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## Northwest Alabama Small Ruminant Newsletter Summer 2009

Greetings Everyone,

Summer is upon us, may your animals be healthy and your barns full of hay. In this issue you will find the following information. (1) The Master Meat Goat Herdsman Program has begun and is being well received. This educational opportunity provides comprehensive information on almost every aspect of goat production. Schedule information is found below. (2) There are several other meetings scheduled this summer designed benefit of goat and sheep producers. See information below for specifics on topics and locations. (3) For those of you who may not be aware, there is a federal disease control program, known as the Scrapie Eradication Program. While registered animals with proper tattoos and paperwork are exempt from being tagged, terminal animals (destined for sale barns) must be properly tagged with Scrapie tags identifying animals from your farm. Save yourself some stress and order them now (see enclosed) if you have not already done so. (4) According to a January 2009

press release from National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) goat and sheep numbers are down across the country and within Alabama, which would explain why market prices have been so good for an extended time this spring. Take a look at the information in this newsletter.

I hope you benefit from the information provided in this newsletter. As always I thank you for your support and appreciate your input concerning our outreach efforts with Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Robert Spencer*

Robert Spencer  
Urban Regional Extension Specialist

## Programs and Workshops

### **Master Meat Goat Herdsman Program**

State-wide comprehensive training curriculum addressing the fundamentals of meat goat production. Eighteen hours of training including class room setting and hands-on practice. Upon completion of course requirements, participants will receive educational materials and certificate. Registration fee: (\$35) to be paid first day.

Upcoming schedule is:

June 26 & 27 and July 10 & 11: Northwest (Shoals area). To preregister contact Robert Spencer (256) 766-6223

July 31 & August 1 and August 21 & 22: East-central (Talladega area). To preregister contact Talladega Extension Office (256) 362-6187, or Eddie Wheeler (256) 582-2009. *This one was originally scheduled for June but moved to a later date.*

### **Other Small Ruminant Workshops**

**Sand Mountain Goat Field Day:** An opportunity to learn more about forages for meat goats

Saturday July 18

8:30 am – 1:30 pm

Sand Mountain Research and Extension Center: 13112 Highway 68, Crossville, AL 35962

Must pre-register for lunch, pay at door; \$5 registration fee, includes lunch w/ goat and lamb

Learn about meat goat demonstration project, forages for goats, pasture management, and parasite management. Contact Eddie Wheeler (256) 582-2009 or Robert Spencer (256) 766-6223 to preregister or for more information.

### **Small Ruminant Conference: Marketing Meat Goats**

Saturday August 8th, 2009

8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Joe Wheeler State Park

201 McLean Dr.

Rogersville, AL 35652

Learn about marketing ideas utilized in neighboring states, buyer preferences, and other important marketing strategies. Registration Fee \$10.00 per person to cover "Meal" only. Pre-registration is required up to August, 1<sup>st</sup>. For more information contact Dr. Maria Leite-Browning (256) 372-4954. For reservations at the park lodge (on your own) call 256-247-5466.

### **Blount County Dairy Goat Workshop:**

Fundamentals of dairy goat production

Saturday August 15

9 am – 3 pm (lunch on your own)

Blount County Extension Office: Frank J.

Green Building/415 Fifth Avenue East,

Suite A

Oneonta, AL 35121

Learn more about various aspects of dairy goats, fundamentals of starting a dairy, herd health, differences between meat goat and dairy goats, and etc. Contact Dan Porch: (205) 274-2129 or Eddie Wheeler: (256) 582-2009 to register or for more information.

## **Scrapie Eradication Program**

*The following information taken from: <http://www.agi.state.al.us/scrapie?op=makePrintable> & [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/animal\\_diseases/scrapie/free-certi.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/free-certi.shtml)*

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of sheep and goats. It is among a number of diseases classified as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE). Infected flocks that contain a high percentage of susceptible animals can experience significant production losses. Over a period of several years the number of infected animals increases, and the age at onset of clinical signs decreases making these flocks economically unviable. Animals sold from infected flocks spread scrapie to other flocks.

The presence of scrapie in the United States also prevents the export of breeding stock, semen, and embryos to many other countries. TSEs are the subject of increased attention and concern because of the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, the link between BSE and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in people, and feline spongiform encephalopathy (FSE) in cats in Europe.

The program is a cooperative effort among producers, allied industry representatives, accredited veterinarians, State animal health officials, and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The program provides participating producers with the opportunity to protect their sheep and goats from scrapie and to enhance the marketability of their animals through certifying their origin in scrapie-free flocks. In addition, APHIS regulations restrict the interstate movement of sheep from scrapie-infected and source flocks.

The Scrapie Eradication Program is now mandatory. This federal disease control program is designed to accelerate the eradication of the fatal brain disease, Scrapie, from the nation's sheep flocks and goat herds began November 19, 2001. The program requires ear tags to be placed in all sheep and some types of goats by their owners before they are sold by private treaty or transported to a sale, show, or exhibition. Flocks enrolled in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program will not need to make any changes. Slaughter surveillance programs are under way now to determine the prevalence of Scrapie in the United States. The presence of the ear tags will allow trace back to the flock of origin of animals whose brains test positive for Scrapie. A plan can then be instituted in these flocks to eliminate the Scrapie infection. An indemnity program is in place to compensate owners for the financial loss that may incur from live animals that have to be destroyed due to Scrapie infection or exposure.

The following need to be tagged by their owners with USDA approved tags:

### **SHEEP:**

- Before a change of ownership occurs by sale by trade, private treaty, or auction
- Before transport to a livestock market
- Before transport to a slaughter facility
- Before transport to a show, fair, petting zoo, or other exhibition

## GOATS:

- Sexually intact goats before transport to a show, fair, petting zoo, or other exhibition
- Goats used primarily for milk production must be tagged the same as sheep above
- Goats that have been pastured with sheep must be tagged the same as sheep above
- \*All goats that travel to or within the state of Florida and other specific states and sale barns must be tagged with USDA tags; more and more states and individual sale barns are requiring tags for *all* sheep and goats.

**Please Note: Registered goats that have a legible registry tattoo and are accompanied by their registry certificate do not require tags. The tattoo must be registered as a unique entity with the breed registry and our USDA, APHIS, VS office.**

Goats that are raised/sold for meat only and do not have registration papers are considered low risk commercial goats and do not require tags except those traveling to and within the state of Florida and other *states and sale barns requiring tags on all sheep and goats.*

In most situations commercial goats fall into the category of low risk and only require tags *in states and sale barns requiring tags for all sheep and goats.*

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## Record Keeping

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Please remember to keep written records of ear tags on all sheep and goats you sell or purchase. This could be very important if any animal you buy/sell is involved in a Scrapie trace back investigation. Dates of sale/purchase and names of buyer/seller are vital information. When you sell an animal you should keep a written record of the ear tag number along with the buyer information. If the animal is sold at a public auction, you only need to keep the name of the auction in your records, not the name of the buyer. The same type of records should be kept on purchased animals, i.e. ear tag numbers and who you purchased from. If a purchased animal loses the original ear tag, when you replace it with one of your own tags, you should record the old tag and indicate in your records the ear tag number that was used to replace it.

When you present sheep or goats to a stockyard for sale, you should have the ear tag numbers written down so they can be provided to the stockyard at the time of checking in. The stockyard personnel should write the ear tag numbers on the checking in slip along with your name and other vital information.

All records should be kept for a period of five years after the transaction occurs.

Tags may be ordered by e-mailing or calling Dr. Cynthia Brassfield to request tags. Tags and applicator pliers are available to producers free of charge from the USDA, APHIS, VS office.

Contact Dr. Brassfield at: [Cynthia.M.Brasfield@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Cynthia.M.Brasfield@aphis.usda.gov) or (334) 657-5549  
See enclosed Scrapie tag application form.

## **Decreases in 2009 Goat and Sheep Population**

(Information taken from <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/SheeGoat/SheeGoat-01-30-2009.txt>)

**Sheep and Lamb Inventory Down 3 Percent:** All sheep and lamb inventory in the United States on January 1, 2009, totaled 5.75 million head, down 3 percent from 2008.

Breeding sheep inventory decreased to 4.25 million head on January 1, 2009, down 4 percent from 4.43 million head on January 1, 2008. Ewes one year old and older, at 3.40 million head, were 4 percent below last year.

Market sheep and lambs on January 1, 2009, totaled 1.50 million head, down 1 percent from January 1, 2008. Market lambs comprised 95 percent of the total marketings. Twenty-three percent were lambs less than 65 pounds, 11 percent were 65 - 84 pounds, 21 percent were 85 - 105 pounds, and 39 percent were over 105 pounds. Market sheep comprised the remaining 5 percent of total marketings.

The 2008 lamb crop of 3.71 million head was down 5 percent from 2007. The 2008 lambing rate was 105 lambs per 100 ewes one year old and older on January 1, 2008, down 3 percent from 2007.

Shorn wool production in the United States during 2008 was 33.0 million pounds, down 5 percent from 2007. Sheep and lambs shorn totaled 4.43 million head, down 5 percent from 2007. The average price paid for wool sold in 2008 was \$0.99 per pound for a total value of 32.5 million dollars, up 7 percent from 30.2 million dollars in 2007.

**Goat and Kid Inventory Down 2 Percent:** All goat inventories in the United States on January 1, 2009, totaled 3.07 million head, down 2 percent from 2008.

Breeding goat inventory totaled 2.54 million head down 2 percent from 2008. All market goats and kids totaled 528,000 head, up 1 percent from a year ago. On January 1, 2009 meat and all other goats totaled 2.55 million head, down 2 percent from 2008. Milk goat inventory increased 4 percent to 335,000 head while angora goats were down 10 percent totaling 185,000 head. The 2008 kid crop totaled 1.96 million head for all goats, down 2 percent from 2007.

For Alabama: Total meat goat population for 2008 was 70,000, while as of January 2009 the population dropped to 65,000; a seven percent decrease. Keep in mind these are estimates!

# Alabama Scrapie Eradication Program

Flock ID application/Tag Order/Tattoo Registration Form

For Scrapie Questions Contact Dr. Cindy Brasfield

[Cynthia.M.Brasfield@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Cynthia.M.Brasfield@aphis.usda.gov)

(334)657-5549

Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(where sheep and goats are located)

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if different than above)

City: \_\_\_\_\_, Alabama Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Species on Farm: Sheep Goats Both County: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Breed: \_\_\_\_\_ Flock Size (adults) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ordered Scrapie Eradication Tags previously? Yes No

If yes, what is your USDA assigned Flock ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tags requested: 10 20 40 60 80 100 other amount \_\_\_\_\_  
(circle the amount you want to order)

- Send me information on the Scrapie Flock Certification Program
- My goats are identified with a registered tattoo. My tattoo is \_\_\_\_\_
- Send me information on purchasing other types of approved tags.

Return this form to the following address:

USDA, APHIS, VS

P.O. Box 70429

Montgomery, AL 36107-0429

Or you may fax this form to 334-223-7352