

Sheep & Goat Sector Status of Commitments September 22, 2020

APHIS will clarify with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as to whether trapping can be an approved damage control activity authorized by the FWS on depredation permits they issue to requestors.

- FWS depredation permits are required to remove migratory birds including ravens and vultures, however FWS does not intend to issue depredation permits to property owners, producers, business, etc. authorizing the trapping of vultures.
- APHIS received clarification from FWS that mitigation of blackbirds, cowbirds, crows, grackles, and magpies damaging livestock or feed is legal under the Blackbird Depredation Order (BBDO) and does not require the issuance of FWS depredation permits. The BBDO requires users to attempt nonlethal control methods before using lethal methods. The BBDO has never allowed for raven or vulture removals.

APHIS will include more predator population and hunter/trapper harvest information in news releases associated with the annual WS Program Data Reports that inform the public of WS' operational activities.

- APHIS will provide context in the Program Data Reports Stakeholder Announcement about the number of livestock killed by predators in relation to predators removed. There may be references to private harvest data, if available. Additionally, APHIS produced a video about work and wildlife damage to protected resources that will accompany the release of the Program Data Reports.

APHIS will provide updates on the processes to research and/or register feral swine toxicants.

- *Sodium Nitrite (HOGGONE®)* – Wildlife Services (WS) reformulated HOGGONE® following 2018 field-testing. The current formulation and delivery strategies are highly effective against feral swine and have greatly reduced, but not completely eliminated, non-target mortality of birds. WS is working to find application strategies to mitigate these risks working towards Environmental Protection Agency pesticide registration.
- *Warfarin (Kaput®)* - WS is no longer evaluating the effectiveness of Kaput® as a toxicant for feral swine.

APHIS shares industry's goal of scrapie eradication and will continue to work cooperatively to achieve this goal.

- APHIS will continue to maximize scrapie surveillance given the resources available, particularly in populations that are under-sampled and explore options for a pilot project focused on subset populations.
- In fiscal year (FY) 2020, scrapie surveillance numbers were down due to COVID-19.
- APHIS entered into cooperative agreements with ASI and AGF to perform education and outreach about scrapie and identification requirements with producers and allied industry.

APHIS supports the establishment of an industry-led electronic identification working group.

- APHIS provided subject matter experts for a working group established by ASI in June 2020 to develop a plan for moving toward radio frequency identification (RFID) for sheep and goats. In compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act requirements, APHIS will consider the input of all stakeholders and not just this group before implementing any policy on RFID for sheep and goats.
- APHIS agrees that this will need to be a multi-year, phase-in plan and that other official ID types may need to remain available for certain uses.

APHIS will work with industry to explore opportunities to establish an RFID pilot project in auction markets.

- APHIS and ASI entered into a cooperative agreement using FY 2020 funds to perform a field trial of the application and reading of RFID tags on sheep in a large sheep and goat market.
- APHIS and AGF entered into a cooperative agreement using FY 2020 funds to perform a field trial of two chute restraint systems for the application of tags on unruly, semi-feral sheep and goats in two separate auction markets.
- APHIS also granted a no-cost extension to AGF to complete application of RFID tags for a RFID retention study in goats that was delayed due to COVID-19.
- On July 6, APHIS published a [Notice](#) in the Federal Register seeking public comment on a proposal to approve Radio-frequency identification (RFID) as the official eartag for use in the interstate movement of cattle and bison that are required to be identified under the current traceability regulations. The Notice, which is open for comment through October 5, also seeks input on a proposed timeline for implementation.

As agreed in October 2018, APHIS will continue to provide a limited number of metal tags to markets and dealers and plastic tags to new producers in FY 2021.

- In FY 2020, APHIS expects to provide about 1.1 million metal tags to markets, dealers, and regulatory personnel and about 770,000 plastic tags to producers, including about 7,700 new producers who have never participated in the ID program before. Similar or slightly higher numbers are expected in FY 2021.

APHIS will continue to work to open markets for sheep and goats and their products.

- APHIS is working on bilateral agreements for export of live sheep and goats and/or ovine and caprine semen and embryos to Brazil (renegotiation) Gabon, Ecuador, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, India, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Zambia.
- APHIS has been discussing logistics with the Food Safety and Inspection Service and industry to facilitate an audit related to market access for sheep and goat meat for human consumption to Korea. Unfortunately, travel restrictions related to COVID-19 have put the audit on hold. APHIS will continue to work with Korean officials and industry to determine when the audit can safely occur.
- On February 25, 2020, APHIS sent a market access request for ovine/caprine intestinal casings from animals slaughtered in the United States to Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Japan currently bans the commodity from the United States.

APHIS is awaiting the Japanese response, which will likely be a questionnaire seeking additional information.

APHIS supports the goals of the Secure Sheep and Wool Supply program and asks that industry submit a proposal to the Agency should additional resources be needed to complete the plan.

- APHIS and ASI entered into a cooperative agreement using FY 2020 funds to develop educational and outreach materials for the Secure Sheep and Wool Supply plan. APHIS understands the importance of planning for the sheep and goat industry and is evaluating an overall approach to manage and maintain plans moving forward.
- APHIS also entered into a cooperative agreement with AGF for the development of a continuity of business operations plan for the goat industry.
- Contingent on the availability of funds, APHIS will consider supporting ongoing maintenance and outreach for these plans at a lower level in FY 2021.

APHIS understands industry's interest and need for additional minor use products, and we will provide assistance within the scope of our regulatory authority.

- APHIS engaged with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to explore possible options to simultaneously review Barbervax. APHIS must comply with the Virus Serum Toxin Act requirements, and it was determined that this unlicensed product currently cannot be imported. There is no step involved in the production of the product that would inactivate many non-enveloped viruses (Non-enveloped viruses, not having an outer wrapping derived from a fragment of cell membrane, can persist for long periods of time in the environment. Non-enveloped viruses are characterized by their higher resistance to chemical, physical procedures and other environmental influences which would inactivate enveloped viruses), Couple that with the fact that this is an injectable product, this issue is even more significant. Given examples of recently emerging, formerly unknown viruses being identified, this product presents a risk of unintentionally introducing a transboundary/foreign animal disease. This issue would need to be addressed before APHIS would license this product for use in the United States.
- APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) will attempt to evaluate non-CVB licensed Brucella ovis reagents by comparing the performance of these reagents against existing testing platforms; if requested by industry. Given the rarity of positive samples received by the NVSL, SAHO-supported identification of infected animals and collection of sera for a serum bank and State VDL-supported submission of serum samples from confirmed positive sheep, as well as presumably negative samples, is needed for the effort to be effective.
- APHIS' Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB) has not received any permit requests in FY 2020 for sheep/goat vaccines. If CVB receives an application for a permit to import a vaccine produced in another country, CVB will do what is permitted under the regulations to streamline the application and approval process.
- APHIS granted a no-cost extension for the FY 2018 cooperative agreement with Iowa State University to develop a more efficacious caseous lymphadenitis vaccine so that vaccine trials halted by COVID-19 can be completed.

- APHIS will work with eligible entities to set annual funding priorities for the Farm Bill preparedness and response program. Minor species drug and vaccine projects were not identified by the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP) Consultation Board as a FY 2020 priority. This funding opportunity was announced in July and focused on livestock biosecurity and depopulation and disposal needs in the event of a high consequence livestock disease outbreak. Submissions are currently undergoing Agency review. The U.S. Animal Health Association designated Amy Hendrickson as the NADPRP Consultation Board sheep and goat industry representative. APHIS will evaluate proposals for funding using a competitive process based on priorities established in consultation with the full scope of eligible entities.

APHIS will provide industry the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) schedule of reviews in early 2020.

- APHIS plans to conduct a NAHMS Sheep study in 2023, provided there is industry support. COVID-19 has led to disruptions in the execution of two current studies and may affect planning of the sheep study.
- APHIS will perform a stakeholder needs assessment in the Fall of 2020 or Winter of 2021.

APHIS will work with industry to establish quarterly sheep and goat conference calls.

- APHIS conducted sheep and goat sector conference calls with industry representatives in March and June 2020.
- The annual sector meeting in September will supersede the September quarterly sheep and goat conference call. Quarterly calls will resume in December 2020.

APHIS will inform the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) that the goat industry is interested in attending the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center stakeholder meetings and share industry's need for additional research to support the sheep and goat industry.

- APHIS contacted ARS and the Agency agreed to invite the sheep and goat industry sector meeting attendees to their stakeholder meetings.