



## ADDITIONAL ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

ASI is the national organization representing the interests of 88,000 sheep producers located throughout the United States. From East to West, farm flocks to range operations, ASI works to represent the interests of all producers.

**H2-A Temporary Agricultural Workers** – The Sheep industry depends on a workable temporary foreign labor program to help care for more one-third of ewes and lambs in the U.S. For over 50 years, the sheep industry has used and helped craft the current provisions of the H2A program. While changes to that program and the creation of an H2C program have been discussed, issues regarding health insurance requirements and the numerical cap remain a challenge. Any guest herder program must maintain special procedures for sheep producers and give our members a fighting chance to compete in an increasingly difficult financial environment, while protecting both domestic and foreign ag workers. **ASI supports passage of H.B. 4092 (the Ag Act) to fulfill this critical labor requirement of the U.S. sheep industry.**

**Scrapie Eradication** – The U.S. sheep industry, working collaboratively with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and state partners, has nearly eliminated scrapie. Official identification, surveillance, and traceability of both sheep and goats is critical to continuing and maintaining these efforts in order to preserve and enhance current and future export markets. Scrapie continues to cost the U.S. sheep and goat industry over \$25 million per year. Through the investment of substantial resources, the U.S. sheep industry is within 5 years of being declared scrapie free, with an additional two years of surveillance, but in order to achieve this result the U.S. Scrapie Eradication program must continue to be fully funded. **ASI urges Congress to fund the U.S. Scrapie Eradication program at \$19 million in FY18 within the Equine, Cervid and Small Ruminant Health Line.**

**U.S. Sheep Experiment Station** – As our nation's only experiment station primarily dedicated to sheep production, it is vital to our industry that this station continue its work as part of the USDA Agricultural Research Service. Over the past century, USSES has developed new sheep breeds, conducted rangeland research, and collected unparalleled sage grouse research data. Ongoing USSES research is critical for in not only ensuring economic competitiveness for producers, but also in understanding range interactions between domestic livestock and wildlife. In addition to rangeland research programs, USDA/ARS' Animal Disease Research Unit is dependent on USSES to carry out its infectious disease problem solving mission. **ASI urges funding for USSES at a level of \$4.141 million as part of our nation's strong commitment to continued agricultural research, with Congressional direction that the facility fully staff by filling the two open researcher positions.**

**Mandatory Price Reporting** – The reauthorization of the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 has been disappointing for sheep producers, due to the implementation of current confidentiality rules followed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its chilling effect on price reporting. Further complicating the issue is the effect on insurance products available to the sheep industry. ASI hopes to address this issue administratively, but will look to the Farm Bill to address the issue legislatively if necessary. **ASI urges the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to continue to work with the industry to ensure access to vital price reports despite continued market consolidation.**

For more information, please visit the ASI website at [www.sheepusa.org](http://www.sheepusa.org).  
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