

Meeting Minutes: April Quarterly Board Meeting

Date: 04/12/2022

Location: Minnesota Farm Bureau (3080 Eagandale Place, Eagan, MN) and
Teleconference on Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Board Members

- Dean Compant, President
- Erica Sawatzke, Vice President
- Peggy Anne Hawkins
- Jessica Koppien-Fox
- Alex Stade
- Jim Vagts

Consultants to the Board

- Stacy Holzbauer, Minnesota Department of Health
- Michelle Medina, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Laura Molgaard, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
- Stephan Schaefer, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services
- Jerry Torrison, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Guests

- Paul Anderson, veterinarian and former Board staff
- Amanda Beaudoin, Minnesota Department of Health
- Katlin Galish, USDA-APHIS, Veterinary Services
- Elaine Hanson, Minnesota Pet Breeders Association
- Brenda Hartkopf, Elk Producer
- Tamara Nelsen, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council
- Laura Paynter, Legislative Analyst, Senate Agriculture and Rural Development Finance and Policy Committee
- Thom Peterson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Jill Resler, Minnesota Pork Board
- Pat Rivers, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Albert Rovira, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
- Karin Schaefer, Minnesota Farm Bureau
- Marc Schwabenlander, Minnesota Center for Prion Research and Outreach
- Lucas Sjostrom, Minnesota Milk Producers Association
- Julia Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine

Staff

- Beth Thompson
- Linda Glaser
- Dale Lauer
- Shauna Voss
- Courtney Wheeler
- Greg Suskovic
- Brian Hoefs
- Annie Balghiti
- Michael Crusan
- Kara Schmidt
- Erin Crider
- Carissa Allen
- Michael Herrmann
- Betsy Lempelius
- Tony LaBarre
- Kayla Pierson
- Addie Evans-Engelke
- Angela Despeigleare

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Dean Compart called the meeting to order and introduced Alex Stade, who was appointed to fill the livestock producer/tribal member position on the Board. Mr. Stade said he owns and operates a cattle farm in New Prague, where he also grows soybeans, wheat and oats.

Mr. Compart then asked for a motion to approve the draft minutes from the February 1, 2022, quarterly meeting. Erica Sawatzke made the motion, and Dr. Peggy Anne Hawkins seconded it. There was no discussion, and Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Mr. Compart asked if there were any corrections or additions to the agenda. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Jim Vagts moved, and Ms. Sawatzke seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

Legislative Update

Ms. Michelle Medina noted the legislature is on break this week and Monday, resuming hearings on Tuesday, April 19. This past Thursday, both HF 3217 and SF 3585 passed. These bills originally aimed to protect the data of those who seek mental or behavioral health assistance from the Minnesota Farm and Rural Help Line. The senate version added \$1 million in funding for the state's Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) emergency response. This passed unanimously and was handed to the House, which also passed it. Governor Walz signed the bill on Friday, and funding should be in the Ag Emergency Fund shortly. Ms. Medina noted the state spent \$4.1 million on HPAI response activities in 2015, so the Board and other state agencies are in discussions to determine how much additional funding is needed to continue the response.

She discussed several bills involving funding for avian influenza testing and white-tailed deer farms. HF 4366 and its companion bill, SF 4019, include \$500,000 to the agricultural emergency fund for avian influenza testing supplies and \$350,000 to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) for equipment to test for CWD, African Swine Fever (ASF), avian influenza and other animal diseases. SF 4019 also appropriates \$1 million for compensation grants to white-tailed deer (WTD) farmers for certain financial losses incurred during the DNR's movement bans between December 2019 and December 2021. HF 3420 also includes \$1 million in VDL funding for animal disease testing and \$500,000 in emergency response funding for avian influenza testing supplies. Its companion bill, SF 3479, includes \$500,000 to compensate WTD producers for the DNR movement bans.

Ms. Medina also mentioned HF 4492, which makes several statutory changes to white-tailed deer farming, including penalties for escapes, fencing provisions, prohibiting new deer farm registrations, testing soil for CWD before selling land used as a deer farm, and more. The companion bill does not include that language.

Mr. Compart asked if, when looking at the \$4.1 million spent on the 2015 HPAI response, this year's HPAI outbreak is more aggressive than the 2015 outbreak. Dr. Dale Lauer said the outbreak is still a very fluid situation, but this

year's virus is moving quickly and is highly transmissible to all poultry flocks, whether turkey or chicken; commercial or backyard. There are different depopulation strategies, needs and timelines for commercial and backyard poultry flocks which requires more resources. Minnesota is far from the end of the response efforts and will need resources from the state and federal government, as well as the poultry industry.

USDA Update

Dr. Stephan Schaeftbauer stated the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is celebrating 50 years of serving the public as a federal agency. Key accomplishments include eradicating animal diseases, including virulent Newcastle Disease, pseudorabies and past outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza, and reducing the prevalence of other diseases, such as bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis.

The Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management and Response Activities 2022 Cooperative Agreement funding opportunity opened on April 7 and closes on June 7. Funding of about \$4.8 million is available for eligible entities must have direct oversight for farmed cervids and include state departments of agriculture, state animal health agencies, state departments of wildlife or natural resources, federally recognized Native American Tribal governments and Native Tribal organizations representing tribal governments. Funding can be used for development and/or implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management and response activities, including indemnification. USDA Wildlife Services has separate funding available for wild cervid CWD management.

USDA APHIS has funding available to assist with HPAI emergency response activities. Funds are provided through cooperative agreements with state or tribal organizations responding to the outbreak. Both the Board and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) are in the process of applying. Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funding is used for any request from USDA to Congress that is over \$1 million. USDA has already requested received the CCC funding to distribute to states for the HPAI emergency response.

Mr. Compart asked if the Farmed Cervid CWD Management cooperative agreement funding total (\$4.8 million) is what is available nationwide. Dr. Schaeftbauer said that is the available funding for 2022, but sometimes it can be extended for a second year. Dr. Glaser added this is the third year this funding has been available. The Board worked with Dr. Scott Wells to apply for funding the first two years. Last year's total was \$2.7 million, so there is more funding available this year. She has notified the Board's research partners of this opportunity.

College of Veterinary Medicine Update

Dr. Laura Molgaard said portions of the College are involved in the HPAI response, including the Raptor Center. The admission process for every patient includes asking those submitting the birds about exposure to domestic birds or humans and sharing that information with the Board, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Department of Health. Biosecurity measures are in place for quarantining and testing birds. As of this meeting, 13 birds have tested positive for HPAI, including five bald eagles, six owls and two red-tailed hawks.

The Midcentral Research and Outreach Center (MCROC) is performing surveillance and drinker swab sample testing to better understand HPAI and how it moves and identify possible new mitigation strategies.

Dr. Molgaard stated both the white coat ceremony and commencement will be in person for the first time since 2019. She also mentioned new staff hires. Dr. Erin Burton was hired as Senior Associate Dean of Academic and

Student Affairs. The College has also hired a new Director of Student Well-Being and Success, who started yesterday.

Plans for the University of Minnesota's Future of Advanced Agricultural Research in Minnesota (FAARM), a next-generation research and outreach complex in Mower County, is moving forward. The College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) is seeking legislative funding to match \$60 million received from the Hormel Foundation. College faculty are identifying areas of importance to include in the FAARM plans.

Mr. Compart asked how large this year's graduating class is. Dr. Molgaard stated there will be 105 graduates. She added the SDSU "Two Plus Two" program continues to grow, and applications for its second year are coming in now. The application deadline for SDSU and the College of Veterinary Medicine is April 15.

Minnesota Department of Health Update

Dr. Stacy Holzbauer shared the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) role in the HPAI response. MDH is responsible for protecting human health in the HPAI outbreak and supporting the responding animal health agencies. She noted the H5N1 virus in Minnesota is a Eurasian strain with no molecular markers associated with increased virulence and transmission to mammals and poses a low risk to the public. Those at risk are individuals who have had direct contact with infected birds or their environments. To date, there have been no human H5N1 cases in Minnesota or the U.S.

MDH is recommending the human seasonal influenza vaccine and symptom monitoring for those exposed because of job duties. They are also providing recommendations for infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE). MDH conducts an initial phone interview for all poultry workers. Those exposed to test-positive flocks are monitored for 10 days for any respiratory symptoms. If symptoms develop, the workers will be tested for avian influenza. To date, there have been 284 potentially exposed employees, responders and contractors and 224 are being monitored for development of symptoms.

MDH has also worked with the Raptor Center and Wildlife Rehabilitation Center staff, stressing the importance of reviewing their biosecurity and employee safety protocols. They also discussed protecting their education birds, setting up an isolation triage area, protocols for triage bird intake, and training in proper PPE for all staff.

Dr. Holzbauer also shared changes to MDH's surveillance system for blastomycosis, a fungal infection that affects people and animals, mostly dogs. Illness can range from asymptomatic to fatal. Minnesota is the only state that does surveillance of both human and animal blastomycosis cases. Human and veterinary cases are both reportable to the state (MDH for human; the Board for animal). Surveillance has shown cases in both humans and animals are highest in late summer/early fall. This blended surveillance also allows investigators to identify emerging high-risk areas. To date, there are more cases in the St. Croix River Valley, and cases in counties neighboring endemic counties in Northern Minnesota are rising.

Due to the increase in blastomycosis cases in both people and animals, MDH is discontinuing its animal owner interviews, as much of the same information is captured in the animal case report form submitted by veterinarians. They continue to encourage veterinarians to report positive animal cases by filling out the [animal case report form on the Board's website](#).

Mr. Compart asked if blastomycosis mainly affects the respiratory system in animals and people. Dr. Holzbauer said it is primarily respiratory in people, but it can develop into skin lesions. Animals can have a more diverse presentation, with half of the cases being respiratory, and half involving non-healing skin lesions.

Mr. Compart asked about the PPE requirements for those dealing with HPAI mortalities. He also asked who is handling this job (poultry workers, hired outside crews, etc.). Dr. Holzbauer said the recommendations are the same for anyone interacting with infected birds: wear latex gloves, goggles or face shield, coveralls/Tyvek suit, rubber boots or disposable boot covers, and an N95 mask. Those involved in disposal are usually those who worked directly with the birds, though some of the larger facilities have hired crews to handle this. People seem to be wearing PPE well, and most had previous experience with PPE during the 2015 HPAI outbreak.

Minnesota One Health Antibiotic Stewardship Collaborative

Dr. Amanda Beaudoin (MDH) stated the Minnesota One Health Antibiotic Stewardship Collaborative (MOHASC) was started by MDH, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Board and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to increase awareness and behavior change through a collective mission, cross-disciplinary learning, and sharing of evidence-based approaches to antibiotic stewardship.

Dr. Beaudoin said antibiotic resistance happens when bacterial infection treatments do not work. Antibiotic use drives the resistance because bacteria evolve to avoid the effects of antibiotics. Resistant bacteria can share resistance genes and are acquired when individuals interact with infected people or animals, take in contaminated food or water, or encounter contamination in the environment. Antibiotic resistance is a “One Health” issue, as improving prescribing behaviors and how antibiotics are used is something all sectors can and must do.

The MOHASC has also brought together other leaders in human, animal and environmental health to raise awareness and change behaviors to maintain effective use of antibiotics. Events held include work groups that meet quarterly to make progress in stewardship action and collaborative-wide annual meetings. Dr. Beaudoin highlighted their field exchanges, where members visit a facility to learn about practice realities and challenges. Facilities visited include the University of Minnesota Medical Center, a nursing home, swine and dairy farms, and a wastewater treatment plant. Their work has also established sustainable collaborations and research initiatives.

MOHASC 2021 highlights include several activities that strengthen the partnership between veterinary medicine and public health; development of a statewide human hospital antibiogram; cooperation between government and academia to detect and describe antibiotics in waters; and a multidisciplinary publication by collaborative members. 2022 activities include updating their strategic plan goals for 2022-2026; supporting pharmacists in small hospitals by providing “office hours” with collaborative members from large hospitals; continuing field exchange events; providing a tabletop display at the Minnesota State Fair; and promoting medication disposal sites in the state.

Dr. Beaudoin then described a recent, complex Minnesota response to a case of Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriales (CRE), one of the country’s most urgent public health threats. The University of Minnesota Veterinary Medical Center (VMC) detected a carbapenem-resistant E. coli in a canine specimen, and they sent it to the MDH Public Health Lab, which confirmed the presence of carbapenemase-producing (CP)-CRE. MDH determined the dog came from an out-of-state animal sanctuary with many other dogs and cats. In collecting samples from the animals at the sanctuary, MDH found that 38 percent of the animals sampled had CP-CRE prevalence. In addition to the University, MDH worked with several entities to contain and prevent animals and people from exposure to CP-CRE infections, including the animal sanctuary, the Board, the neighboring state’s departments of agriculture and health, and nursing homes, as some of the sanctuary animals had visited a nursing home as part of animal therapy sessions in 2021. The response was made easier due to the work and relationships already established through the MOHASC.

Dr. Beaudoin said CRE is a reportable disease for people, but not for animals in Minnesota. MDH hopes to use a One Health approach to increase CRE reporting by veterinarians and laboratories to improve understanding of CRE epidemiology, increase CRE awareness, create protocols for preventing infections, and improve detection.

Dr. Hawkins asked how CRE was detected in the case described. Dr. Beaudoin said the University first detected it through routine culture and susceptibility profiling, which showed that the bacteria was resistant to imipenem, a carbapenem. They sent the isolate to the MDH Public Health Laboratory, where PCR testing identified the resistant gene. Dr. Hawkins asked if veterinarians could do some antibiotic sensitivity testing. Dr. Beaudoin replied that this same dog had had a culture done in July 2021. That testing also showed an imipenem resistance, but the veterinarian was unaware that the profile should have been concerning and investigated further. This shows the need for improved education on CRE in the veterinary community.

Ms. Sawatzke asked about the public's reaction to the topic of antibiotic resistance, given the misconception that animal agriculture overuses antibiotics. Dr. Beaudoin said the reaction is mixed. What seems to be best is to promote use of antibiotics in animals only when needed, and to share that science has shown antibiotics should not always be the first choice of treatment, as they can be harmful to our bodies.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Update

Dr. Jerry Torrison showed a U.S. map indicating the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories conducting (or are approved to conduct) HPAI tests as of yesterday. The Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) and Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) have run almost 3,000 PCR HPAI tests since the outbreak began.

Dr. Torrison outlined changes to streamline processes at the labs since the outbreak began. Originally, they were running an initial AI matrix test, and if that was positive, they would run tests to determine if the AI is an H5 or H7, which would trigger samples be sent to the NVSL for confirmation. Since so many tests were coming back as H5 positive, the labs began running the H5/H7 tests concurrently with the matrix test to save time. The USDA granted permission to the VDL and MPTL to stop testing for H7 if the test for H5 is positive. This will save both financial, material and staff resources. He noted the labs have gone from two per day on weekdays and one daily weekend run to three weekday and 2 runs per day on the weekends.

Dr. Torrison showed a chart comparing cycle threshold (CT) levels of both matrix and H5 test results from the MPTL and NVSL. The MPTL looks at these charts to make sure they remain consistent with NVSL results.

Dr. Torrison stated the HPAI testing process is going well overall. The MPTL is performing most of the testing, as poultry producers prefer. He stated the need for additional staff, and which they continue to address. The current staff are dedicated to serving the poultry industry. Dr. Lauer agreed the lab technicians are doing very well while they continue to navigate a seven-days-a-week service schedule.

Mr. Compart asked if the poultry samples are pooled or if they come from individual animals. Dr. Lauer said Authorized Poultry Testing Agents (APTA) are trained to collect three pools of tracheal swabs (10 or 11 bird swabs per pool) from the infected barn only on commercial poultry premises if the producer suspects HPAI. This sampling strategy which focuses on sampling dead birds is used to identify infected flocks early in the course of the disease. Sometimes only one pool is positive from an infected barn. Dr. Torrison noted this is different in wild birds, as those are taken as individual samples.

Dr. Torrison stated there are several bills in the legislature related to VDL funding for equipment. The University will be watching closely to see how the bills progress.

Budget Update

Kara Schmidt introduced herself as the Board's Business and Human Resources Manager. She then shared information on the Board's expenses during Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021), which totaled \$6,318,318. She showed a pie graph of Board expenses by program, with nearly two thirds of the Board's funding going to the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) and Miscellaneous Disease Control and All Other Animal Health Programs. She then showed a graph of Board expenses by category. Sixty-eight percent of the Board's expenses are for employee payroll, followed by professional technical services (many of these are contracts with the VDL for testing) at 16 percent.

Ms. Schmidt showed a breakdown of the Board's funding sources, with the majority (\$5,217,269) coming from State General Appropriation funds. Other sources included State Emergency Planning and Preparedness (\$196,003), State Farmed Cervidae Oversight (\$199,992), Federal (\$673,041), and Restricted Miscellaneous Special Revenue (\$32,013).

Ms. Schmidt moved on to budget changes for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. The Legislature appropriated \$5,980,000 for to the Board for FY 2022 and \$6,081,000 for FY 2023. This includes \$200,000 for FY 2022 and \$200,000 for FY 2023 for agriculture emergency preparedness and response, and \$103,000 in FY 22 and \$204,000 for FY 2023 to compensate for inflation and maintain the current level of service delivery.

Mr. Compart mentioned the recent retirements at the Board, with more expected. He asked what the process was going to be for filling those positions. Ms. Schmidt stated when pandemic began, all state agencies went under a hiring freeze, which was lifted July 1, 2021. The Board currently has 39 staff and several open positions. Some of these are being advertised, and some are in the interview process. She expects to have these positions filled soon and will give an update on them at the next Board meeting. Mr. Compart asked about applicant numbers. Ms. Schmidt said some positions have more applicants than others, especially with other agencies having different plans and options for remote or hybrid work.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Update

Dr. Dale Lauer showed a U.S. Map of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) cases as of April 11. These indicate official results from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL). This HPAI virus is not only infecting commercial turkeys, but also chicken broiler operations, non-commercial backyard poultry flocks and wild birds.

As of April 11, HPAI has been identified in 26 states and 170 poultry premises infected. (By comparison, there were 21 total states 232 premises infected by this same date in the 2015 HPAI outbreak.) South Dakota has the highest number of infected flocks, but Minnesota is not far behind and will likely catch up and surpass them soon. Dr. Lauer explained that the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) poultry premises is any poultry operation engaged in commerce, which includes selling birds or eggs. All OIE poultry premises are subject to permitted movement. He showed the [USDA's 2022 HPAI confirmations web page](#), which gives more information on the individual infected flocks.

Dr. Lauer then showed a map of the current HPAI cases in Minnesota, which includes 31 commercial turkey operations and four backyard flocks. Over the weekend, the NVSL confirmed HPAI in a commercial chicken broiler flock and a commercial chicken layer flock. Dr. Lauer stressed this virus is very poultry-adapted and highly transmissible.

The MPTL is performing most of the HPAI testing, which includes sick bird testing, surveillance testing, and testing for permitted movement. They are working closely with the NVSL on confirmation of all HPAI cases. They are also providing testing supplies and working well with the Kandiyohi County Operations Center, which is housing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Mr. Compart asked about the process for dropping off samples. Dr. Lauer said they would have boxed BHI tubes and swabs, along with sample submission forms. No birds come to the lab for testing.

Dr. Greg Suskovic discussed the HPAI response activities in Minnesota. The first two cases of HPAI were detected and confirmed on March 25 in a Morrison County commercial turkey flock and in a Mower County backyard flock. The Incident Command Post (ICP) was set up March 29-30. The Board and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) enacted their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and requested half of a national Incident Management Team (IMT) on March 31. They began unified command with MDA, beginning with Lucy Hunt as the State Incident Commander (IC), Edmund Grant as Indigo Team (national) IC, and Dr. Suskovic is the deputy IC. This team will rotate out next week, and another team will rotate in, with an overlap of two days to get the new team up to speed. The outbreak is expanding, so the Board is adding more staff from MDA and USDA to cover response needs.

There are currently 37 infected premises in Minnesota, with two epidemiologically linked premises (sites linked to positive premises). One of these has been depopulated, and the owner of the other premises would like to continue testing to keep his flock alive.

All but four of the 37 premises have been depopulated, most within 24 to 48 hours of confirmation. Carcasses from the HPAI depopulated flocks were composted, buried or taken to the VDL for disposal. Foaming crews have plenty of foam, but there have been some issues with getting enough water for depopulation. These events require very large amounts of water (thousands of gallons), which can be difficult to obtain within the short time frame of planning a depopulation, especially if it falls on an evening or weekend. A few sites have opted for Ventilation Shutdown Plus (VSD+), and that has been going smoothly in most cases. Dr. Suskovic noted the USDA has made some changes to streamline the indemnification and depopulation process since the outbreak began, which has helped to keep the processes moving and conserve personnel resources.

The Board and USDA are also conducting backyard surveillance in the 10 km control area surrounding an infected commercial poultry premises. Surveillance staff drive the roads within the control area, searching for backyard poultry flocks. Their goal is to identify flocks and survey owners about their birds and avian influenza. If the owners mention any sick birds or mortalities, the Board schedules testing for the flock. The Board has set up the Avian Influenza Hotline for the public to call in sick birds, ask questions about permitting, or report sick or dead wild birds. Surveillance testing at commercial facilities within control areas is conducted every five to seven days. Permitted movement into, out of and within control areas is ongoing.

Dr. Brian Hoefs, Disease Surveillance Branch Supervisor, stated the Board will surpass 300 surveillance quarantines in the state's control areas today (April 12). Backyard surveillance has not generated any positive premises, but sick bird calls to the hotline have resulted in two to three cases in backyard flocks.

Dr. Shauna Voss recognized and thanked Dr. Linda Glaser for her expertise and help with permitted movement. They have issued about 400 to 450 permits so far. There was also discussion on structure of control areas and USDA requirements for permitted movement into the different areas of the control zone.

Dr. Thompson added that, according to the day's incident Situation Report, there are currently about 75 staff from the Board, MDA, USDA, and other state agencies responding to this event. She stated this number was probably low, and Dr. Suskovic agreed.

Mr. Compart asked how HPAI has affected the sales of chicks. Dr. Suskovic said he did not know, but a couple of National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) sites that sell chicks and are located in control areas have decided to fulfill their current orders and then not take any new orders. Dr. Hoefs said those sites are under surveillance quarantine and need to go through the permitted movement process to continue delivering orders, so it would be labor intensive for them to continue.

There was discussion on the issue of sourcing water for foaming. Dr. Suskovic said the incident operations chief is working to set up contracts to have water on standby in different areas of the state.

Mr. Compart asked about the current HPAI situation in Europe. Dr. Lauer said he had not had time to get an update on Europe's situation, but the virus has been circulating in Europe in both domestic and wild birds for several years. With the continued circulation of the HPAI virus over time in wild birds, adaptation of the virus and transmission of the virus into domestic poultry flocks is not unexpected. The concern is that HPAI could become a "resident" virus in wild birds in North America. Drs. Lauer and Suskovic expressed concern that the U.S. could be facing the same situation that Europe is currently experiencing.

Board of Animal Health Bylaws

Ms. Annie Balghiti Stated the Board currently does not have written bylaws. She has drafted a bylaws document and worked with Board staff to finalize the draft, which will be sent to the Board members for review prior to the next board meeting. The draft they receive will include staff comments and suggestions for Board members to consider. Ms. Balghiti displayed the draft document and scrolled through it as a preview. Board members will review the draft bylaws over the summer, give feedback, and discuss these during the September Board meeting.

Board of Animal Health Update

Dr. Beth Thompson stated she has been doing many media interviews concerning the HPAI outbreak. She read excerpts from an editorial published in the Rochester Post Bulletin, which gave very accurate information on the Board's work, biosecurity, and HPAI. She thanked all Board staff involved in providing HPAI communications for the media and the public.

Dr. Thompson shared that Dr. Lauer plans to retire sometime in the summer. Dr. Lauer began his career in mixed animal practice and was also a dairy veterinarian for six years before he came to the Board in 1987. He has become a nationally respected poultry veterinarian. Dr. Lauer plans to retire in July.

Dr. Thompson announced that Dr. Suskovic also plans to retire this summer. He was hired as a field veterinarian in 1989 and eventually moved into an emergency management position.

Dr. Thompson then announced she has accepted a new position as state veterinarian in South Dakota. She grew up in South Dakota and is excited about the opportunity to serve her home state. She starts her new position on May 9. She strongly recommended the Board use the closed session set aside for her performance review to appoint Dr. Glaser as Interim State Veterinarian. Dr. Glaser has been with the Board for 17 years and will provide the Board with continuity of leadership and experience with Board programs. The search for the next state veterinarian would begin as soon as possible.

Mr. Compart thanked Dr. Thompson for her service and called for the meeting to move into closed session.

Closed Session: Performance Evaluation of Executive Director and Appointment of Interim Executive Director

Board members met in a closed session to evaluate the performance of Dr. Thompson, Executive Director of the Board, and to discuss the appointment of the executive director for the coming fiscal year. After discussion took place, Ms. Sawatzke motioned to nominate Dr. Thompson for reappointment as the Board's executive director until her resignation on May 8, and effective May 9, appoint Dr. Linda Glaser to serve as Interim Executive Director until a qualified candidate may be identified and appointed. Dr. Peggy Anne Hawkins seconded it. A vote was taken by roll call, with all voting aye in favor of the motion.

Mr. Compart offered a statement that the Board would like to recognize Dr. Thompson for her achievements during the past year. He recommended an achievement award. Dr. Fox made a motion to approve the granting of an achievement award; Ms. Sawatzke seconded it. A vote was taken by roll call with all voting aye.

Appointment of Interim Executive Director

Mr. Compart asked Dr. Hawkins to read a motion for approval. Dr. Hawkins read:

"I would like to make a motion to approve Dr. Thompson for another year's term through May 8, 2022, at which point the Board accepts Dr. Thompson's resignation as Executive Director, and effective May 9, the Board appoints Dr. Linda Glaser to serve as Interim Executive Director, with all the power and privileges of Executive Director, until a permanent executive director is selected by the Board."

Mr. Compart asked for a second to the motion. Mr. Stade seconded it. There was no discussion, and Board members voted unanimously to pass the motion.

Mr. Compart asked Ms. Schmidt to explain the hiring process. She stated the Board will begin accepting applications for Executive Director soon. Board members will need to convene a special meeting to interview and select a new executive director. They hope to have this completed before the September meeting. Dr. Glaser said they will advertise the position through the state's usual channels, but they will also be spreading the word through national and state veterinarian organizations to cast a wide net for qualified applicants.

Election of Board Officers

Mr. Compart moved to the Board officer elections. He noted his appointment to the Board will end in January 2023, and he will not be applying for reappointment. He then opened the nominations for Board President. Dr. Hawkins nominated Ms. Erica Sawatzke. Mr. Compart asked for a motion to approve the nomination. Mr. Stade made the motion, and Dr. Fox seconded it. Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Vagts motioned to close nominations; Dr. Hawkins seconded. Mr. Compart called for a vote, with Board members voting unanimously to elect Ms. Sawatzke.

Mr. Compart then asked for nominations for Vice President. Ms. Sawatzke nominated Dr. Peggy Anne Hawkins, and Mr. Vagts seconded it. Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Compart called for a vote electing Dr. Hawkins as Vice President. All Board members voted aye to elect Dr. Hawkins.

Farmed Cervid Questions/Adjourn

Mr. Vagts mentioned a legislative hearing on the Board and DNR concurrent authority over white-tailed deer. He asked that the Board give a status update on their progress on the Board/DNR Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before the end of the legislative session. Dr. Glaser stated the DNR worked on the MOU draft for about a month and then passed it to the Board almost two weeks ago. Most staff have reviewed it, but two more people need to review it today and add comments so it can be returned to the DNR by the end of the week. Mr. Vagts requested this information be passed on to legislators.

Mr. Vagts said he had not received a Farmed Cervid team update email in a few weeks. Dr. Glaser said those emails were notes from the Board's internal Farmed Cervid team meetings, which have not been distributed due to shifting priorities of the HPAI outbreak. The Board and DNR have not met for a while, as their main priority was the MOU draft, which the DNR was working on. By the time the MOU was turned over to the Board, the staff were occupied with HPAI outbreak responsibilities.

Mr. Vagts asked about the status of the non-compliant Mille Lacs County herd discussed at previous Board meetings. Dr. Glaser stated the herd was depopulated on February 4, and no CWD was detected. Mr. Vagts then asked about the animals the owner had sold before the depopulation. Dr. Glaser said those animals went to a Kandiyohi County herd, which was quarantined until the animals that came from the Mille Lacs County herd were tested with CWD not detected results. She said she would have to check on the status of this.

Mr. Compart asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sawatzke made the motion, and Mr. Stade seconded it. Mr. Compart called for a vote, with all voting aye to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda C. Glaser
Interim Executive Director
Interim State Veterinarian