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Department of Livestock

Animal Health Brands Enforcement Centralized Services Diagnostic Lab Meat & Milk Inspection Attached Agency Boards

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Board of Livestock Approves Changes to DSA, Proposes Changes to Trich Rules

The Montana Board of Livestock at its meeting earlier this week approved changes to the state's Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) for brucellosis, and proposed changes to the state's trichomoniasis rules.

"It was a busy meeting in regard to rules and regulations," said board chairperson Jan French, a rancher from Hobson who serves the board as a cattle industry representative. "We tackled some issues that are pretty important to the state's livestock community."

Here's a summary of the board's actions:

DSA: The board approved changes in administrative rules to adjust the DSA's boundaries and revise animal identification requirements for animals leaving DSA.

The first change - adjusting the DSA's boundary in a portion of Beaverhead and Madison counties (see attached map) - was necessitated by a recent Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks study that found brucellosis-exposed elk in the Ruby Range, where such elk were previously not known to exist. The DSA boundary adjustments were the focus of public meetings in Alder and Ennis, and were well received by the ranching community in those areas.

The second change, regarding animal identification, requires all sexually intact cattle to be individually identified. The change follows import requirements recently implemented by several destination states for Montana cattle and a similar rule recently enacted in Wyoming. The previous rule required all sexually intact cattle 12 months and older to be individually identified.

Implemented in January 2009, the DSA is a disease management area for parts of Beaverhead, Gallatin, Madison and Park counties. It is designed to reduce the risk of brucellosis transmission from infected wildlife to domestic livestock, and to protect the state's ability to market cattle to other states.

Trichomoniasis: The department proposed to shift its focus from state-wide testing for trichomoniasis to testing and other requirements for two disease management areas encompassing 10 counties (Cascade, Glacier, Ponder and Teton counties, and Big Horn, Carbon, Powder River, Rosebud, Treasure and Yellowstone counties) where the disease has been most prevalent.

Trich testing would be required on bulls within the management areas - which are officially called epizootic areas - and no open cows could be imported into the state or sold out of the epizootic areas except to slaughter.

Additionally, the rule changes would require trich tags for all trich-tested bulls statewide, and would provide an exemption for grazing association and common grazing herds with approved management plans.

The proposed rule will be published in August, and will be open for a 60-day public comment period. Additional information on the proposed rule and comment period will soon be available on the department's web site at liv.mt.gov, and will also be covered in future press releases.

In other board news...

- The board proposed to create a bison transportation permit, similar to current sheep permits, that would be required for when domestic bison are moved to market or across county or state lines.
- Brands Division administrator John Granger reported that brands rerecord is going well, with more than 50% of the state's brand holders having completed rerecord. Sixty percent of those that have rerecorded their brands did so online, Granger said.
- Central Services Division administrator George Harris reported that head counts for livestock appear to be up from last year.
- The board set its next meeting for September 26-27 in Helena.