USDA Confirms Detection of Classical Scrapie in a Slaughtered Sheep

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed classical scrapie in a sheep slaughtered at a facility in Oregon. Final diagnostic results and genotype analysis were completed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), with confirmatory testing indicating classical scrapie. As required, APHIS has notified the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) of the confirmed detection.

Classical scrapie is a fatal, degenerative prion disease of sheep and goats. Prior to this confirmation, the United States had gone more than 5 years without a case. The United States was positioned to meet WOAH’s 7-year benchmark for self-declared scrapie freedom in January 2028. This confirmed detection could reset that timeline and may push the earliest possible date for national scrapie-free status to approximately 2033.

APHIS and State animal health officials have initiated an epidemiological investigation to determine the flock of origin. The affected animal did not have an ear tag, which may limit traceability and highlights the critical importance of strong animal identification practices nationwide. To support the investigation, NVSL will conduct tissue-matching and parentage testing on the affected sheep and two additional animals from the same accession.

APHIS expects minimal impact on trade. Most countries restrict live animal exports only from affected flocks or premises, and products such as wool remain unaffected.

USDA encourages producers to reinforce key practices that have advanced scrapie eradication efforts nationwide:

- Strict compliance with ear tagging and traceability requirements to ensure exposed animals can be accurately tracked.
- Robust surveillance participation, including submission of clinical suspects and routine monitoring.
- Use of genetically resistant breeding stock, which significantly reduces disease susceptibility and depopulation needs.
- Continued partnership with APHIS and State officials to support investigation and long-term freedom efforts.

More information about scrapie and APHIS' eradication program is available at www.aphis.usda.gov.

Print