

Meeting Minutes: Quarterly Board Meeting

Date: April 12, 2018
Location: Minnesota Farmers Union, 305 Roselawn Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55117

Attendance

BOARD MEMBERS

Dean Compart, Producer
Graham Brayshaw, Veterinarian
Matt Anderson, Veterinarian
Peter Ripka, Producer

CONSULTANTS TO THE BOARD

Jerry Torrison, Director, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
Trevor Ames, Dean, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
Joni Scheftel, Minnesota Department of Health
Stacy Holzbauer, Minnesota Department of Health
Stephan Schaeffbauer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
Mary Donahue, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Service

GUESTS

Jim Byrne, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
Michelle Carstensen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
James Collins, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
Bruce Dokkebakken, Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement Association
Linsey Knox, Fourth-year veterinary student
Kevin Kimber, intern, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
Brenda Hartkopf, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
Greg Lubinski, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
Bob Lyons, BPD Biotech
Michelle Medina, Minnesota Farmers Union
Brita Moore, Minnesota Farmers Union
Muril Niebuhr, Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement Association
Ann Olson, Animal Folks
Steve Olson, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association/Minnesota Chicken and Egg Association
Gary Wertish, Minnesota Farmers Union
Julia Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine

STAFF

Beth Thompson	Courtney Wheeler
Linda Glaser	Morgan Grelson
Dale Lauer	Michael Crusan
Shauna Voss	Erin Crider

Call Meeting to Order/Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Dean Compart called the meeting to order and asked for corrections or a motion to approve the February 28, 2018, minutes. Peter Ripka made a motion, and Graham Brayshaw seconded, with all voting aye. Mr. Compart asked for a motion to approve today's agenda. Dr. Brayshaw made a motion, and Matt Anderson seconded. A vote took place, with all voting aye.

Board of Animal Health Update

Beth Thompson gave an update on activities at the Board. She and Drs. Torrison, Scheftel and Wilson were at the Capitol for Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) Day at the Capitol yesterday. MVMA representatives had an opportunity to speak with their respective district's legislators about MVMA and the important issues related to their work. Dr. Thompson mentioned that an individual there complimented the Board on maintaining its professionalism, specifically referring to the avian influenza outbreak response in 2015 and the current legislative audit process. Dr. Thompson said this speaks highly of the Board and the organization as a whole.

Dr. Thompson gave an overview of the different Board activities over the past fiscal year. She mentioned the Board program directors are active in a number of national and state animal health associations. She also gave a brief summary of Board program accomplishments:

- The Board currently is finishing up the legislative audit process.
- **Poultry:** The Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) is in the process of moving their data from servers at the Willmar facility to the St. Paul database.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Greg Suskovic has made progress in streamlining the swine vesicular investigation process. He is also working on the harmonization of the Safe Poultry Supply Plan.
- **Farmed Cervidae:**
 - Streamlining forms for a better workflow.
 - Produced a handbook outlining producer requirements.
 - Shortened the surveillance periods for producers who are not submitting successful samples.
 - Added official ID as a requirement on the inventory form.
 - Produced training materials to help veterinarians collect and submit successful CWD and TB samples.
 - Revised the Farmed Cervidae Escape Policy.
- **Companion Animal:**
 - Courtney Wheeler has been with the Board for about nine months.
 - Implementing streamlined enforcement policies for consistent compliance.
 - Tracking and reporting statewide Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) test results.
 - Implementing better outreach to licensees.
 - Working toward becoming paperless.
- **Traceability:** The USDA will be retiring visual-only official ID tags, such as metal NUES tags, in the next few years. RFID tags will become the new standard ID.

Dr. Thompson mentioned the Board's current diseases issues, including salmonella in chicks, swine vesicular disease investigations, CWD, and brucellosis in breeding facilities. The Board also traced animals into the state from a South Dakota herd where a case of TB was found. Thousands of animals were tested, and no animals tested positive in Minnesota.

Dr. Suskovic and Board staff are preparing to participate in a multi-state foot and mouth disease (FMD) exercise May 7-10. The Board will use the exercise as a test of all aspects of their FMD response. Dr. Thompson expects the exercise will help pinpoint good uses for the Board's Emergency Preparedness funds.

Dr. Thompson expressed how pleased she is with the progress Board programs have made in the last year and since she became Executive Director in 2016. There have been a number of retirements and staff changes that brought about a reorganization of leadership from four assistant directors to two, and additions of two more senior veterinarians. Despite the changes, she sees great progress in all programs.

University of Minnesota Update

Dean Trevor Ames provided an update on activities at the University of Minnesota's College of Veterinary Medicine. The College is moving ahead with several facility projects, including the veterinary isolation building BLS-3 area certification, additional facilities and equipment for the Equine Center, renovation of lab space for new research faculty, and the relocation of the West Metro Equine Ambulatory Practice.

The College added 10 additional food animal health faculty using state and University funding. Dr. Ames commented, when compared with his past years at the University and in talking with deans of other veterinary schools, the College's recent investment in faculty expansion is unprecedented. However, outside of the funding for these specific positions, the College's budget has been either reduced or flat over the last 12 years, causing them to cut staffing in other areas. The College continues to search for other funding sources.

Dr. Ames briefly mentioned other current College activities.

- The College has interviewed about 300 applicants for next year's incoming class. Applications were up by eight percent over last year. They will finish the process of filling the class after April 15.
- The College's White Coat Ceremony will be held this Saturday. Around 400 are expected for this event.
- Commencement is on May 5. Dr. Thompson will be the keynote speaker.

Dr. Ames stated the University will be investing funds to redefine the St. Paul Campus' focus to food, agriculture and water education. In addition, they are exploring leasing a portion of the Commonwealth Terrace property for retail space to generate revenue.

Dr. Thompson asked about the College's progress on filling the swine economic faculty position previously held by the late Dr. Bob Morrison. Dr. Torrison said the position was posted, and 11 individuals have applied. The College is scheduling initial Skype interviews this week.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Update

Jerry Torrison provided an update on the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). As previously mentioned, MVMA Day at the Capitol was yesterday. It was a great opportunity to bring MVMA issues to legislators, including Paul Anderson, Chair of the House Agricultural Policy Committee, and Representative Rod Hamilton. MVMA is seeing growing veterinarian and student participation at this annual event. A couple of MVMA issues -- creation of a "Dangerous Dog" Registry and a provision for legal immunity for veterinarians who report animal abuse -- do not appear to be moving forward during this session. Dr. Wilson will be discussing the issues related to opioids later in the meeting.

Dr. Torrison stated that legislators are supporting a request for Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR) funds for University facilities maintenance. Response to requests for additional funding for the VDL also seems to be supported.

Dean Compart asked what amount of funding would help stabilize the VDL and University funding. Dr. Torrison noted the Board has been very supportive in assisting in funding technician and pathologist positions. He stated that the VDL is asking for \$500,000 for next year, and a higher amount for the next biennium. Dr. Ames concurred, saying the University is asking for \$500,000 to \$700,000 for the current year and around \$1.5 million for the next biennium's base budget. He stated the University has not had any inflationary increases to the budget since 2005. Any money they have received recently has been for one-time building funds or to keep in-state tuition from rising.

Dr. Thompson asked if the University has requested funds to maintain these new facilities, including the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL). Dr. Torrison said the MPTL added around \$50,000 in annual maintenance fees to their budget. The poultry industry and legislators are supportive of the facility and its mission. A first-term senator is ready to co-sponsor the legislation for the next funding cycle.

Dr. Torrison mentioned a couple of upcoming events. The American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVDL) accreditation visit will be April 29 to May 3 at the VDL and the MPTL. In preparation for the accreditation, the VDL put new flooring in the necropsy area and also renovated the entrance for better biosecurity. The VDL also will be participating in the Multi-state FMD exercise. No samples will actually be submitted, but they will be notified that a sample is coming, will set a timer for the amount of time it takes for testing, and then they will report the results through the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), as they would in an actual FMD incident.

Dr. Torrison also mentioned that the VDL was one of only two NAHLN labs able to test for, and detect, porcine circovirus 3 (PCV3). The VDL does not know how widespread PCV3 will be, but they will put their results on the nationwide network so they can track the virus' spread. Dean Compart asked if PCV3 is different enough that the vaccine used to treat PCV1 and PCV2 would not be effective for PCV3. Dr. Torrison said it is genetically different enough from PCV2 that he would not expect the PCV2 vaccine to be effective. Vaccine companies are currently working on developing PCV3 vaccines.

Winona County Farm CWD Epidemiological Update

Mary Donahue provided an update on the ongoing epidemiological investigation of the Winona County Cervidae farm where chronic wasting disease was detected in a white-tailed deer herd. Dr. Donahue said the first animal was confirmed positive in November, and then a second positive was found in December. The herd was depopulated in February, and CWD was detected in all remaining animals. The only animal movement was a transfer of three animals to Prairie Island in 2016, and those animals were also depopulated. No disease was detected.

Dr. Donahue said after the first positive was found, the Board immediately began a records review for any animals moved on or off the farm. She, along with Dr. Glaser and the regular Board inspector, went out to visit the farm on December 1 to identify risk factors. Possible risks included the owner's taxidermy business, his hunting in Dodge County, the biosecurity practices on the farm, and the farm proximity to the CWD endemic zone.

Dr. Donahue summarized future investigations into how and when the disease came onto this farm. Genotyping was done on all of the animals, and results are expected back in two to three weeks. She explained that all deer are susceptible to CWD, some genotypes allow the disease to progress more slowly. They also took rectal associated mucosal lymphoid tissue tests, but result timetables are unknown. She and Dr. Glaser will be going back to the farm to

interview the owner about his biosecurity and animal handling practices tomorrow morning. There are a number of feral cats on the premises that had access to the deer pens. This could be another potential source for disease transmission. She said they are theorizing that the disease came onto the farm sometime after 2016, as the three animals transferred to Prairie Island in 2016 were CWD not detected.

The final epidemiology report is due with the Habitat Conservation Program (HCP) report by the end of July. This report will include findings on the index case; detailed premises information, including maps and diagrams, management practices, and compliance with the HCP; complete animal inventory, including trace ins and trace outs; all epidemiological links; and all lab results.

Dean Compart asked for clarification on the concern over feral animals. Dr. Donahue stated, as part of his taxidermy business, the owner would cut the neck meat off from the mounts and then toss it into the deer pen to feed the feral cats. Cats are susceptible to CWD, and there is concern that they may have defecated in the feed bunk. Because of this, the deer could have been repeatedly exposed to the disease.

Mr. Compart asked what the recommended method of disposal for the skeleton or extra parts from taxidermy is, and if there is a danger in how these things are disposed. Michelle Carstensen stated the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for inspecting taxidermists. In 2016, they banned whole carcasses from being imported into the state. Currently, there are no statutory regulations for taxidermy waste disposal. Having the ability to regulate this would be very helpful. She noted that deer will also eat deer meat. Dr. Donahue commented that ingestion and inhalation are both good ways to introduce a prion to a cervid. Dr. Schaeffbauer reminded everyone that taxidermy is a potential risk factor for CWD infection. Dr. Donahue concurred, saying we can only identify possible risks; we will never know the true cause.

Mr. Compart asked if there were epi reports done on the Crow Wing and Meeker County farms where CWD was detected. Dr. Donahue confirmed the Crow Wing County farm was the index farm, and the Meeker County farm was a trace out. Mr. Compart asked if there were any commonalities in genetics or practices between the Crow Wing County farm and the farm in Winona County. Dr. Donahue stated that the Crow Wing County farm has many more animals the Winona County herd has, but there have been no new positives since the two detected in December 2016. There is no genetic link between the two farms. However, she said they will be looking into trends in biosecurity practices, including used equipment and fencing purchases.

Dr. Thompson asked what the Crow Wing County farm risk factors were. Dr. Donahue stated there is a history of carcasses being buried on the premises. The owner states that they were there before he bought the farm. The owner's son is a taxidermist, and does deer mounts. He does not live there, but how often he visits could be a factor. The owner also purchased and brought in many animals from different places, and that also increases risk.

USDA Update

Stephan Schaeffbauer gave an update on activities at the USDA, beginning with changes to the CWD program standards. The changes were proposed by the Program Standards Working Group, which was comprised of scientific experts, state and federal animal health and wildlife officials, and representatives of the farmed cervidae industry. Their goal was to streamline and clarify issues and to make sure definitions aligned with the CWD Rule. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is accepting comments on the changes until April 30. Changes include:

- Sampling requirements and instructions on how to collect and submit samples.
- Adding reindeer to the susceptible species list.
- Adding clarification on how to do epidemiological traces.

- Clarification of the impact of genetics on disease progression and testing.
- When to implement rectal biopsy testing.
- Examples of implications states can use for producers who chronically submit poor samples.
- DNA matching of index cases on new farms infected with CWD.
- Steps for biosecurity and prevention.

Dr. Schaeffbauer mentioned that, with support from the Board, USDA has been working to get all staff trained on the Emergency Management Response System (EMRS2). Feedback on training is that it does develop useful skills, but they are lost over time if they aren't used. Dr. Schaeffbauer said they would hold exercises in order to keep skills sharp.

LPAI Stakeholder Meeting Update

Dale Lauer and Stephan Schaeffbauer offered an overview of the March 27 LPAI Stakeholder Meeting. Dr. Lauer stated the main focus of the meeting was to share and discuss proposed USDA policy changes related to indemnity and compensation rates for LPAI outbreak response activities, and to determine a decision on LPAI risk evaluation for controlled marketing versus slaughter for infected flocks.

Under current National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) provisions, LPAI flocks are eligible for up to 100 percent indemnity and compensation. Most years had 2-4 isolated LPAI incidents requiring indemnity, and in 2004 and 2005 funds were appropriated for LPAI outbreak indemnity. Those funds were exhausted after a large LPAI outbreak in 2009 and the HPAI outbreak in 2014-2015. There also were LPAI outbreaks that turned into HPAI in 2016 and 2017.

Dr. Schaeffbauer said the USDA proposes to build in incentives to decrease cost and preserve flocks with controlled marketing, when possible. In the past, there have been opportunities for states to use controlled marketing, but they chose to depopulate, which is more costly. The proposed changes will allow LPAI indemnity percentages to be adjusted as funds are available.

Dr. Schaeffbauer stated, assuming the typical 2-4 instances of infection per year, as soon as a flock is confirmed LPAI with a H5/H7 subtype, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) will be notified, and the state will begin their Initial State Response and Containment Plan (ISRCP), including quarantine, epidemiological investigation, surveillance, and flock plan development. They will also fill out an appendix form to determine if controlled marketing is an option.

Once the flock is approved for controlled marketing, the USDA will pay 85 percent of the HPAI compensation/flat rates for materials disposal, destroyed materials, and virus elimination assistance. Producers must produce evidence of increased biosecurity and conduct weekly testing to monitor for the virus.

For premises where not all birds can be controlled marketed, indemnity for those birds is paid at 75 percent of the HPAI calculator. Depopulation costs are paid at 100 percent.

Indemnity will not be paid if there are significant biosecurity lapses documented by state or federal personnel, if the controlled marketing or depopulation recommended by USDA is not followed. All houses must be virus-elimination tested by environmentally sampling prior to quarantine release.

Dr. Lauer said Minnesota will be incorporating these changes into its ISRCP. Minnesota's ISRCP must be followed to receive indemnity and compensation, and controlled marketing is an option we will use when possible.

Poultry Update

Dale Lauer gave an update on the poultry industry and the MPTL. In March, LPAI H7N1 cases were found in Missouri and Texas. However, the distance between the two facilities is about 300 miles. Missouri case involved a flock of 20,000 commercial turkeys, which the company was able to control market. The Texas case was found in a flock of 24,000 broiler breeders after slight mortality and a drop in egg production. This flock was depopulated. Dr. Lauer also mentioned ongoing HPAI H7N3 in Mexico and H5 virus in the Middle East, China and Japan.

Dr. Lauer gave a summary of MPTL activities. Dr. Saad Gharaibeh, the new diagnostician, is building good connections with staff and producers and is increasing his clientele. MPTL testing submissions are also increasing in both chicken egg layer and turkey markets. The serology panels they are running are helping growers easily select agents to test for and are providing the MPTL with more information on specific flocks.

The MPTL recently held a course for authorized poultry testing agents (APTAs). APTAs are not employed by the Board, but they have an interest in poultry. Minnesota has nearly 900 APTAs, with 60 percent focused on commercial flocks, and 40 percent in backyard flocks. These agents help with 4H, fairs, sales and exhibitions. They were extremely helpful in testing flocks around the state during the HPAI outbreak in 2015.

The Emergency Disease Management Committee met at the Midwest Poultry Federation Convention on March 15. Topics included the updated avian influenza disease alerts, HPAI permitted movements, and Minnesota plan revisions. They also discussed the plans for the upcoming depopulation field exercise and the 2019 H5/H7 LPAI tabletop exercise.

Dr. Lauer mentioned other upcoming events. The Live Bird Market System (LBMS) Continuing Education Course will be held in St. Paul August 21-23. This will bring veterinary medical officers (VMOs), animal health technicians and others from around the country. Training will include lecture, wet labs, a LBMS tour, and a State Fair emergency exercise. Dr. Lauer and Dr. Voss will both be attending the NPIP Biennial Conference in Tennessee this June. Members will be considering a number of proposed changes to the NPIP Provisions and program standards.

Dr. Torrison asked if there has ever been concern that APTAs are not veterinarians. Dr. Lauer stated that the use of APTAs are written into the Board Rules and the NPIP provisions. Without APTAs the Board would have to employ around six additional staff. The Board emphasizes this fact with producers, and there hasn't been much pushback. Dr. Voss added that veterinarians who are not used to working with poultry are very supportive of APTAs.

Dr. Torrison expressed concern that accredited veterinarian resources would be stretched thin during a disease event. If a veterinarian is not available, the responsibility to collect samples would fall to farm staff, who may or may not be doing so under a veterinarian's supervision. He said the upcoming FMD exercise most likely will reveal the need for more coverage in this area. Dr. Schaeffbauer said in a perfect world, they will have policies and processes in place to deploy people to collect samples in a FMD outbreak situation.

Request for Mycoplasma Testing Rule Change

Shauna Voss brought a request for the Board to approve changes to the Mycoplasma Testing rule. She reviewed the rulemaking process and detailed the changes to the rule (additions are shown in bold, underlined text; repealed text is in bold strikethrough text).

1721.0280 IMPORTATION OF HATCHING EGGS, POULTRY, AND RATITES

Subp. 5. *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae*

Chicken hatching eggs, chicks, and chickens from commercial egg-type or meat-type chicken hatcheries or breeding flocks and ~~all~~ turkey hatching eggs, poults, and turkeys from commercial turkey hatcheries or breeding flocks imported into the state must:

- A. originate from a hatchery or breeding flock that is classified *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* clean and *Mycoplasma synoviae* clean under the plan; or
- B. be individually identified with a leg or wing band and be negative to a *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and a *Mycoplasma synoviae* test within 30 days prior to importation.

1721.0290 POULTRY DEALERS

Subp. 4. *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae*

Chicken hatching eggs, chicks, and chickens from commercial egg-type or meat-type chicken hatcheries or breeding flocks and ~~all~~ turkey hatching eggs, poults, and turkeys from commercial turkey hatcheries or breeding flocks distributed in the state by poultry dealers must:

- A. originate from a hatchery or breeding flock that is classified *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* clean and *Mycoplasma synoviae* clean under the plan; or
- B. be individually identified with a leg or wing band and be negative to a *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and a *Mycoplasma synoviae* test within 30 days prior to distribution.

1721.0320 HATCHERIES AND BREEDING FLOCKS

Subp. 3. *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae*

All commercial egg-type chicken, commercial meat-type chicken, or commercial turkey hatcheries or breeding flocks in the state must meet the requirements of the *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae* clean programs of the plan.

1721.0344 MYCOPLASMA GALLISEPTICUM AND MYCOPLASMA SYNONOVIAE

Subp. 1. Positive test results

Commercial egg-type chicken, commercial meat-type chicken, or commercial turkey breeding flocks that have a positive test result for *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *Mycoplasma synoviae* must be retested according to plan procedures or other equivalent procedures approved by the board.

Subp. 2. Quarantine.

Commercial egg-type chicken, commercial meat-type chicken, or commercial turkey hatcheries or breeding flocks determined by the board to be infected with *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* or *Mycoplasma synoviae* must be quarantined and participate in an approved salvage program or be disposed of in a manner approved by the board.

1721.0300 EXHIBITION OF POULTRY

~~*Subp. 4 *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae~~ – REPEAL Subp. 4**

~~At exhibitions, all turkeys and turkey hatching eggs must:~~

- ~~A. originate from a hatchery or breeding flock that is classified *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* clean and *Mycoplasma synoviae* clean under the plan; or~~

~~B. be negative to a *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and a *Mycoplasma synoviae* test within 90 days prior to the opening date of the exhibition.~~

1721.0310 COMMUNITY SALES

~~Subp. 4 *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and *Mycoplasma synoviae* – REPEAL Subp. 4~~

~~At community sales, all turkey hatching eggs, poults, and turkeys must:~~

- ~~A. originate from a hatchery or breeding flock that is classified *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* clean and *Mycoplasma synoviae* clean under the plan; or~~
- ~~B. be negative to a *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* and a *Mycoplasma synoviae* test within 30 days prior to the sale.~~

Dr. Voss said she did not expect any objections to these changes, and she hopes they will go through the process within a year's time.

Dean Compart asked for a motion to proceed with the above-outlined mycoplasma testing rule changes. Graham Brayshaw made a motion, and Matt Anderson seconded it. All voted, saying aye, and the motion carried.

Salmonella Outbreak Investigations in Baby Chicks

Stacy Holzbauer gave a presentation on salmonella outbreaks associated with poultry. Zoonotic salmonella infection accounts for 11 percent of all *Salmonella* infections and result in the highest morbidity and mortality. From 1990-2017, there were 75 such outbreaks, and they have been on the rise over the last few years. Most cases are found in the spring through the early fall and involve children under five years old. Some people have contact with backyard flocks; some have indirect contact with poultry at feed stores. Multiple serotypes are involved, but the exact number depends on the specific outbreak.

In 2017, there were 10 multi-state outbreaks, and 73 percent of cases report contact with live poultry the week before becoming ill. Trace backs discovered the source was a commercial hatchery supplying eggs to feed stores. However, questions answered by infected people showed 41 percent reported owning poultry for less than six months.

The best way to reduce outbreaks is with education. There are several outreach efforts underway aimed at decreasing the prevalence of *Salmonella* infection on the federal and state levels. The USDA has a working group focused on *Salmonella*, and one of their goals is outreach to various groups, such as 4H. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Board have sent out a joint press release each of the last two years. It is targeted to rural media and focuses on best practices for safe live poultry handling. Licensed dealers also are required to provide an information sheet on *Salmonella* risk. At the NPIP Biennial Conference, there will be a proposal which aims to help cover breeder flock testing.

Using Bacteriophage for the Rapid Detection of MAP (and Bovine TB)

Berwyn Clarke and Bob Lyons from BPD Biotech, a U.S. company developing a test using bacteriophage to detect *Mycobacterium avium* ss. *Paratuberculosis* (MAP), the bacteria that causes Johne's Disease. Current testing methods (ELISA, PCR, and cultures) have shortcomings, including inconsistent or low sensitivities, are expensive, or take substantial time for results. There is not universal testing method or sample type for all species.

The advantage of using bacteriophage for testing is that it replicates faster than the bacteria, and they replicate within the doubling time of the host. This reduces the time the disease takes to reach detectable levels.

Dr. Clarke summarized by saying the Actiphage™ Rapid assay is a test that detects the specific bacteria in less than six hours, can be used on a range of animals and sample types, is no more costly than standard testing methods, is highly sensitive, and only detects live cells.

Dr. Anderson stated detecting Johne's disease in animals under two years of age is a step forward, but he questioned whether the test was too sensitive. Dr. Clarke said the test is useful in detecting disease in infected animals that are not infectious. It will allow a producer to quarantine these animals and monitor them until they become infectious.

Opioids in the Veterinary Profession

Julia Wilson gave an update on the opioid crisis and how it affects veterinarians. Prescription drug abuse in humans is an increasing problem across the country. Forty percent of opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription drug. In 2016, Minnesota experienced more deaths from opioid overdoses than from traffic accidents.

The veterinary profession is increasingly becoming a target for opioid abuse. There are a number of ways this occurs. Veterinarians or staff may use or sell them; some may be stolen; the vet may prescribe excessively; staff may write false prescriptions with the vet's prescription pad.

Dr. Wilson stated all states have prescription drug monitoring programs (PMPs) that enable medical doctors and pharmacists to report and keep track of narcotic prescriptions for individuals. Depending on state laws, doctors can or must register with their state's PMP, and should or must look up patient prescription record before prescribing an opioid.

As a result, drugs are more difficult to get, and some people are finding ways to procure opioids from veterinarians. Dr. Wilson gave an example from Dakota County, where a dog owner with an opioid addiction was able to get prescriptions from 20 different vet clinics in the county, plus three other clinics out of state. She was eventually caught and convicted of illegal possession of controlled substances. The conviction and details of the case are sealed by the court to keep addicts from knowing how to do the same.

Minnesota legislators are now supporting efforts to have veterinarians use the state's PMP. Dr. Wilson expressed concern over getting the law written so veterinarians can still treat animals.

Dr. Anderson asked if there was any support for medical cannabis for animals. Dr. Wilson stated Minnesota's medical board is not supporting that issue, but it is happening in other states. Such a measure would require extensive training. She said veterinarians are indeed a potential source for opioids, but she asked for help in making legislation that will work for veterinarians, animals and the public.

Farmed Cervidae Update

Linda Glaser gave an update on the Farmed Cervidae Program. The Winona County herd where CWD was detected was depopulated on February 21. All seven animals in the herd were CWD positive. In 2016, three animals that were comingling with this herd were moved out. Those animals were also depopulated, and all were negative for CWD.

Dean Compart asked the average age of a wild deer with CWD. Dr. Carstensen stated that hunters usually take younger animals, but the oldest one she could recall was a nine-year-old female.

Dr. Anderson asked at what point in the infection animals show clinical signs of CWD. Dr. Glaser said the incubation period is one to three years. Once they show clinical signs, they die within six months. Dr. Donahue stated the genotype information they are developing on the Winona County herd will be very important. The genetic difference will indicate the length of the incubation period.

The newly-formed Farmed Cervidae Advisory Task Force is now full. The first meeting will be held in the next few weeks. The objectives will be to develop guidelines for exclusionary fencing and provide recommendations to the Board for regulatory changes needed for farmed cervidae businesses to remain viable in the state.

Dr. Glaser stated the legislative audit of the Farmed Cervidae Program is nearly complete. The Board received the draft audit for review at the end of March. On April 4, Board staff met with the auditors to give their feedback on the audit. Tomorrow, the Board will finalize its response letter to the auditors, and a hearing at the Legislative Audit Commission is scheduled for April 20. This hearing is open to the public.

The Board is working to inspect all Fillmore and Winona County farmed Cervidae operations by April 20. This project was initiated on March 12, with the objectives of making sure fences meet the 96-inch minimum height requirement, that all animals are officially identified and that information is reflected on the inventory. Staff are using minimum guidelines for these inspections. So far, the Board has inspected 13 of the 19 farms, and two Notices of Violation have been issued for fencing.

Dr. Glaser stated the program is finalizing a draft of the updated minimum inspection guidelines. If producers do not meet all the criteria, they need to correct those issues, or they do not pass inspection.

Jim Byrne asked for clarification on why exclusionary fencing is listed on the inspection guidelines form, when exclusionary fencing is not required. Dr. Glaser stated that portion of the form indicates items that should be inspected if they exist. If a farm has exclusionary fencing, it needs to be inspected.

Peter Ripka asked if the first inspection is free and if the Board charges for a second inspection; for example, if his farm does not pass inspection, he has to pay for the inspector to come out a second time. Dr. Glaser said there is nothing in legislation that allows the Board to charge an inspection fee.

Dr. Carstensen asked how inspectors look at identification on the animals. Dr. Glaser said the process is a combination of making sure there are tags in the animal's ears and there is an ID number assigned to every animal in the herd.

Adjourn to Closed Session

Dean Compart asked for a motion to move the meeting into closed session. Matt Anderson made the motion, and Graham Brayshaw seconded, with all present voting aye.

Closed Session: Appointment Board Leadership and Executive Director

The Board met in a closed session to elect the President and Vice President. Peter Ripka nominated Dean Compart for President, and Dr. Brayshaw seconded. Discussion took place, and the vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Compart as President.

Dr. Brayshaw nominated Matt Anderson as Vice President. Dean Compart seconded the nomination. Discussion took place, and the vote was unanimous to elect Dr. Anderson as Vice President.

The Board members met in closed session with Morgan Grelson to discuss the appointment of the executive director of the Board for the coming fiscal year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019). A motion was made by Dr. Anderson to rehire Dr. Beth Thompson as the executive director, and Dr. Brayshaw seconded. Discussion took place. The vote was unanimous to approve the appointment of Dr. Thompson as the Executive Director for the period, July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

A motion was made by Dr. Brayshaw to award an Achievement Award in the amount of \$2,000 to Dr. Thompson for her outstanding performance. The motion was seconded by Dr. Anderson. Discussion took place, and the vote was unanimous to approve the \$2,000 Achievement Award to be provided to Dr. Thompson.

Dean Compart adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Thompson
State Veterinarian
Executive Director