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Department of Livestock Encourages the Public to Submit Comments on the Removal of Brucellosis from the Select Agent List

Helena, Mont. – The Montana Department of Livestock is encouraging the public to submit comments to remove brucellosis from the select agent (or bioterror) list. Diseases on the select agent list have severe restrictions on research because they could pose a threat to human, animal, or plant health. The comment period for this notice closes on May 18, 2020 at 11:59 PM EST.

Including brucellosis on the list has prevented research that could have led to new vaccines, diagnostics, and other methods of disease control, says, Dr. Marty Zaluski, Montana State Veterinarian. “Without better tools, especially vaccines, brucellosis will continue to spread in Greater Yellowstone Area wildlife, expose more livestock, and increase management costs.”

“While the intent of including brucellosis on the select agent list was to limit the availability of the bacteria, it’s having the opposite effect,” states Zaluski. “The disease is becoming more broadly distributed on the landscape and we have few tools to stop it.”

Both the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspective Service (APHIS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have published requests for public comment on the select agent list. The Department also encourages individuals to consider submitting letters to the secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), USDA, and the CDC. DHS is opposed to the removal of brucellosis from the select agent list.

Comments can be submitted at the following links:

- CDC: https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=CDC_FRDOC_0001-0117
- APHIS: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=APHIS-2019-0018-0001>

Additional information, including talking points for inclusion in comments and the addresses of the DHS, USDA, and CDC secretaries, can be found on the Department’s website at <http://liv.mt.gov/Animal-Health/Diseases/Brucellosis>.

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit <http://liv.mt.gov/>.

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