

**To: Vermont Sheep and Goat Producers**

**Date: August, 2006**

**Subject: Vermont Scrapie Consistent State Status**

The Vermont Scrapie Flock Certification Board would like to bring to your attention a matter of significance and interest to anyone owning sheep and goats, or with an interest in the small ruminant industry in the state of Vermont. The Vermont Scrapie Flock Certification Board is responsible for oversight of the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) in the state of Vermont and consists of seven members including sheep producers, veterinarians and state and federal animal health officials.

### **Introduction**

Many sheep and goat owners are already aware of the federal and state requirements for official identification of sheep and goats moving in interstate commerce. Thirty nine flocks are currently participating in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (“SFCP”) and 231 other producers have already called the toll free number 866-USDA-TAG (866-873-2824) to either register their premises or order official tags [at no charge] to identify their animals. That represents about 1/3 of estimated sheep and goat premises in the state (NASS estimate is 768).

In the next phase of the national Scrapie eradication program, the USDA is identifying those states meeting certain standards for the control of Scrapie Disease. States that are in compliance with the standards are recognized as ‘consistent’ states. Those that are not are given a status as ‘inconsistent’. ***Beginning September 30, 2006, states recognized as inconsistent will face certain restrictions in the movement of sheep and goats from their state.***

As of March of this year, 33 states had successfully achieved a consistent state status under the national Scrapie eradication program. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture has elected not to pursue ‘consistent’ state status for the state of Vermont in part because of the requirement that the state mandate official identification of sheep and goats upon change of ownership within the state. The Vermont Scrapie Certification Board finds it important that all interested parties be aware of the additional interstate movement requirements Vermont producers will face as an inconsistent state.

### **Inconsistent Status**

***Enrollment in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) will become necessary for anyone wishing to move their animals in interstate commerce from an inconsistent state for breeding, exhibition or any purpose other than for slaughter.*** Those flocks already enrolled in the SFCP will largely be unaffected by any proposed changes as the requirements for participation in the program will bring them into compliance with most if not all current and proposed future regulations. However, as an inconsistent state, anyone in Vermont wishing to enter animals into interstate commerce for breeding or exhibition purposes will be required to enroll their flocks in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP). For those who are not familiar with the SFCP, it has been

a voluntary monitoring program for those flocks with an interest in achieving an officially recognized or certified Scrapie-Free status. Participation requires official identification of all animals over 1 year of age, maintaining records and an annual flock inspection by a state or federal animal health official. Thirty nine flocks are currently enrolled in the SFCP in Vermont and almost 2,000 flocks are enrolled nationally.

Sheep in interstate commerce for slaughter purposes from an inconsistent state will also have additional requirements for animal identification and a certificate will be required for cull ewes and rams more than 18 months of age.

### **Consistent Status**

*In a consistent state, animals will be able to move in interstate commerce under the requirements that currently exist (e.g. official ID and health certificate) without enrollment in the SFCP, but owners will be required to officially identify their animals upon change of ownership within the state.* One of the most significant standards of a 'consistent' state likely to affect many sheep and goat producers is the requirement that the state mandate official identification of sheep and goats upon change of ownership within the state. It is primarily for this reason that the Vermont Agency of Agriculture has elected not to pursue consistent state status at this time. While state and federal regulations have required official identification of animals in interstate commerce for many years, the requirement for official identification upon change of ownership within a state goes a step further and would become mandatory in order for a state to be recognized as a consistent state in the control of Scrapie disease. For many of you who have already registered your premises and ordered your free tags for interstate movement, this requirement may be of little consequence as you already have the tags you would need to officially identify your animals for any movement within the state.

We recognize that this is all rather confusing, but in short, after September 30 of this year, Vermont producers wishing to show, sell, ship or slaughter sheep or goats in interstate commerce may face additional requirements as outlined in the enclosed attachment. Importantly, this would include youth and 4-H exhibitors. We would also point out that for those producers who already identify their animals with their own tags for personal reasons, officially approved tags are currently available free of charge and in different styles by calling toll free 866-873-2824.

### **Information**

The Board feels it is important for everyone to become informed about the policies that may affect your operation. For information or questions concerning the Scrapie Flock Certification Program or consistent state status requirements contact Dr. Todd Johnson, USDA APHIS 802-338-7467.

Marian White  
SFCP Board President