



Stock Quotes: Animal Health Newsletter

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

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WHAT'S NEW

- High Path Avian Influenza Outbreak, State Veterinarian Notes, p. 1
- Updated CVI Policy, p. 4

State Veterinarian Notes

As I write this, the Nation is dealing with an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) that is likely to match or exceed the 2015 outbreak; the most recent year when widespread Avian Influenza (AI) affected the poultry industry.

HPAI OUTBREAK: The 2015 outbreak resulted in 50.5 million commercial birds affected at a cost of \$3.3 billion to industry and consumers. Egg prices more than doubled as a result of reduced production. With wild bird detections accounted for, 24 states were affected. So far in 2022, 24 states have diagnosed HPAI in captive/domestic birds, and additional states have reported the disease in wild birds only.

BACKGROUND ON AVIAN INFLUENZA: The virus routinely circulates in wild birds, particularly waterfowl. In a cyclical pattern that is not well understood, HPAI flares up some years resulting in a much higher viral load in migratory waterfowl, the reservoir to domestic birds in commercial and backyard operations.

REASON FOR CONCERN: HPAI infections in birds can vary in severity, but as the name suggests, can be highly lethal. In domestic poultry, mortality rates over 90% are not uncommon, which can cause a significant financial impact on producers and affect food supplies. However, the greatest concern is the HPAI virus readily mutates and assorts genetic material, which has a potential to evolve into a disease that affects humans. It's believed that genetic reassortment resulted in the pandemic of 1918 which resulted in an estimated 50 million human deaths worldwide. The 1918 influenza virus was believed to have a mixture of avian and swine influenza virus components; a mutation that turned out particularly deadly. Therefore, both production and public health concerns drive a vigorous national response to the virus.

MONTANA STATUS: As of early April, detections have been made in south-east neighboring states including North and South Dakota, and Wyoming. Montana has had one detection in backyard poultry in Judith Basin County, and one in a commercial facility in Cascade County. The latter is significant because of necessary depopulation of the flock, required disposal of birds, disinfection of premises, and required

surveillance of all premises with poultry within 10 kilometers (6.2 mi) of the affected facility.

WHAT SHOULD MONTANANS DO: The risk of exposure is overwhelmingly from wild waterfowl, which can carry the virus without showing symptoms. In BOTH Montana cases, wild waterfowl contact was confirmed. In addition to standard biosecurity practices, the department is strongly advising all poultry owners to restrict outside access, particularly in areas that are near bodies of water, or wherever wild waterfowl may congregate.

HEALTH CERTIFICATES: At the March Board of Livestock meeting, the Board reviewed the Department's policy on electronic health certificates and considered feedback from several veterinarians about the transition to electronic format. The Montana Veterinary Medical Association board voiced support based on input from members. Based on a high adoption rate of electronic options, the department will continue the 2021 policy of asking veterinarians to issue no more than 20 paper certificates during the calendar year, while accommodating unique cases of technology failure. In 2023, no more than 5% of health certificates written by a veterinarian may be in paper format. Please see page four of this newsletter for more information.

VACANCIES: Spread the word that Department of Livestock (DOL) is looking for a few good people to fill several key vacancies. Animal Health Bureau (AHB) is hiring a staff veterinarian, and pending board approval, the brucellosis veterinarian. The brucellosis veterinary position is shortly being vacated by Dr. Eric Liska who is leaving us for the private sector after spending over 10 years with DOL. Also, we are looking to fill the vacancy for Meat Inspection Bureau Chief. A veterinarian or another professional with regulatory and food safety experience would be ideal for the job. Lastly, DOL is looking to fill the vacancy for the Administrator of the Brands Enforcement Division. We are hoping to fill these key positions with folks as qualified as those that are leaving. ☘

By Marty Zaluski, DVM

Brucellosis 101: An Overview

In May of 2009 after Montana’s September 2008 loss of brucellosis Class Free Status due to the discovery of two brucellosis affected herds in a twenty-four-month period, the Brucellosis Action Plan (BAP) was adopted by the Montana Board of Livestock. The BAP was a livestock brucellosis surveillance plan involving seven counties in southwest Montana. The BAP was developed with the intent to determine areas of livestock risk and to find any additional infected livestock through required surveillance in these counties. It was also intended to reduce the financial burden on producers statewide due to federal and trading partner regulations based on our brucellosis classification, and to ease trading partner concerns that the disease would spread via livestock beyond Montana’s borders.

Montana regained class free status in July 2009 at which time the BAP transitioned to the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) shrinking the area to portions of four Counties (Gallatin, Madison, Park and Beaverhead).

Since 2011, the Department of Livestock (DOL) has partnered with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) in a live elk capture program designed to determine the extent of the disease on the landscape in elk. Understanding where brucellosis exists helps us determine where the boundary of the DSA must be to include livestock that may be at risk.

In States with a brucellosis wildlife vector, a Brucellosis Management Plan (BMP) must be in place to maintain Class free status. The three Greater Yellow Area (GYA) states (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) all have a BMP that is essentially outlined in the rules and administration of their respective DSAs. Each state’s BMP is reviewed by USDA every 3 years for approval.

Additionally, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) no longer requires a downgrade in Class status if the State in which affected herds are found can effectively quarantine and perform complete epidemiological investigations. Currently, Montana has four livestock herds under

quarantine as brucellosis affected.

All four affected herds are within Montana’s DSA. Two are in Madison County and two in Gallatin County. The two most recently discovered herds, the 2021 Madison County herd and the 2022 Gallatin County herd, found only one animal each at the time of discovery. Since the inception of the DSA in 2010, 12 herds (Figure 4) have been identified as affected. Elk have been found to be the most likely source in all affected Montana herds since 2010 following thorough epidemiological investigations.

The 2021 Madison County herd epidemiological investigation was simplified by the negative test on the animal the prior year and therefore only animals that ran adjacent to the infected animal since were required to be tested. Two small herds that had not yet tested were placed under quarantine, with DOL personnel able to quickly complete testing for the herds in order to lift quarantines. All adjacent animals were negative.

The 2022 Gallatin County herd’s single animal also had a prior year negative test, again narrowing the scope of the epidemiological investigation. Despite the narrowed scope, multiple adjacent herds were still subject to quarantine as they had not completed whole herd testing since the 2021 risk period. Most of these herds will perform testing when they have completed calving this spring and again in the fall.

Historically, one affected herd is found each year but the effectiveness of the DSA has been demonstrated through the early detection of infected herds. At detection, the average infection rate of affected herds has been 0.45% (Figure 4) (range 0.04 - 2.55%). The success of early detection would not be possible without tremendous producer effort and the help of local veterinary practitioners. Each year, DOL performs a compliance assessment matching all sale and movement records with required testing. On a per animal movement or sale basis, the last few years have revealed a compliance rate of nearly 100 percent. ✎

By Eric Liska, DVM

Calendar Year	2010	2011	2011	2013	2013	2014	2014	2016	2017	2018	2021	2022	total
Affected Herd Size (approx.)*	3,250	275	1,550	1,100	700	2340	650	180	1,100	1,450	582	170	13,347
No of Reactors on Index Test	4	7	1 (bull)	3	1 (bull)	1	1	2 (bulls)	1	1	1	1	24 (4 bulls)
Herd Prevalence (%)	0.12%	2.55%	0.06%	0.27%	0.14%	0.04%	0.15%	1.11%	0.09%	0.07%	0.17%	0.59%	0.45%
Quarantine status	Ongoing	7 months	36 months	8 months	7 months	7 months	6 months	9 months	8 months	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	12 herds
Disposition	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	Test out	
Adjacent Herd animals (approx.)	7,000	3,000	10,000	3000	800	22,000	1,500	4,000	450	4970	1300	1750	59,770
Adjacent Herd tests complete	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
County	Gallatin/ Madison DSA	Park DSA	Madison DSA	Madison DSA	Park DSA	Madison DSA seasonal	Park DSA Seasonal	Beaverhead DSA	Madison DSA	Madison DSA	Madison DSA	Gallatin DSA	6 Madison 3 Park 1 Beaverhead 2 Gallatin

Figure 4. Epidemiological investigations from 2010 to March 2022. Source: DOL Staff

2022 Targeted Elk Brucellosis Surveillance

In 2011, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) initiated the targeted elk brucellosis surveillance project. Sampling efforts focus on one to two elk herds each year. Elk in targeted herds are captured and sampled to evaluate the prevalence and spatial extent of brucellosis exposure in elk herds. Global Positioning System (GPS) radio collars are deployed on a subset of elk to document elk movements, the extent of spatial overlap with livestock, and interchange between elk herds. Elk capture and sampling efforts for the current year of the project occurred January 27-29, 2022, in the northern portion of the Tobacco Root Mountains (HD333) and February 1-4, 2022, in the southern portion (HD320; Figure 1).

A total of 100 female elk were captured and sampled in the northern Tobacco Root Mountains study area (HD333), (Figure 2). Zero of the 100 animals sampled tested seropositive for exposure to brucellosis, giving the herd an estimated seroprevalence of 0 (95% confidence interval: 0 - 0.037).

A total of 63 female elk were captured and sampled in the southern Tobacco Root Mountains study area (HD320), (Figure 3). Of these, 0 tested seropositive for exposure to brucellosis, giving the herd an estimated seroprevalence of 0 (95% confidence interval: 0 - 0.06).

Previously for the Southern Tobacco Root Mountains, 70 elk were sampled in 2014 and all tested seronegative

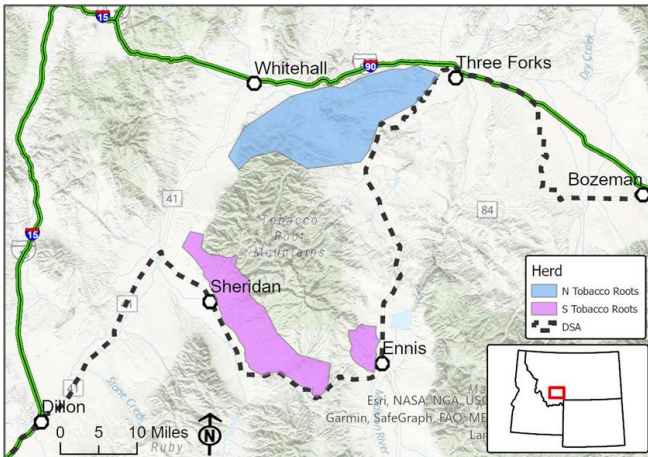


Figure 1. Elk brucellosis surveillance was conducted in the northern (HD333) and southern (HD320) portions of the Tobacco Root Mountains. The Montana Department of Livestock brucellosis designated surveillance area (DSA) is shown as a black dotted line. Source: FWP.

for brucellosis. FWP chose to re-sample this area in 2022 because two elk from the Ruby Mountains immediately to the south tested seropositive in 2020 and movement data suggests potential mixing between these two herds. No elk were fitted with GPS collars in

this area because sufficient movement data was collected from the 26 collared elk of the 2014 capture effort.

Current information on the distribution of brucellosis exposed elk, including the results from the 2022 capture, indicates that

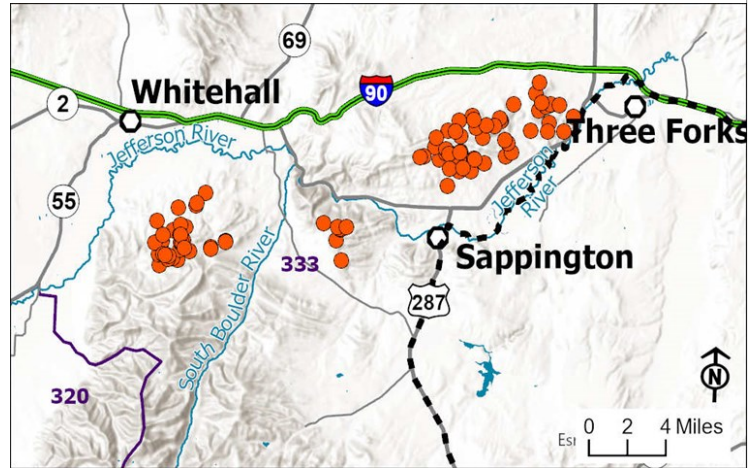


Figure 2. Capture locations of elk in the northern Tobacco Root Mountains south of Whitehall, Montana during January 2022. Source: FWP.

the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) boundary encompasses the appropriate population of livestock that could have contact with infected wildlife. Following the 2022 captures and elk brucellosis test results, Animal Health Bureau (AHB) does not see a reason for an adjustment to the boundary of the DSA. Detections of seropositive elk outside of the boundary are a primary determinant in making recommendations for DSA boundary adjustments.

By Eric Liska, DVM and Jenny Jones, Montana FWP

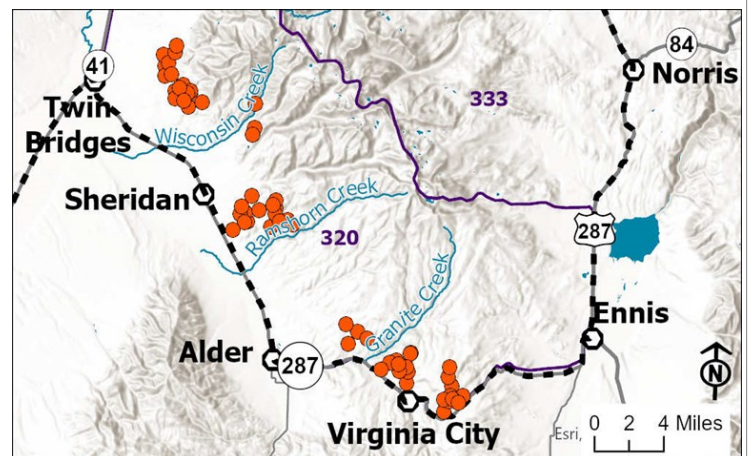


Figure 3. Capture locations of elk in the southern Tobacco Root Mountains near Sheridan, Montana during February 2022. Source: FWP.

Updated CVI Policy

Following recent discussion at the Montana Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) meeting and the January Board of Livestock (BOL) meeting, Department of Livestock (DOL) updated the policy on the use of electronic certificates of veterinary inspection (CVI).

DOL previously set an implementation date of January 1, 2021, to require all CVIs for Montana origin animals to be issued electronically. Based on feedback from MVMA, DOL delayed implementation, allowing veterinarians to write up to 20 paper CVIs during the 2021 calendar year, with full implementation set for January 1, 2022.

Montana veterinarians have done a tremendous job embracing and adopting the use of electronic technologies for CVIs. During the first two months of 2022, only seven of 3,181 export CVIs received by Animal Health Bureau (AHB) were issued on paper. This is an electronic adoption rate of 99.78%. DOL recognizes the learning curve associated with new technologies and again, thank you for all your and your staff's hard work.

With the recent announcement the AgMove platform will no longer be available, veterinarians are left with only one option for offline issuance of electronic CVIs. VET-CVI, a free option with offline capabilities, is expected to be available to Montana veterinarians in the coming months. Because of the limited options for the issuance of offline CVIs, DOL will extend the 2021 policy of a 20 paper CVI allowance through 2022.

Assuming adequate options for the offline issuance of CVIs, beginning January 1, 2023, the intended policy of requiring all CVI's to be issued electronically will be implemented. To clarify what constitutes justifiable instances to use paper CVIs and the required timeframe for reporting, DOL's policy on allowable use of paper CVIs will be 5% of total CVIs issued by an individual veterinarian.

Finally, DOL has also received inquiries on how the non-compliance will be issued. Consistent with other non-compliance issues, the Department will implement a progressive approach to compliance.

For veterinarians that fail to comply with this policy, the following sequential compliance steps will be taken:

1. Written notification of violation of Department policy. For interested veterinarians, the Department will provide additional training on the use of available platforms.
2. Request for a written plan outlining how the ongoing violation of DOL policy will be addressed. Assistance from Department staff will continue to be available.
3. Suspension or termination of deputy state veterinarian status per administrative rule 32.3.141. This is required for the issuance of CVIs by Montana veterinarians.

The 2022 CVI policy was voted on and approved by the BOL on March 18, 2022. ☒

By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM

Electronic CVI Options

Since the Department of Livestock (DOL) transitioned to electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVI), some of the available eCVI options have changed. Global Vet Link (GVL) purchased AgMove and will be sunsetting AgMove on April 25, 2022. The information below details new options for offline issuance of eCVIs.

myVETTECH

myVETTECH is a platform from a private company that offers electronic options for CVIs and Equine Infection Anemia (EIA) tests.

Advantages of myVETTECH:

1. Certificates can be issued offline and then uploaded when a veterinarian returns to internet service.
2. Pay per use: \$1.50 per health certificate and \$3.50 per EIA test form.
3. United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Approved myVETTECH eCVI for bovine, sheep, pigs, goats, and equine.
4. myVETTECH requires no sign up fee or subscription fee.
5. Health Certificates upload automatically to the state of origin and the state of destination.
6. Offers bulk upload for large shipments of animals from multiple spreadsheet resources.

Disclaimer:

myVETTECH is only available for upload on iOS (Apple) devices. Use of this product on Android devices is expected to be available April 2022.

VETCVI

VETCVI has been created and paid for by DOL in order to further the transition to eCVIs.

Advantages of VETCVI:

1. Certificates can be issued offline and then uploaded when a veterinarian returns to internet service.
2. Free to Montana accredited veterinarians.
3. Has both large and small animal capabilities.
4. The application can be downloaded on any device (i.e., iOS or Android).
5. Will pull phone contacts from a veterinarian's phone and input it into the health certificate.
6. Health Certificates upload automatically to the state of origin and the state of destination.

Disclaimer:

VETCVI is not expected to be available until June 2022.

DOL has extended the paper CVI issuance policy for 2022. Please see the first article on this page for more information on the Updated Electronic CVI Policy.

For more information, please visit <https://www.myvettech.org/>. Please contact Sara Starkey with questions. 406-444-1587 SStarkey@mt.gov. ☒

By Sara Starkey, Compliance Specialist
Brooke Ruffier-Hoopers, Import Office Manager

Emergency Preparedness Update

Department of Livestock (DOL) recently completed a two-day foot and mouth disease (FMD) exercise, focused on use of the Incident Command System (ICS) for management of a disease outbreak. The ICS exercise was a continuation of the fall 2021 ICS exercise discussed in the September 2021 [edition](#) of this newsletter and was designed to grow DOL's familiarity and confidence in the use of ICS. During the most recent exercise, DOL staff focused on use of the ICS structure to methodically manage a large scale event while working to address how stop movement controls will be implemented, how a surveillance zones will be structured, what controls will be in place for premises in a control zone, and how Montana will approach the potential use of vaccine to control a FMD outbreak.

The exercise is a one of several emergency preparedness activities DOL has planned for 2022 as we look to advance our capability to respond to a large scale disease outbreak.

In May 2022, DOL will hold a communications training for Department staff. The training will provide the tools needed to speak with media during a disease event as well as aid DOL in the development of a formal communications plan.

In June 2022, several DOL employees will attend a Carcass Management Train the Trainer Exercise in Washington State. This training is funded through Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPREP) funding. The training is specific to the use of composting as a means of carcass management during a foreign animal disease outbreak. The training is available to state, federal, academic and industry partners. If you are interested in composting, you can find more information about the training here: bit.ly/MortalityCompostingApplication. Participants have the option of taking the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) compost Subject Matter Expert (SME) certification exam. Attending the training and successfully passing the exam are two of three steps to becoming a USDA recognized compost SME.

In August 2022, DOL will be working with the National Pork Board (NPB) on a four-day functional exercise focused on the depopulation and disposal of swine during an emergency or disease outbreak. Montana was one of five states selected to participate in this exercise. The NPB has identified responding to a foreign animal disease (FAD) like African Swine Fever (ASF) as a top priority to prepare for in 2022. This exercise will provide an opportunity to focus and work on conducting a FAD investigation on an active hog production facility and to advance planning for the depopulation and disposal of swine in case of a large scale disease outbreak. Fortunately, many of the lessons can be applied across other species.

Finally, DOL will be moving forward with a series of tabletop exercises focused on the Secure Beef Supply (SBS) Plan. The secure food supply plans provide guidance for producers to prepare for a potential foreign animal disease outbreak to reduce the risk of disease introduction through enhanced biosecurity. Premises with plans in place may be able to continue to move animals during a disease outbreak, an important part of maintaining the viability of an operation and the livestock industry as a whole.

The tabletop exercises will introduce producers to the concepts and components of a SBS plan. Interested participants can have a biosecurity audit conducted on their operation as part of the planning process. In order to ensure that all producers interested in an on farm assessment done are able, DOL will be hiring a contract veterinarian. This position and the tabletop exercises are also funded through DHS NADPREP funding. Montana was awarded this funding in 2021. If you are interested in the contract position, please contact Dr. Tahnee Szymanski at (406) 444-5214 or tszymanski@mt.gov. Additional information will be provided in the coming weeks.

Efforts to advance DOL's preparedness capabilities are shaped by our participation in the 2018 Agricultural Response Management and Resources (ARMAR) exercise, a functional exercise simulating the first four days of a FMD detection in Montana. At the conclusion of the ARMAR exercise, DOL identified a list of to-do's based on deficits identified. Many of these have been accomplished or are areas of continued focus for DOL. As new trainings and exercises are completed, DOL continues to add to and refine our list of needs to ensure DOL is prepared to respond to a large scale disease outbreak.

Some recently identified to do's include:

- Identify mental health resources that will be available during an event for producers and responders.
- Contact and develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with other law enforcement agencies who will be needed to assist with stop movement orders.
- Draft specific instructions to agency partners that will assist with the stop movement.
- Consider MOUs with adjacent states and Canadian provinces on coordinated response activities and potential for business continuity during an outbreak.
- Develop a list of stakeholders that need to be updated during a disease event.
- Identify lists of carbon sources by location for composting.
- Establish or find an existing standard operating procedure (SOP) for cleaning and disinfection of personnel between animal visits.

Emergency preparedness is not a finite task DOL must complete. Instead, it must be continually revisited and revised and practiced to ensure our readiness. Despite the unending nature and the substantial work to be completed, DOL is pleased with the progress that has been made. ☘

By Tahnee Szymanski, DVM

Extended Equine Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (EECVI) Update

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In January 2019 Department of Livestock (DOL) transitioned from paper six-month health certificates to the Extended Equine Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (EECVI) through Global Vet Link (GVL). This product allows horse owners to have their horses inspected once and then travel to EECVI participating states for six months.

It has been communicated with DOL that there is still confusion with how the Extended Equine Certificates of Veterinary Inspection should be completed.

Important facts for veterinarians to communicate with clients:

1. The initial inspection of the horse by the issuing veterinarian does not generate a transport document.
2. Owners must sign up for an account through myvetlink ([MyVetLink Owner Account and App | GVL \(globalvetlink.com\)](https://myvetlink.com)) in order to create transport permits.
3. Transport documents are generated by the owner and must be completed for every movement, both in and out of participating states.
4. Transport permits should be completed 24-

5. 48 hours before movement.
6. Horse owners can access and log their movements 24 hours a day, 7 days a week online.
7. Horses can move on transport permits to over 30 states.
8. Each state has specific identification requirements for horse imports please visit globalvetlink.com for more information on participating states and identification requirements.
9. The physical address of the origin and destination must be listed on the transport permit. Post office boxes are not accepted, per federal regulation.

Statistics have shown that 40% of EECVI's issued by accredited veterinarians had no associated movement documents during the six month life of the health certificate. Moving forward veterinarian who issue EECVI's with no associated movements will be contacted by DOL. For more information please contact 406-444-9525 or email brooke.ruffier@mt.gov.

By Brooke Ruffier Hoopes

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Montana Department
of Livestock