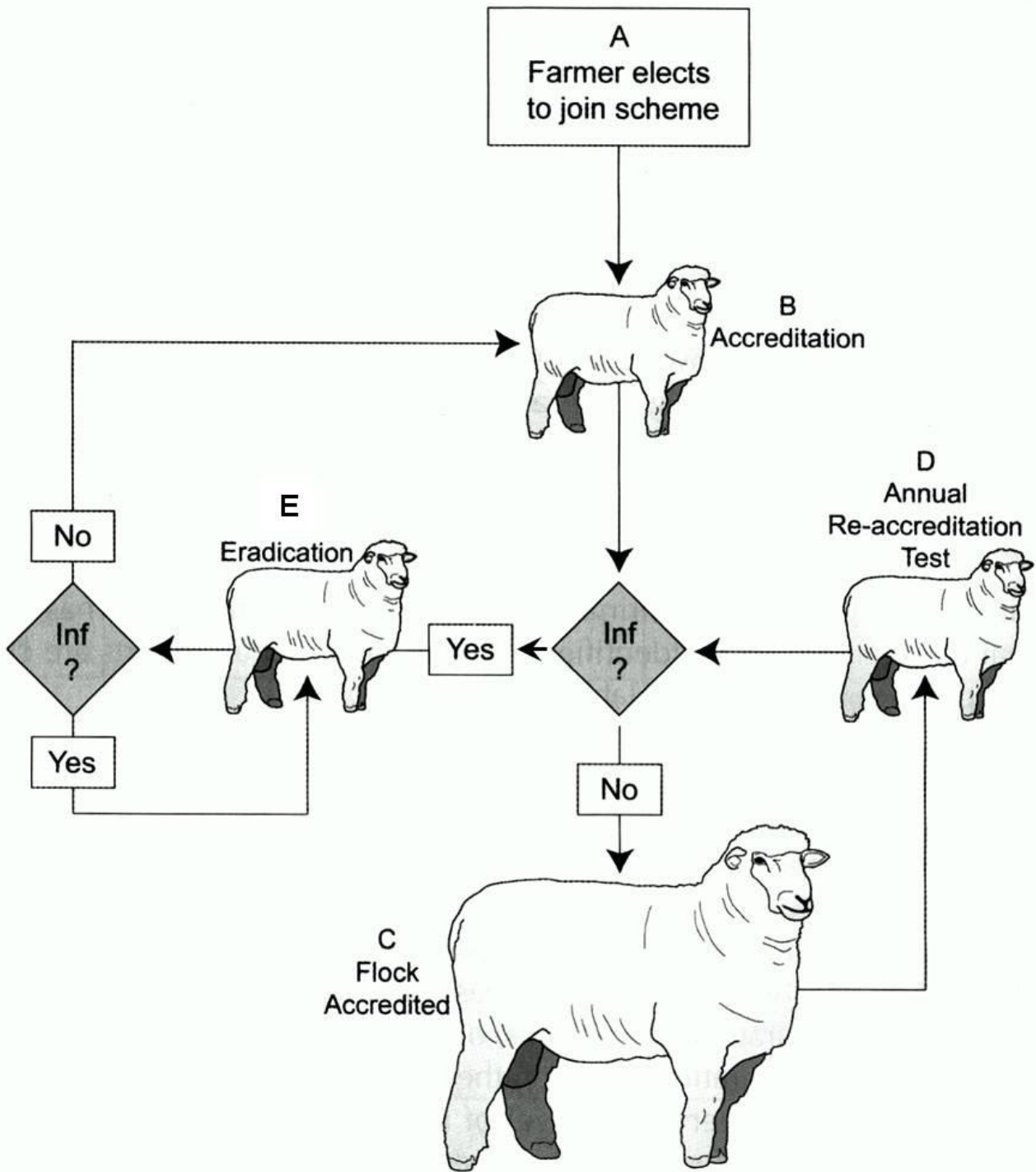


# **SHEEP BRUCELLA OVIS FLOCK ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

**Modified Guidelines 2011**

## SHEEP BRUCELLA OVIS FLOCK ACCREDITATION SCHEME MODIFIED GUIDELINES 2011

Flowchart outlining the scheme – see page 3 for notes to accompany this flow chart.



## NOTES TO ACCOMPANY FLOW CHART

### A. OWNER ELECTS TO JOIN SCHEME

This is an industry-based scheme and participation of ram flock owners is voluntary. The veterinary practitioner is responsible for carrying out all testing of rams for *B. ovis* and certifying the flock when it is free. All costs of examinations and testing should be borne by the flock owner.

### B. ACCREDITATION TEST

To fulfil the requirements for accreditation the veterinarian is to:

- a. Check that no new rams, other than from accredited free flocks, have been introduced within the previous two months.
- b. Palpate the scrotal contents and blood sample and serologically test all rams and teasers over the age of 15 months and rams less than 15 months which have been used for mating.
- c. Palpate the scrotal contents of all sale rams within 3 months of sale for breeding purposes. Blood sample and serologically test any with lesions of epididymitis.

### C. FLOCK ACCREDITED

The veterinarian issues an Accreditation Certificate (available from the NZVA; [nzva@vets.org.nz](mailto:nzva@vets.org.nz), or online at <http://sb.nzva.org.nz>) to the flock owner. Accreditation is valid for a period of one year from the date of testing.

### D. ANNUAL REACCREDITATION TEST

- a. All stud rams and teasers over the age of 15 months and stud rams less than 15 months of age which have been used for breeding: scrotal palpation and bloods for serology
- b. Commercial rams over the age of 15 months: scrotal palpation of **all** rams, bloods from the whole flock or **20** rams, whichever is the least, and any ram with epididymitis.
- c. Scrotal palpation of all sale rams within three months of sale for breeding purposes. Blood sample any with lesions of epididymitis.

### E. ERADICATION TESTING

Should *B. ovis* infection be diagnosed and should the owner wish to proceed towards accreditation, then a *B. ovis* eradication programme should be implemented on the farm under the supervision of the veterinarian. The eradication programme should be adapted to the particular flock circumstances on the property concerned.

The flock may be accredited when:

- a. All rams and teasers 15 months of age and over, and any younger than 15 months which have been used for mating, **have had two consecutive negative blood tests no less than 60 days and not more than 180 days apart.**
- b. All sale rams have undergone scrotal palpation within three months of sale for breeding purposes, and any with lesions of epididymitis have been negative to serology.

## SHEEP BRUCELLA OVIS FLOCK ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The procedures for the New Zealand sheep *Brucella ovis* Flock Accreditation Scheme, to accredit ram flocks free from *Brucella ovis*, are set out here.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Within ram breeding flocks, *B. ovis* infection has been controlled and almost eradicated following the widespread adoption of the accreditation scheme by the Sheep Breed Societies. However, a reasonable level of infection is still present in commercial flocks and breakdowns still occur within accredited flocks. It is important that annual reaccreditation is maintained.

The scheme is maintained by representatives of the Society of Sheep and Beef Cattle Veterinarians of the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA), the sheep breed societies (representing the sheep industry), Massey University and approved diagnostic laboratories. A committee is responsible for managing the implementation of the scheme and for modifying the scheme in accordance with any changes in the needs of the sheep industry.

**NOTE: It is emphasised that this is a voluntary industry-based scheme, and veterinarians will have the responsibility for overseeing and ensuring the accredited status of their clients' flocks.**

### 2. PARTICIPATING PARTIES

These include:

- Ram flock owners
- Veterinarians
- Sheep Breed Societies
- Society of Sheep and Beef Cattle Veterinarians NZVA
- Approved diagnostic laboratories

### 3. PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION

#### INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF FLOCKS

**Step 1:**

- a. Check that no new rams, other than from accredited free flocks, have been introduced within the previous **two** months.
- b. **All** rams and teasers over the age of 15 months and all rams less than 15 months but used for mating should be blood sampled for serology. Palpate their scrotal contents to detect epididymal lesions.
- c. Palpate the scrotal contents of all sale rams within 3 months of sale for breeding purposes. Blood sample and serologically test any with lesions of epididymitis.

If no confirmed reactors are found in any of the tests, the flock may be accredited. If reactors are found and the veterinarian establishes a diagnosis of *B. ovis*, procedures as outlined for accreditation of known infected flocks should be followed.

**Step 2:**

The veterinarian issues an Accreditation Certificate (available from the NZVA; [nzva@vets.org.nz](mailto:nzva@vets.org.nz), or online at <http://sb.nzva.org.nz>) to the flock owner. Accreditation is valid for a period of one year from the date of testing specified on the certificate.

#### ACCREDITATION OF KNOWN INFECTED FLOCKS

A diagnosis of *B. ovis* infection in rams on a property will be made by the veterinarian responsible for that property, based on the history of the rams on the property, results of scrotal palpation, serology and, if necessary, bacteriology.

Should *B. ovis* infection be diagnosed, and should the owner wish to proceed towards accreditation, then a *B. ovis* eradication programme should be implemented on the farm under the supervision of the veterinarian. While the eradication programme will be adapted to the particular flock circumstances on the property concerned, it is strongly recommended that reactor animals should be disposed of by slaughter. It is considered unethical for flock owners to sell reactor animals other than for slaughter.

The flock may be accredited when:

- a. All rams and teasers 15 months of age and over, and any younger than 15 months which have been used for mating, **have had two consecutive negative blood tests no less than 60 days and not more than 180 days apart.**
- b. All sale rams have undergone scrotal palpation within three months of sale for breeding purposes, and any with lesions of epididymitis have been negative to serology.

If the veterinarian considers that this latter group of rams has been at risk of becoming infected with *B. ovis* then it is recommended they are all blood sampled before the flock is accredited.

## ANNUAL REACCREDITATION

To maintain accredited status, retesting of ram flocks must be carried out annually as follows:

- a. Stud rams and teasers over the age of 15 months and stud rams less than 15 months of age which have been used for breeding: scrotal contents are to be palpated and blood samples to be taken from all rams.
- b. Commercial rams and teasers over the age of 15 months: Scrotal contents of **all** rams are to be palpated and blood samples are to be taken from the whole flock or **20** commercial rams, whichever is the least.  
**Note:** any rams with lesions of epididymitis are to be included in the sample for blood sampling together with any rams which are considered to have been at greater risk of becoming infected with *B. ovis*.
- c. Sale rams less than 15 months of age which are intended for sale for breeding purposes. Within three months prior to sale, scrotal contents must be palpated and those with epididymal lesions must be blood sampled.

If no reactors are found in any of these tests, the flock may maintain its accredited status. The veterinarian issues an Accreditation Certificate.

**Note:** Failure to retest rams within three months of the due date will result in the suspension of accredited status.

## 4. LOSS OF ACCREDITED STATUS

The detection of confirmed *B. ovis* infection of any sheep/ram on an accredited property constitutes a breakdown and accredited status of rams on that property will be lost. In the event of a breakdown, the procedure for reaccreditation is that outlined for the accreditation of known infected flocks.

## 5. INTRODUCTION OF RAMS

Accredited status may be maintained when new rams and/or teasers are introduced to a flock under the following provisions:

- a. Introduced rams and/or teasers are from an accredited flock and have been transported in isolation from other sheep.
- b. The rams to be introduced are not from an accredited flock but they have been isolated from other sheep for not less than 60 days following introduction to the property, and shown to be serologically negative and free from epididymitis before they are mixed with the accredited ram flock.
- c. These same recommendations apply to rams from an accredited property that have been off the property on a temporary basis e.g. leased out for breeding, or sale, or if the owner is concerned that they may have come in contact with *B. ovis* infected rams.

## 6. SHEEP SALES AND SHOWS

It is recommended that rams which do not originate from an accredited flock are not admitted for ram sales/fairs or shows unless they have been shown to be serologically negative within 30 days before the event.

## 7. INTRODUCTION OF EWES

Ewes may become infected with *B. ovis* following mating with an infected ram. Such infection is carried for a short time only. However it is recommended that accredited rams should not be mated with ewes which have run with non-accredited rams or teasers during the same mating season.

## 8. GENERALITIES AND DEFINITIONS

### ***Definitions of a *B. ovis* free Accredited Flock***

This is a flock in which all rams are confirmed free, by a veterinarian, of any evidence of *B. ovis* infection. The term 'flock' is used synonymously with property in the case of the *B. ovis* accreditation scheme. A flock refers to all rams on a property at the time of testing for accreditation. This is important in the case of a property on which more than one ram flock is run e.g. a commercial and a stud flock. These two flocks will be considered as one flock for accreditation purposes.

### ***Definitions of *B. ovis* infection***

A positive diagnosis of *B. ovis* infection will be made by a veterinarian based upon the history of the flock, serological results, scrotal palpation and, if necessary, isolation of *B. ovis* from semen or tissues.

A positive serological result will not necessarily constitute a positive diagnosis for *B. ovis* if other epidemiological information does not support this.

### ***Certification***

Veterinarians will issue ram flock owners with an Accreditation Certificate (available from the NZVA; [nzva@vets.org.nz](mailto:nzva@vets.org.nz), or online at <http://sb.nzva.org.nz>) certifying the flock has no evidence of infection with *B. ovis*. The certificate will be valid for a period of one year from the date of the final examination of rams for accreditation or reaccreditation.

Breed societies may require their members to provide a copy of the accreditation certificate to maintain valid entries in their stud books.

### ***Identification of rams***

All rams and teasers must be individually and permanently identified.

### ***Artificial Inseminations***

This may be carried out on the ewes of an accredited flock only if the semen is derived from a *B. ovis* accredited ram or a ram regarded free from *B. ovis* infection on the basis of flock history and negative serological testing.

### **Costs**

All costs of examinations and testing should be borne by the owner.

## **9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING PARTIES**

### **Ram Flock Owners**

Owners must in particular:

- Present all eligible rams for testing on each occasion
- Ensure all rams are identified as required
- Control livestock as follows:
  - Guard against contact of accredited rams with non-accredited untested or infected rams;
  - Prevent straying, and treat sheep that have strayed from their accredited flocks as introductions from non-accredited flocks;
  - Quarantine rams and have them tested in situations described in Section 5 (Introduction of rams)
- Inform his or her veterinarian within seven days of introduction of rams from non-accredited flocks (including strays)
- Undertake to have a veterinarian test any ram which, at any times, has signs suggestive of *B. ovis* infection or which has been at risk of becoming infected with *B. ovis*.

### **Veterinarians**

The veterinarian has the responsibility to:

- Advise farmers on a programme to eradicate *B. ovis* from their ram flocks and achieve and maintain accredited status
- Carry out all testing of rams for accreditation and annual reaccreditation in accordance with the procedures of the scheme as defined in this document
- Accredite ram flocks as free of any evidence of *B. ovis* infection and issue ram owners with an Accreditation Certificate

### **Sheep Breed Societies**

It is the responsibility of the sheep breed societies to:

- Promote the concept of *B. ovis* free accreditation amongst their members
- Promote adherence to the letter and spirit of the scheme amongst members who are owners of accredited flocks and flocks working towards accreditation
- Educate their members on the need to guard against introduction of infected sheep onto their properties or placing their rams in contact with infected sheep off the property (shows, sales, leasing of rams for breeding, mating on run-offs, etc)
- Promote among the organisers of agricultural and pastoral shows, ram sales etc, the objective of the *B. ovis* accreditation scheme and adherence to its rules



### **Approved Diagnostic Laboratories**

Approved diagnostic laboratories must meet the quality criteria prescribed by the scheme committee for *B. ovis* scheme testing.

### **10. ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

The *B. ovis* accreditation committee was formed in July 1985 to revise the existing *B. ovis* accreditation scheme and ensure greater uniformity in its application. The committee drew up guidelines for the revised scheme which have since been further modified as required.

The members of the committee are representatives from:

- Sheep Breed Societies
- Society of Sheep and Beef Cattle Veterinarians NZVA
- Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences, Massey University
- Diagnostic laboratories co-opted for technical advice

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