



Legislative Report

January 24, 2008

Bovine Tuberculosis Program Update

Provided by the Animal Industry Division
Michigan Department of Agriculture

General Information

Establishing 2008 Priorities

The Michigan Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Advisory Committee is comprised of appointed representatives of non-government stakeholder groups and provides advice to the Department of Agriculture. The Committee met on December 18, 2007, and discussed 2008 priorities:

- Promoting implementation of Wildlife Risk Mitigation Plans in the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ). Committee members supported the strategy of having USDA Wildlife Services (USDA WS) and other technical experts available to cattle producers in the MAZ in one-on-one and small group settings.
- Modifying the Accredited Advanced Zone (MAAZ) and Free Zone (Upper Peninsula) Surveillance System. The Committee was divided regarding the proposal to move from random to a more cost-effective, targeted surveillance system in these two zones.

The Chair Chuck Preston will authorize work groups and subcommittees as needed. These smaller groups will draft recommendations for complex and/or potentially divisive issues which will then be considered by the full Bovine TB Advisory Committee.

A Surveillance Subcommittee was formed, with both MAZ and MAAZ representatives, to develop a written targeted surveillance proposal for the full Committee to discuss and consider for approval at the January 24, 2008 meeting.



The Surveillance subcommittee met on January 2, 2008 and a written proposal was submitted to the USDA Veterinary Services Eastern Region on January 10, 2008 for their input.

Wildlife Risk Mitigation Plan Implementation in the Modified Accredited Zone

The bovine TB eradication program utilized a specialist from the MDA Environmental Stewardship Division to work with animal disease specialists and cattle producers on a collaborative strategy for increased adoption of Wildlife Risk Mitigation Plans (WRMPs) in the MAZ. This will leverage the expertise developed through other successful programs that emphasize public and private sector collaboration, including the:

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Right to Farm Program
- Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)

An initial meeting between MAZ cattle producers and government officials was held on January 2, 2008.

Annual Cattle Surveillance Testing Status

Zone	Annual Surveillance Requirement	Completed
Modified Accredited Zone	Annual herd test on anniversary date	One herd is currently overdue – all others are current
Modified Accredited Advanced Zone and Free Zone	800 herds	697 (with 90 additional herds scheduled for testing)

Note: MAAZ and Free Zone surveillance updates are based on information provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services (USDA VS) Michigan Office as of December 31, 2007.

Zonal Boundary Compliance

A total of 110 livestock vehicles were either inspected or accounted for by MDA staff at the Agriculture Inspection Station located at the Mackinac Bridge in St. Ignace, MI. MDA staff inspected 32 (29%) livestock vehicles containing cattle and found 1 paperwork violation. This violation involved cattle destined for slaughter that had been handled with a warning letter as a first-time violation. A total of 9 (8%) of the livestock vehicles drove past MDA staff without stopping. Three violations occurred while the Mackinac County Sheriff was on duty and were pursued and stopped. All three were found to be empty.

There were 179 movement permits issued to producers in the MAZ during the month of December.



Slaughter Surveillance and Slaughter Verification

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Ear Tag use in Michigan

Past scientific studies have identified two main factors limiting the effectiveness of bovine TB slaughter surveillance nationwide:

- USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors in some slaughter plants are submitting too few tissue samples from slaughtered cattle for tuberculosis screening
- Inadequate individual animal identification to trace animals back to herds of origin

The RFID ear tags of over 10,000 Michigan cattle were scanned in December, 2007, at slaughter plants inspected by FSIS. This documented improvement in our ability to trace Michigan animals has strengthened surveillance effectiveness and is being incorporated in a proposal to reduce requirements for other more costly forms of surveillance, such as whole herd testing in the Modified Accredited Advance and Free Zones.

Maintaining Functional RFID Readers in Cattle Markets

Staff from both the MDA and the Michigan Department of Information Technology (DIT) made repeated visits to one of Michigan's cattle markets this week to fix the RFID scanning system. The existing system is the result of a partnership between MDA and the market that has resulted in cost-effective scanning of RFID tags on all animals being sold. The technicians identified older hardware and non-standard software in the scanning system; DIT staff is developing steps for updating the system and reducing down time.

Recently Identified Bovine TB Infected Cattle Herds

The owner of a Montmorency County bovine TB-positive beef herd accepted USDA's indemnity offer; farm depopulation will take place the week of January 14, 2008.

The USDA appraisal of an Alcona County TB-positive beef herd was accepted. Plans are underway to have the farm depopulated the week of January 14, 2008.

The appraisal of the Oscoda County TB-positive beef herd is still being finalized.

Education and Outreach

Priorities have been identified to start public outreach regarding the needed changes and future requirements for wildlife risk mitigation plans in the MAZ. State agencies are working with extension, Farm Bureau, and other partner agencies to educate producers on the risks associated with farming in the TB zone.



Significant Issues

1. Sale of Deer Feed and Bait

The Michigan Agricultural Commission discussed the problem created by the increasingly common sale of bulk agricultural commodities in the MAZ. This creates a *Catch 22* situation where sale of these products is legal, but their use is prohibited in certain areas of the MAZ. The baiting and feeding of deer is banned in Alcona, Alpena, Crawford, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle counties to prevent the spread of bovine TB between wild deer. The issue is still under review by MDA.

2. Payment of indemnity for re-infected herds

Currently, the State of Michigan is expected to pay 100% fair market value for animals depopulated from TB-infected farms, regardless of how many times farms become re-infected. The current policy fails to provide an incentive for producers to invest in risk reduction equipment and management practices to prevent infections.