

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCRAPIE

Chair: Dr. Jim Logan, Cheyenne, WY
Vice Chair: Dr. Joe D. Ross, Sonora, TX

Dr. John R. Clifford, DC; Dr. Thomas F. Conner, OH; Dr. Wayne E. Cunningham, CO; Dr. Jerry W. Diemer, CO; Dr. Lisa A. Ferguson, MD; Dr. R. David Glauer, OH; Dr. Allen M. Knowles, TN; Dr. Donald P. Knowles, Jr., WA; Dr. Thomas F. Linfield, MT; Dr. Michael R. Marshall, UT; Ms. Sarah J. Mize, CA; Dr. Charles Palmer, CA; Dr. Kristine R. Petrini, MN; Mr. Stan Potratz, IA; Mr. Paul E. Rodgers, CO; Dr. Joan D. Rowe, CA; Dr. Carsten Schroeder, ME; Dr. Pamela L. Smith, IA; Dr. Diane L. Sutton, MD; Dr. Lynn Anne Tesar, SD; Dr. Delwin D. Wilmot, NE; Dr. Nora E. Wineland, CO; Dr. Cindy B. Wolf, MN.

The Committee met on October 27, 2004, from 8:00 am-12:00 pm. The meeting was called to order by Chair Dr. Jim Logan. He was assisted by Vice Chair Dr. Joe D. Ross. There were 69 people in attendance. The Chair welcomed Committee members and others in attendance and all were given an opportunity to introduce themselves. This was the first meeting of this Committee. It was appointed after the 2003 Annual Meeting at the urging of several members of the Board of Directors. Because this is a new Committee, the first item of business was consideration of a mission statement. The Committee approved the following as the Committee mission statement:

“The Committee on Scrapie’s mission is to provide a forum to address federal, state, and industry regulatory issues including: periodic review of the Scrapie Uniform Methods and Rules (UM&R), new research, diagnostic techniques, surveillance, international and trade issues, and other matters as they arise to enhance scrapie eradication efforts in the U.S.”

Dr. Diane Sutton, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), National Scrapie Program Coordinator reported on the National Scrapie Program. The report focused on utilization of a genetic based approach to flock clean up plans, cleaning up infected and source flocks, tracing and testing exposed animals and flocks, analysis and publication of the results of the Scrapie Ovine Slaughter Surveillance study (SOSS), implementation of regulatory slaughter surveillance (RSSS), producer education, and finalizing the Scrapie Eradication UM&R for FY2004. As of September 30, 2004, the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) had 1868 participating flocks including 135 certified flocks, 1726 complete monitored flocks, and seven selective monitored flocks. There were seventy infected and source

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flocks identified as of September 30, 2004. In FY2004 a total of 103 new infected and source flocks reported with seventy-seven of those released in FY2004. As of September 30, 2004, 368 scrapie cases had been confirmed and reported by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), of which fifty-four were RSSS cases. One new goat case was reported. Approximately 3,058 animals were indemnified. Dr. Sutton also reported on the Scrapie ovine slaughter surveillance study and the Regulatory Slaughter Surveillance program. Scrapie testing was done on 25,006 animals in FY2004. As of September 30, 2004, 90,322 sheep and goat premises have been assigned identification (ID) numbers in the Scrapie National Generic Database. Official eartags have been issued to 64,040 of the premises.

Dr. Gary Ross, USDA-APHIS-VS gave an update on the scrapie database. The following items were discussed: Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP); National Scrapie Eradication; Animal ID; Animal Genotyping Information; Data Entry Upgrades – a two year contract was made with General Services Administration (GSA) to make the database more user friendly for personnel in the field, labs and area offices; Implementation Plan; Field Data Entry; and that the scrapie national generic database and the national animal identification system will be able to share information.

Drs. Fran Ross and Patricia Meinhardt, USDA-APHIS-VS National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), gave a presentation entitled, "Resolving Genotyping Discrepancies – When two laboratories disagree." USDA-APHIS-VS policy requires genotyping on all exposed sexually intact QRS and RR's that are not being depopulated conducted twice (in different labs) before release. QQs are only tested once unless owner requests second test. There are instances when the results from the two contract laboratories do not agree for an animal, or, multiple animals from a flock. In order to resolve these discrepancies and to assure such discrepancies do not occur in the future, a formal process has been established. Working in conjunction with all involved parties, the NVSL Genotyping Unit is now serving as the coordinator in resolving these discrepancies. Since June 2004, over 15 such discrepancies have been resolved. As a result of these investigations, several improvements have been implemented in the contract laboratories which should do away with future problems.

Drs. Frank Ross and Patricia Meinhardt, USDA-APHIS-VS-NVSL, reported on Genotyping Formalin-Fixed Tissue for the RSSS. Genotyping on samples collected in conjunction with the RSSS program is now being conducted on formalin-fixed tissues. The NVSL has validated the technique developed by the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) for this effort. If formalin-fixed tissues are used, it is necessary to keep in mind that formalin degrades DNA. Therefore, those tissues should be placed into paraffin blocks within 10-14 days.

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Dr. Nora Wineland, USDA-APHIS-VS Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health gave an update on the 3rd Eyelid Test Validation Study and the RSSS. APHIS and ARS have been working together to complete stage 3 validation per World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) standards. Eight hundred sixty (860) animals have been successfully sampled ante-mortem from either field samples or a group of quarantined animals in research facilities. Based on the data gathered so far, the test has a sensitivity of 64-68% and a specificity of 97-99%.

The RSSS Program has shifted to targeting higher risk groups. This consists of mature black face or mottle faced sheep or white-faced sheep and goats showing clinical signs of scrapie. To date, 28,945 samples have been tested and 0.32%, or approximately 1 per 300, has been positive. One of the problems preventing even higher levels of surveillance is lack of identification on some of the animals.

The Committee considered several proposed changes to the Scrapie UM&R and reached agreement to accept some minor changes and have Dr. Sutton incorporate them into the UM&R. Those changes approved by the Committee were:

- The commingling definition was clarified to allow the designated scrapie epidemiologist to determine whether shared fence lines had resulted in commingling.
- Exposed flocks were split into two categories. Those that are being investigated will now be called "flocks under investigation" and only those that are determined to have some on going risk will be designated as "exposed flocks". This change is then reflected through out the UM&R.
- Definition of genetically susceptible animal was changed to include AVQR ewes epidemiologically associated with 136 VV or AV positive animals. There by including more AVQR ewes in the high risk category.
- Limited contact definition was clarified and changed to include any contact with a male animal.
- Low risk goat definition was changed to include goats commingled with sheep from low risk commercial flocks.
- Removed requirement for owner statement on CVI.
- Added requirement that animals required for test be restricted pending completion of testing.
- Numerous changes were also made for clarity.

Three (3) resolutions were considered and two (2) were approved and forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions for approval by the general membership. The two resolutions approved addressed:

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1. Having USDA-APHIS-VS conduct a thorough review of the Scrapie Flock Certification Program in order to determine how to harmonize it with current OIE standards.
2. Urging State Animal Health Officials to submit their Consistent State status pre-review checklist immediately and to take appropriate measures to be in full compliance; and to work with USDA-APHIS-VS to enforce compliance with interstate movement and Consistent State regulations.