



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

C. L. "BUTCH" OETER
Governor
CELIA R. GOULD
Director

Dear Idaho Sheep Producer:

June 15, 2009

Once again, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded Cooperative Agreement funds to the state of Idaho to be used for scrapie disease eradication efforts. The funds are to be used for the following activities:

- Increasing the level of education and awareness about scrapie.
- Promoting the Scrapie Eradication Program and the Scrapie Flock Certification Program.
- Finding and eradicating scrapie.
- Providing Codon 171 genotype testing of rams and ewes for producers to increase the genetic resistance to scrapie in their flocks.
- Testing sheep identified with QQ genotype for scrapie by third eyelid or rectal biopsy.

The Codon 171 genotype testing determines susceptibility or resistance to scrapie. Animals having an RR genotype at codon 171 are highly resistant to scrapie. Those with a QQ genotype are highly susceptible. Animals with a QR genotype are rarely susceptible. If rams with the RR genotype are used exclusively in a flock, none of the lambs will be QQ, or highly susceptible to scrapie. It is for this reason that the Cooperative Agreement funds will pay for the following:

- **Up to ten (10) males of any breed** per producer may be genotype tested at codon 171 at no cost if it is agreed in writing that:
 - 1) rams over 14 months of age testing QQ at codon 171 will be made available for third eyelid or rectal biopsy surveillance testing by state or federal personnel.
 - 2) ram lambs under 14 months of age testing QQ at codon 171 be either:
 - a) castrated,
 - b) have blue meat tags applied and culled for slaughter, or
 - c) used as a terminal sire.
- **Up to 25 ewes or rams (in addition to rams mentioned above)** per producer may be tested only if:
 - 1) they are 14 months of age or older;
 - 2) they are black-faced, Southdowns, Montadales, or cross of there of, and
 - 3) it is agreed in writing that any animal testing QQ at codon 171 will be made available for third eyelid or rectal biopsy surveillance testing by state or federal personnel. Southdowns or Montadales must be recognized members of these breeds, i.e.; registered, registration eligible, or from foundation stock that was registered purebred.

If you wish to take advantage of this testing, contact your veterinarian. Then you or your veterinarian must call Dr. Lawrence, Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) at 208-332-8540 to obtain approval for testing. The veterinarian will receive the necessary forms. Any payment for veterinary fees and additional tests are the responsibility of the flock owner. Testing will be done at Genechek Laboratory and the costs will be covered by funds from the Cooperative Agreement. Funding will be available until 12/31/09 or until the fund is exhausted, whichever occurs first.

Third eyelid or rectal biopsies are live animal tests that can be used to determine if a sheep is infected with scrapie. These tests can be positive before an animal begins to show signs of scrapie, but sometimes an animal will not be positive on these tests and still develop scrapie later. Live animal testing is available for owners of QQ black-faced animals. This test will be performed by state and federal staff at no cost to the producer. If you have questions, please call Dr. Lawrence at 208-332-8540.

Bill Barton
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QQ Sheep Test Agreement Cooperative State-Federal-Industry Scrapie Program 2009

I agree that any sheep that tests QQ on codon 171 genotype will be made available for third eyelid or rectal biopsy testing to detect scrapie. I understand that I will be contacted by state or federal personnel shortly after the genotyping results are returned to schedule testing if any of my animals test QQ at codon 171.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Owner or representative)