

SCRAPIE: ERADICATE IT



The sheep industry's scrapie eradication efforts.

American Sheep Industry Association

May 31, 2013

The goal of the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and the U.S. sheep industry is to eradicate scrapie from our borders by 2017. In addition, it is the objective to have the United States recognized as scrapie free in accordance with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). This quarterly publication is created specifically for those of you in the field who are also working to achieve this goal.

This newsletter brings together, into one spot, current information from all 50 states, as well as from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and any other organization providing scrapie news, and reports it back to the field.

If you have first-hand accounts that you believe would be relevant for others to read or have information that you would like included in this newsletter, please email judym@sheepusa.org.

Multi-Pronged Approach to Eradicate Scrapie

Since 2004, the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have entered into an annual cooperative agreement to aid in the eradication of scrapie in the United States.

According to John Clifford, DVM, deputy administrator for Veterinary Services, a measure of scrapie prevalence has been reduced by 96 percent since 2003. The prevalence of scrapie in cull sheep was .006 percent as of April 30, 2013, or, more clearly stated, only one in every 18,000 cull sheep is infected with scrapie.

The purpose of the cooperative agreement is to facilitate the rapid eradication of scrapie by providing education to producers to encourage compliance with the identification, record keeping and movement requirements of the program and to enhance the ability of producers to identify and report affected animals. APHIS and ASI cooperate in the development of educational materials that is overseen by ASI.

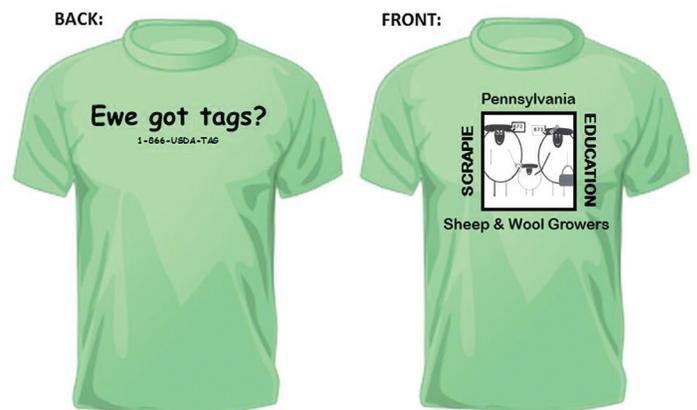
Under this agreement, each of the ASI state-member organizations is eligible to apply for funding to assist with the eradication of scrapie at the state level. States typically received \$1,000.

The State Outreach Program is impressive, both in terms of the number and of the diversity of activities that are conducted. Such a program allows for the selection and tailoring of activities as determined by those in state leadership positions, thereby allowing for the correlation of specific information for specific audiences on a state-by-state basis.

Developing educational materials, holding meetings and hosting speakers have been some of the more traditional uses of outreach funds. Many state associations are ill-funded when it comes to the ability to finance educational courses and professional speakers. From brochures and posters to displays and presentations, there have been a large number of educational materials developed about scrapie as a result of this program.

As the world becomes a more digital place, a number of state associations thought to update their websites to include information on scrapie and the eradication program. Along with detailed information, the sites offer one-click access to APHIS reference material. Connecticut, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin are just a few of the states that offer this resource to producers.

Vermont and Michigan, undertook the lofty goal of creating a scrapie educational video to address the needs for the scrapie pro-



The Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers Association has developed unique items to share at sheep events to bring awareness to scrapie. Above is a t-shirt the association distributed.

gram and to explain what is involved in participation. The Vermont video takes the viewer through a step-by-step process from registering a farm to applying for tags to selling an animal at an auction facility. It specifically speaks to how the program protects the industry and ultimately protects the producer.

The Michigan association combined its efforts by incorporating a segment about scrapie identification in a newly designed informational video created to generate interest in the sheep industry. These DVDs were provided, free of charge, to extension personnel, producers and students and used in promotional displays as well as posted on its website.

Through its Producer's Roundtable Program, the state of Wisconsin developed courses like Plans for Genetic Improvement, Don't Buy Problems!, The Scrapie Challenge: So Where are We and Sheep 101 -- Getting Started: Resources for Beginning Shepherds.

Special recognition is given to South Carolina and Pennsylvania for their creative use of the outreach funds.

Each year, the Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers Association, with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, created a unique item to share at sheep events during the year. One item was a water bottle printed with an "Eradicate Scrapie" sheep logo listing contact numbers for additional information. The following year, a clipboard showing approved scrapie tags, tag

positioning and common tagging methods was handed out along with a t-shirt bearing a clever graphic of sheep donning ear tags and the phone number to order scrapie tags. The Pennsylvania group also distributed calendars on two different occasions that provided detailed information about

"The scrapie outreach program has been a tremendous benefit to the North Carolina Sheep Producers' programming efforts. This funding plays an important role in helping us educate producers along with consumers. We appreciate the support from the scrapie outreach program in ensuring the longevity of the sheep industry in the United States."

North Carolina report

the scrapie eradication program and the rules and regulations of the program. The South Carolina Sheep Industry Association created an informational display and a Plinko board game to be used at sheep shows, fairs, meetings and wherever groups of sheep producers gather. The display is large, colorful and full of photos and information to help producers learn the methods to detect and eradicate scrapie. The Plinko game draws attention to the information, provides interaction for the learner and creates an awareness of the difficulties in controlling the disease without premise registration.

It is acknowledged that young producers are the future of the sheep industry as well as of agriculture in general. Many of the outreach programs rightfully focused attention on this segment of the industry.

In Nevada, a scrapie module was added to the mandatory Youth Quality Assurance (QA) Program used by 4-H and FFA members as well as the Nevada Junior Livestock Show (NJLS) participants. Youth must pass an exam at the completion of the QA curriculum to be allowed to show at the NJLS. More than 300 youth were certified in 2010 alone.

In Michigan, high school students are encouraged to research and learn about scrapie through an essay contest.

The Tennessee Sheep Producers Association holds an awards program for juniors who purchased ewes and lambs at the sheep sale each year in April. The scrapie ear tag number is inspected and recorded for each animal. At the State Junior Sheep Expo in July, the scrapie ear tags are again inspected to determine eligibility for the show. The purpose of this activity is to remind junior exhibitors about the importance of each animal being identified with a scrapie tag.

Mentors were established to help young producers better manage their flocks in Florida. Youth who are inexperienced with

sheep are most likely to be at risk. Therefore, the Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida (MSA) educator certification program is gaining interest with the youth, as well as with small flock producers, as interest in the sheep industry grows. This process has resulted in more people asking and understanding how flock management helps them maintain a scrapie-free environment for Florida.

Additional outreach to small-farm sheep flocks was also a goal in Nevada. New producers, small-farm sheep flock operators, hobbyist and individuals seeking information regarding sheep production have been the principle audience for Nevada's adult educational efforts.

A measure of the success of the program lies in the fact that a number of states boast of no or fewer disease outbreaks since the inception of the state outreach program.

Vermont indicates that its producers, who sell both in and out of state, have been in full compliance with the scrapie rules for some time. Montana credits its educational programs as the reason that state has gone several years without a reported outbreak.

And the state of Washington measures the success of its programs by:

- the reduction of telephone calls, emails and general questions about the disease;
- increased compliance and decreased complaints about the identification requirements; and,
- evidence of more flocks enrolled in the state program.

In closing, a fitting testimonial comes from a veterinary medical officer for the Hawaii Department of Agriculture – Livestock Division, Kim N. Kozuma, DVM, when she said, "I can state that since the Hawaii Sheep and Goat Association's (HSGA) outreach programs and annual meetings have resumed, the state has never had to issue a



Alabama's scrapie program is directly dependent on the cooperative work between the Alabama Meat Goat and Sheep Producers and their USDA/APHIS designated scrapie epidemiologist, Cindy Brasfield, DVM. She is responsible for helping create and disseminate the materials such as the brochure to the left.

scrapie violation to any of the HSGA members or producers who have attended one of the seminars. This is a direct result of the educational programs, HSGA's informative website and the commitment of its members."

USDA Program Update to Sheep Industry

John Clifford, DVM, deputy administrator for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS), updated sheep producers from nearly 20 states in May by saying a measure of scrapie prevalence has been reduced by 96 percent since 2003. The prevalence of scrapie as of April 30, 2013, was .006 percent or, more clearly stated, only one in every 18,000 cull sheep is infected with scrapie. There are eight confirmed cases of scrapie in sheep and goats in the United States for FY 2013 - seven sheep and two goats.

Revisions to import regulations for sheep and sheep products should be published for comment by the end of the year, according to Clifford. Sheep and sheep product export opportunities will become easier to address since the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has changed the BSE classification for the United States.

Clifford stated that he was very pleased with the work of the federal-state-industry partnership that has led to the current low prevalence of scrapie and that the hard work through those joint efforts, along with past appropriated federal funds, got us to this point. He also commented that as the prevalence of scrapie reduces, it takes more surveillance to find the last pockets of infection (a needle in the haystack scenario) and, thus, more funding is needed in the future.

Federal Tagging Requirements

Federal and state requirements mandate that the following groups of sheep and goats need an official scrapie USDA-approved eartag or other official identification before change of ownership regardless of whether they are being shipped in-state or out-of-state:

- All breeding sheep and goats and potential breeding sheep and goats regardless of age except low-risk commercial goats.
- All sheep 18 months and older.
- All sheep and goats for exhibition except for wethers.
- All scrapie-exposed, suspect, tested-positive and high-risk animals.
- Sheep under 18 months of age in slaughter channels that are females that are pregnant or have aborted or sexually intact animals from a scrapie infected or source flock.

Some states have additional requirements and some states have exempted certain classes of animals while moving within the state.

To request free official eartags call toll free 866-873-2824. To learn about state specific requirements, go to www.eradicatescrapie.org/State%20ID%20Requirements.html.

Submitting Mature Heads

APHIS provides shipping boxes and labels for the submission of heads for scrapie testing at no cost to producers. Many veterinary diagnostic laboratories also accept heads for scrapie testing. To request a box or more information on sample submission, contact the veterinary services area office for your state. State contact information is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices. Area offices can also be reached through the toll free number, 866-873-2824.

Websites Dedicated to the Eradication of Scrapie

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie

Maryland Small Ruminant Page: www.sheepandgoat.com/scrapie.html

National Institute of Animal Agriculture: www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie/scrapie.htm

Scrapie SharePoint: <http://animalhealth/scrapie/default.aspx>

(Federal employees can access this password-protected site by emailing earl.t.thorpe@aphis.usda.gov to receive a password.

State employees can request a copy on CD.)

To view the National Scrapie Eradication Program May 2013 Monthly Report, prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Veterinary Services, go to http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/downloads/monthly_scrapie_rpt.ppsx.

Animals Sampled for Scrapie Testing Sheep and Goats

As of May 31, 2013 (from Oct. 1, 2012)

28,501 animals have been sampled for scrapie testing: 27,402 RSSS and 1,099 on-farm samples

Regulatory Scrapie Slaughter Surveillance (RSSS) Statistics

Since April 1, 2003

382,086 samples collected

458 NVSL* confirmed positives

As of May 31, 2013

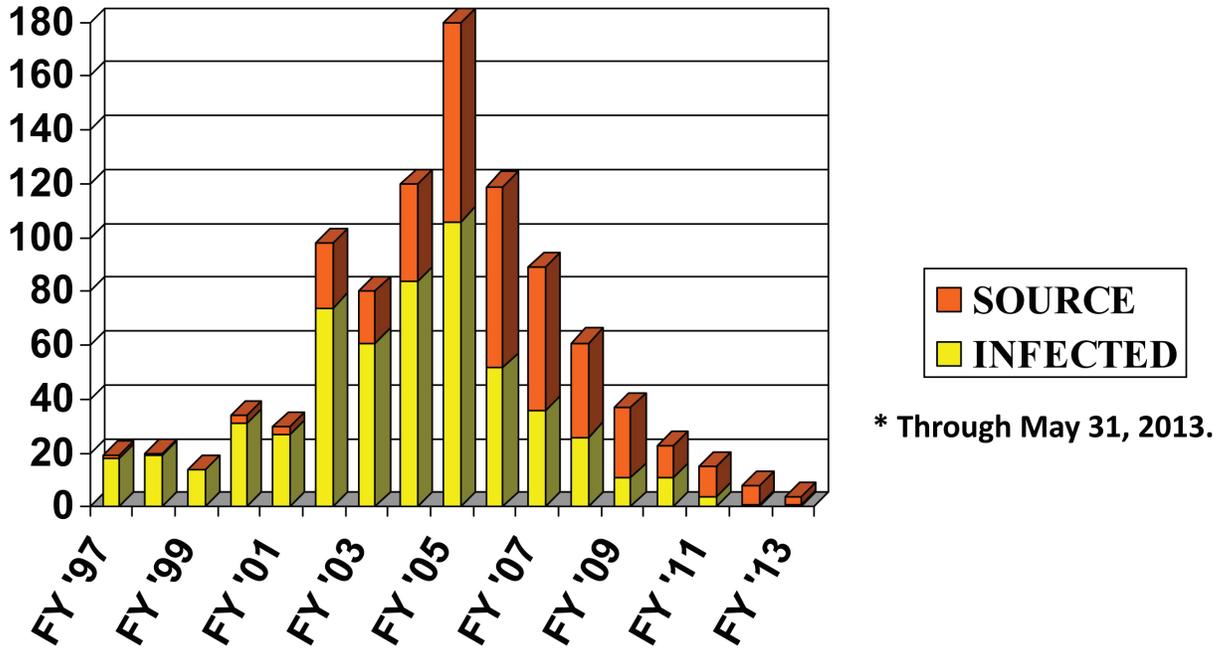
27,402 samples collected (4,035 from goats)

5 NVSL confirmed positives

*National Veterinary Services Laboratories

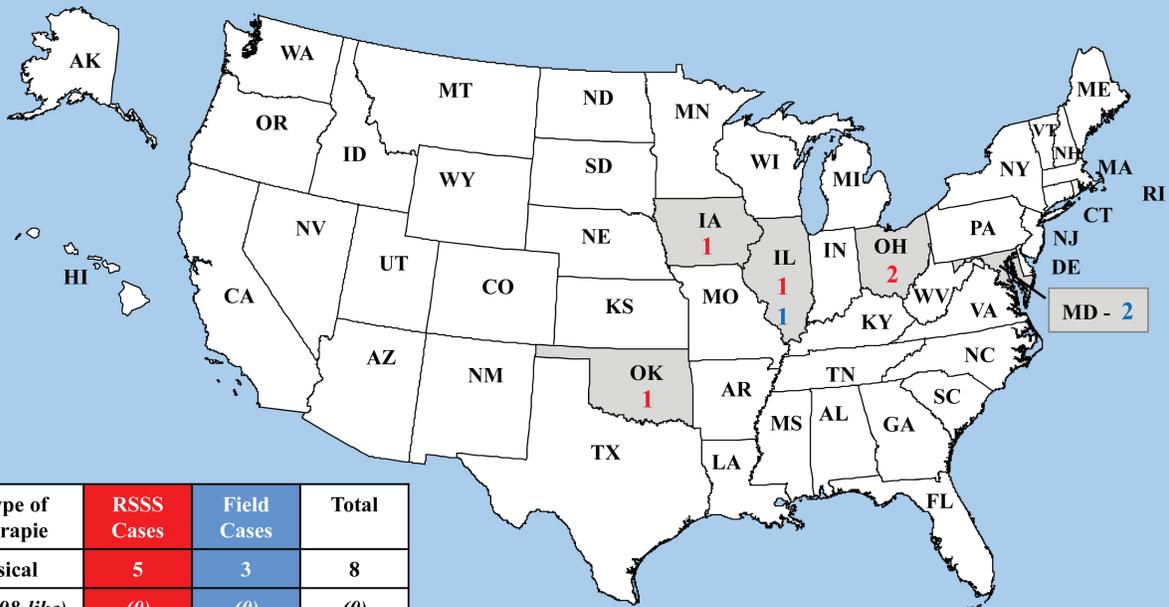
Infected and Source Flocks

New Statuses by Year Fiscal Years 1997 to 2013*



Scrapie Confirmed Cases in FY 2013

As of May 31, 2013



Type of Scrapie	RSSS Cases	Field Cases	Total
Classical	5	3	8
(Nor98-like)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Total	5	3	8

(Figure 1)

Reported by State of ID tag. Collected in FY 2013 and confirmed by June 15, 2013. Field cases include animals removed from infected/source flocks, so State totals often include several animals from the same flock.

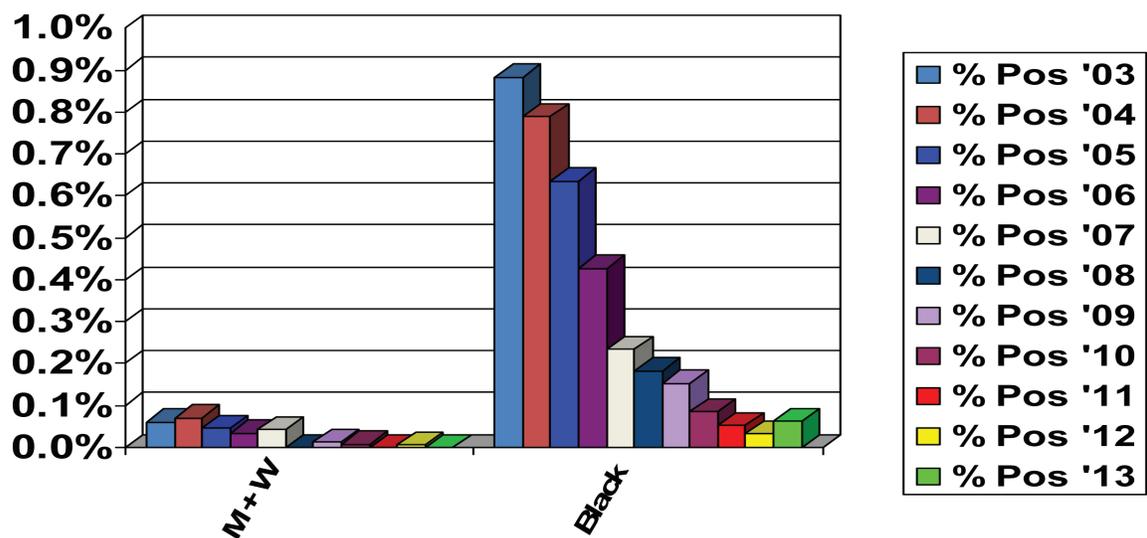
Scrapie Confirmed Cases in FY 2013

As of May 31, 2013

STATE	SHEEP		GOATS	
	RSSS	On-Farm	RSSS	On-Farm
IA	1	0	0	0
IL	1	1	0	0
OH	2	0	0	0
OK	1	0	0	0
MD	0	0	0	2
TOTAL ALL STATES	5	1	0	2

Percent of RSSS Samples that Tested Positive for Classical Scrapie by Face Color

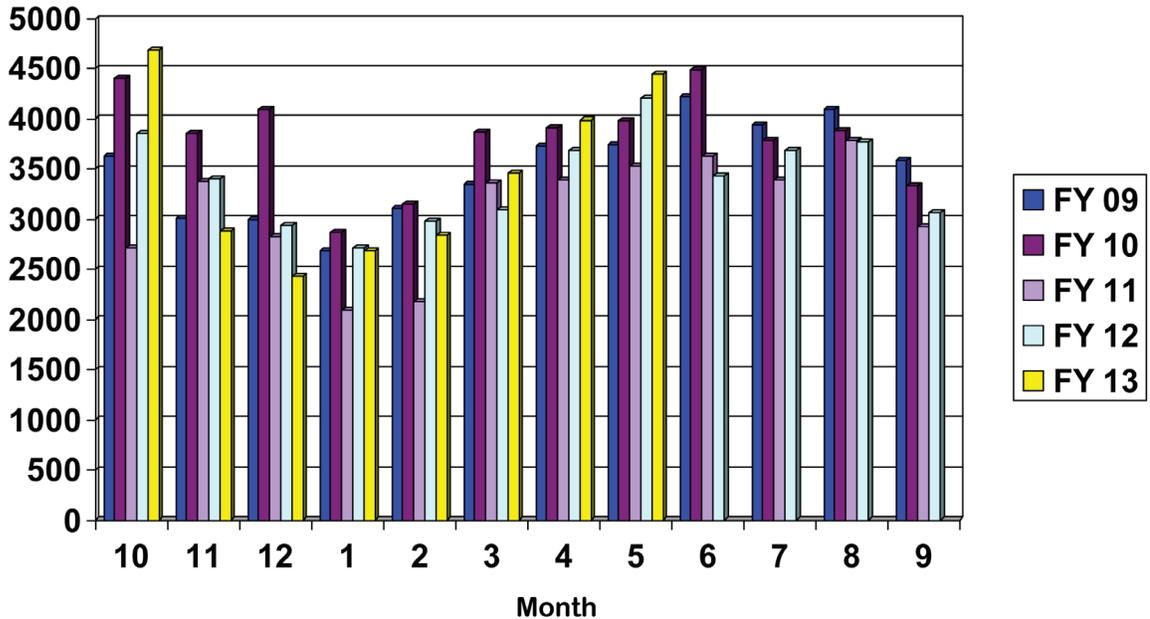
Fiscal Year (2003 – 2013*)



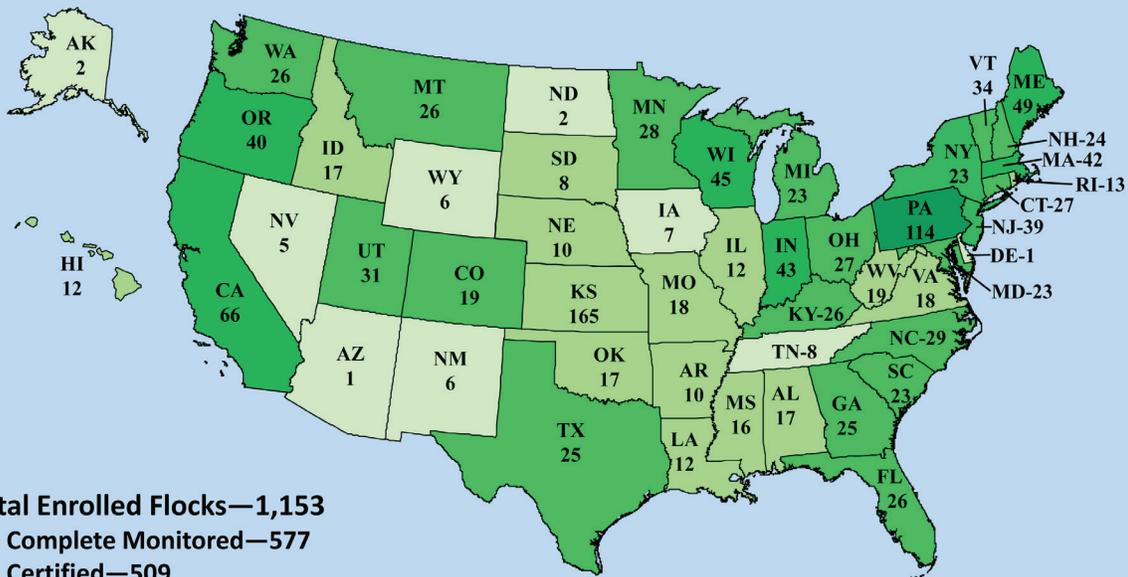
* Through May 31, 2013—Adjusted to exclude multiple positive animals from same flock. Mottled- and white-faced combined. Does not include Nor98-like scrapie cases found through RSSS (2 in FY 2007, 1 in FY 2008, 4 in FY 2010, 1 in FY 2011). *The increase in FY 2013 is not statistically meaningful due to the sample size.*

Slaughter Surveillance Samples Collected by Month

Fiscal Years 2009 to 2013



Scrapie Flock Certification Program: Participating Flocks *As of May 31, 2013*



Total Enrolled Flocks—1,153

- Complete Monitored—577
- Certified—509
- Export Monitored—52
- Export Certified—11
- Selective Monitored—4

