



# UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2016 Resolution

120th Annual Meeting

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**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 16, 23, and 40 Combined**

**APPROVED**

**SOURCE:**

**COMMITTEE ON SCRAPIE  
COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION  
COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS**

**SUBJECT MATTER:**

**Continued United States Department of Agriculture  
Provision of Plastic Scrapie Program Ear Tags for Sheep  
and Goats Producers**

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

While the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) has been successful in decreasing the prevalence of scrapie in the United States, eradication has not yet been achieved in sheep or goats. Continued improvement in traceability and surveillance is needed, not just to achieve the eradication of scrapie, but also to advance animal disease traceability (ADT) efforts.

Much of the success of the NSEP is attributable to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) work with producers to find identification (ID) devices which have good retention and lend themselves to improving animal care and management. Currently, the USDA provides small metal tags or more visible plastic ear tags to producers, sales yards, fairs, veterinarians and veterinary clinics. The plastic tags have a larger profile and lend themselves to management systems where tag numbers are read and recorded. The metal tags are too small to be used as visible ID for management purposes, and they are more likely to lead to infections in goats than the plastic tags.

The publication of the NSEP final rule is expected in 2017 and will include new requirements for official identification and traceability for certain classes of goats and sheep previously excluded from mandatory official ID. In addition to the increasing numbers of new sheep and goat producers entering the program on a continuing basis, longtime producers of low risk goats and sheep, who were previously exempted, will have mandatory ID requirements for the first time. A change in tag-provision policy at this critical time jeopardizes the ability of veterinarians and scrapie program officials to facilitate compliance by these herd owners. Elimination of USDA-provided tags that provide best visible ID will compromise accurate recording of ID and compromise compliance with record keeping requirements for both traceability and the scrapie program

Alternative sources of funds and cost saving options to support the USDA-provided plastic ear tags should be explored. Benefits of the USDA-provided plastic tags outweigh the savings that could be achieved by cutting the funding for this item. The success in ADT attributable to the NSEP and the wide adoption of sheep and goat plastic ear tags demonstrate the value of providing ID options that benefit both producers and traceability.

**RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to continue to provide plastic ear tags for the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) in the most economical and case appropriate manner. These USDA-provided tags are critical to successful identification and traceability of sheep and goats for NSEP and animal disease traceability.