

BRUCELLOSIS UPDATE:

MDOL has nearly completed the epidemiological investigation surrounding the case of brucellosis diagnosed in a virgin heifer in Pray, located east of Emigrant in the Paradise Valley. As of mid-September, MDOL and USDA APHIS had tested 1,128 animals in 25 herds. Additional testing of some trace-outs (animals that left the positive herd within two years of the diagnosis) is yet to be completed.

Significantly, the source of infection was most likely exposure to a brucellosis-positive elk. Genetic analysis from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) recently reported that the strain of brucellosis recovered from the infected heifer is similar to strains isolated from wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone Area. While Yellowstone area bison are infected with brucellosis, there is no history of contact between bison and the cattle herds diagnosed with brucellosis in 2007 or 2008. Bison cows have not traveled north of Yankee Jim Canyon; bison bulls, who pose a low risk of transmission, have made it to the canyon, but not beyond. The recent genetic analysis, combined with other epidemiological information, strongly suggests wild, infected elk as the source of brucellosis transmission to livestock.

With epidemiological information pointing to elk as the most likely source of the 2007 and 2008 infections, the Board of Livestock has directed the state veterinarian to work with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, sportsmen and cattle producers to develop common sense strategies to reduce the risk of transmission of brucellosis from elk to livestock.

The herd diagnosed with brucellosis in 2008 was Corriente bred, and the herd diagnosed with brucellosis in 2007 was a mixed herd with some Corriente cattle. At this time, there is no apparent epidemiological link to Mexican or "M-Branded" cattle in either positive herd. All of the Corriente cattle in the affected herds were native to the

United States. In the 2008 case, the infected heifer, as well as her herd mates, originated from Montana. Additionally, the dam of the infected heifer, currently in another herd, recently tested negative for brucellosis. At this time, it appears to be nothing more than coincidence that both of the infected herds had Corriente cattle. MDOL and USDA-APHIS will continue to investigate additional cattle that may have been the source of the infection as well as cattle that may have been exposed to the disease. The complete Preliminary Epidemiology Report is available on MDOL's web site at www.liv.mt.gov.

If no additional cases of brucellosis in livestock are found, the state will be able to apply for Class Free status to USDA-APHIS in late May of 2009.

Montana needs to prove to USDA that no additional cases of brucellosis in cattle exist in the state. MDOL's draft Brucellosis Action Plan increases testing for the disease in the area where brucellosis in wildlife is known to exist. This plan and documentation of additional testing will serve as the foundation for application to regain our Class Free status.

The draft Brucellosis Action Plan, along with an Action Plan fact sheet, is available at <http://liv.mt.gov/news/2008/200809252.asp>. Public comment on the plan will be accepted through October 10 at MDOLplancomments@mt.gov.

CHANGES TO IMPORT REQUIREMENTS:

Cattle imported from New Mexico or California must have a negative Tuberculosis test within 60 days prior to entry, effective July 21, 2008. Both states have lost their TB-Free status, and are now Modified Accredited Advanced.

Montana has always required bulls, cows and heifers to be identified with a silver USDA tag, a breed registration tattoo, or a brand inspection number. Previously, spayed heifers and steers were not required to have individual ID tags. Since June 23, 2008 however, both spayed heifers and steers

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Brucellosis Update**
- **Import/Export**
- **Staff Corner**
- **Anthrax**
- **Rabies**
- **West Nile Virus**
- **Trichomoniasis**
- **Equine Viral Arteritis**
- **Biosecurity and Foreign Animal Disease**
- **NAIS**

have been required to have either individual ID or a brand inspection.

Stallions and bulls importing into Montana for shows and/or sporting events are not required to have Equine Viral Arteritis testing (stallions) or Trichomoniasis testing (bulls), but one of the supporting statements must be written on the CVI

- For Equines: “While in Montana, this stallion cannot be sold, loaned, leased, or used for breeding or semen collection.”
- For Bulls: “While in Montana, this bull(s) cannot be sold, loaned, leased, or used for breeding or semen collection.” In addition, rodeo animals must have a negative TB test every six (6) months.

STAFF CORNER:

MDOL recently made several changes to the Animal Health Division’s field staffing.

Until recently, two MDOL health enforcement officers covered the entire state. Their duties included import violation investigations, enforcement of disease and import quarantines, and routine disease investigations. Brands Enforcement had separate staff that assisted with animal health emergencies.

This summer, MDOL created three areas with an Area Supervisor for each. These Area Supervisors, Ernie McCaffree (Western), Marty Clark (Central), and Travis Elings (Eastern) now have significant animal health duties as well as Brands enforcement and theft prevention roles. District brand enforcement staffs report to the Area Supervisors and will also assume some animal health responsibilities.

These changes fuse personnel from Animal Health and Brands Enforcement, improve the level of service for animal health issues, increase the presence of animal health personnel in the field, and improve the enforcement of animal health regulations. Improved efficiency through decreased travel is another significant benefit.

Please get to know your Area Supervisor:

- Ernie McCaffree (406) 439-1774
- Marty Clark (406) 444-2045;
- Travis Elings (406) 439-2890.

Additionally, MDOL recently hired a veterinarian to work on federal programs.

Dr. Tahnee Szymanski will be working as a field veterinarian for the department. Her primary areas of focus will be Premise Registration (NAIS), foreign animal disease surveillance, and Swine Health management.

Born and raised in Helena, Dr. Szymanski is a 2004 graduate of Oregon State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. She joins the department with four years of experience as a large animal practitioner in the Helena valley.

ANTHRAX:

In what seems to be an annual rite of passage, Montana experienced an anthrax outbreak this summer. One cattle producer and a domestic bison operation suffered losses. Outbreaks also occurred in North Dakota and Saskatchewan.

Managing the disease in a 5,000-head domestic bison herd was challenging because the usual tools of parenteral antibiotics and vaccination were not practical. Because of the seasonal rut and the size of the ranch, moving animals several miles to a handling facility for vaccination was problematic. Likewise, while antibiotics are useful in stemming losses in cattle, individual administration of antibiotics in such a large herd was impossible.

Additionally, medicated feed presented its own challenges, as the herd had not been provided with supplemental feed for more than five years they did not readily consume the medicated pellets.

Such challenges provided an excellent learning opportunity for MDOL and other involved agencies. MDOL congratulates this bison operation as well as the cattle producer affected for aggressively addressing a serious animal health issue.

Numerous producers in the area have vaccinated their cattle for anthrax as a preventive measure. In Montana, obtaining the vaccine requires permission of the state veterinarian’s office, so please contact us if you would like to obtain vaccine for your clients.

Risk factors for anthrax include: 1) history of anthrax on the premises or in the county (although

no record of anthrax in this county exists), 2) alkaline soils, 3) heavy rains that follow a period of dry weather or drought in middle to late summer.

RABIES UPDATES:

Yellowstone and Dawson counties have been quarantined for pets since August 7 and August 14, respectively. All dogs, cats and ferrets that are unvaccinated for rabies cannot leave the county. In the case of first time vaccination, the pet must remain in the county for two weeks after initial vaccination, unless otherwise approved by the state veterinarian's office. Counties are quarantined for 60 days when a case of terrestrial rabies is diagnosed.

Current statistics on submissions to the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic lab are 315 total submissions with 292 negatives reported. Breakdown of submissions by species is as follows: canine 89, feline 85, wildlife 103, equine two, and other five. There have been eight positive rabies cases to date: one skunk in Yellowstone County, one dog in Dawson County, and one bat each in Cascade, Lincoln, Powell, Park, Yellowstone, and Wheatland counties.

There have also been 15 unsuitable rabies submissions to the laboratory. These cases are especially difficult because without a properly handled and submitted sample, no test is performed and there is no easy way to decide how to handle potential human and animal exposures. These animals include two cows, two horses, two dogs, one cat, one coyote, one porcupine, two skunks, and five bats. Please remember, dried up bats or wildlife cannot be tested for rabies.

Please review the following protocols for Rabies Submissions to the laboratory.

1. Submit the head only. This ensures that required anatomical sites are available and helps preserve brain. EXCEPTIONS: For bats and small rodent, please submit ENTIRE dead animal. For livestock, submit ENTIRE BRAIN intact without skull.

2. All samples should be submitted FRESH. Do NOT place any part of the brain in formalin.

Samples may be submitted frozen in special circumstances and noted on the SV-43 form.

3. Shipment - Double bag the head and add absorbent toweling to prevent leakage. Ship on blue ice packs (1-2 packs depending on head size). If sent by US Postal Service, address package to:

MT Veterinary Diagnostic Lab
P.O. Box 997
Bozeman, MT 59771-0997

If shipped by Fed-Ex or UPS, please send to:

MT Veterinary Diagnostic Lab
S. 19th and Lincoln ST
Bozeman, MT 59718

Greyhound Bus Lines will also accept shipments. Please check with your local lines.

4. Specimens received by 10 AM will be tested the day received and results will be available after 3 PM. The submitter will be notified via phone for all human exposure case results unless requested otherwise.

5. Cost: \$25 for small animal testing, \$50 for large animal testing. No COD on shipping. Carcass disposal charges are weight dependent except bats or small rodents

If you have any submission or testing questions, please call the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab at (406) 994-6350.

World Rabies Day was September 28. Please visit the AVMA website at <http://www.worldrabiesday.org/> for information on how to educate and inform the public regarding the importance of vaccinating their pets.

RABIES VACCINATION FOR VETS AND STAFF:

Recently, one of the companies manufacturing the rabies vaccine stopped production, which has left the one remaining company responsible for covering all pre- and post-exposure vaccinations and prophylaxis.

At this time it is virtually impossible to obtain pre-exposure vaccinations, even for veterinarians and staff, unless exposed to a positive animal. The Montana Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) and the MDOL are working together with the Department of Public Health and Human

Services (DPHHS) to file a letter requesting the vaccine company and DPHHS consider veterinarians as high risk due to occupational hazards. This would allow pre-exposure vaccinations of veterinarians and staff as they become available. Please check with your county and state public health departments for information on occupational vaccinations.

MVMA and MDOL are also working with DPHHS to have rabies titers checked at the winter MVMA meeting in Bozeman. Armed with this information, it is possible to receive a booster vaccination as the product becomes available.

Watch for more information in your MVMA newsletters.

WEST NILE VIRUS:

Six equine cases of WNV have been reported: four in Lake County, one in Madison County, and one in Jefferson County. None of the horses were vaccinated and several were more than 20 years of age. Two of the horses were euthanized and two are still in the early stages of the disease.

Montana typically will see positive cases through the end of September. Please remember this disease is preventable through the use of commercially available vaccines and mosquito control.

Four cases of human WNV have been diagnosed: one each in Big Horn, Cascade, Lake and Richland counties.

TRICHOMONIASIS:

Trich tags began a new color and year on September 1. The new Trich tag color is blue and tags are available from the state veterinarian's office for use from September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009.

Please continue to use silver USDA tags for official identification in addition to the Trich tag, especially for any out of state sale. Colored Trich bangle ear tags are especially helpful for the owner when searching for a particular animal among many. The buyer, market personnel, and brand inspectors also appreciate a highly visible number that can be used on ownership papers as well.

There are 22 Trich positive bulls to date from Big Horn, Carbon, Glacier, Hill and Pondera/Glacier Counties.

Since July 1, 2008, only veterinarians certified to collect Trichomoniasis samples are able to provide valid test results for sale bulls or export animals.

Veterinarians must complete a Trich Certification session to be eligible to conduct official Trich testing. If you are not yet certified, quarterly Trich certification seminars will be held in Helena. Please contact the MDOL at (406) 444-2043 for dates and scheduling.

EQUINE VIRAL ARTERITIS:

Stallions being imported into Montana are required to have Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA) testing or vaccination.

Effective September 7, 2007, based on Board of Livestock approval, stallions 13 months of age and older are required to meet specified criteria. The import requirements stipulate non-vaccinated stallions must have a negative test within 30 days. For vaccinated stallions, a negative baseline serum test within 10 days of vaccination and a vaccination certificate must be available. No stallions may be imported within 28 days of their initial vaccination date.

This new order brings more consistency to existing semen import rules. Shipped semen requirements for equidae stipulate that the donor stallion has a general health status inspection, a current EIA test done within 12 months of shipping, and a negative EVA test current within six months for non-vaccinated horses. For those stallions that have been EVA vaccinated, they must show a negative EVA test prior to initial vaccination and provide an annual vaccination certificate. All stallions must have a permit issued to ship into the state with all documents having been sent to the State Veterinarian's Office prior to shipping. Stallions with semen testing positive for EVA are ineligible to ship semen into Montana.

Applications and additional information for importing semen are available on the MDOL website at www.mt.gov/liv/animalhealth/forms, or stallion owners may choose to provide test charts

in conjunction with a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection to request the permit. A legible copy of the season's permit should be included in the Equitainer with the semen thus allowing the receiving station to confirm all testing is current.

Six-month horse passport certificates for stallions require the animal be vaccinated and the certificate will expire with the vaccination status.

BIOSECURITY & FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE:

Remember the days when your Mom always told you to wash your hands?

Well, Mom was right on the money. With the mobility of animals and people increasing in frequency and destination, it becomes even more imperative for animal owners and veterinarians to follow good biosecurity measures. The spread of many diseases, including foreign animal diseases, can be mitigated through application of just such measures:

- Limit access to barns and livestock areas and know who enters those areas;
- Wash tires and use protective foot covering when traveling between facilities and pastures;
- Maintain a separation of new animals and existing livestock for a minimum of three weeks to safeguard against transmission from the new animal(s) or longer whenever possible;
- Keep supplies and feed away from garbage and other waste; eliminate rodents and other creatures that may spread disease;
- Careful disinfection of facilities and use of gloves when handling animals with undetermined illness will reduce the possible spread of infection.
- When examining an animal or animals that exhibit possible signs of a foreign animal disease, place an immediate hold on all movements into and out of the facility until the appropriate officials can respond. Many diseases, such as vesicular stomatitis, will appear identical to another disease and

cannot be confirmed without laboratory confirmation. Preventing movement of animals from the onset will reduce the possible spread and infection.

Disease outbreaks can decimate an industry and result in devastating loss of animal life. Some diseases cross species to impact both animals and humans.

If you suspect a case of Foreign Animal Disease, contact either the State Veterinarian's Office at (406) 444-2043 or the Federal Veterinarian's Office at (406) 449-2220 immediately.

NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (NAIS):

MDOL is in the final planning stages of an outreach program to promote premise registration and NAIS compliance in Montana.

NAIS is voluntary and confidential. The primary focus of the program is the creation of a database that will allow rapid and effective traceback in the event of a serious disease outbreak in Montana.

While producers comprise the bulk of premises in Montana, all segments of the livestock industry have a stake in the case of a disease outbreak.

Additional information will be available in the months to come regarding the role of the veterinarian in the program.

VETERINARY INFORMATION SURVEY:

In MDOL's continuing effort to increase communication between the State Veterinarian's office and practicing veterinarians, we are again sending out an information survey.

This information will be used to provide you with the most up-to-date information regarding animal health issues, potential disease outbreaks, and changes in regulatory procedures.

If you haven't already, please take the time to share your contact information with us.