

Sheep and Goat Control Order

What is the Control Order?

Control Orders are issued under the *Animal Health Act* in response to an animal health hazard. The Control Order for domestic sheep and goats aims to reduce the risk that wild thimhorn sheep and mountain goats will be exposed to respiratory pathogens, especially *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*), that can be carried by apparently healthy domestic sheep or goats. The first Control Order came into effect on January 1, 2020. A new, 10-year Control Order has been issued, effective January 1, 2025. This new order is being issued due to the ongoing concern about the risk of respiratory disease spread.

What is different about the 10-year Control Order?

The new Control Order is based on what was learned about this hazard during the five years of the first Order. As the domestic sheep and goats that tested positive for *M. ovi* in Yukon herds were destroyed in the first year of the initial Control Order, the number of positive animals markedly declined. In subsequent years, positive animals were much more likely to be either imported to Yukon or in herds or flocks that had imported animals. The risk that imported animals are more likely to carry *M. ovi* is reflected in the updated approach under the new Order. Herds or flocks that have imported animals or have a history of positive animals are at higher risk and will have stricter inspections, testing and controls.

Results of an industry impact assessment carried out by an independent contractor and an independent summary of laboratory testing methods also informed the new Order. In addition, the risk assessment done in 2016 was independently updated, concluding that the consequences of respiratory disease outbreak in wild sheep or goats would be significant. It confirmed that measures to ensure separation between domestic small ruminants and wild sheep or goats, as well as efforts to remove animals that carry *M. ovi* would help prevent the spread of pathogens from farmed to wild populations.

The new Control Order uses a risk-based approach to determine how often to test animals and inspect enclosures. The new Order also decreases record keeping requirements for owners and provides new options for animal imports.

What does this mean for sheep or goat owners?

Anyone who owns sheep or goats, even a single animal, must comply (or continue to comply) with the conditions in the Order. Sheep and goats must:

- be kept in an enclosure approved by an inspector;
- have permanent identification, e.g., ear tag, microchip;



- be negative when tested for the pathogens of concern;
- be kept below 1,000 metres elevation.

In addition, owners must:

- keep records of any new sheep or goat on their farm since the last testing visit;
- report the escape of any sheep or goats from their enclosure, or while being transported;
- apply for and obtain a permit to import sheep or goats into the Yukon.

Will my animals still need to be tested and my fencing inspected?

Yes, domestic sheep and goats will still be tested but the frequency of testing will be based on a risk assessment. The risk assessment will consider if there have been imports to the herd or flock and if animals on the premises previously tested positive. Fencing will be inspected any time a quarantine order is placed for animal testing. Additional inspections will occur based on risk factors such as history of animal escapes or in preparation for animal imports.

What information needs to be included in records I keep?

Record keeping requirements are reduced under the new Control Order. As of January 1, 2025, owners only need to record information about animals added to their herd or flock since the last testing visit. Owners must record information about the source of new animals, specifically, the name and address of its previous owner. New animals born on farm must also be recorded. Record keeping templates are available from the Animal Health Unit.

What are the options for import?

Importing new sheep or goats to the Yukon comes with the risk of introducing respiratory pathogens along with those animals. Testing animals for *M. ovi* before import is always recommended but those who wish to import can choose whether they will test the animals before import or not, then submit the appropriate application form to the Agriculture Branch. After their enclosure is inspected and the import application is approved there are three import options available:



1. Risk mitigated import

- Animals have tested negative for M. ovi before import to the Yukon, with two tests with approximately four weeks between the tests.
- No quarantine order is issued when the animals arrive in the Yukon.
- New animals and any herd or flock mates are tested for M. ovi within three months of the import.
- Owner is eligible to apply for compensation if their animals later test positive and are ordered destroyed.

2. Immediate quarantine on import

- Owner chooses to import sheep or goats without the recommended pre-import testing (or with incomplete pre-import testing) and assumes the risk that animals may be positive for M. ovi.
- Animals are immediately quarantined on arrival and testing for M. ovi begins within 14 days.
- Owner is not eligible for compensation for costs or losses, including for animals that may test positive and be ordered destroyed after import because they opted to accept the risk of importing without pre-testing.
- Positive animals must be destroyed no later than 6 months from the day of import.

3. Import direct to slaughter

- Sheep and goats imported to the Yukon for finishing and slaughter.
- Animals are immediately quarantined for a period of up to six months.
- They are not tested in the Yukon, and all must be slaughtered within the six-month quarantine.
- Owner is not eligible for compensation for costs or losses related to the orders because they assume the risks of importing without pre-import testing.

Note: an owner may request testing for the purpose of keeping an animal rather than directing them to slaughter. These requests can be received up to 90 days following the animals' arrival in the Yukon. Owners are encouraged to contact the Animal Health Unit or Agriculture Branch to discuss import options for their specific situation.

What supports are available for pre-import testing?

There is funding available to reimburse owners for the costs associated with testing sheep and goats before import to the Yukon. Funding may be used to cover the costs for a veterinarian to visit the source farm, collect samples and ship them to a laboratory for testing. The laboratory testing fees are paid by the Government of Yukon. Owners that wish to arrange for testing prior to import should contact the Animal Health Unit.



What happens if *M. ovi* is detected in a sheep or goat I plan on buying?

Animals that are positive for *M. ovi* are considered carriers of this pathogen and will not be allowed to be imported into the Yukon.

Do I need a permit to move domestic sheep or goats within the Yukon?

No, a permit is not required to move domestic sheep or goats within the Yukon. Owners are required to individually identify their sheep and goats and to report any escapes during transport.

Enforcement

Sheep and goat owners are required to comply with the Control Order. Failure to do so is an offense under the *Animal Health Act* and may result in fines and/or the seizure of livestock. Any owners of domestic sheep or goats who have not contacted Government of Yukon and are not in compliance, or actively working towards compliance, are in violation of the Control Order.

Contact

Animal Health Unit
Government of Yukon
10 Burns Road, Whitehorse, Yukon
867-667-5600 or
1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.
animalhealth@yukon.ca

Agriculture Branch
Government of Yukon
Suite 320, 300 Main Street, Whitehorse, Yukon
867-667-5838 or
1-800-661-0408 and ask to be transferred.
agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca

