

Meeting Minutes: Quarterly Board Meeting

Date: December 13, 2017
Location: University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Room 280

Attendance

Board Members

Dean Compart, Chair
Matt Anderson
Peter Ripka
Paul Hanowski
Graham Brayshaw

Consultants to the Board

Jerry Torrison, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
Trevor Ames, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
Stephan Schaeftbauer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
Stacy Holzbauer, Minnesota Department of Health

Guests

Sarah Delacueva, Office of the Legislative Auditor
Julia Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine
Greg Moulton, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
Mark Nisely, Committee Administrator, Minnesota House of Representatives
Michelle Medina, Minnesota Farmers Union
Whitney Place, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Sara Bailey, Veterinary Student
Ashley Kohls, Minnesota Cattlemen's Association
One member of the public

Staff

Dale Lauer, Assistant Director
Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian
Greg Suskovic, Senior Veterinarian
Courtney Wheeler, Senior Veterinarian
Michael Crusan, Communications Director
Morgan Grelson, Business Manager
Erin Crider, Communications Specialist
Samantha Miltz, Office and Administrative Specialist Intermediate

Call Meeting to Order/Approval of Minutes

Dean Compart called the meeting to order and asked for corrections to or a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20 meeting. Graham Brayshaw made a motion to approve the minutes. Matt Anderson seconded, with all voting aye. Mr. Compart then asked for a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting. Peter Ripka made a motion to approve the agenda, and Graham Brayshaw seconded, with all voting aye.

Board of Animal Health Update

Dr. Dale Lauer stated that he would provide the Board of Animal Health update, as Dr. Beth Thompson is unavailable due to a family emergency. In October, a number of Board staff attended the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA. This meeting brings together state animal health officials, commodity groups, related industries, and the USDA, which often provides program funding and direction for livestock and poultry programs. USAHA is organized so that each species and disease is represented in their committees and subcommittees, and the Board is well represented in these groups. Dr. Linda Glaser is the chair of the Interstate and International Commerce Committee; Dr. Thompson is the chair of the Tuberculosis Subcommittee of the Cattle and Bison Committee; and Dr. Lauer is chair of the Poultry and Other Avian Species Committee.

Dr. Lauer mentioned that the Livestock Producer #2 seat on the Board of Animal Health has been open for applications for the last few months. The Governor will now review the applicants and appoint a new board member in the next month or so, most likely before the next board meeting.

Dr. Lauer thanked the outgoing member, Paul Hanowski, for his commitment to the Board and the poultry industry. Mr. Hanowski has brought strong knowledge of the poultry industry, common sense and the ability to think through problems. He has been an excellent member of the board over the past eight years. Dr. Lauer also thanked all of the board members for their willingness to share their time and knowledge for the benefit of animal health, which makes the Board an effective state agency.

Board of Animal Health Program Audit Overview

Sarah Delacueva, Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA), provided an overview of the ongoing audit of the Farmed Cervidae Program. The OLA is an independent, non-partisan office in the Legislative Branch of the state government. This year, the Board was nominated for an evaluation by the OLA.

Ms. Delacueva may use a number of methods to evaluate the Farmed Cervidae program, including interviewing anyone with interests in the program, learning about the laws that govern it, reviewing program literature, conducting surveys and site visits, and collecting data, including non-public data, which will be protected. At the end of the review, the OLA will produce a report, including recommendations for the Board and the Legislature. The OLA will release the report in a legislative hearing, likely to the Legislative Audit Commission, in early April 2018.

Ms. Delacueva stated she will be evaluating three specific areas:

- The Board's statutory responsibilities in overseeing the farmed cervidae program and how well the Board accomplishes them.
- The Board's response to chronic wasting disease (CWD).
- The Board's partnership with the Department of Natural Resources in responding to CWD.

She started her evaluation in October and expects to start writing her report in January. She will share it with the Board after it is finished so the Board can comment on it prior to sharing it with the legislature.

Legislative Overview

Whitney Place gave an overview of the Board's plans for the upcoming Legislative session. 2018 is a bonding year, and the session will begin February 20 and will end May 21. Funding the legislature and a projected state budget deficit are the major concerns for this session. The most recent budget forecast predicted a \$188 million deficit for 2018-2019 and over \$586 million for 2020-2021.

Ms. Place has talked with Dr. Thompson about plans for this session, and the Board will not be asking for more funding or legislative changes. However, that may change, depending on the findings and recommendations of the Farmed Cervidae program audit.

A company in Balaton, Minnesota, has begun producing shrimp, and they plan to propose a bill to regulate the aquaculture industry. The MDA, DNR, Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Board are working together to determine the best way to protect the health of the animals and the environment. This has never been done before, and all parties are working to write the proposed language, which will be shared with the Board at their next meeting.

Ms. Place stated that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Rural Finance Authority, a revolving loan program designed to help farms consolidate and invest in livestock, has almost spent the \$35 million in funding received last year. They will be asking for another \$20 million in this session.

The MDA and other partners are working on improving rural mental health, especially with the state of the agricultural economy and elevated suicide rates in agricultural professions. The MDA has started a Farm and Rural Helpline, a free, confidential service available 24 hours a day for farmers and rural Minnesotans. They are also hosting a series of workshops for those who work with farmers on a regular basis. It is designed to help these people recognize the signs of stress and be able to provide resources to help. Veterinarians are invited to attend the workshops, which will be held across the state January through March.

Farmed Cervidae Update

Dr. Courtney Wheeler (in the absence of Dr. Glaser and Dr. Thompson) offered an update on the Farmed Cervidae Program. Dr. Wheeler stated that the program recently has printed a second edition of the Farmed Cervidae Handbook, which is being shared with all the cervidae producers in Minnesota.

Dr. Wheeler gave an overview of CWD in Minnesota farmed cervidae.

- **Crow Wing County:** CWD detected in December 2016. The herd will not be depopulated at this time. The property includes a hunting preserve and all harvested animals have been tested. So far, 60 animals have been tested, and no animals have tested CWD positive.
- **Meeker County:** This farm was a trace out from the Crow Wing County herd. The herd owner chose to depopulate the herd in April 2017. Five animals tested positive for CWD.
- **Winona County:** In November, a harvested animal tested positive for CWD. The herd has been quarantined, and three animals have been tested to date. Two have tested CWD positive. The herd includes six males, one female and one buck fawn. The Board is working with the herd owner to determine the best course of action. Area district staff are checking into USDA indemnity.

Dr. Wheeler also gave an overview of the DNR's sample collection efforts during the hunting season. The DNR collected more than 11,000 samples around the Meeker and Crow Wing County CWD positive farms and around the CWD Management Zone, and no positives were found. They also collected samples within the CWD Management Zone, where CWD was first found in late 2016, and six positives were found. With the recent positives at the Winona County farm, the DNR will collect samples from animals harvested in that area next fall.

Dr. Wheeler presented a request for the Board to approve the establishment of a Farmed Cervidae Task Force. The task force would replace the Farmed Cervidae Advisory Committee. It would be limited to 15 members, who would serve for a term of two years or less. They would meet on a 'quarterly' basis and would have clearly defined subjects and objectives to discuss. Two immediate issues are defining guidelines for exclusionary fencing and identifying actions (if any) that need to be taken to keep the industry viable. The task force would report back to the Board through presentations at Board meetings or written minutes.

Dr. Wheeler asked for a motion to approve the establishment of a Farmed Cervidae Task Force, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 15.015 and 15.059. Paul Hanowski made the motion, and Peter Ripka seconded, with all voting aye.

Mr. Hanowski asked about the costs associated with a CWD test, including staff time. Dr. Torrison said they cost \$23 each, but that does not include staff time. Dr. Wheeler thought the DNR might have an annual report that would include staffing costs. She offered to check with the DNR and get back to the Board with any information.

Mr. Compart asked about Wisconsin's response to CWD. Dr. Wheeler said states nationwide are still making efforts to learn more about CWD. Dr. Lauer suggested adding an update on Wisconsin and other state's responses to CWD to the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Poultry Update

Dr. Lauer provided a poultry program update. He stated that the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) biosecurity audits being conducted by Board staff are ongoing. He and Dr. Shauna Voss have sent out information requests to 31 producers. At present, nine producers have had satisfactory results, and five producers have been asked for corrective actions, as they have incomplete information in fulfilling the NPIP biosecurity principles. Producers have been very cooperative. Dr. Lauer and Dr. Voss try to complete two audits per week, but they have approximately 400 audits in Minnesota to complete by 2020. They will be training field staff to conduct audits so the Board can complete them more quickly.

Mr. Compart asked Mr. Hanowski about the audit process, as his farm recently went through it. Mr. Hanowski said that the process was somewhat burdensome, but once all producers have been through audits, the industry will be much improved because biosecurity is being brought to the forefront. As an example, he mentioned that some growers in his area have purchased extra farm equipment so they do not have to move it from site to site. Dr. Stephan Schaeffbauer said that linking indemnity to biosecurity plans also helps.

Dr. Stacey Schwabenlander asked if producers are using the Poultry Disease Planning Tool developed by Dr. Carol Cardona and Clara Brandt at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine to assist with the biosecurity audits. Dr. Lauer stated that the tool was designed to help Minnesota poultry producers be prepared before a disease outbreak such as HPAI occurs. Dr. Cardona is applying for another grant from U.S. Poultry and Egg Association to add tools that would assist with the NPIP biosecurity audits.

Dr. Lauer led a discussion and reasons for a temporary exemption of *Mycoplasma* testing for backyard turkey producers until the rules are permanently changed. The exemption would include testing for both *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG)

and *Mycoplasma synoviae* (MS). Backyard turkey flocks are often co-mingled with other chickens, waterfowl and gamebirds that make maintaining a MG and MS Clean status difficult. Minnesota's *Mycoplasma* requirement as it applies to backyard turkeys is more restrictive than other state's requirements. This is preventing Minnesota backyard turkey producers and hobbyists from obtaining unusual or rare breeds of turkeys from out-state producers in the next few months when there is significant hatching activities and backyard poultry movement. The last rule change was aimed at larger commercial turkey producers, and smaller backyard producers are now having difficulty meeting the *Mycoplasma* testing and import requirements. Dr. Lauer requested:

Board members direct the Executive Director, Dr. Beth Thompson, and Board staff to implement a Board Policy to classify turkey producers who maintain a backyard (hobbyist) operation and are affected by the Board Rules above, be exempt from the Mycoplasma testing until new rules are promulgated. This policy change does not apply to large turkey producers that are considered commercial turkey operations.

Dr. Schaeffbauer asked what the "cutoff number" is for backyard versus commercial producers. Dr. Lauer and Dr. Voss have settled on 1,000 birds or less to be considered a backyard producer. This number needs to be flexible and is dependent on the type of poultry raised, but usually individuals who have backyard poultry or raise poultry as a hobby are not poultry producers associated with or raising birds for the large commercial poultry companies.

Mr. Hanowski stated that he had talked about this policy change with Dr. Lauer and Dr. Voss, and he is in support of it. Dr. Brayshaw asked if there is any risk to commercial producers in the state. Dr. Lauer stated that the backyard producers are a group of people who exhibit their birds at fairs, sell from their home or bring birds to community sales; they generally are not near or associated with commercial poultry operations.

Mr. Compart asked for a motion to accept the Board Policy Request. Mr. Hanowski made a motion, and Dr. Brayshaw seconded it, with all voting aye.

Senecavirus A Investigations

Dr. Greg Suskovic updated the Board on Senecavirus A (SVA) investigations in Minnesota.

- In Fiscal Year 2017, the Board performed 149 foreign animal disease (FAD) investigations, including 138 swine vesicular investigations (all diagnosed as SVA).
- In Fiscal Year 2018, 31 of 34 FAD investigations were for swine vesicular investigations. All have been negative for FAD.

Investigations are usually started by USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Cases have been negative for foot and mouth disease (FMD) and are usually SVA positive. All investigations are traced back to the farm of origin. A slaughter plant can have Board staff come and collect samples, or an accredited herd veterinarian can do sample collection. The latter is likely to be faster and will not keep the plant on hold as long as waiting for Board staff to arrive.

Dr. Suskovic summarized the current routine investigation protocol:

- He and Dr. Mary Donahue from the USDA review each case and assign one of the Board's six trained foreign animal disease diagnosticians (FADDs) to cover any swine vesicular cases at slaughter plants.
- Samples are couriered to St. Paul by Board field staff whenever possible.
- Their goal is to get the samples to the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) by 12:30 p.m. for end-of-business day test results in order to allow plants to harvest the hogs within 24-36 hours.
- All samples collected in duplicate are also sent to the Federal Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab (FADDL) via FedEx.

Mr. Compart asked about the incubation period for SVA and if the source of the infection is known. Dr. Suskovic stated there is still work to be done to identify the source. Dr. Torrison stated that Dr. Fabio Vannucci is seeking funding for a study to support the theory that the source of SVA is in the transportation process. Serology testing shows SVA is prevalent at plants, but not as much at farms. If a truck is not properly disinfected before picking up a subsequent load from a farm, vesicles start appearing on pigs on the farm a few days later. However, vesicles are not detected until the animals are at the plant and FSIS spots them. Informal discussions with farmers have shown the virus is usually found in loads other than the first load. Dr. Suskovic mentioned he sees SVA in a first load about one quarter of the time.

Dr. Suskovic stated SVA is not a serious disease, but it presents similarly to FMD. Swine vesicular FAD investigations will continue in order to maintain Minnesota's FAD vigilance.

College of Veterinary Medicine Update

Dr. Trevor Ames provided an update on the College of Veterinary Medicine. The Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Loan Forgiveness Program is now in the state's base budget. This program is able to fund up to five students per biennium \$15,000 per year for up to five years. The program targets students living in rural areas, and fourth-year students and first year graduates are given priority. Program applications are due January 4.

The College held their annual Research Days in October. Awards were mostly given to swine faculty, including Dr. Bob Morrison, who passed away in April. Dr. Morrison's wife accepted the Mark of Excellence Award on his behalf.

Due to several grants, the College has started a number of new research and education efforts. Dr. Carol Cardona received a cooperative grant from the USDA to fund a project titled, "Facilitating Public-Private Partnerships for the Management of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and other Animal Disease Emergencies to Support Continuity of Business." This will further help the state with preparations for HPAI and other animal disease events. The College also was able to create about nine to 10 new faculty positions focused on agriculture and food production, including food animal welfare and swine health.

Dr. Ames stated the number of applicants for next year's class has increased. The state currently has a shortage of veterinarians in all areas of practice. The College is currently in talks with South Dakota State University (SDSU) to have 20 students study their first two years at SDSU and then come to the University of Minnesota for their last two years. The program would target rural food animal students and would be modeled after the program between Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska.

Veterinary Isolation Building Tour

Dr. Ames, Paula Buchner and Ed Craig from the University of Minnesota led Board members and meeting attendees on a tour of the \$ 29.5 million Veterinary Isolation Building located on the St. Paul Campus. The new state-of-the-art veterinary isolation bio-containment facility is expected to open in 2018.

Ovine Progressive Pneumonia (OPP) Eradication Trial Update

Judy Lewman offered an update on the OPP Eradication Trial, as Holly Neaton was ill. Ms. Lewman stated that the trial and its final report are complete. Because of this trial, those involved will now be promoting a new eradication system. Previously, people would pull lambs after birth and bottle raise them apart from the ewe. However, the trial found that virus transmission through colostrum and milk made up only about 10-30 percent of cases. Most were from adult-to-

adult transmissions. They found that allowing all lambs should stay with their mothers until about 6-8 weeks, then be weaned and removed from an infected dam, keeping them apart for life. This resulted in the young almost always remaining OPP negative.

Ms. Lewman said the trial had a participant from the large Pipestone sheep program. He participated in the trial all four years, and has a flock of 400 ewes expected to be free of OPP by mid-2018. He is talking to his peers about the success of this new system. Those involved in the trial have consulted with other flocks around the country to implement this system, and some were able to go from as much as 90 percent positive to 100 percent negative in 18 months.

Ms. Lewman also remarked that it is commonly believed that a ewe is done lambing by 5 to 6 years of age. However, she has found that ewes free of this virus can remain productive until 9-10 years old.

Cindy Wolf and Jim Logan, co-chairs of the American Sheep Industry's Animal Health Committee, and the National Sheep Association are interested in supporting it. Because of this, another pilot program involving states from across the country may help establish this system as the new method of eradicating OPP.

Mr. Compart asked how soon lambs can be tested, assuming antibodies from colostrum can give inaccurate test results. Ms. Lewman said they completed successful testing soon after weaning, but a safe interval is 7-8 weeks. The new test has been used in the U.K. since 1999 and not only gives a positive or negative reading, but also allows for identifying animals that are close to being positive or negative so producers can make more informed choices about their flocks.

Dr. Wheeler asked what the prevalence of OPP is nationwide. Ms. Lewman said producers feel having OPP in the flock is normal, so prevalence is about 30-40 percent. It is likely higher in the Midwest, as ewes are shipped nationally west to east. Also, ewes in the Midwest are often housed in barns, which generally keeps animals closer together and spreads disease more readily.

Human Exposure to *Brucella Abortus* RB51 Discussion

Dr. Stacy Holzbauer provided an update on the current incidence of RB51 exposure in the U.S. More people in the U.S. are looking for natural, unprocessed foods and opportunities to buy locally. As a result, consumption of raw milk has increased. In September of 2017, one individual in Texas was hospitalized with RB51. This person had purchased and consumed raw milk from a Texas dairy. The company cooperated with the investigation, and it revealed more than 800 households from at least 11 states had purchased the milk, and 83 percent of household members were exposed by drinking it. These people were given antibiotics and will be monitored for six months. Milk cultures from two of the dairy's cows were positive for RB51.

Dr. Holzbauer said the RB51 vaccine is used in the U.S. for prevention of brucellosis in cattle. Vaccine use has been decreasing since 2009, when all 50 states were declared "Brucellosis Free" by the USDA. However, it is still widely used in the industry.

The second case occurred last month in New Jersey. One individual was hospitalized with RB51 after drinking raw milk from an online company that illegally distributes milk to Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island. The company will not cooperate with authorities and continues distribution.

In Minnesota, human brucellosis cases are reportable to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). All case subjects are interviewed to determine cause of exposure. In the case of RB51 and raw milk consumption, MDH would work with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to identify other exposed individuals and may request RB51 vaccination records from the Board, depending on the implicated farm's cooperation.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Update

Dr. Jerry Torrison shared an update on the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). He said they are looking for more support for state funding in the legislative session. They have expanded the MPTL and added new staff and equipment. They are also looking to be more competitive with wages and benefits to keep the staff they have.

During the last week of April, the VDL and MPTL will be audited by an accreditation team from the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD). They will come in for a site visit in St. Paul and at the MPTL in Willmar.

Dr. Torrison summarized the improvements to their information technology systems. They have been working on the client interface; next they will focus on leveraging VDL data to help producers, the Board, and others make good animal health decisions, and finally moving the VDL toward operating more efficiently.

USDA Update

Dr. Stephan Schaeffbauer presented an update on USDA activities. In September, the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) launched the Beef Cow-Calf 2017 Study. About 4,000 producers will be asked to participate. The study surveys producers and focuses on industry operations and animal health management practices. Dr. Mary Donahue helped create information packets field staff can to give producers and veterinarians as a “heads-up” so they can prepare to respond to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Veterinary Services (VS) surveys. These surveys are time-consuming, so producers will receive a number of incentives for completing them, including a forage nutrient analysis and test results regarding persistent infection with bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) virus for their entire calf crop.

Dr. Schaeffbauer mentioned they have begun a data call for farmed cervidae TB testing to help determine the proper interval between TB vaccinations. This was a request that came from this fall’s USAHA Meeting. The data is due for submission by the middle of January.

The USDA has implemented the Field Activity Report Dashboard, a standardized report for USDA field staff to track their time and activities. This system will make extracting data from any region of the country more efficient. Dr. Schaeffbauer was asked if she could find out how many federal employee hours were devoted to farmed cervidae work. Dr. Schaeffbauer said she could pull that information from the system and would present it at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Schaeffbauer introduced Dr. Greg Moulton as their new Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) in the Southeast District. Dr. Moulton has a background in mixed animal veterinary practice.

Dr. Schaeffbauer also mentioned a number of Veterinary Services trainings occurring in 2018, including team development training sessions in January, an animal compensation course on evaluating herds, and a live bird market continuing education course in August.

Human Resources and Budget Update

Morgan Grelson offered an update on the Board’s human resources activities and budget. In the past two years, the Board has seen a number of staffing changes, including six retirements. As things change, the Board works to create a solid workforce with promotions and new hires. He highlighted several human resources issues:

- Six weeks of paid parental leave became law in May. Paid parental leave is one way the state is working to stay competitive with similar government entities.

- The state is also working to gain more employees through the Connect 700 Program, which is 700 hours of on-the-job demonstration to provide reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities during the hiring process. The Board continues to seek opportunities to develop connections with disabled individuals.
- Labor contracts for the state's two largest unions were not approved this fall. Old contracts remain in effect, and new contracts will come before the legislature in February.
- The Board and MDA are jointly funding a new Planner Principal State position, to be hired in 2018. The Board is using Emergency Preparedness funds to cover half of the cost.

Mr. Grelson mentioned the projection of a statewide \$188 million deficit for the current biennium and a negative balance of \$586 million for the 2020-2021 biennium. Unknowns in federal policy make it difficult to predict if this will have an impact on the Board's budget. Mr. Grelson said the Board will have a better understanding of the budget in February, after the state releases the updated biennium budget projection and the federal government finalizes its budget.

Next meeting and adjourn

Mr. Compart again thanked Mr. Hanowski for his service to the Board. He then proposed setting a date for the next meeting. Dr. Lauer suggested waiting to schedule until Governor Dayton appoints the new Board member and then work with Dr. Thompson to set the date for the February meeting. Mr. Compart agreed with Dr. Lauer's suggestion.

Mr. Compart asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hanowski made the motion, Mr. Brayshaw seconded, with all voting aye.