

Heaton Trail Farm

Dear Commissioner Brune and Shannon Miller:

I am writing in opposition of the proposed changes to 18 AAC 36.125 and 18 AAC 36.135 that would require testing of *M. ovi* for importing sheep and goats.

Since *M. ovi* is already present in Alaskan wildlife, testing animals before they come into the state will have no impact on whether this disease is introduced to the wildlife and little to effect its spread between domestic and wild ruminants. What this regulation will do is add another barrier and expense to Alaskan farmers and ranchers expanding their operations and improving the genetics of their herds through importation of quality breeding stock, thus increasing the cost of the already limited local sheep and goat products be they milk, meat or wool.

The state of Alaska and local governments needs to be supporting agriculture by eliminating regulations and opening up state and other government lands to agricultural use instead of finding ways to increase productions costs and hinder Alaska's food security efforts by adding regulations and taxing agricultural land as if it is a millionaires estate with astronomical land assessments that drive up property taxes to a point where farmers are better off financially to sell out to a real estate developer. There needs to be encouragement from the government for agriculture and food security and not more regulation hoops to jump through.

I urge you to not implement these new regulations that would required testing for *M. ovi* for imported sheep and goats.

Simon Gilliland