

7.4 Procedures Common to All Pathways

Preliminary Activities

1. Obtain and read the National Standards for the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP).
2. Schedule a meeting with the local CFIA district veterinarian to review the terms and conditions for flock/herd certification and to discuss the duties and procedures that must be followed under the selected pathway. Tutorial or review of the TSE brain sampling technique in small ruminants is suggested at this time.
3. Establish a valid accreditation agreement (contract) with the CFIA district office for the delivery of the SFCP.
4. Discuss with the producer which one of the three pathways to certification they intend to pursue. Assessment of their facilities, flock/herd management and record keeping practices should be done to gauge the ease with which the accredited veterinarian feels the producer can be successful and identify any changes in record-keeping or management that would be necessary to facilitate the fulfilment of SFCP requirements.
5. Advise the producer to contact the regional administrator, the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency (OSMA), to obtain an application form and the requirements to participate, advance and maintain certification within each of the three pathways to certification.

Application

6. The flock owner contacts the regional administrator (OSMA) and requests an application form to participate.
7. An application is completed and submitted to the organization responsible for status assessment. The applicant must indicate which program specific pathway to certification will be pursued. The application form must be accompanied by the following:
 - a site plan of all buildings and grazing premises to which the animals are given access;
 - the initial flock inventory prepared by the accredited veterinarian within the three month period immediately prior to the submission of the application;
 - a record-keeping plan (objective: records must be reviewed completely and effectively at each annual inspection).

8. The application and inventory must be signed by the accredited veterinarian and the producer.
9. The step of applying to the regional administrator (OSMA) for entry into the SFCP is delayed in Pathways 2 and 3 until other conditions are met.

Anniversary Quarter

10. The flock category is effective from the date when the flock is accepted into the program, and the anniversary quarter for subsequent years is the quarter in which the acceptance date falls (January 1-March 31; April 1-June 30; July 1-September 30; October 1-December 31).

Inventories

11. Supervise the initial animal inventory. All sheep and goats 12 months or older on the premises must bear two forms of identification. All animals aged less than 12 months must be officially identified when a change in ownership occurs or when animals are moved from their usual location (e.g. exhibition, insemination centre, sales barn or auction barn).
12. Assess the animals for any clinical evidence of scrapie.
13. Instruct the owner to record all additions to the flock. Records are required for every sheep or goat that is born on, or that enters the premises.
14. Inform the owner that acquisitions of live sheep or goats or embryos must include documentation required by the specific pathway.
15. Instruct the owner to maintain appropriate documentation of every sheep or goat that leaves the flock/herd, e.g. sales receipts, notation of deaths.
16. Inform the owner that records must be maintained for a period of five years.

Annual Physical Inspection

17. The accredited veterinarian must visit the enrolled premises at least once a year. The **physical annual flock/herd inventories** must be conducted under the supervision of the accredited veterinarian. Appropriately trained third-party personnel, such as animal health technicians or veterinary students may be used. The inventory will identify every sheep and goat on the premises. During the inventory inspection, all animals over 12 months of age in the flock must be identified individually (individual id read) and assessed for any clinical symptoms of scrapie.

Annual Inventory 18. The **annual inventory report** is the responsibility of the accredited veterinarian. The foundation of the annual inventory report is the reconciliation of this year's annual inventory with the previous year's annual inventory. The annual report lists the following:

- all identification of each sheep and goat on the premises at the time of the inventory;
- all identification devices placed on each sheep/goat, including the current lamb/kid crop and any sheep or goat that has lost its identification device;
- all sheep/goats that have entered or left the premises since the last inventory;
- the status of the flock of origin for sheep/goats entering the premises as live animals or as implanted embryos;
- all deaths;
- the destination of every sheep/goat that moved off the premises as established by a bill of sale or, if the animal has not been sold, a signed document showing the destination of the sheep/goat; and
- appropriate laboratory results (**scrapie testing**).

When satisfied that the report adequately documents all reconciliation of the inventory, sign the report.

19. Forward the document to the status assessor within the anniversary quarter in which the enrolled flock/herd was registered in the program.
20. Instruct the owner to submit an application to the regional administrator to advance to the next level of the certification program or to maintain certified status once they have attained that level.

Deadstock Testing

21. Every sheep or goat over 12 months of age that dies on the premises must be submitted for scrapie testing at a CFIA approved laboratory. **This is the most critical element of the program and the lack of even one submission without documented cause will jeopardize the flocks' status within the program.** The nearest approved laboratory for scrapie surveillance testing should be identified by both the accredited veterinarian and the producer. The producer may submit the head or brain sample directly to the laboratory. The accredited veterinarian should review how to sever the head and indicate that samples should be stored frozen. Heads/samples may be held and sent, or delivered in batches. If the owner kills a mature sheep for humane purposes, testing is still required. When the brain is too damaged, one head lymph node should be submitted for diagnoses (i.e. the retropharyngeal, mandibular or 3rd eyelid).

22. Flocks that are working through status levels E - A must submit 100% of animals more than 12 months of age that die on farm for scrapie testing. Upon obtaining certified status, the owner may continue to submit 100% of animals more than 12 months of age that die on farm for scrapie testing or, alternatively, they may submit for scrapie testing 80% of animals more than 12 months of age that died **and** 20% of the animals of the flock more than 12 months of age that are slaughtered.
23. Animals greater than 12 months of age submitted for routine post-mortem examination may be considered as dead submissions if tested for scrapie.
24. No more than five adult animals have to be submitted for testing from a group of animals that die from a common cause, as determined by a veterinarian or veterinary pathologist, within the time frame of the same epidemiologically linked episode (not to exceed four weeks), e.g. toxicity.

*Deadstock
Testing
Exemptions*

- Legitimate exemption from submission of heads.

The status assessor should consider the following as automatic exemptions from the requirement to submit unless the status assessor suspects the conditions set out were not met or that the exemption is being abused to the detriment of the flock certification program.

- A. Destruction of sheep by fire
 - a certificate or letter of an appropriate fire official must accompany the annual flock report.
- B. Destruction and carrying away the head of a sheep by a predator
 - a certificate or letter of an appropriate wildlife officer or other government official responsible for investigating such incidents must accompany the annual flock report.
- C. Theft
 - a report of the police officer who investigates the theft must accompany the annual flock report.
- D. Loss or destruction of the sample when it is no longer in the control of the owner, e.g. by an accredited veterinarian or laboratory. Recognized laboratories should note on reception of the specimen that the obex is not present and the reason why.
 - a letter setting out the details of the loss of the sample by the individual responsible must accompany the annual flock report.
- E. Any other reason over which the owner could not reasonably be expected to have control which results in the destruction or disappearance of the body, such as a flood

- a letter or report by an acceptable third party which sets out the details of the reason for failure to submit the sample must accompany the annual flock report.
25. If unsuitable brain specimens are received by a laboratory, the laboratory will notify the status assessor and accredited veterinarian responsible for the flock. A follow-up of the details of the individual situation will be undertaken with the responsible accredited veterinarian / status assessor. If negligence on the part of the producer is identified as the cause, or this occurrence is repeated, the program's requirements are not considered to have been met and the status of the flock will be suspended.

Sick Animals

26. Instruct the owner of the premises to report illness in a sheep or goat over 12 months of age lasting longer than two weeks, with the exception of a physical injury. The accredited veterinarian will be responsible for monitoring the outcome of the case and for reporting the case to the CFIA if scrapie is a differential diagnosis. Educate the owner to recognize the clinical signs of scrapie and provide information on the epidemiology of the disease.