

FACT SHEET ON MONTANA'S DRAFT BRUCELLOSIS ACTION PLAN

The points below explain the rationale for the specific recommendations made in the draft Montana Brucellosis Action Plan. A table with recommended actions and map of designated areas can be found at the end of this document below.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

WHY A BRUCELLOSIS ACTION PLAN: Montana lost its Brucellosis Free status on September 3, 2008. If no additional cases of brucellosis in livestock are found, the state will be eligible to apply for Class Free status in May of 2009. Montana needs to prove to USDA that no additional cases of brucellosis in cattle exist in the state. This Brucellosis Action Plan will increase testing for the disease in the area where brucellosis in wildlife is known to exist. This plan and documentation of additional testing will serve as the foundation for application to regain our Class Free status.

WHAT IS THE WILDLIFE COMPONENT: With the exception of bison, MDOL does not have jurisdiction over wildlife. The recommendations for FWP participation are under "Additional Recommendations" on page 10 of the Brucellosis Action Plan.

DEFINING AREAS: The plan designates three areas based on presence of brucellosis-positive wild elk, county boundaries and other features such as roads. Interviews with wildlife biologists also helped guide area designations, particularly regarding the designation of Carbon County as belonging in Area 2 in the east, and the western boundary in Beaverhead County.

Area 1 encloses the geography where brucellosis positive elk have been harvested. Area 2 reaches out to the surrounding county boundary in the east and north. This is an area where no brucellosis is known to exist, but more testing needs to be done to demonstrate this low risk. Area 3 is greater Montana outside of Area 1 and Area 2.

RISK ASSESSMENT: The risk of co-mingling of seropositive elk and livestock in Area 1 specific to many operations is currently unknown. A risk assessment conducted by a MDOL or a USDA APHIS employee on all herds in Area A is required.

RECOMMENDED VS. VOLUNTARY: The difference between Recommended and Voluntary in the summary table is that Recommended is considered "best practice" for some areas, and producers should consider implementing. These are not mandatory because of potential cost, difficulty in implementation, or unknown benefit for any specific operation. Voluntary is an option for the producer to implement as desired.

BRUCELLOSIS TESTING

FIRST POINT TESTING: Under the current draft plan, first point testing (change of ownership at markets) is not required in greater Montana (Area 3). This is because Montana is already conducting significant surveillance through the MCI slaughter surveillance program, and other test eligible animals exported out of state. However, first point testing is required for Area 1 and 2 because of possible greater risk.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP TESTING: This testing is a requirement for animals coming out of Area 1 and Area 2. The age test eligibility is 12 months or older for Area 1, and 18 months or older for animals in Area 2. The 12 month age for test in Area 1 requirement provides greater confidence that brucellosis positive livestock will not be sold after spending a season in a higher risk area

TESTING FOR ANIMALS MOVING OUT OF AN AREA WITHOUT CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP:

The rationale for this requirement is same as a change of ownership testing above. Accommodations and exceptions will be granted based on operation type and risk as determined by a risk assessment.

ENTIRE HERD TEST: A critical component of the brucellosis action plan is to ensure that there are no other brucellosis-positive herds. A whole herd test of all test eligible animals in the highest risk area provides this information; USDA has indicated that this is a priority. Once a whole herd test has been completed, the risk assessment will guide the date of the future test. Some herds may not need to be tested again unless there is new information indicating a greater risk or additional cases are found.

MCI SLAUGHTER TESTING AT FSIS AND STATE INSPECTED FACILITIES: This item describes the current MCI slaughter surveillance program and makes no recommendation for changes.

MCI SLAUGHTER TESTING AT CUSTOM EXEMPT FACILITIES: Currently, custom exempt facilities do not typically conduct brucellosis testing. Where feasible, this is recommended, but not required, because of limitations in facilities and staff.

BRUCELLOSIS MILK SURVEILLANCE TESTING (BRT): Currently, dairies are tested with the BRT four times a year. Testing six times a year testing in Area A can be done in lieu of a whole herd test.

ABORTED FETUS: Currently, herds enrolled in a plan herds are able to submit aborted fetuses (elk and cattle) to the Montana diagnostic laboratory for an abortion screening free of charge. These are high-risk submissions and are encouraged.

SYNDROMIC TESTING: Testing open cows, lates, and dry cows is recommended. These are animals more likely to be infected with brucellosis than the general cattle population. If positive, these animals will be detected before they enter the slaughter channels. Detecting a live animal better preserves traceability, and maintains a live animal for further diagnostic testing if needed.

PURCHASED CATTLE TESTING: Animals purchased, and brought into Area 1, and Area 2 need to be tested if they are 12 and 18 months of age and older respectively. This provides assurance that an infection diagnosed within Area 1 or Area 2 originated there, rather than was imported.

VACCINATION

OFFICIAL CALFHOOD VACCINATION: A recommendation is being made for statewide brucellosis vaccination of calves (OCV). The majority of producers in Montana already OCV replacement animals, while feeders are typically sold out-of-state at less than 12 months of age. Therefore, the expected financial impact of this requirement should be limited.

Additionally, Idaho already has an OCV requirement, and Wyoming is considering the same. Lastly, based on the Code of Federal Regulations, OCV animals can ship out of state without a brucellosis test up to 24 months of age (non OCV must be tested at 18 months or over if exported out of state).

OFFICIAL CALFHOOD VACCINATION BOOSTER: OCV booster vaccination is recommended for Area 1 and Area 2. This is a practice of administering two doses of brucellosis vaccine by the time and animal reaches 12 months of age to produce the best immunity. This would require special USDA approval.

ADULT VACCINATION: Animals that are not OCV by the time they reach 12 months of age, would need to be vaccinated as adults. Adult vaccination ensures that animals within Area 1 have received brucellosis vaccine either as calves or adults.

ADULT VACCINATION BOOSTER: The immunity against brucellosis in older cattle that have been OCV years previously is thought to diminish. With time, immunity of these animals that have previously

been OCV, can be improved by administering brucellosis vaccine to the animals as adults. This practice is recommended to herds in Area 1, and as determined by a risk assessment.

FENCING AND PHYSICAL SEPARATION

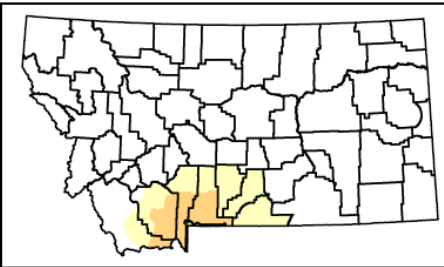
FENCING OF FEEDING AREAS, HAY STACKS AND PASTURES: These “physical separation barriers” are recommended if there is a significant risk of co-mingling of elk and livestock, or if feed storage areas are an attractant to wildlife. The implementation of this recommendation will depend on resources, and cost sharing with state or federal agencies.

TRACEABILITY / ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

RFID EAR TAGS (APHIS PILOT PROJECT): Montana has received 25,000 RFID tags for use by producers in the Greater Yellowstone Area (Area 1). These tags are able to be captured electronically which helps speed processing of livestock after the initial application of the ear tags to the animals. Producers who wish to participate, need to contact MDOL or USDA APHIS.

OFFICIAL ID FOR SALE OR MOVEMENT: maintaining traceability of animals coming out of the GYA is one of the most important marketability measures. Being able to trace a seropositive animal as originating from a specific location helps other states maintain confidence in purchasing Montana cattle. The Brucellosis Action Plan calls for mandatory identification 12 month old and older animals in Area 1, and 18 months and older animals in Area 2.

Draft Montana Brucellosis Action Plan Boundaries



SUMMARY - MT BRUCELLOSIS ACTION PLAN (TO REGAIN CLASS FREE STATUS) – Draft - September 19, 2008

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Comments
RISK ASSESMENT	*YES	**NO	NO	* Encourage enrollment in Herd Plan ** Encourage Best Management Practices
TESTING				
1 st -point testing (livestock markets) / Test-eligible age	YES / ≥ *18 mo.	YES / ≥ *18 mo.	NO	* Test-eligible age may be subject to individual states' requirements.
Change of ownership testing / Test-eligible age (Animals remaining in MT)	*YES / ≥ 12 mo.	YES / ≥ 18 mo.	** NO	* If sold prior to entire herd test. Variances addressed via Herd Plan. **Testing required if sold out-of-state as part of Class A
Movement testing / Test-eligible age (Animal movement out of Area)	*YES / ≥ 12 mo.	YES / ≥ 18 mo.	** NO	* If moved out of area prior to entire herd test or if seasonally grazing in Area and moving to Area 2 or 3. Variances addressed via Herd Plan. **Testing required if moved out-of-state
Entire Herd Test / Test-eligible age	*YES / 18 mo.	NO	NO	* To be completed by December 31, 2009 – all Area 1
MCI (slaughter testing) - State and FSIS Facilities	YES / 24 mo.	YES / 24 mo.	YES / 24 mo.	MCI slaughter testing currently ongoing statewide
MCI (slaughter testing) - Custom Exempt slaughter	*Rec. / 18 mo	*Rec./ 18 mo.	NO	* Would necessitate concurrence/cooperation from custom exempt slaughter facilities in Areas 1 & 2
Brucellosis Milk Surveillance Testing (BRT)	*YES - 6 X / yr.	YES - 4 X / yr.	YES - 4 X / yr.	*Would exempt herd(s) from entire herd testing. BRT currently ongoing 4 X / yr. statewide
Aborted Fetus Testing	Recommended	Recommended	Voluntary	
Syndromic Testing	Recommended	Recommended	Voluntary	
Purchased cattle Testing	Rec./12 months	Rec./18 months	Voluntary	
VACCINATION				
Official calfhood vaccination (OCV)	YES	YES	*YES	*Best Management Practice, and provides consistency between GYA states. May require rule change or Off. Order
Official calfhood vaccination (OCV) booster	*Recommended	*Recommended	NO	*Would require approval from USDA-APHIS-VS. Recommended 4 mo. between initial OCV and booster OCV
Adult Vaccination (if female cattle non-OCV)	YES	Voluntary	Voluntary	
Adult Vaccination (booster of previous OCV or AV)	Recommended	Voluntary	Voluntary	
FENCING/PASTURE MANAGEMENT				
Hay stacks/feed storage areas - Game proof fencing	*Recommended	*Recommended	Voluntary	* If attractant to GYA elk or YNP bison
Cattle feeding/calving areas - Game proof fencing	*Recommended	*Voluntary	NO	* If known interaction between elk and cattle. Depends on feasibility/practicality
Pastures - Use existing or new fencing to increase distance between cattle areas utilized by elk.	Recommended	Recommended	Voluntary	
TRACEABILITY/ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION				
RFID Ear tags (APHIS Pilot Project)	*Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	* APHIS Pilot Project – “840” tags at no cost to producer
Official ID for sale or movement / ID-eligible age	YES / 12 mo.	YES / 18 mo.	* Rec. / 18 mo.	* Those sold to out-of-state destinations will be officially ID'd.