

## Small Ruminant Import Policy to Change February 1, 2016

Following a lengthy consultation period that saw three draft policies considered over the past 3 years, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has announced that revised import policy for small ruminants intended for breeding purposes will change effective February 1, 2016.

Among other revisions, the policy will require that:

- Imported females must originate from a farm that is considered a “negligible risk premises”.
- Imported males must meet ONE of the following criteria to be eligible for import from the US:
  - Must originate from a “negligible risk premises”, **OR**
  - Rams must be of the codon 136AA 171RR or 136AA 171QR genotype, **OR**
  - May be imported from any premises in the US provided they are imported onto a farm that has been enrolled in the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP) for a minimum of 1 year. Under this option, there are additional post-import restrictions placed on imported animals included how they are kept and where they can move.

The policy describes what constitutes a “negligible risk premises” in detail. In essence, US farms enrolled in the USDA Scrapie Flock Certification Program Export Monitored stream for a minimum of 5 years (even if they have not yet reached 'Export Certified' status) constitute negligible risk premises. In addition to scrapie-related restrictions, some disease testing is also required depending on the species and state of origin.

Import policies for all species are reviewed and revised regularly to ensure that they remain in line with current domestic disease control policies and that they reflect the most current science in disease control. The CFIA currently has scrapie control programs and measures in place in Canada, and the revisions to import policy are designed to ensure that there is a minimum risk of importing scrapie infected sheep and goats into Canada.

Scrapie is a threat to the health of the national sheep flock and goat herd. Not only is scrapie a debilitating disease that over time causes affected animals to suffer, scrapie-exposed and at-risk animals are subject to disease control actions that can include euthanasia. For these reasons, small ruminant industry groups are supporting efforts to prevent the spread of scrapie and its implications in animal health and welfare. The goal is to minimize any further losses to producers and to the industry. There is no question that this policy represents increased restrictions on the import of new genetics, but it is designed to protect the industry over the long term.

In an effort to support producers who wish to import breeding stock from the US, the Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF), through its Scrapie Canada activities, continues to offer the VSFCP for all interested Canadian sheep and goat producers. For more information about the VSFCP, contact the CSF by calling 888.684.7739 or by emailing [admin@scrapiecanada.ca](mailto:admin@scrapiecanada.ca).