Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health
Wednesday, April 3, 2013

A quarterly meeting of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health was held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 3, 2013 at the Orville Freeman Building in St. Paul, Minnesota. The following people were present:

Board Members:

John Whitten, Veterinarian
Holly Neaton, Veterinarian
Paul Hanowski, Producer
Dean Compart, Producer
Steve Brake, Producer

Consultants to the Board:

Jim Collins, Director, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
Trevor Ames, Dean, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
Dave Frederickson, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Guests:

Joni Scheftel, Minnesota Department of Health
Gary Wertish, Minnesota Farmers Union
Heather Fowler, Minnesota Department of Health
Tory Whitten, Minnesota Department of Health
Jeremy Geske, Minnesota Pork Producers Association
Greta Gauthier, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Scott Dee, Pipestone Veterinary Clinic
Judy Lewman, Producer
Julia Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine
Kim Voller, Anoka Equine Veterinary Services

Staff Members:

William Hartmann, Executive Director
Paul Anderson, Assistant Director
Dale Lauer, Assistant Director
Linda Glaser, Senior Veterinarian
Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian
Shauna Voss, Senior Veterinarian
Susan McClanahan, Senior Veterinarian
Beth Thompson, Senior Veterinarian
Ray Scheierl, Information Technology Director
Jody Holm, Program Administration
Bethany Hahn, Communications Director

Approval of Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health held on Wednesday, February 20, 2013

A motion was made by Steve Brake and seconded by Paul Hanowski, with all present voting aye to approve the minutes of the Wednesday, February 20, 2013 meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by Dean Compart and seconded by Holly Neaton, with all present voting aye to approve the agenda.

Field Research Trials

Dr. Scott Dee was in private swine practice, then a professor at the University of Minnesota (U of M) prior to accepting his current position as research committee director with Pipestone Veterinary Clinic. Pipestone's projects center on applied research in animal health. The two objectives for the projects are to help bridge the gap between the field and laboratory, and to improve accuracy of data which helps clients in decision-making.

In all Pipestone field trials, external and internal oversight is extremely important. Welfare audits and inspections are conducted during each trial by a company-specific Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, an independent third-party company, and internal staff members. Pipestone Veterinary Clinic has the facilities to conduct successful field trials. There are 45 Pipestone System farms, two research barns with plans for a third, and a South Dakota State University animal resource wing.

The two sides of research barns are divided by a wall with separate pits and attics but have the same design. This set-up ensures controls for research trials and helps determine how well the products work. The desired outcomes are a well-controlled and safe process, accurate data, better decisions, improved performance and client satisfaction.

The Pipestone System follows a process for managing each Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome Virus (PRRSV) challenge study. The first step is to identify the knowledge gaps. The next step is to design the study and then treatment and control groups are determined. Pipestone then communicates study plans to the neighborhood. Area meetings are held to make sure neighbors are comfortable with the plans. Thus far, there have been no objections to Pipestone's field trials. Once the plans are communicated with the Board of Animal Health, Pipestone proceeds with selecting the "neighborhood virus", or challenge isolate. Trials are usually conducted in the summer because of reduced disease risk due to sunlight and heat. Outcomes are communicated through meetings and publications. Intervention is applied and the impact is measured.

In one particular study, the goal was to determine if vaccine improved performance and reduced PRRSV shedding. Pipestone has been researching airborne virus and the outcomes have been very eye-opening. Forty-five percent of the time, virus is found outside of the farm. High quantities of virus were found in the air, possibly overwhelming the filtration system. The diversity of the virus has also been revealing. Twenty-five strains of PRRSV were identified, and only 12 or 13 were familiar. The rest had never been seen. The virus is adapting to become more of an airborne risk and is traveling further that way. The viruses are now known to travel over five miles. In one case, a barn 100 miles away from an identified virus broke with the same virus. Pipestone is finding better filter systems that will provide more protection.

The Board of Animal Health consults with an identified group before certain field trials take place. Dr. Trevor Ames and Dr. Jim Collins are both included in the discussions. It was suggested that the Board should consider developing a policy that outlines the steps that should be taken when field trials are conducted. At the request of the board members, the Board will look into the legal ramifications of requiring oversight or approval of field trials.

Department of Agriculture

Commissioner Frederickson and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture have been busy at the Capitol this legislative season. Otherwise, things are running smoothly.

Legislative Update

Greta Gauthier provided an update on Board-related legislative activity. There are only seven weeks left of session. There have been several bills that the Board has been interested in. One bill drafted by the Minnesota Zoo would permit the zoo to bring wild cervidae into captivity if passed into law. Current regulations limit herd additions to animals coming from Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) free herds, making it illegal to take in wild cervids. Wild moose coming in to the zoo's herd are not necessarily CWD-free, but the zoo has an extensive moose breeding program with a containment facility to keep animals isolated for as long as needed. The Board has discussed the bill with the Farmed Cervidae Advisory Committee. There has not been any opposition thus far, noting that the allowance would be limited to the Minnesota Zoo only.

A version of a dog and cat breeder bill received a hearing in four or five house committees, but when it got to the house agriculture committee there was no hearing. The bill did not meet the deadlines for it to move ahead. It also did not receive a hearing in the senate agriculture committee.

The Board of Animal Health budget is up for consideration in both houses in the next couple of weeks. It has already been heard and referred on. No problems are anticipated and there was no budget reduction recommended by the governor.

Swine Identification and Movement

Dr. Beth Thompson spoke about swine movement and the new rules pertaining to identification of hogs in Minnesota. Procedures for moving pigs are very different today than in the past. The new rules for swine movement and identification are based on the "all-in, all-out" method under which most hogs move.

Swine moving across state lines must be officially identified unless they are moving under a production system plan or going directly to market or slaughter. To apply for a swine production system plan, producers must first contact each involved state's animal health officials. The provisions of such a plan include pigs staying together as one group with no ownership changes and a veterinarian must inspect or be present at the barn within 30 days of movement. In addition, each state involved must be notified of where and when the hogs move.

Under the Board's new rules, breeding and feeding swine moving within Minnesota must be officially identified unless they are:

1. Moving under a production system plan,
2. Moving within the herd,
3. In a slaughter-only class at an exhibition,

4. Consigned to a market,
5. Going to a buying station or
6. Moving directly to slaughter.

For the import, movement and sale of breeding swine, the Board recognizes U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) metal tags, premises ID tags, radio frequency ID tags and breed registered ear notches with papers as forms of official ID.

The 4-H tag has been a topic of conversation and whether they should still be used during exhibitions. The Board does not recognize 4-H tags as official ID. After discussions with U of M Extension personnel, it is clear that the 4-H tag will still be used this year. The Board will continue to encourage all groups to discontinue use of the 4-H tag because it does little to increase animal traceability. In addition, the Board offers an official, plastic, tamper-proof alternative at no cost that would work well in exhibition settings. This year the focus will be on education of the new rules during exhibitions. The official identification requirement will not be strictly enforced during the early phase of implementing the new rules.

For importation and sale of nursery and feeder pigs, the USDA metal tag, monitored herd ID ear tattoo or tag, and monitored herd ID slap tattoo are recognized by the Board as official ID. No ID is required for importation or sale of market hogs if going directly to a buying station or slaughter plant.

Dean Compart talked about a scenario where a large group of pigs at about 40 pounds needed to be moved to a finishing barn in Iowa. Under the new rule, all the pigs would need to be officially identified prior to movement. Compart explained that it might be better to officially identify a small percentage (two or three percent) of the group rather than try to tattoo or tag all of the animals at one time. If hundreds or thousands of pigs are tagged or tattooed in a short amount of time, the tattoos wouldn't hold well or ears could be ripped in the process.

Slaughter sows and boars moving within Minnesota directly to slaughter must be identified using a back tag or eartag. This requirement is the same as it was in the old rules.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Dr. Jim Collins explained the upcoming reaccreditation process for the U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). A group from the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians will visit the laboratory for five days to conduct a site inspection and go through the approval process. The group will then meet with the laboratory director for an exit interview and will inform of the pass or fail accreditation status at that time. It is critically important to have an accredited laboratory in Minnesota. Without it, tests needed for interstate and international commerce would need to be performed out of state, resulting in slower service at a higher cost to Minnesota livestock producers and pet owners.

College of Veterinary Medicine

Dr. Trevor Ames spoke about the U of M's College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) recent news and activities. One CVM student was picked to receive one of 68 Howard Hughes research fellowships. This is only the second student chosen for this; the first was also a U of M student.

The new curriculum was recently voted on and will be rolled out in the fall with the new students. It includes reduced contact time in class in order to have more self-learning using technology. The fourth-year curriculum has already been voted on and is in place. An accreditation visit for the college is scheduled for 2014. The accreditation standards are being changed and the CVM will be the first one to go through the new standards.

Various veterinary school buildings are going through renovations. Though the State has not indicated budget cuts for the CVM, the college made reductions in administrative costs. The animal hospital had no cuts in budget because it runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, no cuts are being proposed in higher education funding. A partnership with the State called MINDRIVE may lead to increased funding in research.

Equine Herpes Virus

Drs. Julia Wilson and Kim Voller explained why they would like Equine Herpesvirus 1 (EHV-1) to be added to the list of the Board's reportable diseases. Europe allows importation of horses only from states that list EHV-1 as a reportable disease. It is reportable in at least 31 other states but is not reportable in Minnesota. Therefore, it has become burdensome to attempt to export Minnesota horses to Europe. In addition, EHV-1 is a costly disease and is currently circulating in the U.S., with seven states reporting outbreaks this year.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) has recommendations on how to handle EHV-1-positive animals, including quarantining herds and guidelines for removing herds from quarantine. The Board should consider following the AAEP's recommendations along with adding EHV-1 to the list of reportable diseases in Minnesota. Making it a reportable disease would increase awareness and communication among the equine community and its veterinarians.

Holly Neaton made a motion to add EHV-1 neurologic form to the list of reportable diseases. All board members voted in favor. At this time, the Board will not routinely quarantine herds with test-positive animals.

Board of Veterinary Medicine

Dr. John King recently retired from his role of executive director at the Board of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Julia Wilson now fills the position. Donna Carolus, a staff member at the Board for over 20 years, also plans to retire next month.

Ovine Progressive Pneumonia

Judy Lewman is the coordinator of the Ovine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP) and Caprine Arthritis Encephalitis (CAE) test and control pilot program. The program had proceeded without incident since 2006. In 2012, however, two flocks with five and 15-year histories of OPP test-negative status received inconclusive results on routine agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID) blood tests. Retests with a competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (cELISA), a different blood test manufactured by VMRD, Inc. in Pullman, Washington, were positive at the U of M VDL and also at the designated USDA confirmatory laboratory in Pullman, Washington. The two producers stopped breeding stock sales, a significant income source, and self-quarantined upon receiving the positive cELISA test results. One flock has been in a holding pattern for one year and the other for nearly eight months.

Subsequent testing of duplicate sera from one flock, done at the University of Guelph in Ontario using Hyphen BioMed's Elitest ELISA (Elitest), reported all animals to be negative, as did polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing on whole blood at Colorado State University. In addition, necropsy by the VDL on one of the most strongly cELISA-positive ewes, including PCR on brain and spleen tissue, failed to provide evidence of OPP. The USDA Animal Disease Research Unit (ADRU) in Pullman was also unable to confirm OPP infection in either of the two affected flocks using the Western blot.

VMRD's cELISA test was developed in collaboration with USDA scientists in Pullman, Washington. Use of the test in goats was licensed by USDA in 2004. In August 2012, USDA also licensed this cELISA for use in sheep. However, a recent study at the University of Guelph in Ontario concluded that the VMRD cELISA "did not perform well with respect to both sensitivity and specificity and so is not recommended for use in MV (OPP) programs." The percentage of animals that tested cELISA positive following administration of a vaccine was significant. It is highly probable that chlamydia vaccine is what caused the positive tests in the two Minnesota flocks.

At the start of the OPP/CAE program, the U.S. Animal Health Association recommended that USDA agencies support the piloting of this program. Subsequently, the USDA-ADRU in Pullman offered to do confirmatory testing in the case of indeterminate or questionable test results from VDL. Due to the recent challenges, however, the Minnesota program should be revised to declare the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa as the confirmatory lab when testing is deemed necessary beyond that offered by the VDL.

Holly Neaton made a motion to change the confirmatory laboratory from the USDA-ADRU in Pullman to the NVSL. All board members voted in favor.

Board of Animal Health

Dr. Bill Hartmann congratulated Dr. John Whitten on his reappoint to the Board of Animal Health and thanked him for his work over the years. The overhaul of the Board's rules is complete and the new rules are now in effect. The other large task of transferring to use of a new database is also taking shape. The director of the company that created CoreOne visited the Board in March and is helping to move the project forward.

The USDA animal disease traceability rule went into effect on March 11. There are a few changes that will affect Minnesota. The USDA outlines what is considered as official identification for interstate movement and the states must recognize the same for import. In the past, the Board has accepted breed registry tattoos with registration numbers for import of cattle into Minnesota. Under the new federal rule, tattoos and brands are no longer acceptable as official unless there is a contract in place between the shipping and receiving states.

The other major change is that all male dairy cattle born after March 11, 2013 need to be officially identified prior to moving interstate unless moving to a state/federal approved market, slaughter, or other approved tagging site. To simplify things, Dr. Whitten recommended that the Board get rid of the March 11 cut-off date and require all male dairy cattle, regardless of age, to be officially identified.

Healthy Fairs Workshops

Bethany Hahn spoke about a series of workshops in preparation of the county fair season. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) submitted a grant proposal with the hopes of sponsoring workshops that would bring together county fair personnel, 4-H and FFA leaders, petting zoo operators, and other involved parties. Each workshop would consist of three basic topics of human, environmental and animal health at county fairs. The MDH invited the Board to present at the Healthy Fairs Workshops to provide expertise in the area of animal health.

In its cooperative agreement proposal with USDA, the Board agreed to increase producer and public awareness of zoonotic disease, including influenza. The Healthy Fair Workshops will be an excellent opportunity to discuss the topic with stakeholders.

Election of Officers to the Board of Animal Health

Executive Director Dr. Bill Hartmann took over direction of the meeting for the election of next year's Minnesota Board of Animal Health officers (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014). John Whitten was reappointed as president and Holly Neaton as vice president to the Board of Animal Health.

Appointment of Executive Director

The board members met in a closed session with Dr. Beth Thompson to discuss the appointment of the executive director of the Board of Animal Health for the coming fiscal year July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014. A motion was made by Dean Compart to rehire William L. Hartmann as the executive director, seconded by Holly Neaton, with all voting aye. A motion was made by Holly Neaton to approve an achievement award for the executive director, seconded by Paul Hanowski, with all voting aye.

Date and Place of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold their next quarterly meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 4, 2013 in the Wilmont area. A motion was made by Paul Hanowski, seconded by Holly Neaton with all voting aye to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. William L. Hartmann
Executive Director