

# Sheep with scrapie found in Japan

April 14 2011

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A dead sheep infected with scrapie -- a degenerative disease of the nervous system similar to mad cow disease -- has been found in western Japan, an official said on Thursday.

The animal died on March 31 on a farm in Fukuoka prefecture where around 50 sheep and goats were kept, said prefectural official Shigetaka Yamashita, adding tests had identified the cause of death as scrapie.

It was the first case of the disease in Japan since 2005 when it was detected in a flock in Kanagawa, south of Tokyo, Yamashita said.

"The sheep will be incinerated soon and we will check the remaining sheep and goats at the farm," he said, adding that the prefecture had no plan to impose any ban on shipments of sheep or goats.

Sheep farming is not common in Japan and is mainly concentrated on the far northern island of Hokkaido.

Scrapie is related to [bovine spongiform encephalopathy](#) (BSE), or [mad cow disease](#), a highly infectious condition that has devastated whole herds of cows in Japan and other parts of the world, and which has been linked to Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans.

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Citation: Sheep with scrapie found in Japan (2011, April 14) retrieved 9 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-04-sheep-scrapie-japan.html>

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