

Exporting Sheep to Canada Outline

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Outline by Deborah Y. Hunter, Published in *The Shepherd* August 2022

Fielding Canadian inquiries is happening at an increasing rate.

Proximity to the US-Canada border might be the driving force behind your decision to export sheep breeding stock to Canada.

Different sets of rules govern the export of rams versus ewes.

The import of rams into Canada from the US is much less restrictive in terms of flock of origin.

By contrast, it takes five years in the USDA / APHIS export monitored category before you can export your first ewes to Canada. After five years, the flock is granted Export Certified status. This process is not for everyone. There is:

1. an annual inspection
2. additional record keeping
3. replacement of tags, if lost
4. the unpleasant task of removing the heads of dead ewes for submission to the USDA

The payoff? An entire country is added to the potential market.

Rams

1. The scrapie disease is passed on in birth fluids and milk.
2. Therefore, rams are not identified as vectors for the disease.
3. Rams do not have to be from a flock enrolled in the Export Certified Program.
4. Flock of origin must have a premise number and flock/scrapie ID registered with the USDA.
5. The ram *must have a permanently affixed USDA approved scrapie ID tag* with the flock/scrapie ID for traceability purposes.
6. RFID Chips can be used as permanent ID. But the chip would have to be compatible with chip readers at the border station where the buyer intends to cross.
7. Ram *must have "USA" tattooed in his right ear*. A black light is used to make green ink tattoos show up more easily in black ears.
8. The ram *must be genotype tested* by a USDA approved lab. Allowable results are:
Codon **136AA 171RR** Or **136AA 171QR**

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Payments

We usually ask for a good faith deposit of at least 20% of the purchase price to hold the animal and commit to the export protocol.

Always ask the buyer to pay the balance in U.S. dollars, money order or cash transfer preferred, in advance of the border Exchange.

Testing

Recommendation is for *GeneCheck* in Greeley, Co. Online at www.Genecheck.com

The ear sampling system is easy, which takes a bit of tissue leaving a tiny ear hole. A regular padded envelope will hold dozens of samples.

Costs:

1. sample cup is \$3 to \$4
2. test is \$11 per animal
3. sample punch is ~\$30, a one-time expense

Turn-around time has been quite short, less than a week, after receiving samples.

[Author] routinely tests all the ram lambs, so these charges are not passed onto the buyer.

Canada Permit

CFIA requirements for import of small ruminants can be found online at www.inspection.gc.ca

1. The test results must be *submitted with* the importer's **Application for an Import Permit** from the CFIA, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the USDA equivalent.
2. The importing Canadian breeder must apply for the permit at that agency.
3. Last check cost was \$35 Canadian (2020).

Permit Application is the first official paperwork to be completed, to get the import-export process going.

US breeder supplies the following information for each sheep to be imported:

1. Breed
2. Gender
3. Date of birth
4. Color
5. Farm tag number
6. Scrapie tag number
7. genotype report copy

More than one sheep can be listed on the permit.

Two weeks is typical turn-around time.

Permits are good for 90 days.

If you have a hard deadline, begin the process three months ahead.

International Health Certificate

Once you have completed:

1. Ram(s) tested and tattooed.
2. The Canadian buy-importer has received the CFIA permit and sent you a copy.

THEN: Make an appointment with your vet to issue the International Health Certificate.

NOTE: The vet can inspect the animals before having the permit number, but they cannot issue the certificate without it. Vets usually charge more for International versus Interstate certificates because the form is longer.

Expenses for International Health Certificate (Example)

In 2020 this cost was \$90 = \$65 for the vet's farm call + \$25 for the papers for one ram.

Added animals would have been \$10 each. These expenses are passed to the importer.

USDA Endorsement

Once you have:

1. CFIA permit
2. ram genotype results
3. international health papers

You can now request the necessary endorsement from the USDA for all the paperwork.

USDA has to review all the paperwork and approve it before the animal can enter Canada.

There are three options for submitting the paperwork: Vet-assisted, in-person, and mail-in.

- Vet-assisted is the easiest: USDA will accept digital paperwork ONLY from the vet that did the inspection. Some vets may charge a modest fee for this service. Your endorsed paperwork will be sent to you digitally.
- In-person works if you live close to the USDA/APHIS office, but you must have an appointment (plus this service was not available during the pandemic). You will walk out with your endorsed paperwork.
- Mail-in works if you have lots of time, and are not a worrier. Your paperwork will be sent to you digitally or mailed.

In all cases, the fee charged by the USDA for the endorsement was \$120 (October 2019).

This expense is also passed onto the buyer-importer.

The Exchange

Animals, make sure:

All tag numbers in the documents *match* actual animal tags.

Tattoo "USA" in the right ear.

Exchange Documents

1. CFIA Permit, with USDA endorsement.
2. International health certificate, with USDA endorsement.
3. Ram genotype results copy.
4. Bill of sale.
5. Optional: Registration certificate(s) signed off with Transfer(s), if balance is paid.

Exchange Options

1. Buyer coming to the farm of origin to see the setup is the best way.
2. Meet the buyer on the US side of the border, and transfer the animal(s) there.
3. Buyer hires a professional transporter.

NOTE: It is *not* recommended to drive the animal across the border for the buyer to pick up. It is a lot more hassle for a U.S. citizen to get an animal into Canada than it is for a Canadian, even if all the paperwork is in order.

Border Veterinarian Check

There is *no fee* for customs or the vet inspection at the border.

Whoever is taking the animal across the border:

1. Via online search, find Canadian Customs Office phone number at the crossing point.
2. Set an appointment with the vet at the border crossing.
3. Ask the veterinarian for their opinion about the best procedure at the border.
4. Optional: Ask the vet about RFID chips, if that is your method of sheep identification.

The vet will check the animals for illness, and make sure all the numbers and descriptions match the paperwork.

At The Border

Transporter should go to the *Animal Inspection* area first.

Possible additional requirement:

Check if taxes are owed on purchase of the animals. Experience has shown this is a paperwork formality, and taxes are not collected. A call to the Customs office at the crossing point will clarify this. (2020)

Ewes

The procedure for ewes is exactly as described above.

No genotype testing is required to export ewes from the US to Canada; however, they must come from an **Export Certified Flock**, determined to be *negligible risk premises*. The USDA website describing what it takes to become an Export Certified flock is at: www.aphis.usda.gov

The basics:

1. an annual inspection
2. additional record keeping
3. replacement of tags, if lost
4. removal and submission dead ewes' heads

It takes five years in the Export Monitored Category before first ewes can be exported.

Living within an easy drive of the border could open up a new market for your ram genetics. The demand in Canada is growing. And this is your chance, if you would like to provide cornerstone rams for motivated breeders in Canada.

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**NOTE about Codon Test Results:**

If a ram tests QQ at codon 171, or is untested, he can still be imported, but the Canadian breeder must have been enrolled in the Canadian scrapie eradication program for at least a year and had at least one inspection. There are other restrictions on the Canadian side with a QQ or untested ram. So it is much easier just to test and select a ram with the correct genotype.

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