



SCRAPIE ERADICATION

Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) affecting sheep and goats. It is a degenerative and eventually fatal brain disease and is in the same class of diseases as BSE in cattle and Chronic Wasting Disease in elk and deer. The presence of classical scrapie in the U.S. sheep and goat population affects industry economically through production losses, lost exports, and increased production and disposal costs. Following changes in the eradication efforts that focused on surveillance, genetic resistance and traceability, the US has finally come within three years of being declared free of scrapie.

- Scrapie was first discovered in US sheep in 1947, and has been diagnosed in thousands of flocks throughout the United States. In 2004, the sheep industry asked USDA to revamp its eradication program to accelerate the eradication effort with an emphasis on surveillance, development of genetic resistance in sheep and traceability.
- In 2004, one in 359 sheep were found to be positive for Scrapie. Since that time, the NSEP has nearly eliminated scrapie. In fact, the program has directly led to a reduced prevalence rate of 99%. The US is now finally within three years of being declared scrapie free.
- Scrapie has a long incubation period of approximately 5 years, which makes it necessary to wait at least seven years after the last case to declare the disease fully eradicated. The last case of scrapie identified in the US was in 2021.
- USDA's mandated identification, surveillance, and traceability of both sheep and goats has been critical to achieving the goal of Scrapie elimination. Scrapie eradication will help to preserve and open current and future export markets for US sheep products.
- For nearly 80 years, the U.S. sheep industry, working collaboratively with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and state partners through the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP).
- In order to ensure the goal of eradicating scrapie from U.S. sheep and goats is achieved, it is essential that federal spending on scrapie eradication within the Equine, Cervid and Small Ruminant Health Line be maintained at no less than FY2024 levels. **Accordingly, ASI urges Congress to fund the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP) at \$19 million in FY2026 within APHIS' Equine, Cervid and Small Ruminant Health Line.**



Appropriations Bill

Agriculture

Agency

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Account

Salaries and Expenses

Program

Equine, Cervid, and Small Ruminant Health Program

FY2025 Requested Amount and Language

The Committee directs that not less than \$19 million shall be reserved for the **National Scrapie Eradication Program**.

Description

Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) affecting sheep and goats. The presence of classical scrapie in the U.S. sheep and goat population affects industry economically through production losses, lost exports, and increased production and disposal costs. Public health concerns related to the transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) to humans have resulted in efforts to eradicate all TSEs in food-producing animals.

Surveillance for scrapie in the United States is conducted through the National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP), a cooperative State-Federal-industry program. The surveillance components of the NSEP include:

1. Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance;
2. Non-slaughter surveillance (e.g., trace investigations, on-farm testing); and
3. The Scrapie Free Flock Certification Program.

The program's goals are to eradicate classical scrapie from the United States and to meet World Organization for Animal Health criteria for disease freedom. Since 2002, the prevalence of scrapie has decreased significantly through existing eradication efforts, largely a result of effective slaughter surveillance.

Since slaughter surveillance started in FY 2003, the percent of cull sheep found positive at slaughter (once adjusted for face color) has decreased 99 percent. However, in order to declare the U.S. "scrapie free", we must be able to prove to the world that we have conducted testing in all sheep and goat populations. This is why your submission of samples from sheep/goats over 18 months of age found dead or euthanized on your farm is extremely important. Without your help, we will not be able to declare the US free of scrapie, costing the sheep and goat industries approximately \$10 to \$20 million, annually.

Authorization

U.S.C. 8301-8317; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4

President's FY 2026 Budget Request

TBD

FY 2025 (CR – funded FY25 at FY24 levels)

\$35,000,000

For more information, please visit the ASI website at www.sheepusa.org.

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