



Dec 2009

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#### Calendar of Events:

- Deputy Veterinarian Training  
Mon Feb 1st, 2010  
Mon Jun 21st, 2010  
Mon Oct 4th, 2010
- Jan 13th, 2010:  
Board of Livestock Meeting, Helena
- Jan 29-30, 2010:  
MT Veterinary Medical Association Winter Conference  
Bozeman

# StockQuotes Animal Health Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter from the Animal Health Division of the Montana Department of Livestock

Volume 2, Issue 4

## State Veterinarian Update

Welcome to the December issue of StockQuotes, the Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) Animal Health newsletter. I wish you a great holiday season.

Fall was an active time at our office, as it coincides with the busiest time for animal imports. Additionally, we've been collecting comments on the proposed revisions to the Trichomoniasis control rule, and most recently on the proposed Official Order to continue brucellosis surveillance in parts of Park, Gallatin, Madison and Beaverhead counties.

Idaho recently found a brucellosis affected herd, and we've been working on filing comments on the USDA Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Concept Papers. More on these issues in the brucellosis section.

If we have your email address, some of the content in this newsletter may be familiar (hopefully not too redundant), as I've sent out a number of email notices.

If we don't have your email address, and you desire more timely information than the quarterly newsletter, please share that with us. As always, please check our web site for updates.

## Novel H1N1 News

Flu season is upon us and MDOL is working hard to educate and prepare Montana swine producers in response to the potential risk of transmission of H1N1 virus to swine from an infective person. Influenza activity in humans in Montana is currently classified as widespread. To date, there have been

>700 confirmed cases of H1N1 virus in humans in the state.

MDOL has developed a preparedness and response plan to educate producers, to minimize the risk of transmission, and to ensure that the department is capable of providing industry support. The USDA has published a National Surveillance Plan to prevent transmission of H1N1 to the U.S. swine herd and to outline the actions that would occur if H1N1 is suspected or confirmed in swine. The Board of Livestock and the Montana Pork Producers Council have adopted that plan here in Montana. The plan is available at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot\\_issues/h1n1/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/h1n1/).

A summary of the national plan, biosecurity recommendations, and a summary of influenza activity in humans in Montana was sent out to all swine producers in the state with help from the Montana Pork Producers Council. The information was also made available to all county extension agents.

Additionally, the USDA is concerned about the drop in submission of swine disease samples over fear of what the discovery of H1N1 virus or another common strain of influenza would do to the industry. MDOL is encouraging veterinarians to continue to monitor swine herds for disease, including H1N1 virus. If there is a detection of H1N1 influenza in a swine herd, movement of clinical animals will be limited until recovery, but animals without symptoms will be able to move through commerce without restrictions.

By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM

### Satisfaction of Veterinarians with MDOL's Import System

#### Satisfaction Survey:

In August 2009, The Animal Health Division initiated a comprehensive review of the animal import permitting system to identify areas for improvement and to enhance customer service and compliance. This assessment included:

- Conducting questionnaires with Montana and out of state veterinarians who utilize the current system.
- Reviewing other states' permitting systems.
- Making mock permit requests to Animal Health's permitting system during non-business hours to review the proficiency of the after-hours service.

#### Survey of veterinarians who utilize the current Montana system:

A list of veterinarians who frequently use the current Montana system was compiled. Each veterinarian was sent a survey that requested a rating of their experiences with Montana's system compared with other states that require import permits. Montana veterinarians (15) and out-of-state practitioners (22) were asked to complete the survey. The charts at left show responses to two of the 12 questions asked. A full copy of the import system analysis is available from our office on request.

#### Summary of Results:

Compared with other states' import permit systems, Montana's system was reported as very comparable or average by respondents. Veterinarians who call in from other states have a greater appreciation for the system than in-state practitioners. Although most respondents indicated that the 24 hour availability and speaking directly with a person as useful, (if not

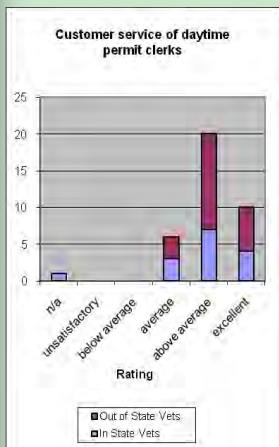
essential), they also remarked that the after-hours answering service needs improvement. The idea of a web-based system met mixed reviews, with a majority of the vets not interested in using a fee-based web system.

The Oregon and Wyoming systems received the most positive comments from surveyed veterinarians, and the office staff from both states had very few complaints on their end as well. The dominant praise of their systems was the ability to recall previously added veterinarian, consignor, and consignee address information so that it does not have to be repeated for each subsequent permit. Although the automated phone message system in Colorado received good remarks from veterinarians due to accessibility, the office staff was less enthusiastic because it creates more work for them in transcribing the messages.

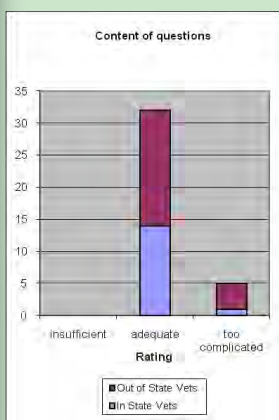
The information compiled in this report is an important tool for developing the new import permit system software. Both the input from veterinarians and information on the other states' permitting systems will assist us in creating a program that will be easier to use, and therefore allow us to provide the best customer service possible.

**Background:** In 1981, legislation was adopted by the Montana Department of Livestock to implement an import permit system in response to a nation-wide disease outbreak. This system gives the Department the ability to monitor animals entering the state, ensure they comply with all requirements, and reduce the likelihood that disease will be transmitted to Montana animals. Additionally, in the event of a disease outbreak, the permit system aids in trace-back investigations to determine the source of the disease and locate other possibly affected animals.

By Ms. Amy Dault



**Figure 1:** This chart shows that both Montana veterinarians and out-of-state veterinarians perceived that the customer service of MDOL import office staff was above average or excellent.



**Figure 2:** This chart shows that most respondents think the content of the questions asked to obtain a permit is appropriate

## Equine Piroplasmosis Update

As I recently mentioned in an electronic newsletter, Texas is investigating an outbreak of piroplasmosis, a tick-borne disease caused by the parasite *Theileria equi*.

Testing has so far confirmed 442 positive horses out of 1,246 tested. 289 of the positive horses belong to the index ranch and are under lifetime quarantine. The states of Alabama (1), California (2), Florida (5), Georgia (1), Louisiana (5), Minnesota (1), North Carolina (2), New Jersey (3), Tennessee (1), Texas (30), Utah (1)

and Wisconsin (1) have also detected positive horses linked to this outbreak.

All testing for piroplasmosis is conducted at The National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL).

In response to this outbreak, MDOL changed import requirements as did the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Please see the USDA Corner section of this newsletter for updated Canadian equine import requirements.



## Montana Voluntary Premises Registration Corner

MDOL recognizes the value and need to enhance traceability for disease tracing and marketability of the state's livestock and we're continuing to move forward with MT-id. We have recently completed a large scale mail out to all livestock owners in the state. Cattle, sheep, goat, and hog producers received information about premises registration and our new online premises registration form. Equine owners received information about equine microchips.

MDOL has made significant progress in the last quarter. To date, we have shipped out 2800 RFID tags to cattle producers through their local veterinarians. This does not include tags supplied from the USDA for use in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Along with the tags, we now have 8 hand-held PDA's and RFID wand readers in the field with local veterinarians. If you are interested in a unit, please contact MDOL for additional information. The units can be used while performing official disease work, including Brucellosis testing and Official Calfhood Vaccination. While they are designed to be used in conjunction with RFID tags, metal USDA tag information can also be stored in the program when RFID tags are not used. The software allows you to generate test forms and vaccination records with no lengthy transcription or writ-

ing needed.

If you are interested in learning more or possibly receiving a unit, please contact Tahnee Szymanski, DVM at (406) 202-0690 or [tszymanski@mt.gov](mailto:tszymanski@mt.gov). Also, MDOL has a large number of tags that are available free of charge. We are allowed to allocate tags directly to a veterinarian. The tags can then be distributed by the veterinarian as needed by their producers. For your horse clients, we have equine microchips as well.

The future of USDA's traceability program continues to be the subject of much discussion. Proposals for funding have ranged from zero to about a third of current funding levels. The most accurate information currently shows the program will continue to be funded by the USDA, albeit at a significantly reduced level. It is expected that in the next few months, the Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, will release a new direction for the program in response to criticism and feedback received during the national listening sessions.

By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM



A wolf-resistant cow at a Montana market



A wild back-tag in its natural environment

## Brucellosis Update

Unfortunately, with brucellosis being like a house guest that just won't leave, there seems to be no shortage of news and updates in this area.

**Brucellosis in an Idaho cattle herd:** We recently received a report of brucellosis in an Idaho cattle herd. This 600 head cattle herd was assembled in early 2008 and is located in Idaho's surveillance area northeast of Idaho Falls. From the testing completed so far, there are two confirmed positive animals. Currently, Idaho is brucellosis free. Under existing federal regulations, this herd needs to be depopulated and an epidemiological investigation needs to be completed within 60 days for Idaho to retain its Class Free status. At least one positive herd has been detected in each of the states of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming since spring 2008.

**Brucellosis Action Plan testing and budget update:** As of December 7th, over 70% of all producers in the 7 counties that are part of Area 1 have submitted an operation-specific risk survey. In addition to the 1230 surveys we received (from an estimated 1800 operations), some producers met the Action Plan requirement by completing a whole herd test.

MDOL has disbursed nearly \$1.2M (out of \$2.37M available through June 30, 2010) for testing costs associated with 133,480 brucellosis tests. As of mid-November, the Diagnostic laboratory has conducted 112,000 brucellosis tests in this calendar year.

**Proposal for continued brucellosis surveillance:** As promised, Montana's brucellosis action plan sunsets on January 10, 2010 (six months following Montana regaining Brucellosis Class Free status).

During the November Board of Livestock meeting, the Board discussed a draft Official Order for continuing brucellosis surveillance, vaccination, and traceability requirements in a much smaller part of

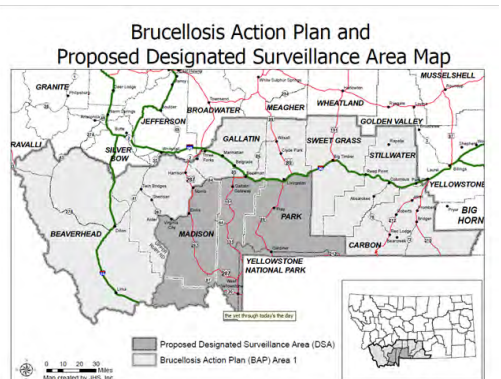
Montana (as opposed to the entirety of 7 counties). This is an area with a continuing risk of brucellosis transmission from wild elk and bison.

This DRAFT order also extends requirements on producers in the 7 county Area 1 who have not participated in the Brucellosis Action Plan by completing an operation-specific risk survey or a whole herd brucellosis test.

In addition to attending industry meetings in December, we'll be holding two public meetings (hopefully after you receive this newsletter) to discuss the proposed order: Livingston on Dec. 16 at 1:00-3:30 PM at the Livingston-Park County Public Library and in Twin Bridges on Dec 17 at 12:30-3:00 PM at the fairgrounds.

A copy of the DRAFT order is available on our web site at [www.liv.mt.gov](http://www.liv.mt.gov). Please submit comments by mail or email to [DSA-comments@mt.gov](mailto:DSA-comments@mt.gov) by Dec 18th.

In addition to attending industry meetings in December, we'll be holding two public meetings on the proposed Designated Surveillance Area.



**Federal Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Concept Paper:** USDA has proposed a new direction for the brucellosis and the tuberculosis eradication programs. Concept Papers describing key features of proposed rules were released in early October for public comment. The public comment period closed on December 4th. MDOL generally agrees with this

### Brucellosis Update (continued)

new direction and submitted comments on both programs. Comments by MDOL and others are viewable at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (search for brucellosis or tuberculosis concept).

**Bison Quarantine Feasibility Study:** In early December, a group of agency representatives (including Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, USDA, and MDOL) met for a third time to evaluate proposals to accept bison “graduating” from the Bison Quarantine Feasibility Study.

The review group had two priorities in mind. First, and most importantly, we needed to ensure that the recipient of the animals is able to complete the study by monitoring the bison for four addi-

tional years. Second, we desired to choose a proposal that had the greatest conservation value.

Ultimately, the group recommended that the majority (73) of the bison be transferred to Turner Enterprises with a balance of 14 being sent to Guernsey State Park in Wyoming. The animals going to Turner Enterprises will be returned to the public following the 4 year surveillance period with the corporation keeping the majority of the natural additions.

The Director of the Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks accepted this recommendation, and an Environmental Assessment for the two locations is pending.



Card test with reagent and serum.

### USDA Corner:

#### Veterinary Accreditation and Horse Import Requirements to Canada

**Changes to National Veterinary Accreditation Program:** In the last newsletter, we provided information regarding USDA's proposed changes to the National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP). The final rule addressing these changes was published December 9, 2009 in the Federal Register. The effective date for the new regulations is February 1, 2010. Once effective, all veterinarians seeking initial veterinary accreditation and all currently accredited veterinarians wishing to maintain veterinary accreditation will need to complete a new Application. Through Veterinary Accreditation Form 1-36A, veterinarians will declare an accreditation category (Category I – performing accredited duties only for companion animals; or Category II – performing accredited duties for all species). USDA is in the process of revising the VS Form 1-36A and will notify veterinarians when it is available.

This new form (anticipated on February 1, 2010) will be utilized for initial accreditation, authorization in a new State, choosing or changing an accreditation category, changing contact information, and reaccreditation.

If you are not sure of your accreditation status, call the Veterinary Services Area Office at (406) 449-2220. Under the new rule, even if you have attended a Core Orientation session, unless you filled out the application (VS Form 1-36A) and received written approval from the Area-Veterinarian-In-Charge (AVIC), you are not accredited. If you graduated before November 1992 and never became accredited, it will be necessary to attend a Core Orientation, even if you attended one prior to graduation. If you graduated after that date, you need to contact the Veterinary Services Area Office to find out what requirements you have already met and what requirements need to be fulfilled to become accredited.

Dr. Linfield will be attending the 2010 MVMA Winter and Summer meetings to provide updates and respond to questions regarding the changes to the NVAP. In the meantime, you may also refer to the following USDA-APHIS-VS websites:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/nvap/>  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_accreditation/faq.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/faq.shtml)



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We're on the Web:  
[www.liv.mt.gov](http://www.liv.mt.gov)

### USDA Corner (cont'd): Canadian Horse Import Requirements

**Changes to Canada's Importation Requirements for U.S. Horses:** The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has revised its restrictions on horses originating from Texas. Instead of having to wait 21 days in another state, Canada will now allow entry of horses originating from Texas (including Canadian horses returning to Canada from Texas), with a CFIA-issued import permit; piroplasmosis testing within 15 days prior to export; and additional certification statements.

Please contact the Montana Veterinary Services Area Office (406) 449-2220 for additional details regarding these changes to the Canadian import requirements.

By Tom Linfield, DVM

### MDOL Policy Change: Identification requirements for OCV on arrival

We have implemented a policy change for required identification for calves to be brucellosis vaccinated on arrival. MDOL allows the import of unvaccinated (but vaccine eligible) calves into Montana to be quarantined and brucellosis vaccinated by a Montana veterinarian.

Beginning Jan 1 2009, we required that these calves be officially identified with eartags prior to import. Based on feedback from veterinarians and producers, and an informal assessment of risk, we have modified this policy.

Effective immediately, branded female calves will be eligible for importation into the state when accompanied by a brand inspection. Non-branded (slick) calves imported from a state that does not have registered brands and inspections will still require individual animal identification.

#### MDOL Contact Information:

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