UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2026 Resolution

130th Annual Meeting
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Madison, WI

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 26 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMMITTEE ON SHEEP, GOATS AND CAMELIDS

SUBJECT MATTER: Sustained Support for the National Scrapie Eradication Program

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and Congress to provide sustained, dedicated funding and personnel for the National Scrapie Eradication Program, with an emphasis on the following priorities:

1. Maintain effective surveillance: Provide sufficient resources to sustain comprehensive, risk-based surveillance, including the collection of at least 30,000 samples annually, to detect remaining cases of classical scrapie and support future recognition of disease freedom.

2. Promote genetic resistance: Support producer access to genetic testing, education, and resources that encourage the selection and use of breeding animals with genotypes associated with resistance to classical scrapie.

3. Strengthen producer education and compliance: Invest in coordinated outreach and educational initiatives that reinforce the importance of official animal identification, movement records, participation in surveillance, and genetic selection as essential components of eradication.

USAHA further urges USDA-APHIS to maintain dedicated program resources and continue collaborating with state animal health officials, veterinarians, producers, and industry organizations to ensure that the progress achieved through decades of investment is not lost during the final stages of eradication.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For more than 70 years, the United States has worked toward the eradication of classical scrapie in sheep and goats. Through the collaborative efforts of federal and state animal health officials, industry organizations, veterinarians, and producers, the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) has achieved substantial reductions in disease prevalence.

These accomplishments have relied on three essential components: surveillance, individual animal identification, and genetic selection for resistance.

Recent studies have confirmed that the scrapie agent can persist in the environment for an indeterminate period. Going forward, genetic selection for scrapie resistance in sheep and goats will be increasingly important for protecting against the reintroduction of scrapie through environmental exposure on previously infected premises.

In July 2026, classical scrapie was confirmed in a sheep slaughtered in Oregon, representing the first detection in more than five years. This case was identified through routine slaughter surveillance, demonstrating the continued importance and effectiveness of the program. However, the affected animal lacked official identification, complicating efforts to determine its flock of origin and highlighting the importance of producer compliance with identification and recordkeeping requirements.

Prior to this detection, the United States was approaching the seven-year benchmark necessary to support a self-declaration of freedom from classical scrapie in 2028. The recent detection may delay that milestone until approximately 2033, underscoring the challenges associated with the final stages of disease eradication.

In 2024, the United States Animal Health Association adopted Resolution 26, calling for sufficient funding and personnel to maintain scrapie surveillance and to collect at least 30,000 samples annually. Despite this recommendation, competing priorities and resource limitations have continued to challenge program implementation.

The recent detection reinforces the importance of sustained investment not only in surveillance but also in producer education and the adoption of genetic resistance. As disease prevalence declines, it becomes increasingly challenging to maintain producer awareness, participation in surveillance, and compliance with identification requirements. Continued education and outreach are essential to preserve the progress achieved and prevent further setbacks.