

SCRAPIE: ERADICATE IT

The sheep industry's scrapie eradication efforts.



American Sheep
Industry Association

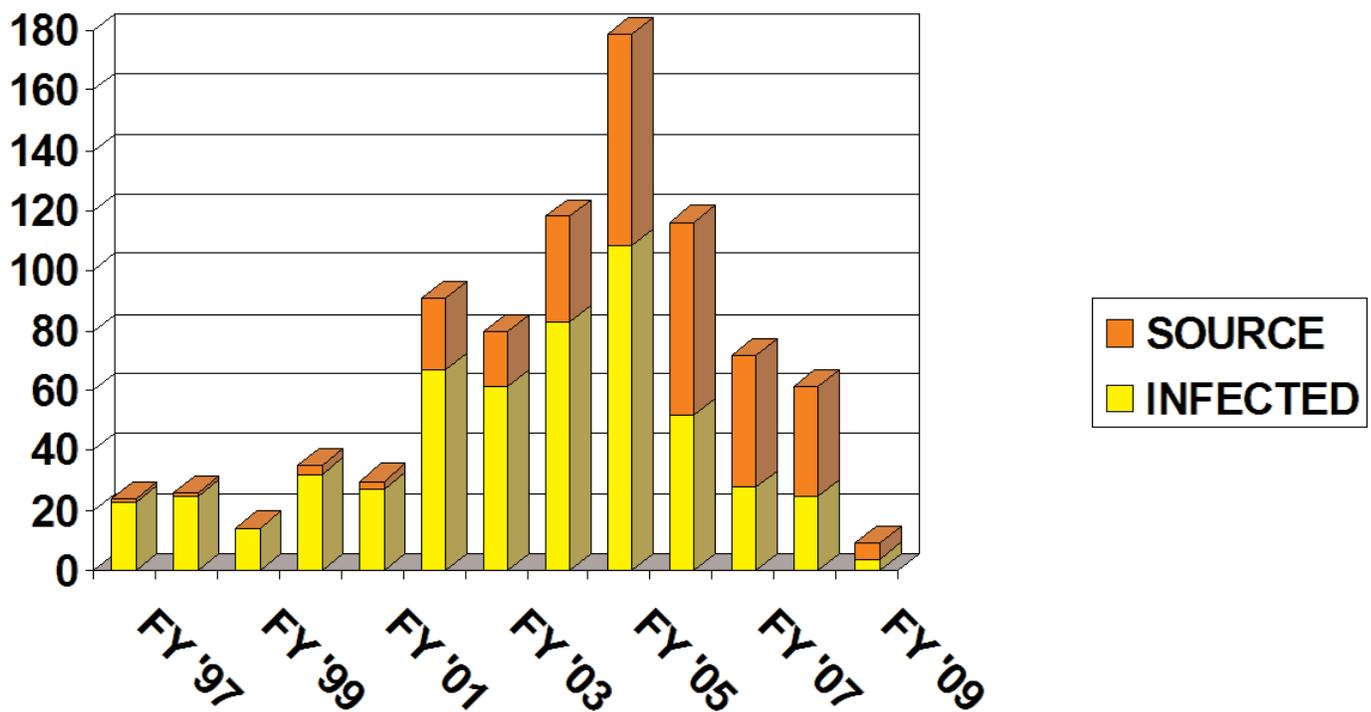
March 2009

The goal of the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and the U.S. sheep industry is to eradicate scrapie from our borders. In addition, it is the objective to have the World Organization for Animal Health, OIE, declare the United States scrapie free by 2017. This quarterly publication is created specifically for those of you in the field who are also working to achieve this goal.

This newsletter brings together, into one spot, current information from all 50 states, as well as from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and any other organization providing scrapie news, and reports it back to the field.

If you have first-hand accounts that you believe would be relevant for others to read or have information that you would like included in this newsletter, please let us know at becky@sheepusa.org.

Infected and Source Flocks New Statuses by Year FY 1997 – 2009*



*Through February 28, 2009

Scrapie Topics Discussed at ASI Annual Convention

This year's Production, Education and Research Council (PERC) and its subcommittees, the Animal Health Committee and Genetic Stakeholders Committee, met during the American Sheep Industry Association/National Lamb Feeders Association Convention, Jan. 21-24, 2009, to once again present the most up-to-date information on a range of topics in the forefront of the sheep industry.

Scrapie was a hot topic at this year's convention, and several different presenters touched on the disease and the status of the eradication program. Diane Sutton, DVM, National Scrapie Program coordinator, presented an update on the National Scrapie Eradication Program to the Animal Health Committee.

According to Sutton, there have been strides made toward the eradication of scrapie in the United States, with a 26.5-percent decrease in percent positive black-face sheep sampled at slaughter and 15-

percent fewer newly infected and source flocks in fiscal year (FY) 2008 compared to FY2007.

"We are succeeding as a result of industry support and hard work by our state and federal personnel," Sutton said.

Another positive advance in the past year was the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) approval of rectal biopsy for ante-mortem testing of sheep and goats; the rectal biopsy test is an easier procedure than the only other live animal test, the third eyelid biopsy, Sutton added.

Sutton discussed that a main priority for 2009 is focusing on the National Scrapie Surveillance Plan, which includes state sampling goals and identification compliance targets, encouraging more low-volume plants to ship sheep heads to a central collection site, improving selection criteria for white- and mottled-face sheep and goats and completing the live animal surveillance pilot being conducted in Texas. In addition, the agency will expand a pilot project performed in Iowa to identify geographic gaps in surveillance, to include several other states.

Also, there are three regulations currently in process that are scrapie related. These regulations address interstate movement of sheep and goats (see proceeding article "Final Rule on Interstate Movement of Sheep and Goats Published," for more information) and scrapie program rules and requirements for importing sheep and goats, their embryos and products to mitigate risks from scrapie.

In addition, Nor98-like scrapie and the regulations surrounding it were discussed by several speakers. In her presentation to PERC, Katherine O'Rourke, Ph.D., USDA Agriculture Research Service (ARS) scrapie researcher, told attendees that while there are unknowns about Nor98-like scrapie, it is known that the codons that have the strongest association with its occurrence, 141 and 154, are different than those of classical scrapie. O'Rourke said that it has been reported to occur in about one in every 500 mature animals sampled at European slaughter and causes disease in sheep at an older age than is usual for classical scrapie. New experiments are being designed to determine if and how it is transmitted naturally; current epidemiological evidence shows that is either not transmissible or poorly transmissible under natural conditions.

Sutton reported that USDA has urged the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to categorize Nor98-like scrapie as a separate disease from classical scrapie. Currently, the OIE has proposed a draft revision of their scrapie chapter that would exclude Nor98-like scrapie from the chapter. USDA will be submitting its comments on this proposal soon.

This holds importance, because if Nor98-like scrapie is recognized separately and there are separate regulatory recommendations in the final OIE document, it would mean that if a country had cases of Nor98-like scrapie, its scrapie status, as it is currently understood, would not necessarily be affected.

Final Rule on Interstate Movement of Sheep and Goats Published

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is amending the regulations regarding the interstate movement of animals to add sheep and goats to the approved livestock facility agreement.

Livestock facilities that handle sheep and goats in interstate commerce must meet the requirements for approval including complying with this agreement to utilize certain provisions in the scrapie regulations that reduce the movement requirements for sheep and goats moving to or from these establishments. Such facilities include stockyards, livestock markets, buying stations, concentration points or any other premises where sheep and goats in interstate commerce are assembled and which choose to become an approved livestock facility.

The approval by APHIS will be contingent on the facility operator meeting certain minimum standards and other conditions related to the receipt, handling and release of sheep and goats at the facility, as well as complying with certain animal identification and recordkeeping requirements.

These standards and other conditions will serve, in part, to support the regulations relating to the interstate movement of sheep and goats in order to control the spread of scrapie.

APHIS responded to all of the comments received from industry organizations and markets. Therefore, the final rule will be effective May 1, 2009.

The *Federal Register* posting is available at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-7233.htm>.

Scrapie Headlines

Scrapie Eradication Program Receives Funding

In March, Senate approved a \$410 billion omnibus appropriations bill, which President Obama signed on Wednesday. The bill funds most of the federal government, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through Sept. 30, 2009.

The final bill funds several of the USDA sheep programs including the scrapie eradication program that was confirmed to receive \$17.7 million.

USDA to Launch First National Goat Study

In July and August 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will contact randomly selected goat producers in 21 states to participate in the first national study of priority health and health-management issues facing the U.S. goat industry.

Two USDA agencies--the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service--will conduct the study, which will focus on the health, productivity and management practices of the meat, dairy and fiber goat industries. USDA will collect data from producers representing 75.5 percent of U.S. goat operations and 82.2 percent of U.S. goats.

Among the objectives of the Goat 2009 study is to determine producer awareness of veterinary services program diseases and describe management and biosecurity practices important for the control of infectious diseases--including scrapie.

Participation in USDA's Goat 2009 study is voluntary and confidential. Results will be presented on regional and national bases; data provided by individual participants will remain confidential and cannot be identified.

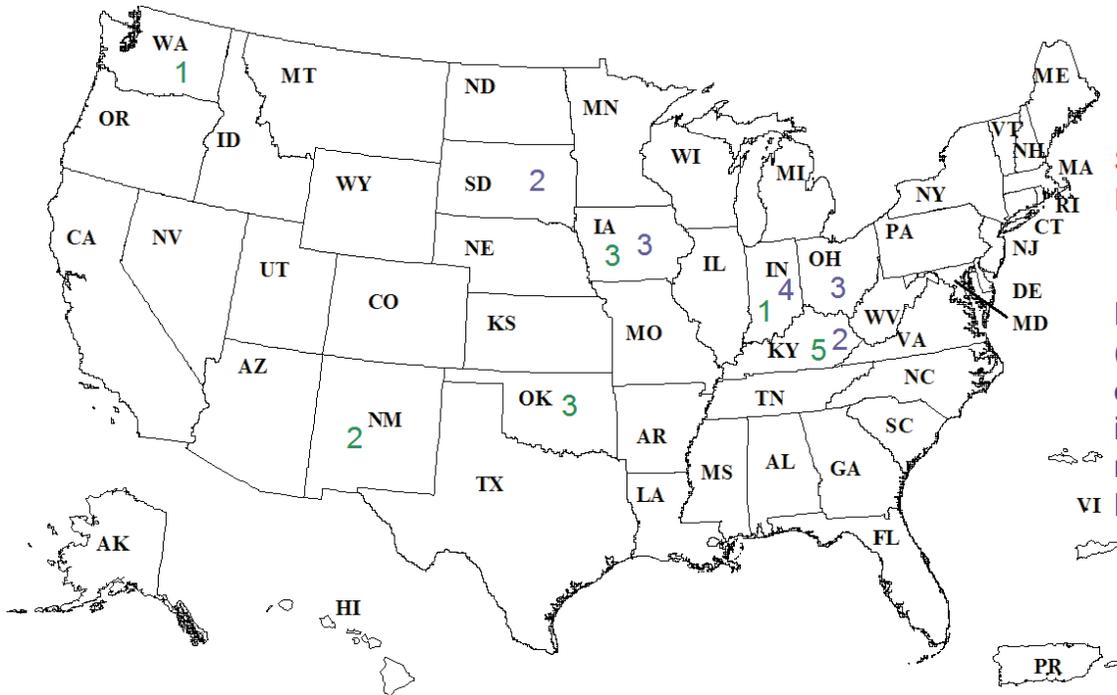
Animals Sampled for Scrapie Testing

Sheep and Goats

As of February 28, 2009

16,611 animals have been sampled for scrapie testing: 15,367 RSSS; 428 regulatory field cases (number includes 206 rectal biopsies from Texas); and 374 regulatory live animal biopsies.

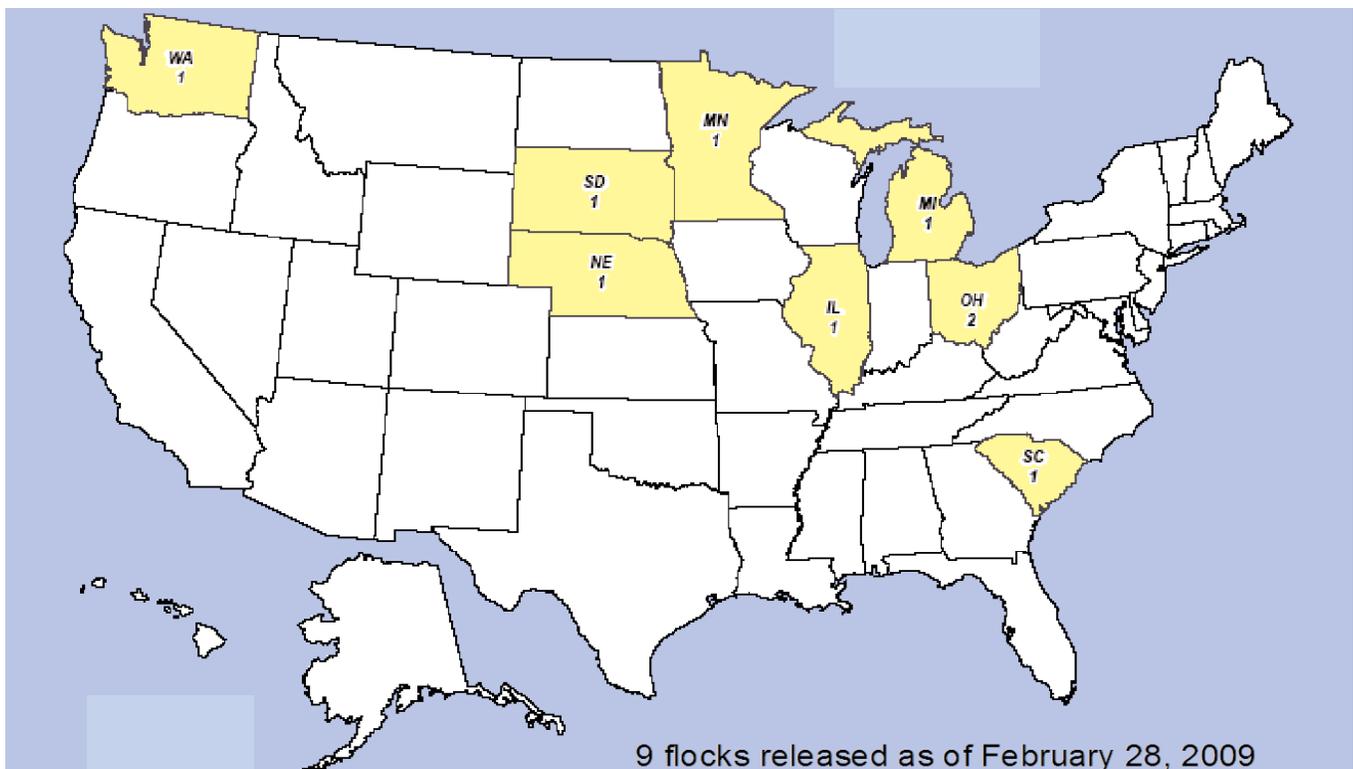
Scrapie Confirmed Cases in FY2009



Scrapie cases as of Feb. 28, 2009 = 29

15 field cases; 14 RSSS cases (reported by State of ID tag. Collected in FY09 and reported as of March 20, 2009).

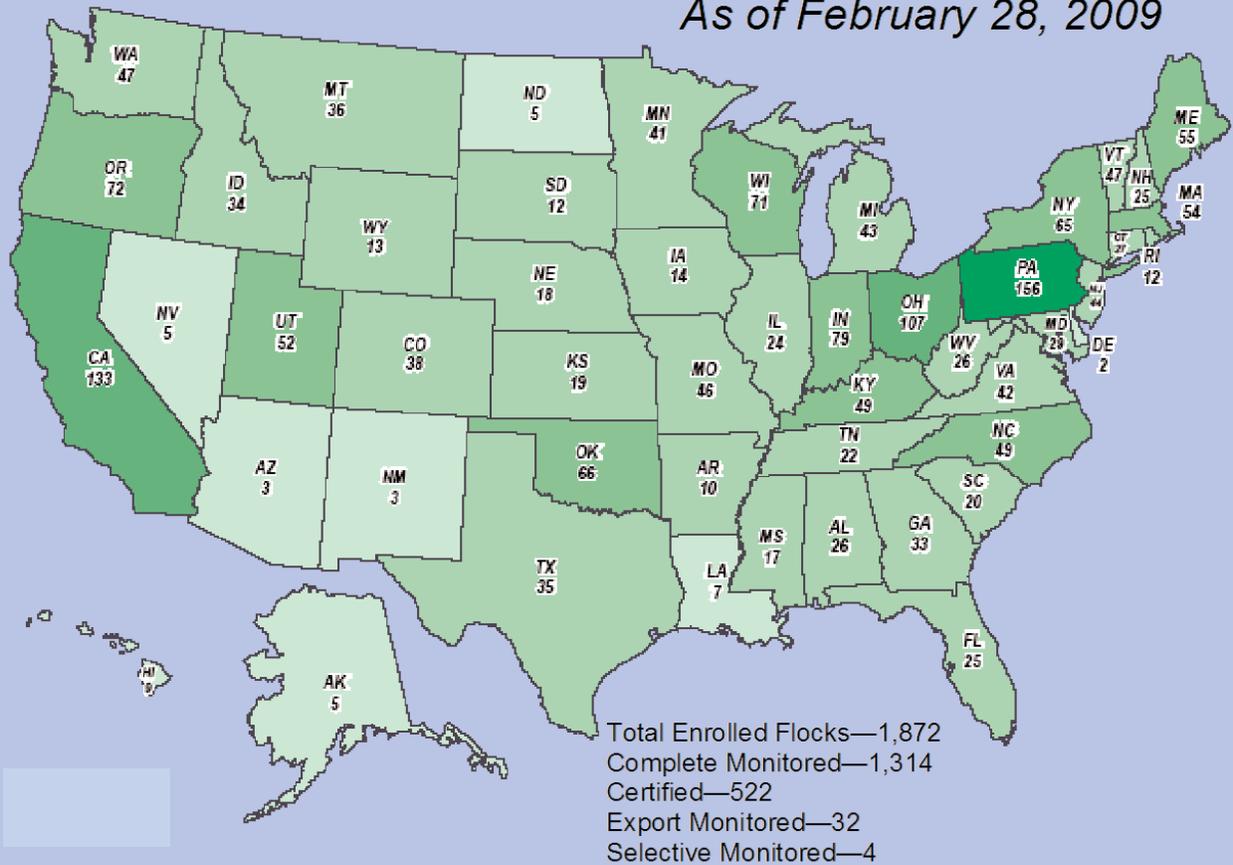
Released Scrapie Infected and Source Flocks FY2009



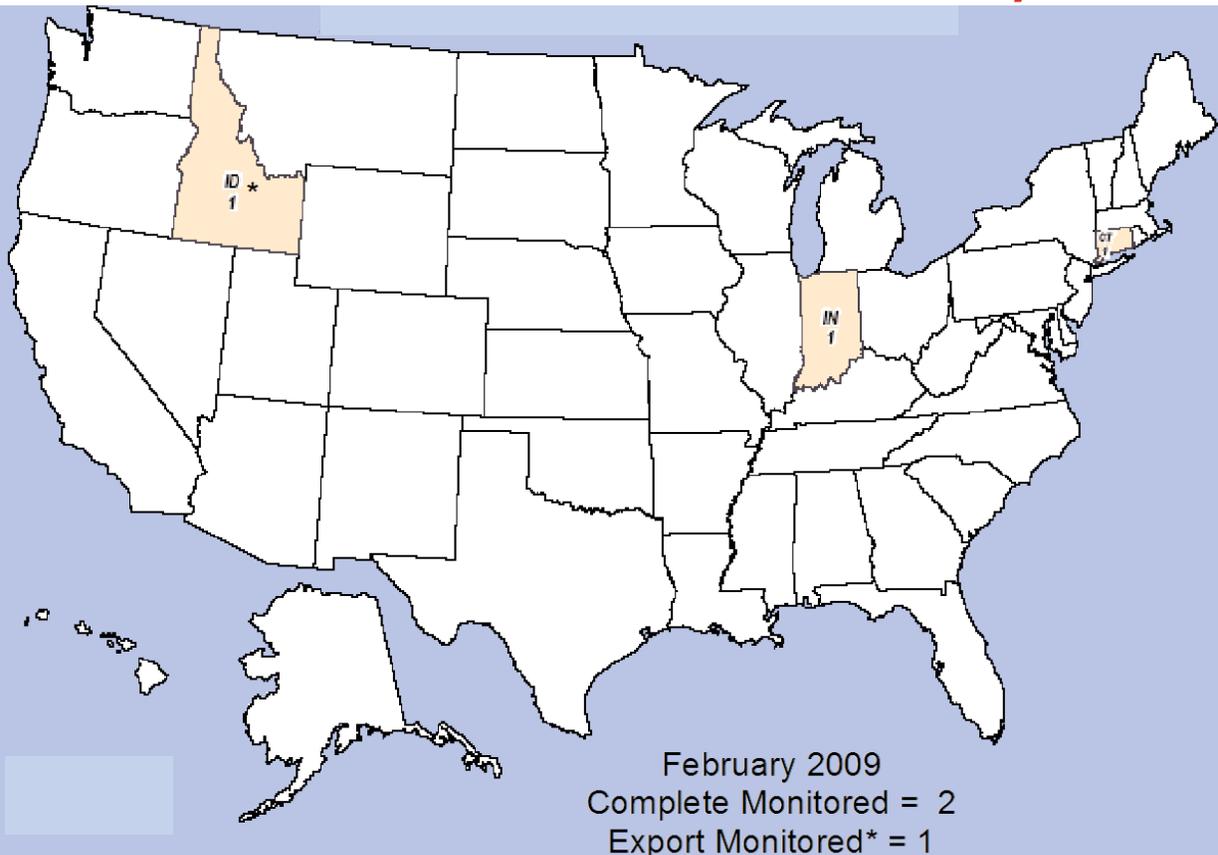
9 flocks released as of February 28, 2009

Scrapie Flock Certification Program Participating Flocks

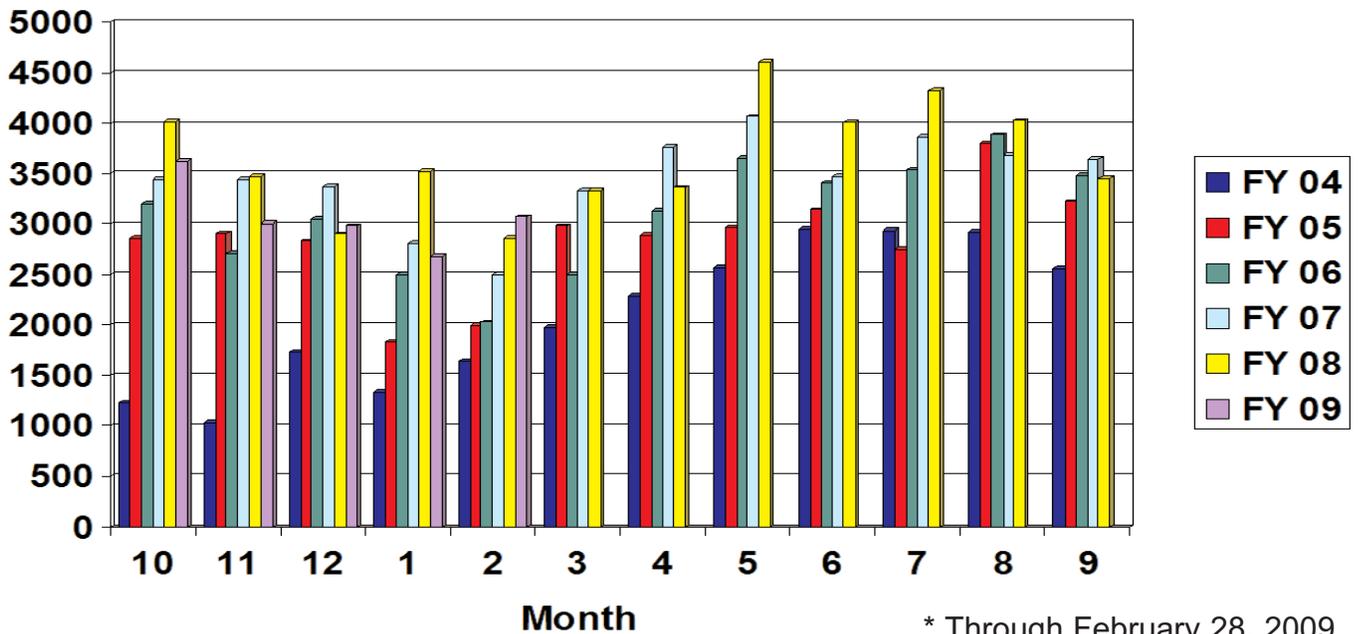
As of February 28, 2009



SFCP Flocks Enrolled and Certified in February 2009



Slaughter Surveillance Samples Collected by Month, FY 2004 to FY 2009*



* Through February 28, 2009

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's goal is to collect 4,000 slaughter surveillance samples each month from around the United States.

Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS) Statistics through February 28, 2009

| Since April 1, 2003: | In FY2009: |
|---|--|
| 204,539 samples collected 398 NVSL* confirmed positive | 15,367 samples collected 14 NVSL confirmed positive |

*National Veterinary Services Laboratories

Web Sites Dedicated to the Eradication of Scrapie

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/scrapie

Maryland Small Ruminant Page
www.sheepandgoat.com/scrapie.html

National Institute of Animal Agriculture
<http://www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie/Scrapie.htm>

Scrapie QuickPlace
<https://qp01.aphis.usda.gov/QuickPlace/scrapie/Main.nsf?OpenDatabase>
State and federal employees can access this password-protected site by e-mailing
Earl.T.Thorpe@APHIS.USDA.gov to receive a password.



American Sheep Industry Association
www.sheepusa.org