



Legislative Report

February 15, 2008

Bovine Tuberculosis Program Update

Provided by the Animal Industry Division
Michigan Department of Agriculture

General Information

November 2007 USDA Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Program Review

On February 11, 2008, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) received a written copy of the report from the November 2007 USDA review of the Michigan bovine TB program. This program involves agencies other than MDA. Some review findings and recommendations are directed toward the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services (VS) Michigan Area Office, and the USDA Wildlife Services (WS) Michigan Office.

There were eight notable issues requiring investments in technological resources, time, and labor. Some recommendations are cutting edge and will require legislative and/or policy changes, as well as additional investments in staffing, equipment, and research to ensure the program is based on sound science. These recommendations include:

1. USDA recommends Michigan move to targeted surveillance.
2. Privately owned cervid farm surveillance needs to be enhanced and addressed in legislation.
3. USDA recommends that MDA post signs on major and minor roads between the MAAZ and the MAZ.
4. MDA must establish and implement an effective herd reconciliation program in the MAZ.
5. MDA must trace every animal destined for slaughter and confirm that it has been slaughtered.
6. MDA must develop a statewide information technology system matching cattle backtags at the saleyards with electronic ID.

7. USDA recommends that DNR pursue stronger compliance with their baiting and feeding bans and motivate landowners to play a more active role in reducing the numbers of TB-infected wild deer.
8. USDA recommends that Michigan seek legislation to tie indemnity payments to herd plans and repopulation of farms.
9. USDA recommends MDA obtain legal authority to stop vehicles hauling livestock.

The pursuit of these objectives requires the support of the agricultural and wildlife communities, the state legislature, and Michigan’s congressional delegation.

Wildlife Risk Mitigation Plan Implementation in the Modified Accredited Zone

MDA and USDA Wildlife Services staff conducted Wildlife Risk Mitigation (WRM) assessments in February 2008, on six farms located in or around Deer Management Unit 452. Producers and government staff will meet to collaboratively identify:

- Practical strategies for reducing current risks for cattle herds in areas with an identified high level of bovine TB infection in wild deer.
- Barriers (including costs) faced by producers wanting to implement risk reduction measures.
- Strategies for reducing or eliminating those barriers.

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 or scheduled for testing.
Modified Accredited Advanced Zone and Free Zone	800 herds	781 (with 23 additional herds scheduled for testing in 2007 but final paperwork has not yet been received)

[Note: MAAZ and Free Zone surveillance updates are based on information provided by the USDA VS Michigan Office as of February 8, 2008.]

Iosco County Circle Testing

Testing of cattle herds located within 10 miles of the two Iosco County TB positive deer is currently underway. Both deer were taken by hunters; one from just inside the MAZ and the other from a location just south of the MAZ border. Testing operations involve both MDA and USDA field staff. Nine herds have already been tested with 49 additional herds scheduled for testing.

Zonal Boundary Compliance

A total of 133 livestock vehicles went through the Agriculture Inspection Station, located at the Mackinac Bridge in St. Ignace, Michigan. MDA staff inspected 80 (60 percent) livestock vehicles containing cattle and found no cattle movement violations. A total of

eight (6 percent) of the livestock vehicles drove past MDA staff without stopping. A small number of individuals hauling livestock vehicles continue to drive past the Mackinac Bridge checkpoint. Until MDA has the legal authority to stop and detain vehicles, the department will continue to have difficulties preventing what USDA deems "risky" movement across the bridge.

There were 81 movement permits issued to cattle producers from MAZ farms and 138 issued for cattle moving from the Gaylord sale during the month of January.

One of the USDA requirements to protect the MAZ from illegal cattle movement is to require movement certificates into and out of the MAZ. MDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding for 2008 with the Michigan State Police for 20 hours per week of livestock hauling patrol activity. State Police will stop and check the paperwork of vehicles that could potentially be hauling cattle. This random activity will take place on the border between the MAZ and the MAAZ.

Slaughter Surveillance and Slaughter Verification

There were 24,432 head of cattle scanned at Michigan Livestock Markets in January, 2008. The number of cattle marketed in any month varies per multiple factors, including weather, feed prices, cattle prices, and seasonal marketing patterns. For example, there will be a spike in activity around spring and fall feeder calf sales.

Weather had an effect on the electronic ID scanners at markets in January, 2008. The actual number of cattle marketed in Michigan is higher than the number scanned at markets, because electronic ID reader systems failed at two markets for two weeks.

Slaughter facilities scanned 10,582 cattle in January, 2008. The reader system in one Michigan slaughter plant was out of service for one week in January, resulting in approximately 1,500 cattle not recorded at that facility.

MDA is negotiating with private vendors to determine how government and the private sector can cost-effectively collaborate to support the technology (software and hardware) needs and maintain cattle traceability. The immediate problems at the markets and the slaughter facility were resolved.

Bovine TB Infected Cattle Herds

There have been no additional cattle herds identified as bovine TB positive to date. The appraisal of the Oscoda County beef herd, identified as positive in 2007, was finalized; the farm was depopulated.

Education and Outreach

MDA representatives recently met with university-based researchers to explore how state agencies and academic institutions can enhance collaboration, ensuring bovine TB eradication efforts are based on sound science. The multi-disciplinary group of researchers represented the fields of economics, environmental protection, communications, sociology, disease control, and laboratory diagnostics.

On January 24, 2008, MDA issued a news release regarding the Iosco County TB positive deer and the establishment of two Potential High-Risk Areas. The press release also included information regarding the suspect deer in Shiawassee County.

MDA provided stakeholders with talking points and notified legislators, local government officials, agriculture, local public health, wildlife interest groups, Michigan State University Extension, MDA, MDCH, and DNR staff prior to issuing the release.

MDA posted *Questions and Answers* regarding “Potential High-Risk Areas” on the emerging diseases Web site: www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

MDA mailed letters to impacted producers in Iosco and Shiawassee counties. The letters explained bovine TB testing requirements and the “Potential High-Risk” designation in Iosco and Shiawassee counties.

An informational meeting on bovine TB was held in Shiawassee County on Wednesday, February 13, and another is scheduled to take place in Iosco County on February 27. Officials from MDA, MDCH, DNR, and USDA attend these meetings, as well as industry organization leaders.

Information Technology System Assessment

The Animal Industry Division (AID) initiated a review this week of several business processes that are central to efficient operation of the bovine TB Eradication Program. The review is designed to identify opportunities for improvement in the way AID gathers, tracks, uses, and reports information. The review, which is scheduled to be completed by April, is part of a plan to modify current web-based information systems to more effectively provide services for Michigan’s cattle industry.

Request for Supplemental Federal Funding

MDA and Bovine TB Eradication Project partners continued efforts to obtain federal funding for required bovine TB eradication activities. A proposal was submitted to USDA for funding to provide expanded assistance for producers to implement effective, on-farm wildlife risk mitigation plans and enhance early detection through improved disease surveillance.