

## Meeting Minutes: Quarterly Board Meeting

Date: April 19, 2017

Location: 625 Robert Street N, St. Paul, MN 55155 Orville Freeman Building, Room B144

### Attendance

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#### Board Members

Dean Compart, Producer

Graham Brayshaw, Veterinarian

Paul Hanowski, Producer

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

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

Lou Cornicelli, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Sarah Delacueva, Office of the Legislative Auditor

Brenda Hartkopf, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

Bev Herda, Crystal Collection Reindeer

Barb Herda, Crystal Collection Reindeer

Peter Karpe, Prairie Oaks Equine Services

Ashley Kohls, Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association, Minnesota Beef Council

Greg Lubinski, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

Gary Olson, Minnesota Deer Farmers Association

Lynne Osterman, Minnesota Governmental Pursuits

Dave Priesler, Minnesota Pork Producers Association

Pat Rivers, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Daryl Simon, Crystal Collection Reindeer, National Reindeer Owners & Breeders Association

Alison Slaats, Minnesota Information Technology Services

Mike Starkey, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Melissa Uchtyl, Minnesota Deer Farmers Association

Steve Uchtyl, Minnesota Deer Farmers Association

Julie Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine

Kraig Wurst, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

## Staff

Beth Thompson, Executive Director  
Paul Anderson, Assistant Director  
Linda Glaser, Assistant Director  
Dale Lauer, Assistant Director  
Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian  
Michael Crusan, Communications Director  
Morgan Grelson, Business Manager  
Terry Sistad, Agricultural Consultant  
Don Myren, Agricultural Advisor  
Erin Crider, Communications Specialist

## Approval of Minutes and Agenda

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A motion was made by Graham Brayshaw and seconded by Paul Hanowski, with all present voting aye, to approve the minutes for the Wednesday, February 19, 2017 meeting. A motion was made by Peter Ripka and seconded by Matt Anderson to approve the agenda for the April 19 meeting.

## Legislative and Board of Animal Health Updates

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Dr. Beth Thompson provided an update on the Board of Animal Health and the current legislative session. She stated that not much has changed in the legislature since the February Board meeting. Dr. Thompson has talked with both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, and today is their conference committee. The Governor has approved a base budget and recommends a 1 percent increase in Board funding. The House also recommended a 1 percent increase, and the Senate did not recommend an increase. The Agriculture committee will be discussing the possible increase in the Board's funding today.

Dr. Thompson stated that the Board will be going through a legislative topic audit this fall. She explained that there are two types of audits: a financial audit and a topic audit. The Board has had financial audits before, but it has never had a topic audit in its almost 120 history. A legislative commission and a subcommission decide on topics, which any Minnesota citizen can request for review. This year, there were about 120 different topics requested, the list was narrowed to 11 topics, which were then more closely examined. Legislators vote on topics, and the Board received the fewest votes among the 11. The Legislative Audit Commission made the final decision to include the Board in the 2017 topic audits. The Board will be hosting the Legislative Auditor this fall, with a final report available in 2018. Potential topics include the cervidae program, the commercial dog and cat breeder program, and the Board's response to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 2015. The Board welcomes suggestions on how to better serve the State of Minnesota.

Dr. Thompson mentioned changes in staffing at the Board. Dr. Paul Anderson will be retiring from the Board on June 12. Dr. Anderson has been with the Board for 26 years, and the group thanked him for his service. Dr. Thompson stated that before Dr. Anderson announced his retirement, they had opened up an Assistant Director position for interviews, and Dr. Linda Glaser was hired. As a result, the Board will be hiring a new senior veterinarian. Dr. Glaser will be taking on the cervid programs, and the new senior veterinarian will be handling the commercial dog and cat breeder program, the rabies program, and possibly some other smaller programs.

## Budget Update

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Morgan Grelson delivered a budget update for the Board. The Governor's recommended budget and the House budget include a 1 percent increase in funding for the Board, and the Senate version does not include an increase. Sixty-eight percent of the budget for FY18 is for salaries and fringe, which is typical in organizations of

the Board's size. The Governor's budget projects about \$675,000 in emergency planning funds will be forwarded from FY18 to FY19.

In FY19, the budget will not change much from FY18. There is a predicted \$35,000 in emergency preparedness funds that will be forwarded to FY20. Mr. Grelson noted that the recommended 1 percent increase is a small portion of the overall agriculture budget (\$59,000 in FY18 and \$107,000 for FY19). The Board will have to make adjustments to the budget if they do not receive these funds.

Mr. Grelson also mentioned that the avian influenza planning and response funding was broadened to include all emergency preparedness activities and was extended to use through June 2019. Right now, about \$1.2 million is still available for the Board to allocate.

## USDA Update

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Dr. Stephan Schaeferbauer offered an update on USDA activities. She stated that the USDA is finalizing the Tuberculosis (TB) Brucellosis Rule. This rule is meant to combine the TB regulations and Brucellosis recommendations. The proposed rule was published in December 2015, and the USDA received 135 pages of public comments. A working group is going through all of them and will address each of them, as required. The USDA hopes to publish the final rule in 2017.

Dr. Schaeferbauer noted that in FY17, the USDA has identified nine herds affected by TB, which is more herds than they have found since 2013. Annual area surveillance identified four of these herds; epidemiological investigations found three herds; and Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspected slaughter facilities found two herds. FSIS identified 10 TB cases, six in fed cattle and four in adults. Three cases in fed cattle are confirmed to have originated in Mexico.

The USDA is deploying two veterinary medical officers (VMOs) to Texas to help with the cattle fever tick response. Texas has cattle fever tick detections outside of the permitted quarantine zone, so the VMOs will be assisting with the response.

Dr. Schaeferbauer commented that 24 states have detected chronic wasting disease (CWD) in farmed and/or wild cervids. As of April 17, there have been six new CWD-positive farmed cervid herds in FY17, including one in Iowa, one in Michigan, two in Minnesota, and two in Pennsylvania. The Iowa herd was recently depopulated.

The USDA has been receiving a small number of dual path platform (DPP) test kits, but not enough to take care of the over 5,000 samples backlogged for testing. Dr. Schaeferbauer is uncertain when new kits will be available.

The first case of low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) in the U.S. was confirmed on March 8. Since then, there have been 12 LPAI cases, either confirmed or presumptive, in Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, and Georgia. Six of these are backyard flocks, and six are commercial broiler breeder premises. There were also two HPAI cases found in broiler breeder facilities in Tennessee, and virus elimination procedures are ongoing at those facilities. The two HPAI control areas have been released. Disinfection is complete on three of the LPAI premises, surveillance zones have been lifted on nine LPAI premises, and quarantines have been lifted on two commercial LPAI premises and four backyard premises. All response efforts are going very well.

Dr. Schaeferbauer also mentioned the Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Meetings being held around the country. There have been good conversations at these meetings, and one will be held in Minnesota on May 2. There will be breakout sessions and six panelists from around the region. Dr. Thompson has helped secure a Minnesota beef producer for the panel, and she will also be a panelist. A Wisconsin dairy producer and an Iowa market

manager will also participate as panelists, and Dr. Schaeftbauer hopes to have a South Dakota feedlot manager and an accredited veterinarian to round out the panel.

Dr. Schaeftbauer discussed cooperative agreements. She foresees giving less money for these, as USDA budgets are lower, and y are under a continuing resolution through at least April 28, 2017. Any targets could change, but she does not foresee that happening. She also mentioned that the USDA is using a new electronic system, called EZFedGrants, to assist in streamlining the process for continuing agreements.

## **University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Update**

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Dr. Jerry Torrison gave an update on the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). He said that the VDL is finishing up a shortened version of their 2016 annual report, and he will email it to the board members. Beyond testing, a large focus of the VDL in 2016 was outreach and training. Dr. Torrison mentioned that the VDL hosted the last Board Meeting, and they give many formal and informal tours. They train veterinary students throughout their rotations, pathology residents, and others, and the VDL is considering expanding this program. VDL staff and faculty received a number of significant awards in 2016. Staff also are involved in research and scholarships, including articles in 36 publications and 27 scientific journals.

The Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) is operating with expanded space and services. They have added two new Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) technicians and should be hiring a diagnostician soon. They continue to prepare for expanded services, including increased salmonella testing. The MPTL recently used University of Minnesota human resources to hold a communication and conflict resolution training and performed compensation industry comparisons to retain staff.

Dr. Torrison said the VDL continues to work on their user interface, data summary and visualization, and laboratory efficiency. They also want to focus on sustainability by giving staff increased opportunities to balance service, research, and outreach, as well as being ready to meet diagnostic market needs.

## **University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine Update**

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Dr. Trevor Ames gave an update on the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM). He distributed handouts and highlighted the information on grants that have been awarded to the CVM for ongoing research. He specifically noted the Rapid Agricultural Response Funding, which is funded through the state to the CVM, the College of Food Agricultural Research Sciences, and the Minnesota Extension Service. Dr. Ames stated that the CVM also received federal funding in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to create educational materials on antimicrobial resistance.

Dr. Ames said that the CVM is in the process of selecting and admitting next year's class. The CVM has reviewed applications, interviewed applicants, and sent out offers to 350 potential students. They are waiting for responses from all of them.

The CVM is waiting to see if the legislature will grant them additional base funding. They have not had a base funding increase since 2007, and the funding was cut in 2008 and 2009. An increase would help lower tuition and decrease student debt.

On April 15, the CVM held its annual White Coat Ceremony for students entering into their clinical training. The CVM also will hold its scholarship Ceremony tonight, at which Senator Rod Hamilton will be receiving the Outstanding Service Award for his support of animal health and funding for the VDL. Dr. Ames also mentioned that Dr. Tom Fletcher, a long-time CVM faculty member, gave his last lecture this morning.

Dean Compart asked Dr. Ames to explain the VetFAST (Veterinary Food and Animal Scholar Track) program and how many students are admitted to it annually. Dr. Ames explained that the VetFAST program is an early-decision program for students with experience and interest in food-production animals and livestock. VetFAST students get an Animal Science degree and their veterinary degree in seven years instead of eight years. Students can apply during their first year of college, and applications are due in early May. If these students have an ACT of 26, were in the top 10 percent of their high school class, and have demonstrated experience with food animals, the CVM will give them conditional acceptance to the CVM. As long as they maintain a 3.4 GPA in the first three years of their Bachelor of Science program, the CVM holds a spot for them in the vet class. The CVM has about 10 VetFAST students committed for this fall. VetFAST students must attend the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, Crookston or Morris.

## Cervid Production

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Brenda Hartkopf, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association, introduced the discussion on elk, deer, and reindeer production. Ms. Hartkopf stated that Minnesota is among the top 10 states for number of deer farms and deer raised, and is a top five state for number of elk farms and elk raised. Cervid farms are in 77 of 87 Minnesota counties. The Board regulates all Minnesota cervid farms. Any time an animal moves from a farm, owners are required to report the movement within 14 days. Cervid farmers participate in mandatory CWD testing. Any time an animal dies, they are tested for CWD. In the last few years, 16.6 - 15.3 percent of all farmed cervidae were tested. This must be done to maintain accreditation. The Board inspects each farm annually, including checking fences for proper height and stability and checking for correct animal identification.

Ms. Hartkopf talked about the Farmed Cervidae Advisory Committee, which was initiated in the 1990s. The committee is convened and facilitated by the Board, and they discuss CWD at every meeting. Other topics include legislation, animal movement, escape protocol, rule making, and import/export protocol. The committee includes all stakeholders, including the Board, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDH, USDA, the VDL, the Minnesota Zoo, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, Minnesota Deer Farmers Association, and the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association.

Ms. Hartkopf then introduced Mr. Steve Uchityl from the Minnesota Deer Farmers Association. Mr. Uchityl discussed the markets for white-tailed deer. He stated that the largest markets deer farms produce for are breeding stock to sell to other farms for diversifying their herds; trophy animals for hunting preserves, mostly in other states; and animals for meat or venison. There are no slaughter plants in Minnesota, but there are some in Wisconsin and Iowa that are used for processing surplus does. Deer farmers also sell fawns to other farms, to those who want pet deer, or to a taxidermist for a live reference for his or her work. Deer farmers also sell skins, hides, leathers for clothing and antlers to collectors or furniture makers. Other products include semen, urine, bones and meat by-products, and deer for photography.

Gary Olson said that deer farming has been in Minnesota since 1908, and these farms stay in families for generations. They graze on land that is not good for cattle, sheep or goats, and they fill a need for meat for people and make a profit for farm owners. Mr. Olson mentioned studies by Dr. Nicholas Haley showing cervids are in the process of building up genetic resistance to CWD, similar to the genetic resistance to scrapie in sheep. Mr. Olson expressed his hope to find an equitable solution for the wild and farmed cervids in Minnesota until genetic resistance is in place. Dean Compart asked where the expertise on CWD in the U.S. is coming from. Mr. Olson stated that Dr. Haley has done a lot of genetic testing on CWD herds and has been on hand to collect nasal, blood and rectal biopsy samples at many herd depopulations. He stressed the importance of a blood test to detect CWD, which Dr. Tracy Nichols is developing. If the disease is caught early, those animals can be separated out from the rest of the herd, avoiding depopulation. There is also a national elk research committee that is doing testing in the area of cervid disease resistance.

Dr. Lou Cornicelli responded that research shows that resistance will allow an animal to live and shed the virus for a longer period of time, and they will test positive for the disease.

Mr. Paul Hanowski asked about the source for mass produced venison, such as what was used in Arby's Restaurant venison sandwich. Mr. Uchityl said that the U.S. does not currently have the capability to produce venison on such a large scale. The most likely source of venison for the food industry is red deer from New Zealand. Mr. Compart asked if CWD testing is done in New Zealand. Mr. Jim Byrne stated that New Zealand does not do a lot of CWD testing.

Ms. Hartkopf explained the markets for elk production. Demand for elk meat far surpasses the supply. Producers sell halves and quarters locally and to restaurants, and there are also a few wholesale meat markets around the state. Velvet antlers are harvested at about 60-75 days and naturally contain chondroitin sulfate, glucosamine and collagen, and they are made into supplements for animals and humans. Minnesota has two of the major U.S. velvet antler buyers, so producers are easily able to sell this product. Hard antlers are sold for art and dog chews, and the industry cannot keep up with hard antler demand. Trophy bulls are mostly sold out of state, and in Minnesota, an estimated 400 bulls are sold per year. Breeding stock is the final major elk market. Breeding stock diminished greatly after CWD was discovered in 2002, but in the last five years, the market has begun to pick up again.

Ms. Hartkopf said the trophy bull market is very strong right now. A 300" bull will sell for about \$3,000; 500" bull can sell for around \$25,000, but not many people can afford to purchase and hunt these animals. On her farm, the average trophy bull sale is about \$7,000.

Daryl Simon offered a summary of reindeer production markets. Reindeer is not a large industry, and there is not as much demand for them as there is for white-tailed deer or elk. There are 11 reindeer premises in Minnesota. In the U.S., there are about 120 reindeer owners, including 104 members in the Reindeer Owners and Breeders Association (ROBA). About 1,200 reindeer reside in the U.S., including about 80 in Minnesota, and about 100 calves are born each year.

Mr. Simon stated that reindeer are primarily leased for live animal displays at Christmas time. A typical 2-hour display in Minnesota is at least \$1,000; a six-hour day is about \$5,000. Producers can bring in \$200,000 to \$300,000 in December alone. Some reindeer producers sell calves, and that market is very strong. As an example, Mr. Simon said his farm is sold out of calves through 2018.

Reindeer do not require a lot of land, and they are not housed with any other deer species. They stay near the houses where their owners live. Cervid producers have tried to separate reindeer from other cervids due to how they are housed and their lack of disease. Reindeer are not known to get TB, brucellosis, or CWD. When CWD was found in Norway last year, the USDA started to consider reclassifying reindeer as being susceptible to CWD. This is a concern for reindeer farmers, as some states may stop movement of reindeer into their state. Mr. Simon explained that animals in displays do not have access to the ground; tarps and carpets are laid over the ground so they don't touch the ground or eat grass.

Ms. Hartkopf explained the farmed cervidae industry efforts to combat CWD over the years. In 1999, the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MN EBA) requested the Board create voluntary CWD surveillance guidelines. The following year, the MN EBA asked the Board to make mandatory guidelines for all cervid breeders and to restrict movement from non-CWD monitored herds. The first case of CWD in farmed cervidae in 2002 was identified through voluntary surveillance. The cervid farming industry also worked with the Board and the DNR to craft the current laws (MN Statutes 35.153 – 35.155), including escape protocol (in current Rules 1721.0370 – 1721.0420).

Ms. Hartkopf stated that no one, especially cervidae producers, wants CWD in Minnesota. Cervidae producers have asked for and upheld mandatory monitoring, surveillance and testing for more than 13 years, with safeguarding the state from CWD as their goal. All stakeholders need to acknowledge gaps and work together to close them. Wild deer carcass transportation and disposal is not well regulated or enforced, so hunters and taxidermists need education on proper steps to keep CWD out of the state.

Ms. Hartkopf mentioned examples of gaps cervid farmers see within their own industry. Movement restrictions placed on farms surrounding a farm with a CWD-positive case is one concern. Right now, farms surrounding a positive farm have to double fence or slaughter their animals, while the Rules state that the farm with the positive case can move animals under permit. Another concern is escapes. Ms. Hartkopf said the MN EBA and Minnesota Deer Farmers Association need to take this concern back to their members and remind them of the importance of keeping their fences maintained and educating their workers about keeping the gates closed at all times.

Mr. Compart asked how Minnesota's farmed cervidae program compares with the programs in other states. Dr. Anderson stated that the main difference is that Minnesota requires every farm to be certified and survey for CWD, no matter how large or small the herd is. Other states have provisions for shooting preserves, but may not require that all animals that die be tested. Minnesota's rules are as strict or stricter than most states. Mr. Simon added that he has worked with six or more states on movement of reindeer into their states, and those states have requested he send them Minnesota's requirements. Some states have said they plan to copy Minnesota's program.

## Chronic Wasting Disease Update

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Dr. Paul Anderson offered an update on CWD in Minnesota's farmed cervids. Currently, the Board has identified two farms with CWD: one in Crow Wing County, a herd of 108 white-tailed deer and 30 mule deer. The owner does not want to depopulate his herd but is working with field staff and the USDA in creating a herd plan. The plan will take five years to complete. He has purchased the materials and is in the process of building a double fence.

The pen where the two positive deer were identified also contained seven other white-tailed deer. Those animals were rectal biopsied last week, and Dr. Anderson said test results will be available this afternoon or tomorrow. The Board will develop a plan to have all of the animals rectal biopsied and removed as positives are found. Dr. Anderson stated that the Board has not had a farm want to develop a long-term herd plan before, and it does not happen often in the U.S.

There was one Crow Wing County traceout of two mule deer in Stearns County. Nothing has been decided about those animals. The owner may want to get fawns from them and then might be willing to depopulate. The other positive case was identified in Meeker County. This is a small herd of 14 animals. The USDA has purchased them, and they will be harvested on April 25. All of the fences will stay up, and the topsoil and anything in it will be scraped off, burned, and buried.

Dr. Ames asked if there is any published data on the accuracy of rectal biopsy testing. Dr. Anderson said that, given enough time, many animals will become rectal biopsy positive. About 70 percent of cases will be found. Dr. Mary Donahue added that the test is more or less sensitive depending on the genotype of the animal.

Dr. Lou Cornicelli gave an update on CWD in the wild deer population. Over the winter, the DNR established a CWD management zone and a recreational feeding ban, held a special hunt in January, conducted an aerial survey of the management zone and the area around the one positive deer found north of the management

zone, issued landowner shooting permits to obtain additional samples, and issued USDA sharpshooting contracts focused on the core areas from February 20 to March 19.

The special hunt, landowner shooting permits, and USDA sharpshooting resulted in the identification of eight additional CWD-positive deer, which were all found within the same basic area. The overall disease prevalence is at 2.1 percent, which is low. Dr. Cornicelli stated the DNR believes this is a recent infection.

Dr. Cornicelli addressed how CWD may have come to Southeastern Minnesota. It may have been brought through the movement of a deer from a CWD-infected area. There could be a connection to a current or closed cervid farm in Fillmore County. Other possible causes could be the movement of infected carcasses or the illegal release of deer into the wild. Dr. Cornicelli stated that the DNR is collecting as much data as possible, but the explanation for the infection is still unknown.

This fall, the DNR will continue with mandatory CWD sampling in an established CWD management zone, which will be similar in size to the special late hunt zone from this winter. They will continue with export restrictions and surveillance in the surrounding deer permit area during firearm season. As is the DNR's standard procedure, surveillance will continue for at least three years following a CWD-positive case, and the current feeding ban will remain in place until three consecutive years have passed with all negative test results. The DNR will also do surveillance around the CWD-positive cervid farms. They will establish feeding bans that include all surrounding counties and are considering mandatory surveillance during opening weekend of firearm season.

Dr. Cornicelli stated that CWD testing is expensive and is financed solely through the Fish and Wildlife Fund. Because of this, they need to focus on risk-based CWD surveillance around infected facilities, which will cost about \$150,000 per year, for three years. They will be reviewing the epidemiology reports on the Crow Wing and Meeker County facilities to help determine risk in those areas and how to proceed with testing.

Dr. Cornicelli explained his statement, "What happens inside the fence affects what happens outside the fence." The DNR assesses risk based on concerns surrounding farmed cervid inventory rectification, the reuse of tags, CWD test compliance and reported and unreported animal escapes. He agreed that we all want to prevent the establishment of CWD in Minnesota and said that the DNR is committed to keeping open and honest communication with the Board to accomplish this goal.

Mr. Paul Hanowski asked if Dr. Cornicelli stands by his statements to the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association comparing CWD to the Ebola virus. Dr. Cornicelli said he meant the disease response would be similar, in that the response would be immediate and aggressive. That is the only way to stop the disease from becoming established.

Ms. Lynne Osterman asked if Dr. Cornicelli was misquoted in the interview when he said the cervid industry works too closely with the Board. He stated that the industry has a closer relationship with the DNR's stakeholders than the DNR does, so he was quoted accurately. The DNR feels that, as regulators, agencies need to keep an arm's length relationship with their stakeholders in order to continue accurately regulating them. They regulate fish and game licensing for the benefit of all Minnesotans, including fishers and hunters. The public expects the DNR to issue a ticket to someone who does something wrong.

Mr. Jim Byrne stated that the Board's objective is different. The goal is to get producers to comply with the rules. If Board veterinarians were to come in and issue a ticket, they will get a defensive response and opposition to compliance. When the Board creates a relationship with a producer and works to get them in compliance, the response is more positive.

Dr. Thompson asked for details on the aerial survey. Dr. Cornicelli said the snowfall before Christmas made surveying simpler, and the area they flew was roughly the size of the CWD management zone. Most of the area

had about 25 deer per square mile, but the core area where most of the positives have been found had approximately 35 deer per square mile. He said that some are concerned about the DNR shooting more than 1,000 deer in a short time period, but they were taken in an area of over 500 square miles, so the long-term impact will not be severe.

Dr. Mary Donahue asked if the DNR has any information on the genotypes of the positive animals. Dr. Cornicelli said that they do not have that information, but they do have muscle samples from all animals killed since December 31. They will be doing genetic testing on the positive deer to compare them with a number of non-positive animals to see if they are related.

Dean Compart asked if there is a way to use existing captive cervid herds to do research on genetic resistance and CWD. It may be the way to discover if rectal biopsy testing is indeed a reliable option for identifying CWD. Dr. Cornicelli said that this may be an option for captive herds, but it would not be feasible for the wild deer population. He also expressed concern over the funding needed to do the research. Ms. Osterman said that this would be a topic to discuss at the next Farmed Cervid Advisory Committee Meeting.

## Avian Influenza Update

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Dr. Dale Lauer provided an update on avian influenza (AI) in the U.S. USDA monthly wild bird surveillance show AI is identified in 30 percent of all bird species in the late summer and fall. Dr. Lauer noted that AI continues to circulate in wild birds, and keeping domestic poultry safe remains a top priority.

Dr. Lauer mentioned the two cases of H5N2 LPAI identified in Wisconsin and Idaho. The Wisconsin case was found in a commercial turkey facility. The birds tested negative over time and were controlled marketed on April 14. This was a good solution for this situation, where there were few clinical signs of illness and no rise in mortality. Last week, an Idaho flock of ducks and upland gamebirds tested positive for H5N2 LPAI. They plan to watch and test the birds to see how the disease progresses. Dr. Lauer stated that LPAI often allows more options in handling the disease than just depopulation. Dr. Schaeffbauer stated that the USDA is supporting efforts to controlled market flocks with LPAI instead of depopulating them.

Dr. Lauer gave a brief overview of emergency preparedness activities discussed at previous meetings and made special note on three activities. The Board is conducting ongoing AI antibody detection through serology testing (AGID, ELISA). These tests can detect a recent or present AI virus infection. The MPTL does about 50,000-60,000 tests per year, and every flock is tested before being marketed. Through an agreement with the producers, they conduct ongoing surveillance of upland gameland birds and layer flocks. The MPTL is also using PCR testing to identify current HPAI and LPAI infections in flocks. Dr. Lauer stated Minnesota is well prepared to make quick identification of an AI virus infection.

Dr. Lauer also shared a new format for emailed disease alerts. The Board will be using GovDelivery to deliver disease alerts via text and email. The format of the alerts is changing to include a color coded risk level and risk level definitions for easy understanding of the situation. The alerts will still include a map of the area of infection and information on testing.

Mr. Hanowski asked about the relationship between the Board and poultry producers and how important that relationship is to disease management. Dr. Lauer stated that the relationship is very good, and proper disease management heavily depends on this strong relationship. The Board has worked with producers to learn what needs to be done in a disease outbreak, and once a disease alert goes out, the Board depends on the producers to follow the proper procedures to prevent disease spread (delay delivery of feed trucks, controlled marketing of flocks, collecting samples for testing, etc.).

Dr. Lauer also mentioned the MPTL held a HPAI permitted movement drill with the turkey and broiler industries and will hold another with the table-egg layer industries on May 3. These groups are helping to test a new interactive mapping tool that can be used by a limited number of producers in key places around an outbreak. The first drill with the mapping tool went very well. Using this mapping tool combined with the Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) Gateway for permitted movement will allow for a more streamlined and electronic process for permitting.

## **MNIT Interactive Mapping Demonstration**

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Dr. Lauer introduced Ms. Allison Slaats, who offered a demonstration of the interactive mapping tool for use in the event of an AI disease outbreak. One of the lessons learned from the 2015 outbreak was that the industry didn't understand the area of infection, so being able to have a single map that all stakeholders could understand was important. In creating this interactive map, Ms. Slaats stated it also was important to incorporate real-time data from the USDA combined with Minnesota poultry industry premises locations and information on the infected site. Another factor was making sure only appropriate data was shared with those in different roles, such as industry partners and the public, as some data is considered private.

Ms. Slaats then provided a live demonstration of the interactive mapping tool using edited data from the 2015 outbreak. Some of the highlights included:

- A web-based environment that requires a login and a signed confidentiality agreement for access.
- The ability to see where infected premises are and the 10 km buffer zones surrounding them.
- The ability to turn on other information, such as commercial facilities.
- A "what if" feature that allows users to see who would be affected if a certain premises became infected.
- An option to view aerial photography of the state.
- The ability to download a copy of the map.

Ms. Slaats said that other information, such as feed mill delivery routes, could be added as a separate mapping layer. A company would have the ability to do this themselves, or if they provided their route info, she could add it to the map data.

Dr. Linda Glaser said that access to the map has been limited to select Board staff, USDA Veterinary Services staff, industry partners, and several emergency response individuals. The total number of users is about 25-30 people. She said she would send out an email after the meeting with the confidentiality agreement for those who would like to be added as users.

## **Horse Carcass Disposal**

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Mr. Peter Karpe presented a request for the Board to approve a commercial animal composting site permit in Kanabec County. Mr. Karpe runs Prairie Oaks Equine Services and Evergreen Environmental Services, businesses that pick up and dispose of animal carcasses. He said that the only facility still accepting animal carcasses is closing very soon and he need another method of disposal of animals. He has considered cremation, but he would not be able to dispose of all of the animals in the necessary timeframe. He then considered composting, and he searched for an appropriate site to build an acceptable facility. He was able to find property in Kanabec County, in Brunswick Township. The township has endorsed his request.

Mr. Karpe has a very active business, as the number of places available for animal disposal is dwindling. Landfills are no longer accepting animal carcasses, so his services are in demand by the community, including 34

veterinarians. He plans to build a 270' x 90' pole barn with 22' x 26' stalls, though he is uncertain how large his operation will become.

The Board asked Mr. Karpe a number of questions regarding the proposed facility and site, his composting experience, the availability of rendering, and the involvement of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Following the discussion, Mr. Compart recommended tabling the decision on this request until all of the information provided by Mr. Karpe could be carefully reviewed. The Board will reconvene via telephone on Wednesday, April 26 to discuss and offer a decision on Mr. Karpe's request.

## **Election of Officers and Appointment of Executive Director**

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The Board met in a closed session to elect the President and Vice President. Mr. Paul Hanowski nominated Dean Compart for President. Dr. Matt Anderson seconded the nomination. Discussion took place, and the vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Compart as President.

Peter Ripka nominated Paul Hanowski as Vice President. Dr. Graham Brayshaw seconded the nomination. Discussion took place, and Mr. Hanowski was elected as Vice President.

Board members reappointed Dr. Beth Thompson as Executive Director of the Board. Mr. Hanowski made a motion to approve a \$2,000 Achievement Award for Dr. Thompson. Dr. Matt Anderson seconded the motion. Discussion took place. The vote was unanimous to approve the motion to approve a \$2,000 Achievement Award for Dr. Thompson.

## **Adjourn**

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Paul Hanowski made a motion to adjourn, and Peter Ripka seconded the motion, with all present voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Beth Thompson  
State Veterinarian  
Executive Director