

# **Sheep Health Committee**

**Mid-Year Report**

**August 27, 2004**

## **Scrapie Stakeholder Summit**

NIAA will plan and facilitate a meeting involving state and federal animal health officials, producers, practitioners and other sheep industry stakeholders. This meeting will: a) provide a forum for industry/government interface; b) give producers a sense of ownership of the program; c) spur producer advocates for the eradication effort; and d) provide important feedback from industry leaders to USDA on what has worked successfully and what needs attention and possible change. Plans for organizing and hosting this meeting (in 2005) should be made relatively soon assuming that the USDA-State audits of the National Scrapie Eradication Program are completed in 2004. Some of the key issues to address will be: consistency of program operation in the states, direction for change indicated by the massive number of epidemiological investigations conducted since program inception (9/01), direction suggested by current research, and issues with animal testing as well as disposal.

**Eradicate Scrapie! Website** – The committee chair and vice-chair plan to assist staff with providing new information to continue to make the website a valuable asset to industry and veterinarians. The powerpoint presentation is currently under revision with plans to release the latest version October 1, 2004 pending APHIS review of the changes that have been made. Changes that have been made address ID requirements relative to consistency between NAIS and NSEP as well as NSEP updates.

## **Major Issues**

The major issue in front of the committee in the timeframe between the annual meeting and now has been sheep and goat ID. The working groups' attempted to develop industry-supported reports regarding some of the details of a national livestock ID system. Committee members have been closely engaged in listening and assimilating comments forthcoming from industry, veterinarians and regulators.

## **Cooperative Agreement**

There was a possibility for NIAA to set up a cooperative agreement with APHIS specific to sheep and goat ID research coordination but after considerable deliberation, APHIS opted to set up this agreement with the chair of the Sheep ID Working Group through the University of Minnesota.

## **Future Activities**

The committee will attempt to include goat issues to a greater extent than has occurred in the past.