

United States
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Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection Service

Washington, DC
20250

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VETERINARY SERVICES NOTICE 98-04

Subject: New Program Standards for the Voluntary (VSFCP) Scrapie Flock Certification Program

To: Regional Directors, Veterinary Services
Area Veterinarians in Charge, Veterinary Services
Veterinary Medical Officer, Veterinary Services

On October 17, 1997, the new Program Standards for the VSFCP were approved by Veterinary Services (VS). These standards are to replace the existing Uniform Methods and Rules (UMR) for the VSFCP.

Since the updates to the Scrapie Information System (SIS) may not have been installed on every system that uses the SIS, Areas may incorporate some of the standards of the new program for their enrolled producers while retaining the status that they have maintained under the old program until this upgrade is installed. After installation of the SIS upgrade in an Area, the status of all flocks participating in the VSFCP will be changed to correspond with the standards set by the new program.

In order to help managers and participants of the VSFCP, the following outline should be used to guide the transition to the new set of Program Standards:

A. VSFCP Before Updating the SIS

1. Producers who have enrolled flocks, including flocks enrolled during the transition period, will have their flocks qualify for and advance in status in compliance with the old UMR.
2. Producers may have their flocks participate in the Selective Monitored Category under the new set of Program Standards. Records of these flocks must be maintained at a local level until the new database is on line to address this category.
3. Producers may identify their animals based on the new set of Program Standards.

4. Producers may commingle animals, acquire rams, and use germplasm based on the new set of Program Standards.

B. VSFCP After Updating the SIS

1. The Scrapie Database will be modified to accept the status and category changes of the new set of Program Standards. Definition for Status and Enrollment dates are found in the new Program Standards. The release date is the function of the SIS.
2. Flocks at C status under the old UMR will be assigned a Status Date and an Enrollment Date based on the last date that the flock owner made an acquisition outside of the program and the date of their approval to participate in the VSFCP, respectively. If a producer only acquired rams, then the Status Date could be moved back to the last time an ewe was purchased or the Enrollment Date with the approval of the State Scrapie Board.
3. Flocks at B status under the old UMR will be assigned a Status Date that is 1 year older than the Release Date that signified the change between C and B status and an Enrollment Date based on the approval of the producer to participate in the VSFCP.
4. Flocks at A status under the old UMR will be assigned a Status Date that is 3 years older than the Release Date that signified the change between B and A status and an Enrollment Date based on the approval of the producer to participate in the VSFCP.
5. Flocks at Certified status under the old UMR are Certified under the new Program Standards and should be assigned a Status Date that is 3 years older than the Release Date that signified the change between B and A status. The Enrollment Date is based on the approval of the producer to participate in the VSFCP.

The new Program Standards allow for the use of tamper-resistant ear tags approved by VS. These tags are plastic "flap tags" with the flock number and animal identification number printed on both the tag and the "button" that secures the tag to the ear. Currently Allflex is the only company approved to produce these tags. Other companies may produce these tags if they are approved by VS, but a producer may only purchase tags from one company.

Producers that wish to use tamper-resistant ear tags must obtain a letter from their VS Area Office prior to purchase. This letter should include the flock identification number, tag numbers for that specific order, flock address, and tag company's

name. Approved tag companies will be instructed to produce official tags only for producers that submit a copy of this letter with any tag order. Area Offices should maintain a recording system that assures that only one official identification number is issued per tag manufactured for that producer. No duplicate animal identification numbers will be issued for any producer.

Approved tag companies will also provide VS with an annual report of all tags manufactured for producers enrolled in the VSFCP. An alternate way to process tag orders would be for the Area Office to FAX a producer's order form with the appropriate tag information from the Area Office. This order would have to be placed with some method of payment that doesn't involve the use of VS funds to purchase tags. Tag companies will be instructed to accept tag orders FAXED from the Area Office.

/s/ T. E. Walton for
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