

Educational Materials

Title	Type	Description	Other Versions

Animal ID and Recordkeeping for Sheep and Goats (PDF) (192.84 KB)	Factsheet	Overview of Federal regulations for animal identification and recordkeeping	Not applicable
Example Owner/Hauler Statement for Sheep and Goats (PDF) (165.17 KB)	Form/Template	Required documentation for sheep and goats moving through interstate commerce	Afrikaans (144.61 KB) Arabic (176.56 KB) Portuguese (141.01 KB) Spanish (143.2 KB) Turkish (207.62 KB)
Attention Sheep and Goat Owners! (PDF) (9.77 MB)	Poster	Summarizes key information about identification requirements and how to obtain scrapie tags	Afrikaans (16.29 MB) Arabic (16.4 MB) Farsi (16.42 MB) Portuguese (8.02 MB) Spanish (16.58 MB) Turkish (16.37 MB)

Federal Sheep and Goat Official Identification Decision Tree for Animals in Interstate Commerce (PDF) (87.62 KB)	Decision Tree	Supplemental visual to help animal owners and others understand the Federal regulations for sheep and goat identification	Afrikaans (45.21 KB) Arabic (109.44 KB) Farsi (117.78 KB) Portuguese (73.75 KB) Spanish (73.17 KB) Turkish (68.01 KB)
Finish the Fight Against Scrapie (PDF) (625.76 KB)	Flyer	Outreach handout for slaughter facilities and producers about submitting scrapie samples	Arabic (1.23 MB) Chinese (316.94 KB) Farsi (1.23 MB) Hindi (871.47 KB) Portuguese (685.79 KB) Turkish (614.62 KB) Vietnamese (651.27 KB)
National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) and the Importance of Sheep and Goat Traceability (YouTube)	Video	Summarizes the history of the NSEP and the Federal requirements	Not applicable
National Scrapie Eradication Program Standards (PDF) (1.46 MB)	Final Rule	Cooperative procedures and standards adopted by APHIS and consistent States for eradicating classical scrapie from the United States	Not applicable

Sheep & Goat Official ID Basics (PDF) (82.85 KB)	Flowchart	Supplemental chart to help animal owners and others understand the Federal regulations for sheep and goat identification	Not applicable
What's New in Goat ID? (PDF) (4.5 MB)	Flyer	Outreach handout from the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) that helps goat owners and others understand the Federal regulations	Low resolution for email (2.77 MB)
What's New in Sheep ID? (PDF) (1.92 MB)	Flyer	Outreach handout from the NIAA that helps sheep owners and others understand the Federal regulations	Low resolution for email (1.38 MB)
Scrapie Final Rule & Revised NSEP Standards: Key Things Market Operators Need To Know (Powerpoint) (5.09 MB)	Presentation	Powerpoint presentation that gives key points to livestock market owners and producers on Federal requirements	PDF (132.13 KB)
Sheep and Goat Identification Requirements (Powerpoint) (18.46 MB)	Presentation	Powerpoint presentation from the NIAA that gives details about the Federal rule for sheep and goat identification	PDF (48.54 MB)
Official USDA Sheep and Goat Identification (PDF) (1.13 MB)	Report	Describes the quantity and number of orders for official identification distributed to or purchased by sheep and goat stakeholders from fiscal years 2008 to 2011	Not applicable

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