

Sheep and goat owners

How do you comply with the Control Order?

The Government of Yukon issued a control order under the *Animal Health Act* to reduce the risk that wild thinhorn sheep and mountain goats will be exposed to pathogens, especially *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*), that are carried by healthy domestic sheep or goats. It comes into effect January 1, 2020 and expires December 31, 2024.

What does this mean for people who keep sheep or goats?

Everyone who owns sheep or goats, even a single animal, must comply with the conditions in the Order before January 1, 2020. 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 (*M. ovi*);
- be kept below 1,000 meters elevation.

In addition, owners must:

- keep records for every individual sheep and goat;
- report the escape of any sheep or goats from their enclosure, or while being transported;
- obtain a permit to import sheep or goats into Yukon.

What are the fencing requirements?

Fencing requirements will be determined on a farm-by-farm basis because conditions vary. Staff from the Agriculture Branch will assess existing fencing and help owners apply for funds to improve fences. Options include the use of offset electric wires or secondary perimeter fences that will:

- prevent livestock from escaping;
- prevent contact with wandering wild sheep or goats; and
- discourage wild sheep or goats from getting into an enclosure.

Inspectors will provide signs to indicate when completed fences are approved after annual inspection. Contact the Agriculture Branch to schedule a site visit, obtain recommended fencing designs or to learn more about how to apply for funding.

What are the testing requirements?

All domestic sheep and goats must be tested by an animal health inspector for the bacteria known as *M. ovi* before January 1, 2020. Animals must be individually identified (tag or microchip) and the owner must assist the inspector to collect a



Contact

Animal Health Unit
Government of Yukon
867-667-5600 or
1-800-661-0408, ext. 5600

P.O. Box 2703 (V-7)
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 2C6

animalhealth@gov.yk.ca

Agriculture Branch
Government of Yukon
867-667-5838 or
1-800-661-0408, ext. 5838

agriculture@gov.yk.ca

nasal swab from each animal. Animals will be tested three times each at about monthly intervals. The owner can be compensated for their time to help and the testing is free. The farm will be under a quarantine order during testing so no sheep or goats are moved until testing is complete. The order is required under legislation so that compensation can be paid.

Animals will be re-tested in following years but the test method and frequency will be based on risk and determined on a farm-by-farm basis. Contact the Animal Health Unit to arrange for an inspector to perform the testing.

What happens if *M. ovi* is detected in a sheep or goat?

Animals that have *M. ovi* detected in their swab are considered carriers of respiratory disease and they will be destroyed, typically by being slaughtered. The presence of *M. ovi* does not affect the safety of meat and the owner will retain all products from slaughtered animals. They will also be eligible for financial compensation as specified in the *Animal Health Act*. The inspector will provide the application forms and details about how to apply for compensation as well as the appeal process. Other animals in the flock or herd may be tested again but will only be destroyed if they are positive. Flock testing will be repeated each year but may be modified as more is known about *M. ovi*. Please contact the Animal Health Unit to schedule an inspector visit or with any questions about testing and monitoring.

What if I no longer want to keep sheep or goats?

If you choose not to comply with the terms of the Control Order, you should contact the Animal Health Unit for advice about your options. An inspector can outline the financial compensation that may be available if you choose to either:

- transfer ownership of animals; or
- slaughter the animals.

Owners should make these decisions early so that action can be completed before the Control Order comes into effect on January 1, 2020.

Can I import or move sheep or goats?

Once the Control Order comes into effect, you must apply for a permit to bring domestic sheep or goats into Yukon. They can be moved within Yukon if the owner takes reasonable steps to prevent escape. Any escaped sheep or goat must be reported to the Chief Veterinary Officer by calling 867-667-5600.

Enforcement

Sheep and goat owners are encouraged to make arrangements for testing and fencing as soon as possible so they will be in compliance once the Control Order comes into effect on January 1, 2020. After that date, anyone who is violating the Order will have committed an offence under the *Animal Health Act*. Inspectors and staff from the Animal Health Unit and Agriculture Branch will assist owners to become compliant after January 1, 2020, but owners will not be eligible for compensation if their sheep and goats are ordered destroyed or other costs are incurred to comply with the Order.

