



SCRAPIE ERADICATION

Scrapie is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) affecting sheep and goats. It is a degenerative and eventually fatal brain disease in the same class 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 the industry economically through production losses, lost exports, and increased production and disposal costs. Vital to the success of achieving the longstanding goal of eradicating Scrapie from the U.S. sheep flock is USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP).

- **The U.S. is now in year 6 of the 7 years needed to be declared free of Scrapie by the World Organization for Animal Health.** If successful, scrapie-free status will open and preserve export markets for US sheep products.
- Scrapie was first discovered in US sheep in 1947 and has since been diagnosed in thousands of flocks throughout the U.S. In 2004, one in 359 sheep were found to be positive for Scrapie. That same year, in fear for its future, the sheep industry asked APHIS to revamp the NSEP to accelerate its scrapie eradication effort by emphasizing surveillance, traceability, and the development of genetic resistance in sheep.
- These changes in the NSEP – prioritizing surveillance, genetic resistance and traceability – as well as strong collaborative effort between industry, USDA and the States, has directly led to a reduced scrapie prevalence rate of 99%, and nearly eliminated scrapie from the U.S. sheep flock. The accelerated scrapie program has successfully brought the U.S. to within two years of being declared free of scrapie, after 79 years of effort.
- These last two years are crucial to ensure the disease has been truly eradicated. Scrapie has a long incubation period of approximately 5 years so it is 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 January 2021. Efforts must continue to ensure the goal is reached.
- Funding scrapie eradication within APHIS' Equine, Cervid and Small Ruminant Health Line must be maintained at no less than FY2024 levels. **Accordingly, ASI urges Congress to fund the NSEP at \$19 million in FY2027.**



Appropriations Bill

Agriculture

Agency

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Account

Salaries and Expenses

Program

Equine, Cervid, and Small Ruminant Health Program

FY2027 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. Until then 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 2027 Budget Request

TBD

FY 2026

\$35,000,000