

For Immediate Release

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For More Information

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BRONSON ANNOUNCES NEW SCRAPIE RULE GOING INTO EFFECT

TALLAHASSEE—Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles Bronson is announcing the upcoming implementation of a new rule regulating the identification and intrastate movement of sheep and goats. The rule, effective October 10, is designed to prevent the spread of Scrapie, a fatal, degenerative disease of the nervous system in these animals.

The rule requires that all sheep and goats moved intrastate for any reason, or when there is a change of ownership, must be identified by their flock/herd of birth, or if that information is unknown, by the flock/herd from which they originated. Only identification methods approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) can be used. These include official USDA eartags, identification tattoos, or implanted electronic microchips.

The new rule is being done in conjunction with the USDA's Scrapie Eradication Program which provides standards for state and federal governments and the industry to monitor, control and eradicate the disease from domestic flocks and herds in the United States. The USDA regulates interstate movement of sheep and goats but the state rule was necessary to ensure the same standards are followed for animals moved within the state's borders.

"It is imperative that the federal government and all the state's work together on this eradication program," Bronson said. "In today's marketplace, animals are often moved to many locations. It's important to be able to quickly determine where they are from if they are diagnosed with Scrapie."

Information about the flock or herd of origin is necessary because an infected animal may not show clinical symptoms for up to five years, making it more difficult to diagnose and trace back to the original herd to look for a source or other infected animals.

The department's Division of Animal Industry is launching an education effort to get word of the new rule out to producers, dealers, auction markets, petting zoos, 4-H clubs, and any other entities that deal with goats and sheep.

For more information about Administrative Code Rule 5C-29, the Scrapie rule, contact the Department's Division of Animal Industry at (850) 410-0900 or visit www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai.