

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS

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Vice Chair: Don P. Knowles, WA

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The Committee met on October 14, 2009 at the Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, Calif., from 8:00 am- 10:50 am. There were 18 members and 21 guests present.

NAHMS Sheep 2011 and Goat 2009 Studies

Katherine Marshall

National Animal Health Monitoring Service (NAHMS), USDA

The NAHMS Goat 2009 study is currently receiving second questionnaires and mailing kits to producers who are participating in the study. Of the 5,500 producers initially contacted to participate in the NAHMS Goat 2009 study, 2483 (45%) completed the first questionnaire and 1080 of those consented to having their names turned over and continuing in the study. Second questionnaires are being received and data validation and analysis is occurring. The first reports are expected in early 2010. The NAHMS Sheep 2011 study needs assessment will take place in November 2009 through January 2010 via Survey Monkey, and mail. The objectives for the study will then be developed in February 2009, with data collection beginning in January 2011.

Recommendations on best management practices for domestic sheep on public lands shared with bighorn sheep

Walter Cook, Assistant State Veterinarian of Wyoming and USAHA Joint Bighorn-Domestic Sheep Working Group Presented the working group report of the recommendations of best management practices for domestic sheep, domestic goats and bighorn sheep. This report is included in full at the end of the Report of the Committee on Wildlife Diseases in these proceedings.

Discussion and action on domestic/bighorn sheep Joint Working Group Report

William Edmiston – Sheep and Goat Committee Chair

The Chair introduced a resolution concerning research regarding bighorn sheep and domestic sheep interaction that was approved by the Wildlife Committee. The original resolution from 2007 included language regarding the need for research. The working group report did not address this aspect of the 2007 resolution.

The Committee added specific language directing it to the United States Departments of Agriculture and Interior's research agencies and non-government organizations. The members of the Wildlife Committee agreed with these changes and resolution was adopted by the Committee on Sheep and Goats.

Domestic/Bighorn interaction and research- Where do we go from here?

Research brainstorming and prioritization

Don Knowles, Vice Chair Sheep and Goat Committee

USDA-ARS

Don Knowles recommended Big Horn sheep and domestic sheep research be aimed at the concept of species compatibility because it includes more than specific disease research. The intent of the two

committee chairs is that research would be jointly conducted by wildlife and domestic livestock researchers.

Discussion of *Brucella ovis* testing issues and research needs

Jim Logan, Wyoming State Veterinarian; Cindy Wolf, practitioner and sheep producer, and Jeffrey Nelson, National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL), USDA

Brucella ovis has continued to be a source of infertility and thereby of economic significance to the United States sheep industry. Currently available diagnostic methods have not been adequate to accurately determine the disease status of rams. Questions regarding cross-reactivity with other organisms, residual colostral antibody interference, and disparate results between laboratories complicate interpretation of the true disease status.

Additionally questions remain about the role of the ewe in the perpetuation of the disease within a flock. Many times flocks have been found to be infected following years of negative ram tests and with ewe additions. The role of the female in *B. ovis* transmission has not been thoroughly studied.

Committee Business

The Committee reviewed and passed the following resolutions, conducted throughout the meeting.

- Collaboratively develop more sensitive and specific diagnostic tests and also better define the transmission of *B. ovis* in sheep populations.
- Recommending that the NAHMS sheep study 2011 proceed.
- Research regarding bighorn sheep and domestic sheep interaction, also approved by the Wildlife Committee, with friendly amendments.

New Business

The Committee Passed a resolution presented by committee on Import Export concerning OIE guidelines for importing live animals.