

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2009 RESOLUTION

OCTOBER 14, 2009, SAN DIEGO, CA

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19 and 43 Combined APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE DISEASES
COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS

SUBJECT MATTER: RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT OF BIGHORN
SHEEP/DOMESTIC SHEEP DISEASE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Disease has had a significant impact on many bighorn sheep populations. Although evidence indicates that contact with domestic sheep appears to increase the likelihood of epizootics in bighorn sheep, the overall contribution of domestic sheep to bighorn health problems is not clear. At the 2007 United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) meeting in Reno, Nevada, Resolution 15 (combined with 64) was approved. In response to the resolution, the Committees on Wildlife Diseases and Committee on Sheep and Goats established a working group comprised of representatives of state and federal animal health agencies, wildlife and public land managements, the American Sheep Industry and Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (now the Wild Sheep Foundation). The working group has developed recommended practices for raising domestic sheep and goats on public lands where contact between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep may occur and has delivered the report to both committees. The resolution proper however urges the United States Secretary of Agriculture and the United States Secretary of the Interior to seek resources through the President's budget to fund research to better elucidate the epidemiology and pathogenesis of bighorn/domestic sheep disease interactions. To date no additional research funds have been made available.

The Chairs of the Committee on Wildlife Diseases and Committee on Sheep and Goats now will charge the current Working Group on Domestic and Wild Sheep Disease Interactions, or assemble a new working group of similar composition, to develop and prioritize recommendations for research that would best answer questions regarding epidemiology and pathogenesis of bighorn/domestic sheep disease interactions and bighorn mortality prevention.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of the Interior's (USDOI) research agencies seek resources including cooperative efforts with non-governmental organizations to fund research to better elucidate the epidemiology, pathogenesis and prevention of disease in bighorn sheep associated with bighorn-domestic sheep and goat interactions. Cooperative proposals should be solicited from state and federal agencies, universities and other research organizations. The USAHA also requests that funding organizations consult the prospective working group report on research prioritization to assist in determining the highest and most promising priorities.

RESPONSE:

USDA-ARS

ARS is also supportive of USAHA Resolutions #19 and #43, concerning the need for research to elucidate interactions between domestic and bighorn sheep. We are aware of the need to

address disease epidemiology and pathogenesis of disease and mortality in bighorn sheep and have the ability to pursue research and collaborative activities to develop diagnostic and intervention strategies as funds become available.

INTERIM RESPONSE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond. VS has conferred with colleagues at the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and both agencies are aware of the need for research on diseases in bighorn sheep and interactions between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep. VS will support this research through the National Animal Health Monitoring System sheep study by sending samples from domestic sheep.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

We agree with the USAHA that additional information regarding the epidemiology, pathogenesis and prevention of disease in bighorn sheep associated with bighorn-domestic sheep and goat interactions would be valuable. Work in this area can benefit from collaboration among all parties concerned. The DOI will take the USAHA working group's recommendations under advisement and encourage cooperative efforts among State and Federal agencies, universities and research organizations.