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**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 28**

**APPROVED**

**SUBJECT MATTER: Scrapie Eradication Program–Animal Identification**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) relies greatly on owner compliance to identify their animals as they leave the farm for exhibition or sales. No-cost official ear tags have greatly encouraged identification (ID) and thus encourage producer premises registration in the scrapie database and program compliance. There have been a multitude of problems noted with the use of official metal program tags such as infection, poor retention, difficulty in accurately recording the numbers, and safety hazards when shearing. With the publication of the interstate movement rule which requires the same ID requirements of goats as currently exist for sheep, the next few years are critical in encouraging goat and sheep producer compliance regarding ID and tagging. The industries feel strongly that, at a minimum, the provision of a limited number of no-cost official plastic tags will incentivize new goat and sheep producer compliance. In addition, the industries do not want to compromise the NSEP that has been built over the past 18 years at an expense of more than \$260 million.

**RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to continue to provide, at a minimum, a limited number of no-cost official plastic tags to producers enrolling in the National Scrapie Eradication Program for the first time. USDA-APHIS would provide the no-cost ear tags, but producers would be responsible for acquiring an applicator. Further, USAHA urges USDA-APHIS to continue to provide no-cost tags to markets and dealers.

**INTERIM RESPONSE:**

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services recognizes the concerns of USAHA and appreciates the opportunity to respond. As agreed at the October 2019 stakeholder meeting, APHIS will continue to provide a limited number of plastic tags to new producers and metal tags to markets and dealers through fiscal year (FY) 2021. Contracts are in place to accomplish this goal. Due to an increase in the cost of metal tags APHIS may need to further limit the number of tags provided to markets and dealers in FY 2021.