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Maedi  
Visna  
(MV)  
ACCREDITATION  
SCHEME



RULES &  
CONDITIONS FOR  
PREMIUM SHEEP  
AND GOATS

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## Glossary

The following words and phrases have the following meanings when used in these Rules and Conditions:

“Animal” means sheep or goat;

“CAEAS” means Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis Accreditation Scheme;

“Export Certificate” means a certificate confirming the MV accredited status of an animal;

“Flock” means a flock of sheep or a herd of goats including females of breeding age;

“Health Status Report” means a certificate issued in respect of an animal confirming that it is part of a MV accredited flock in accordance with the rules;

“Holding” means any place in which animals are held, kept, bred, handled or shown to the public; “MV” means Maedi Visna;

“MV Accredited” means:-

- in relation to an animal, that it is monitored in accordance with the rules of the MVAS and issued with a Health Status Report pursuant to Rule 1.3 and has not subsequently tested positive for MV or lost its MV accredited status pursuant to Rule 5;
- in relation to a flock that it consists only of MV accredited animals.

“MVAS” means Maedi Visna Accreditation Scheme;

“Non-MV Accredited” means in relation to an animal or flock that it is not MV accredited;

“Periodic Test” means a test carried out periodically on MV accredited flocks and animals in accordance with Rule 3.7 in order to maintain MV accredited status.

“Periodic Testing” means the carrying out of the periodic tests;

“Qualifying Tests” means the 2 consecutive blood tests required to be carried out in order to join the MVAS;

“Rules” means these rules and conditions relating to the MVAS;

“SAC C VS” means SAC Consulting: Veterinary Services;

“Tested” means blood tested for MV;

“Testing” means blood testing for MV; and

“you” means an owner of animals or any agent or other person employed by that owner.

## INTRODUCTION

*This section does not form part of the Rules and is provided for background purposes only.*

### Background

#### □ What is 'Maedi Visna'?

Maedi Visna ("MV") is a chronic infectious viral disease affecting the lungs and nervous system of sheep which can be transmitted between individual sheep and flocks. The virus which causes Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE) in goats is very similar to MV virus and there is evidence that cross infection can occur between species. Therefore for the scheme purposes "animal(s)" refers to both sheep and goats.

Blood testing allows identification of infection. There is no vaccine, no cure and the disease is fatal.

#### □ Purpose of the scheme

- The Maedi Visna Accreditation Scheme ("MVAS") is a voluntary scheme which allows you to demonstrate that your animals have been tested and are accredited free of MV.

The benefits of membership of the MVAS are as follows:

- it helps you to reduce the risk of your flock contracting MV;
- it allows you membership of an elite nationally recognised health scheme with the backing of SAC C VS;
- it enables you to attend shows and sales from which your animals would otherwise be barred;
- it allows you to export to certain countries free from MV;
- it gives you the opportunity to advertise to potential purchasers that your flock is MV accredited
- it adds value to your flock by enabling you to supply purchasers who demand MV accredited stock.
- it acts as an early warning system should infection be inadvertently introduced.

If you want to become or remain a part of the MVAS, you must abide by these rules at all times.

#### □ Who governs the scheme?

The MVAS is operated as follows:-

- **Organisation & Supervision:** As part of its Premium Sheep & Goat Health Schemes,

SAC C VS is appointed to organise and supervise the MVAS.

- **Inspections and certification of compliance with the Rules:** Practising veterinary surgeons are appointed to carry out flock inspections and check on compliance with the rules. SAC C VS can organise random flock inspections at any time to check that scheme rules and conditions are being followed – these can be done by SAC vets or subcontracted.
- **Monitoring of shows and sales:** SAC C VS can inspect, or sub-contract the inspection of, MV accredited sections of shows and sales to ensure compliance with rules and conditions.

## THE RULES

### 1 Membership and certification

#### 1.1 Eligibility to join

You can join MVAS in respect of a flock or a holding provided that:

- the flock is situated in Great Britain;
- the flock meets the MVAS requirements as detailed in these rules; and
- you strictly adhere to the rules of the MVAS. Failure to do so will result in penalties as detailed in rule 6.

#### 1.2 Application process

In order to join MVAS, you must complete the official application form. This is available on request from SAC C VS at:

PSGHS Office  
Greycrook  
St. Boswells  
Roxburghshire  
TD6 0EQ  
Tel 01835 822456  
E. mail; psghs@sac.co.uk  
or  
online at [www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk](http://www.sheepandgoathealth.co.uk).

#### 1.3 Certification

- Only flocks (or groups of animals within flocks) that have a current and valid health status report, and which have not lost their MV accredited status as described in Rule 6.1.1 of these rules are deemed MV accredited in accordance with the rules.
- SAC C VS is responsible for issuing Health Status Reports.

- As keeper of the flock you are responsible for ensuring that testing is carried out within such a time frame that enables SAC C VS, subject to the results of that testing, to issue each Health Status Report prior to the expiry date of any existing Health Status Report.
- The Health Status Report is issued by SAC C VS annually on confirmation of all MV testing being negative.
- Certification of freedom requires test negative results, but also that the declaration on the submission form, that the rules of the scheme have been adhered to, has been signed by both the keeper of the flock and the veterinary practitioner who carried out the sampling.
- Valid and current Health Status Reports are required to gain entry to MV accredited sections of shows
- A valid and current Health Status Report must be in place before an animal or flock is allowed to come into contact with another MV accredited animal or flock.
- SAC C VS will issue an export certificate for MV accredited animal(s) on request for export purposes.

#### 1.4 Reporting suspected infection

- If you suspect that an animal is infected with MV, this must be reported to your veterinary surgeon for investigation. The veterinary surgeon may decide:-
  - that the animal is not infected with MV and that no further action is required.
  - that MV cannot be ruled out and that testing of each animal suspected of being infected must be undertaken and samples submitted to SAC C VS.
- If the testing carried out on the suspect animal confirms the presence of MV, the MV accredited status of the flock of which it is a member will be suspended immediately unless the positive animal is one which has been (and is still being) kept in isolation in accordance with Rule 5.1.1.
- If MV is confirmed in a flock, breakdown procedures in rule 6.2 must be followed in order to regain MV accredited status.

#### 1.5 Discretion of SAC C VS

SAC C VS's decisions are deemed to be final and SAC C VS shall have sole discretion to determine the following:-

- Whether a flock's MV accredited status should be suspended or removed under the MVAS;
- Interpretation of the rules
- Whether to inform other parties of any loss of status.
- SAC C VS reserves the right to carry out farm inspections and to require any animal to be tested at any time.
- These rules are not exhaustive and SAC C VS reserves the right to act as it sees fit in relation to any circumstance relating to the operation or governance of the MVAS which, in the sole discretion of SAC C VS, is not adequately provided for under these rules, and to amend these rules from time to time.

#### Security

##### 1.6 Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis Accreditation Scheme (CAEAS)

The rules of the CAEAS are identical to MVAS rules except that:-

- they are applied to goat herds;
- a three metre gap is required between accredited and non-accredited animals whilst on a holding;
- the animals must be separated by a three metre high solid barrier at temporary locations.

##### 1.7 Farm boundaries

- MV accredited animals must not be allowed to come into physical contact with non-MV accredited animals at any time.
- Farm boundaries must be adequate to prevent animals from straying onto or off holding(s) and to prevent nose to nose contact between animals.
- Other than as provided for at Rule 2.1.3 (segregation at temporary locations), there must be a minimum of a two metre gap between MV accredited and Non-MV accredited animals at all times.

## 1.8 Using and sharing Non-MV Accredited stock facilities

- If MV accredited and non-MV accredited animals are kept on the same holding(s) they must be kept as far apart as possible. As a minimum they will be at least 2 metres apart other than as provided for at Rule 2.1.3 (segregation at temporary locations).

### **WARNING: Keeping MV accredited and non-MV accredited flocks on the same premises increases the risks of spreading infection**

- MV accredited animals and non-MV accredited animals should not be housed together in the same airspace, even if physically separated, except as provided for in Rule 2.1.3.
- MV accredited animals must not be introduced to fields, previously grazed by non-MV accredited animals, for a period of 7 days after the removal of the non-MV accredited animals.
- Equipment such as ear tattooing forceps, drenching guns, surgical equipment, hypodermic needles or any other equipment which may draw blood must not be shared between MV accredited and non-MV accredited animals.
- Handling facilities and livestock trailers which are used by MV accredited and non-MV accredited animals must be cleaned and disinfected before use by MV accredited animals.
- Colostrum from non-MV accredited animals must not be brought into a MV accredited flock or fed to MV accredited animals.
- Only embryos or semen from MV accredited animals may be used to impregnate, inseminate or fertilise a MV accredited animal.
  - If embryos from MV accredited animals are used to impregnate non - MV accredited animals the resultant lambs will immediately lose their status
  - Embryo transfer recipient animals must be MV accredited to preserve the status of the embryo

## 1.9 Notice of security threats

You must notify SAC C VS of changes which could affect the security of a flock or an animal.

You must notify SAC C VS if a non – MV accredited flock is introduced to a holding/s that previously held only MV accredited animals. A flock inspection may be required.

### 1.10 Identification

All animals exhibited or sold as MV accredited must be permanently and individually marked by a method so that:-

- The flock of origin can be identified
- Individual animals can be identified.

## 2 Animal movement and ownership change

### 2.1 Moving Animals

Any animal which moves from one location to another will automatically lose its MV accredited status unless you ensure that all of the following conditions are met:-

#### 2.1.1 Transport:

- MV accredited animals attending shows, sales or leaving their holding for any other purpose must travel segregated from and not come into contact with any animals which are not MV accredited. (except as provided below: segregation at temporary locations)
- MV accredited and non-MV accredited animals must not be transported in the same vehicle unless it has solid partitions and separate ramps. If animals are transported in this way, the MV accredited animals may return to their flock of origin or to another MV accredited flock without any isolation, testing or loss of status.
- Vehicles previously used for transporting animals must be cleaned and disinfected before being used by MV accredited animals.

### 2.1.2 Segregation:

- If you acquire non-MV accredited animals or are unsure of the animals' status, you must physically segregate the animals from MV accredited animals until they have been tested in accordance with Rule 2.3.2.

**If you are unsure of an animal's status, you are strongly advised to seek advice from the PSGHS Office before acquiring the animal, as non-compliance may result in loss of status.**

### 2.1.3 Segregation at temporary locations:

- While at any temporary location such as a show or sale, MV accredited and non-MV accredited animals may share an airspace provided that they are separated by a solid barrier at least 2 metres high. This is only acceptable for short periods of up to 10 days.

## 2.2 Adding or returning Animals to a Holding

If you add (or return) an animal to your MV accredited holding, the flock(s) situated at that holding/s will lose their MV accredited status unless the following requirements are met:

- The flock of origin must be MV accredited.
- The animal must not have lost its MV accredited status through non-compliance with Rule 2.1 (Moving Animals) or otherwise.
- The animal must not have had any contact with non accredited animals.

## 2.3 Change of ownership

### 2.3.1 Acquiring MV accredited animals.

If you acquire MV accredited animals, they will automatically maintain their MV accredited status and may be added to a MV accredited flock where:-

- You are a member of or have applied to join the MVAS;
- You have had the holding on which you intend to keep the animals inspected by a veterinary surgeon; and
- Purchased animals should be maintained in isolation (separate from MV accredited flock) until added animal testing is

completed with negative results.

- You have ensured that the security of the animals or flock has been maintained in accordance with rules 1.6 - 1.10.

### 2.3.2 Acquiring Non-MV accredited animals

- If you acquire non-MV accredited animals, each animal must pass two Qualifying Tests carried out 6 to 12 months apart, to become MV accredited. The animal(s) must be at least 12 months old at the time of the first Qualifying Test.
- Non-MV accredited animals MUST NOT be added to an MV accredited flock until they have passed both Qualifying Tests.
- You must ensure that the security of the animals or flock has been maintained in accordance with rules 1.6 – 1.10.

## 3 Testing Programme

### 3.1 Animals which must be tested

Any animal which is to become part of an MV accredited flock must be tested in accordance with these rules.

### 3.2 Testing procedure

#### 3.2.1 Acquiring MV accredited flocks

- If you acquire a MV accredited flock in accordance with rule 2.3.1, the following periodic testing must take place:-
  - *First Periodic Test:* carried out 6 months after establishment of the flock. At this test all animals over 12 months of age must be tested unless more than 55 Animals have been added from a single flock. In that case the number to test from that source should be calculated using the table in Appendix 1.
  - *Second Periodic test:* carried out 12 months after the first test. The requirements of periodic testing are further explained in rule 3.7.

#### 3.2.2 Acquiring Non-MV accredited flocks

If you wish a non-MV accredited flock to become accredited, the flock must undergo two

Qualifying Tests in accordance with Rule 2.3.2.

### 3.2.3 Acquiring Non-MV Accredited Animals

If you acquire non-MV accredited animals, each animal must pass two Qualifying Tests, 6 to 12 months apart, to become MV accredited. The animal(s) must be at least 12 months old at the time of the first Qualifying Test.

## 3.3 Qualifying Tests

**3.3.1** At the first Qualifying Test, all animals in the flock aged 12 months or older must be tested UNLESS:-

- the flock has been established for a minimum of 3 years;
- at least 90% of ewe replacements are home bred;
- any purchased animals in the past 3 years have come from MV accredited flocks; and
- there is no other animal on the holding/s that is to remain non MV accredited.

**3.3.2** If **ALL** the conditions specified in Rule 3.3.1 are met, then at the first Qualifying Test the number to test should be calculated from the table in Appendix 1. All rams must be tested. SAC C VS has the discretion to require a greater proportion of the flock to be tested.

**3.3.3** At the second Qualifying Test all animals over 12 months of age must be tested.

## 3.4 Procedure for adding animals during Qualifying Tests

**3.4.1** If you intend to add any Non-MV accredited animals to the flock after the first Qualifying Test you must ensure that either:-

- the added animals are kept isolated from the flock until they have passed both Qualifying Tests, 6 to 12 months apart; or
- once the added animals have passed the first Qualifying Test they may join the flock and

the whole flock will undergo the second Qualifying Test 6 months later. The added animals must be 12 months or older at the time of the first Qualifying Test.

## 3.5 Qualifying Test Results

If both Qualifying Tests give only negative results, the flock becomes MV accredited and the flock thereafter undergoes Periodic Testing.

## 3.6 Periodic Testing

**3.6.1** After becoming MV accredited the first periodic test must take place a maximum of 12 months later.

**3.6.2** If the first periodic test is negative, the second periodic test must be carried out a maximum of two years after the first.

**3.6.3** After the second periodic test the following applies:

**3.6.3.1** Flocks kept on a holding where non-MV accredited animals have been present at any point since the last periodic test must carry out periodic testing every second year.

**3.6.3.2** Flocks kept on a holding where only MV accredited animals have been present since the last periodic test must carry out periodic testing every 3 years. It is recommended that any MV accredited animals added to the flock are tested within 12 months of arrival. They must be at least 12 months of age at the time of the test.

**3.6.4 AI/ET centres will be required to test**

- All stock eg teasers, over 12 months old, on annual basis
- All purchased stock 6 months after arrival

## 3.7 Requirements of Periodic Testing

**3.7.1 At each periodic test:-**

**3.7.1.1** The minimum number of animals to be tested should be calculated from the table in Appendix 1. Any MV

accredited animals over 12 months of age which have been added to the flock but not yet tested should be excluded from this calculation and tested as per rule 3.7.1.2.

Separately managed groups within a flock should be sampled according to the numbers in the sampling frame in Appendix 1. For example if in a flock of 500 sheep , 200 are run on one farm and 300 on a separate farm numbers sampled should be 105 and 115 respectively.

3.7.1.2 All MV accredited animals over 12 months of age added to the flock and not tested since arrival must be tested IN ADDITION to the number of animals calculated in 3.7.1.1. If more than 55 have been added from a single flock the number to test from that source should be calculated using the table in Appendix 1.

3.7.1.3 All rams aged 18 months or older must be tested.

3.7.2 If animals that are to remain non-MV accredited are added to a holding the routine periodic testing of the MV accredited flock will change from every 3 years to every 2 years. It is your responsibility to inform us of this change.

3.7.3 If MV accredited animals are added to a holding where only MV accredited animals are kept it is recommended that the added animals be tested within 12 months of arrival when they are at least 12 months of age. If more than 55 MV accredited animals have been added from a single flock, the number to test from that source should be calculated from the table in Appendix 1.

3.7.4 Non-MV accredited added animals must be kept isolated from MV accredited animals in accordance with Rules 1.6 - 1.9 (**Security**) and 2.3.2 (**Acquiring Non-MV accredited animals**) until the Non-MV accredited animals have passed both Qualifying Tests.

3.7.5 At each qualifying and periodic test flock information will be collected

and a declaration that the rules of MVAS have been adhered to will be signed by the owner/manager and their veterinary surgeon. A brief summary of testing protocols is given in APPENDIX 2

## 4 Record keeping

### 4.1 Specific records you must keep and disclose

4.1.1 You must keep records of the following information for seven years for your MV Accredited sheep:-

- Identification, breed and sex;
- Identity of dam;
- Approximate date of birth (month and year);
- Date of death or disposal;
- Reason for death or disposal; and
- Dates and results of all MV testing.

4.1.2 In the case of private sales, you must maintain for a minimum period of three years:-

- movement records for each MV accredited animal within the flock

Records must be made promptly available to SAC C VS on request.

## 5 Contact with Non-MV accredited animals

5.1 If any MV accredited animal comes into contact with a non-MV accredited animal, then that animal shall lose its MV accredited status and you must carry out the following in order to protect and retain flock MV accredited status.

### 5.1.1 Isolation and testing

- The animal should be isolated for a minimum of 6 months;
- After 6 months, the isolated animal(s) must undergo testing. If the result is negative, they may rejoin the MV accredited flock.



- If any animal in the isolated group tests positive for MV it should be culled. The remainder of the group must stay in isolation until they have passed a further test 6 months later.

ALTERNATIVELY:

You may carry out testing of the non MV accredited animals with which your MV accredited animal(s) had contact. The MV accredited animals should be isolated until the result of the testing is known. If the non-MV accredited animals test negative for MV, no further action is necessary.

### 5.1.2 Loss of MV status

- If any MV accredited animal which has had contact with a non-MV accredited animal re-joins the MV accredited flock without adherence to Rule 5.1.1, the flock status will be suspended. The flock must not be described as MV accredited, and no animal may be sold as MV accredited until the animal(s) which lost status have tested negative for MV, at least 6 months after the contact with the non-MV accredited animals; or all the non-accredited animals in the contact flock can be tested.
- A positive result will lead to the whole flock losing its MV accredited status.

## 6 Withdrawal from MVAS or Loss of MV Accredited Status

### 6.1 Loss of MV Accredited Status

**6.1.1** Your flock will immediately lose its MV accredited status if any of the following events occur:-

- You fail to comply in all respects with any of Rules 2, 3.6 or 3.7;
- You fail to comply with any instructions whatsoever of SAC C VS, any veterinary surgeon, or any other party who from time to time have responsibility for governing the MVAS;
- If any animal within the flock tests positive for MV (unless it is in isolation as either an added animal or one that has come into contact with a non-MV accredited animal)

- your flock fails a flock inspection where breaches of rules and conditions are found
- You inform SAC C VS that you wish your flock to be withdrawn from the MVAS.

**6.1.2** The following rules shall apply where an animal has tested positive for MV:

- If a flock loses MV accredited status, a set of procedures for regaining MV accredited status will be issued to the flock owner.
- If the MV positive animal has been added from another flock then the flock of origin will have its MV accredited status suspended and will be subjected to extra testing carried out at the expense of the owner.
- When MV infection is detected in a flock, all animals that have moved to other MV accredited flocks will be traced. These individual animals must then be tested at the expense of the current owner.
- It is the responsibility of the flock owner of the breakdown flock to provide details of all animals moved out of the flock and sold privately or at sales so tracings can be performed.

- It is the responsibility of the flock owner of the breakdown flock to provide the details of all animals purchased into the flock for the time period specified by SAC C VS,

- Information requested by SAC C VS should be provided within 2 weeks

**6.1.3** SAC C VS may suspend or remove your flock from the MVAS if any of the following events occur:-

- If you breach or fail to comply with any of these rules;
- you incorrectly portray your flock status
- If there is any suspicion that an animal has been exposed to MV; or

- If you fail to pay outstanding fees to SAC C VS.

## 6.2 Regaining MV Accredited status

6.2.1 If your Flock loses its MV accredited status because of a positive confirmation of MV, your flock can be re-admitted to the MVAS provided that you comply with the following:-

- All infected animals must be removed from the flock, preferably to slaughter;
- All lambs which have suckled infected animals or fed milk from infected animals must be removed from the flock, preferably to slaughter;
- The flock must pass 2 qualifying tests. The first qualifying test must take place at least 6 months after the removal of the last infected animal(s) from the flock. The second qualifying test must take place 6 to 12 months later. Each test must include all animals in the flock aged 12 months or over at the time of testing.
- If you cannot identify all the lambs which may have sucked an infected animal, then the flock will not be eligible for MV accredited status until all lambs have passed further qualifying tests determined by SACCVS. The earliest the first and second qualifying tests can be carried out is 12 and 18 months of age respectively.

6.2.2 If you lose MV accredited status for any other reason, SAC C VS will determine what, if any, qualifying testing is required for re-admission to the MVAS and what the frequency of testing will be thereafter.

Non-compliance with the rules may result in loss of MV accredited status under the MVAS and your Health Status Reports or other veterinary certificates issued for export purposes may be cancelled or withdrawn.

## 6.3 Liability

6.3.1 SAC C VS is not liable for any losses incurred by a member or any other person as a result of a flock's or animal's loss of MV accredited status howsoever caused.

## APPENDIX 1 MV - Flock Test Numbers

Total number of ewes and rams aged 18 months or older	Sample size
1-55	All
56-60	55
61-65	60
66-70	65
71-80	70
81-90	75
91-100	80
101-120	85
121-140	90
141-160	95
161-180	100
181-200	105
201-250	110
251-300	115
301-350	120
351-400	125
401-500	130
501-700	135
701-900	140
901-1000	145
1000+	150

This table is based on a 95% confidence of detecting a seroprevalence of 2%.

**Where only a proportion of the flock is tested all rams aged 18 months or older must be sampled. All animals aged 12 months or older that have been added to the flock from other sources, and not tested since arrival, must be tested in addition to the numbers in the table above.**

## APPENDIX 2

### SUMMARY OF TESTS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

Please refer to the Rules & Conditions for full details or contact the Premium Sheep & Goat Health Schemes Office on 01835 822456 with any queries.

#### A. Establishing MV accredited flock from Non-accredited sheep

Test	Time frame
First qualifying test (1QT)	When flock established. All animals over 12 months of age tested
Second qualifying test (2QT)	Minimum of 6 months and maximum of 12 months after the 1QT. All animals over 12 months of age.
1st Routine periodic blood test (RPBT)	12 months after 2QT. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements.
2nd Routine periodic blood test (RPBT)	2 years after 1st RPBT. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements.
3rd RPBT (if no non accredited animals) and tests thereafter	3 yearly BUT additionally all bought in accredited animals must be tested within 12 months of purchase. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements.
3rd RPBT (if non accredited animals on holding) and tests thereafter	2 yearly test. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements.

#### Establishing MV accredited flock through acquisition of MV accredited animals

Test	Time frame
1st Routine periodic blood test (RPBT)	Six months after flock established. All animals over 12 months of age tested
2nd Routine periodic blood test (RPBT)	12 months after 1st RPBT. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements
3rd RPBT (if no non accredited animals) and tests thereafter	3 yearly BUT, additionally, all bought in accredited animals must be tested within 12 months of purchase. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements
3rd RPBT (if non accredited animals on holding) and tests thereafter	2 yearly test. See rule 3.7 for test number and test requirements

## **Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes**

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MV Accreditation Rules and Conditions

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