

Interoffice Memorandum

TO: Phyllis Mellon, Deputy Director
FROM: John Tilden
SUBJECT: Weekly Update – TB Program Review Response
DATE: August 24, 2007

Normal Agricultural Practices (NAP)

Agricultural producers, wildlife biologists, DNR, MDCH, and MDA staff met on August 20, 2007 in Atlanta to discuss Feed stuff storage and field application of agricultural by-products in the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ). The meeting, facilitated by the MDA's Environmental Stewardship Division, is part of a cooperative and comprehensive effort to manage feed sources accessible to free-ranging deer and elk in the MAZ. The current USDA Veterinary Services (USDA VS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requires Michigan to consider the impact that current agricultural practices in the MAZ may have on wildlife disease control efforts. Recommendations from this group will be forwarded to the MDA Executive Office for review and approval prior to submission to the Agriculture Commission.

MAZ TB Surveillance Testing

Whole herd testing of cattle herds in the MAZ is currently up-to-date with the exception of one herd whose owner is refusing to allow testing. The herd has been quarantined and compliance activities are currently underway in accordance with the Animal Industry Act (Public Act 466) and Departmental policies. Annual herd testing of cattle herds in the MAZ is needed to ensure early detection of TB should it spill over from or to free-ranging deer. Disease control measures must be implemented once TB is detected before the disease spreads further. Testing is also needed to maintain inter-state markets for Michigan cattle producers.

Updating Senator Stabenow Staff

Mr. Chris Adamo is taking on responsibilities as the lead staffer for Senator Stabenow for agricultural issues. Experts from Michigan's collaborative TB Eradication Project met with Chris on August 23 in Atlanta and provided an overview of current efforts. Meeting participants included representatives from the MDA, Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, USDA Wildlife Services, USDA Veterinary Services, and the Chair of the TB Implementation Group (MAZ cattle producers and stakeholders).

Information Technology Systems

Information Technology (IT) staff from MDA and USDA VS met via conference call on August 21 to review the IT capabilities needed to comply with the current MOU and the 2007 TB

Eradication Program Review. USDA VS currently does not have systems that meet these needs. MDA and Michigan Department of Information Technology (DIT) staff conducted a preliminary assessment of two state-based animal health IT systems and found that they would require significant modifications to address Michigan's needs. A more in-depth analysis is being initiated to determine the cost-effectiveness of modifying one of these existing systems versus constructing a new Michigan system.

Animal Identification in MAZ Cattle Market

MDA staff spent time reviewing procedures used in the Gaylord market to scan cattle electronic identification (EID) tags and link them with both the market's operating system software and the national FAIR database. The process typically involves three USDA VS and MDA employees on sale days. These employees scan EID tags, enter back tag information into the system, verify owner and premises data, and transmit the data to the market and FAIR databases. The system provides a high degree of traceability for animals being sold in the only cattle market in the MAZ.

Wildlife Risk Mitigation (WRM) Plans

The multi-agency risk mitigation work group met in Atlanta on August 23 and worked out a plan to increase producer involvement in their activities. MSU extension will facilitate getting a cross section of MAZ producers (beef and dairy producers, large and small operations) involved. The group agreed that initial information sharing efforts will involve distributing a cover letter with the informational brochure *Reducing the Risk: A Quick Guide for Producers* to all MAZ cattle and bison producers.

Communications Updates

- The MDA put out a press release on August 22 summarizing the certificate requirements for cattle and bison moving between zones – see <http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125--174688--,00.html>
- MDA and MDCH staff sat down with the Gaylord Herald Times to discuss program changes in the MAZ. Publication is expected later this week.
- Copies of the new zoning order and the document "Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Zoning Rules and Cattle Movement Certificates" are being distributed by MDA staff to cattle producers, in cattle markets and at the Mackinaw Bridge check station.
- A Radio spot highlighting movement certificate requirements is playing on radio stations located in Lansing, Cadillac/Traverse City, Greenville, Hastings and Alma.