

Brucellosis Regulations Revised

USDA revises testing and certification requirements
for the National Brucellosis Program.



PHOTO BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Dec. 27, 2010, announced an interim rule that amends its current regulations for brucellosis (also referred to as Bang's disease).

"The brucellosis program has been very successful at reducing the disease in this country," said John Clifford, chief veterinary officer for APHIS. "Today, the disease is mostly eliminated from the United States, with the exception of the known reservoir of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone area. These new regulations will help us better address the current situation and continue to move toward our long-term goal of complete eradication."

Specifically, these amendments:

- ▶ Reduce the amount of testing required to maintain "Class Free" status for states that have been Class Free for five or more years and have no *Brucella abortus* in wildlife;
- ▶ Remove the provision for automatic reclassification of any Class Free state or area to a lower status if two or more herds are found to have brucellosis within a two-year period or if a single brucellosis-affected herd is not depopulated within 60 days;
- ▶ Reduce the age at which cattle are included in herd blood tests;
- ▶ Add a requirement that any Class Free state or area with *Brucella abortus* in wildlife must develop and implement an APHIS-approved brucellosis management plan in order to maintain Class Free status;
- ▶ Provide an alternative testing protocol for maintaining the certified brucellosis-free status of dairy herds, which will give

producers more flexibility for the herd certification process.

These changes are necessary to refocus resources to control and prevent the spread of brucellosis and to protect and maintain the economic viability of the domestic livestock industry.



Comments still appropriate

The interim rule is the first step in updating the brucellosis program, and is consistent with the proposed changes set out in a concept paper USDA published in October 2009. USDA considered the 361 comments received on the concept paper during the 90-day comment period, and incorporated state, industry and public input when creating the interim rule. As USDA continues to move forward with finalizing new regulations for the brucellosis program, it will continue to engage stakeholders and other interested parties for input.

The interim rule was published in the *Federal Register* Dec. 27, 2010, and became effective upon publication.

Public comments on this interim rule will be accepted and used as USDA continues to move forward with finalizing new regulations for the brucellosis program. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Feb. 25, 2011. You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- ▶ Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0083 to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.
- ▶ Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Send one copy of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0083, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. State that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0083.

Comments are posted on the www.regulations.gov website.



Editor's Note: This article was provided by USDA-APHIS.

Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health meets

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) was to conduct the first meeting of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health Jan. 20-21, 2011. The committee's purpose is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on actions related to prevention, surveillance and the control of animal diseases of national importance. In doing so, the committee considers the implications of public health, conservation of natural resources and the stability of livestock economies.

Tentative discussion topics for this first meeting included animal disease traceability; aquaculture and animal health; emergency response and management; trade and emerging global animal health issues; USDA's role in public health initiatives; national disease management programs; and Veterinary Services' strategic planning effort.

Additional details on the agenda and meeting can be found on the committee's website at www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/acah/. The meeting was open to the public and the public was invited to e-mail comments to sacah.management@aphis.usda.gov.

For more information contact Michael R. Doerrer, chief operating officer, Veterinary Services, USDA, APHIS, 4700 River Road, Unit 37, Riverdale, MD 20737; 301-734-5034 or by e-mail at the address above.