



StockQuotes Animal Health Newsletter

June 2009

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

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State Veterinarian Brucellosis Update

Welcome to the fifth issue of StockQuotes, the quarterly newsletter from the Montana Department of Livestock's (MDOL) Division of Animal Health. This issue will focus on two topics that have been occupying much of our time the last three months: the Brucellosis Action Plan (BAP), and the Trichomoniasis Administrative Rule revision. Also in this issue, please look for an update regarding changed import requirements for live stallions, and an update on the conversation on rabies vaccination.

Brucellosis Action Plan

Montana's 61st Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 3 which provides \$2.37 million for brucellosis management. These funds support Montana's Brucellosis Action Plan which enhances brucellosis surveillance in Beaverhead, Madison, Gallatin, Park, Sweet Grass, Stillwater and Carbon counties (Area 1).

Basics of the Action Plan: The BAP places several requirements on cattle managed in Area 1 including: 1) brucellosis testing prior to sale, 2) brucellosis testing prior to leaving the seven county area, 3) whole herd testing, and 4) enhancing traceability through animal identification.

Some of these requirements (i.e. whole herd testing) may be waived if the producer completes and submits an MDOL Producer Risk Survey which assesses the risk of brucellosis in the herd based on location of operations, degree of co-mingling with elk, and management practices. To date, more than 600 operators have completed and submitted a Producer Risk Survey.

MDOL welcomes Dr. Eric Liska and Dr. Jo Beatty, both of whom were hired to assist in the risk survey process, communicate with producers and conduct brucellosis testing as part of the BAP. Amy Dault has also joined the BAP team as a Compliance Specialist; Amy, who can be reached at (406) 444-9622 (adault@mt.gov) processes reimbursements for testing and assists with documentation.

Reimbursement for Testing:

The BAP allows the MDOL to reimburse veterinarians and producers for brucellosis testing costs incurred statewide. Brucellosis testing costs are reimbursable as follows:

Ranch Testing:

- \$12/head to veterinarians for testing that has not been billed to the producer.
- Actual producer-paid testing cost (must have copy of invoice and Accession#/Lab case#) reimbursed to producers for testing they have already paid for.

Market Testing:

- \$7.50/head reimbursed to veterinarians for testing costs, \$1/head chute fee reimbursed to market or veterinarian; for testing costs not passed onto the producers.
- Paid testing cost (must

Calendar of Events:

- June 29: MDOL Deputy Veterinarian Accreditation Training
- July 16-17 US Targhee Sheep Assn. Nat'l Show & Sale in Miles City
- July 20-21: Montana Board of Livestock Meeting
- July 20th: TB Listening Session Hosted by USDA in Denver, CO
- Sep 17 84th Montana Ram Sale in Miles City

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“The BAP allows the department to reimburse veterinarians and producers for brucellosis testing costs incurred statewide.”

“On June 15, MDOL submitted the application for Brucellosis Class Free Status. The state became eligible to apply for Class Free Status May 28 of 2009, one year after the last positive animal was destroyed.”

Brucellosis (cont'd from page 1)

have copy of invoice/check stub and Acc#/Lab case#) reimbursed to producers for testing they have already paid for.

Adult Vaccination:
\$7.50/head reimbursed to veterinarians following approval of the state veterinarian.

Although House Bill 3 is a Supplemental Appropriation, and therefore allows MDOL to pay for testing costs incurred since July 1, 2008, the department will be prioritizing payments for costs incurred since January 13, 2009, when the Board of Livestock approved the BAP. Costs incurred prior to January 13 will be paid based on funding availability.

MDOL is currently processing reimbursements requests for over \$110,000 in testing and adult vaccination costs.

MDOL's web site has the necessary documents for submitting reimbursements, including:

- Reimbursement form for producers
- Reimbursement form for veterinarians
- W9 (MDOL needs to have this on file to issue payment)

Please see the enclosed FAQ (also available on www.liv.mt.gov) that answers many questions on the BAP.

Brucellosis Class Status:

On June 15, MDOL submitted its application for Brucellosis Class Free Status. The state became eligible to apply for Class Free Status May 28 of 2009, one year after the last positive animal was destroyed. MDOL has been working closely with the state APHIS office to submit this application. In essence, the application is a brucellosis surveillance re-

port covering the period of June 1, 2008 through June 1, 2009. It details results of MCI (slaughter) testing, BRT (milk testing), follow-up on brucellosis suspect in reactor animals, and documents the rate of official calftooth vaccination.

As part of this class-status process, USDA conducted a thorough review of Montana's brucellosis program in April. MDOL and the state APHIS office hosted five veterinarians from around the country for several days who reviewed the following:

- Program planning/leadership;
- Personnel, equipment, supplies;
- Lab procedures;
- Official calftooth vaccination;
- Adult vaccination (AV);
- Management of reactors;
- Livestock markets;
- Affected herd management and epidemiology;
- Program records.

The team also examined whether MDOL has sufficient statutory authority to implement the brucellosis program through quarantine, testing, and inspection. Lastly, they examined how Montana expends federal funds for brucellosis management. Following a review, the USDA team typically makes a number of recommendations and sets any needed requirements. The requirements must be addressed prior to the state regaining class free status.

Overall, the review team gave Montana high marks in the majority of areas. The only requirement made by the team was to adjust the protocol for the BRT (milk testing), which has already been addressed.

Heartworm

Due to a number of media articles and editorials, there has been increased interest in heartworm in Montana pets. Although the disease is reportable to MDOL within 30 days of diagnosis, our office gets very few notifications.

This is either because of low prevalence in Montana native animals, or poor compliance in reporting of the disease to MDOL.

At this time, MDOL does not have sufficient information on prevalence of the disease to share with media, veterinarians, or the general public.

If you diagnose the disease in your practice, MDOL strongly encourages you to notify the state veterinarian's office.



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Montana Voluntary Premises Registration Corner

The Montana Department of Livestock has 840 tags! Lots of 840 tags. As efforts continue to advance traceability in the state's livestock, the Montana Voluntary Premises Registration System has received a facelift. From a new logo and newly redesigned website to a new cooperative agreement and new technology, MDOL is diligently working to improve both premises registration in Montana as well as the number of animals officially identified in our state.

Both the USDA and MDOL recognize the significant role that accredited veterinarians can serve in the advancement of traceability. From simply registering your veterinary clinic with the premises registration system to serving as an animal identification number (AIN) device manager and distributing 840 tags to your clients, veterinarians have the potential to play a significant role in NAIS.

MDOL has hand held PDAs, wand RFID readers and RFID tags, including implants for horses and camelids. Similar to the pilot project recently spearheaded for alternative livestock in Montana, MDOL can make these readers available to veterinarians who wish to use the technology for their producers. The tags can be placed in animals involved in offi-

cial disease programs, interstate commerce, or for identification of the breeding herd at preg-checking time. Veterinarians will need to have a non-producer participant number (NPN) and the animals receiving the tags will need to be from a registered premises. MDOL staff is available to assist with premises registration, AIN device manager set-up, training, field application, and data reporting.

Once a veterinarian is registered with a NPN, MDOL can distribute 840 tags to the veterinarian. This is reported and held in the USDA's AIN Management System. In case of an animal disease outbreak, a specific AIN can be used to provide a bookend in the traceback system. MDOL will assist interested veterinarians in implementing the available technology.

Veterinarians who serve in our state's livestock markets are especially encouraged to participate.

Please contact Dr. Tahnee Szymanski at (406) 444-5214 or tszymanski@mt.gov for more information.

By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM

“MDOL has hand held PDAs, wand RFID readers, and RFID tags, including implants for horses and camelids. ...MDOL can make these readers available to veterinarians in Montana who wish to use the technology for their producers.”

Trichomoniasis Testing Rule Revision

MDOL just completed a series of town hall listening sessions to get producer input on the department's plan to amend its bovine trichomoniasis rule (Administrative Rule of Montana 32.3.212, 32.3.501-505).



Image credit:
www.irishviews.com

The meetings were held in areas with the largest numbers of cattle or where ongoing tests have found Trichomoniasis most frequently. The ideas from producers, along with veterinarian comments, will be used to help generate the agency's proposal for the formal rule-adoption process. Veterinarian surveys that were conducted during the nine practitioner trichomoniasis certification meetings in 2007 and 2008, as well as producer group surveys, were also incorporated into the proposed amendments.

The state's current rules were adopted in 2007 and the department and producers have had three breeding seasons to find out what works and what doesn't. Also, the science of testing procedures has advanced.

The proposed changes to the Trichomoniasis ARM and will be presented to the Board of Livestock during the July meeting. If the Board approves the proposed language, it will be filed with the Secretary of State's office and will be open for additional public comment and a public hearing. The department expects a final rule to be in place sometime in the late fall or early winter of 2009.

Current rule: The current ARM now states that any non-virgin bull: Imported into the state must have an individual negative Trich test by PCR or 3 negative weekly cultures within 30 days of entry into MT, OR if; Sold, Loaned, or leased within MT must have the above listed test *prior* to the sale.

"Virgin bull" means a sexually intact male bovine less than 12 months of age or a

sexually intact male bovine 12 to 24 months of age that is accompanied by a signed affidavit attesting that there has been no breeding contact with sexually intact female cattle during the life of the bull.

Positive bulls must be sold to slaughter, an approved market to slaughter or to a Licensed Trich approved feedlot.

Summary of proposed changes:

Add the requirement that if bulls are exempt from testing for import and breach a fence and commingle with other bovine that owner shall bear all testing costs.

32.3.501 Trich Rule Definitions: Add many to clarify the program to aid in enforcement and the epidemiological investigation.

Request mandatory use of the MT Trich eartag at time of testing; suggest that the department may have to pay for them as done by New Mexico.

Eliminate in-house veterinary clinic testing for bulls sold, loaned or leased, but continue to allow for use as a diagnostic tool for herd health management.

32.3.502 Clarify the testing and certification program requirements.

32.3.505 Add language to control and prevent disease spread (disposition of animals in a positive herd, including females).

Add new section: Public grazing and grazing associations to require annual testing prior to turn out.

32.3.212 Import test exemption to include CSS certified Bull Studs as they will test weekly for 6 weeks if the bull is becoming a resident and at least once if it is there short term.

Proposed changes to the ARM maybe viewed at http://liv.mt.gov/liv/ah/diseases/trich/ARM32_3_501.pdf. The document may also be mailed to you by

"Yearly data on trichomoniasis testing are now available on our web site in a table format sortable by county, test positive, and other fields."

calling our office at (406) 444-2043. Proposed changes were emailed to large animal veterinarians who are Trich certified and who have given us their email addresses. Please send your comments to Dr. Rankin at the Department of Livestock.

Current and historical Trichomoniasis data: Yearly data on trichomoniasis testing are now available on our web site in a table format sortable by county, test positive, and other fields. <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/ah/diseases/trich/data.asp>. In summary, 42 positive bulls have been identified in 7 counties in 22 herds as of the middle of June, 2009. Total negative

tests are 5796, with 3925 being PCR and 1871 cultures. There have been 255 pooled PCR samples of up to 5 animals per pool. Please note that pooled samples are not validated for individual sale, loan or lease of bulls, but rather are used for herd health surveillance.

Testing numbers increased this year due to an increased awareness in certain areas and grazing associations requiring testing prior to turn out. Please remember to report any cultures that are done in your clinic so we have an accurate count of testing.

By Dr. Jeanne Rankin



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Rabies

In previous newsletters, we discussed the lack of standardization of rabies vaccine administration throughout the state. Currently, cities and counties often implement vaccination requirements that are not consistent with either the rabies compendium or the vaccine label.

The Montana Veterinary Medical Association addressed this issue during its summer meeting on June 23 by adopting the following position statement.

Rabies is a fatal, transmissible, viral disease that affects the central nervous system of mammals and is of significant public health concern in the State of Montana. The Montana Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) believes that rabies vaccine should be administered according

to vaccine label directions to protect dogs and cats from rabies, and to protect public health. MVMA also believes that rabies vaccine may be administered more frequently where the vaccination history is unknown, or in select circumstances where the veterinarian has reason to suspect the animal will not be presented for rabies vaccination prior to expiration of immunity per label of the product administered during the previous vaccination.

This position statement should help guide practicing veterinarians in administration of rabies vaccine. Further, it will likely be presented to the Montana Association of Counties to encourage standardization and consistency in rabies prophylaxis statewide.

The MVMA addressed rabies vaccine administration during its summer meeting by adopting a position statement that should help guide practicing veterinarians.

Staffing Update

In addition to BAP staffing additions (see the brucellosis section), the department welcomes Lindsey Eaton who accepted the position of Import Permit Tech recently vacated by Amy Dault (now with BAP).

Also, Montana has a new Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC). Dr. Tom Linfield accepted the position of AVIC and is now

USDA, APHIS Veterinary Services top official in Montana. Dr. Linfield was Montana State Veterinarian from 2003-2006 and more recently worked on contract with MDOL over the last year and half on brucellosis. We welcome Dr. Linfield in this new role, and know he will do a great job for the state of Montana.

“Dr. Tom Linfield accepted the position of AVIC and is now USDA, APHIS Veterinary Services top official in Montana.”

Montana Department of Livestock

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We're on the Web:
www.liv.mt.gov

Equine Viral Arteritis Import Requirements

Montana has had a requirement for EVA testing stallions prior to IMPORT since 2007 (placed in response to a multistate EVA outbreak).

During the May meeting, the Board of Livestock rescinded this import order, and replaced it with an order requiring:

Notification of state vet prior to import of any stallion known to be a carrier (semen shedder) of EVA

Any stallion testing blood positive for EVA without prior vaccination history will need to have his semen tested by virus isolation for EVA.

NOTE: THIS CHANGE AFFECTS LIVE ANIMAL IMPORTS

ONLY - THE SEMEN EVA REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT AFFECTED.

MDOL is also reviewing requirements for importing shipped equine semen. Under the current administrative rule (ARM 32.3.220 (7)), imported equine semen must originate from a stallion tested negative for EIA within 12 months, as well as EVA during the previous six months.

Please contact the state veterinarian's office if you have feedback regarding the current requirements, or have suggested additions or changes.

Anthrax Field Test Kits

MDOL has received rapid assay test kits for anthrax from Dr. Martin Hugh-Jones, Professor Emeritus at LSU. These test kits can be used in the field on animals suspected of dying of the disease. The test kits, produced by US Naval Medical Research Center, can be used for cattle, bison, and elk.

Test kits are being distributed to livestock markets throughout the state for easier access to practitioners suspecting anthrax in a herd.

Confirmed or suspected anthrax is immediately reportable. Specimens tested for the disease must also be submitted to the Bozeman Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for confirmation.



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