

## **Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health**

**Wednesday, December 3, 2014**

A quarterly meeting of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health was held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 3, 2014 at the Pork Board office in Mankato. The following people were present:

### **Board Members**

Steve Brake, Producer

Paul Hanowski, Producer

Dean Compart, Producer

Matt Anderson, Veterinarian

### **Consultants to the Board**

Jim Collins, Director, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Trevor Ames, Dean, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine

### **Guests**

Mike Stine, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services

Jill Resler, Minnesota Pork Board and Minnesota Pork Producers Association

Elaine Hanson, Minnesota Pet Breeders Association

Julie Gerdes, Animal Safety League

Ronda Reardon, West End Equine Services

Stacy Holzbauer, Minnesota Department of Health

Samantha Saunders, Minnesota Department of Health

Joni Scheftel, Minnesota Department of Health

Kurt Rossow, University of Minnesota

Tom Helfter, Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association

David Mills, Willmar Poultry Company

### **Staff Members**

William Hartmann, Executive Director

Paul Anderson, Assistant Director

Dale Lauer, Assistant Director

Beth Thompson, Assistant Director

Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian

Kris Petrini, Assistant Director

Shauna Voss, Senior Veterinarian

Erica Gunderson, Communications Specialist

Bethany Hahn, Communications Director

Greg Suskovic, District Veterinarian

Carl Denkinger, Agricultural Consultant

Terry Sistad, Agricultural Advisor

Susan McClanahan, District Veterinarian

## **Approval of Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health held on Wednesday, September 3, 2014**

A motion was made by Matt Anderson and seconded by Dean Compart, with all present voting aye to approve the minutes of the Wednesday, September 3, 2014 meeting.

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

### **Minnesota Pork Board and Pork Producers Association**

Jill Resler spoke about pork production in Minnesota and explained the role of the two organizations. Minnesota ranks second in hog production nationally. Minnesota pig farmers marketed 14 million hogs in 2013 and create 22,500 jobs. Compared to 50 years ago, pig farmers use 41 percent less water and 78 percent less land to produce one pound of pork.

The Minnesota Pork Board is led by a 12-member executive board and is funded through the mandatory pork check off. Every time someone sells pork, 40 cents per 100 dollars goes to national pork check off. Seventeen percent of collected funds are then returned to Minnesota. The program has U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversight so funds collected are used for research, promotion and education.

The Minnesota Pork Producers Association is led by a 9-member executive board and is funded through voluntary enrollment in the strategic investment program. Ten cents of every 100 dollars sold goes to fight for reasonable legislation and regulation, lobbying and countering misinformation and activists. Anything funded through these dollars are not susceptible to FOIA requests.

### **Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory**

Dr. Jim Collins spoke about activities at the University of Minnesota (U of M) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). The VDL has received funding to combat porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv). The College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and the VDL are trying to determine the best use of the money.

A new piece of equipment called Miseq, which is used for genome sequencing of different viruses, is up and running in the Cargill building on the St. Paul campus. The sequencer can be used on viruses found in all different species of animals. It will save a lot of time for analyses, with results averaging about one week. At this time the VDL is considering offering sequencing as a free service.

The VDL will be hosting the next quarterly meeting of the Board of Animal Health in February 2015. The VDL is hoping to have a new electron microscope installed prior to this meeting. The new telepathology technology gives the VDL the capability to provide pathology services anywhere in the world. In addition to the new equipment purchases, the VDL also used the increased funding to hire two new food animal pathologists.

### **USDA Veterinary Services**

Dr. Mike Stine provided an update on the organization and activities of the agency. In Minnesota there are veterinary medical officers and animal health technicians who do many of the same things as the Board of Animal Health field staff. This includes conducting farmed cervidae inspections, reauthorizations of poultry testing agents and farm visits.

The agency reorganization seems to be heading in the right direction. Employees are adjusting to the new structure. Minnesota's administrative officer works out of Ohio. There have been discussions of Minnesota's VS office moving. Staffing in the office consists of the import/export veterinarian, Joe Frank, and the veterinary records technician. The veterinary program assistant will soon be hired. The animal health technicians take turns working in the office to help cover all of the duties.

Though USDA/VS is not going to be able to assist the Board with the new commercial dog and cat breeder program, Dr. Bill Hartmann expressed gratitude for their help in many other areas.

### **Swine Diseases**

Dr. Kurt Russow gave an update on diseases in swine. So far this winter, swine enteric coronavirus disease (SECD) and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRSv) have remained fairly dormant. Current infections don't appear to be spreading and no new infections have been found. Porcine epidemic diarrhea virus has also been very quiet, especially when compared to last year during the same time period. Delta Corona-virus has not been found since the summer and probably won't be around throughout the winter months.

There is a new disease that the U of M is studying which appears to be a necrosis stress-like syndrome. It has been found to affect the diaphragm, ham, shank and other areas of skeletal muscle in pigs. There doesn't appear to be any gross lesions, nor does it appear to affect the heart. The disease has a quick onset and causes pain when the animal is walking. Infected pigs exhibit lethargy and don't want to get up or move. The disease looks like porcine stress syndrome but tests for that disease have all come back negative. At this point, the disease does not seem to be infectious. The U of M will continue to investigate the disease and determine what causes it. That way we can learn more about testing and possible treatment.

### **Hog Barn Fire and Carcass Disposal**

Terry Sistad and Carl Denkinger talked about assisting with carcass disposal after a barn fire. In October there was a fire on a hog farm near Fairmont. A large sow farm that housed over 12,000 pigs was destroyed after a fire started in one of the central buildings. The fire quickly spread to adjacent buildings resulting in the death of over 7,000 piglets and 4,000 sows. In those situations it is very difficult to separate carcasses from the debris and metal, so rendering is not an option for carcass disposal. In this particular case, burial was the only option.

Several factors determine which method of carcass disposal is best for any given situation, including time of year, location and size of the premises, weather, sustained damage and number of affected animals. The Board is available to be onsite to assist during these types of disasters. Board field staff can lay out the options and help producers make decisions that will be best under the circumstances.

Fortunately, there are a few companies who specialize in cleaning up after fires on livestock farms. Barn fires are a real-life example of why it is important for farmers to have an on-farm emergency plan.

### **College of Veterinary Medicine**

Dr. Trevor Ames gave an update on the U of M's College of Veterinary Medicine. The CVM earned renewed accreditation for the next seven years. The report from the accrediting body was very complimentary. The

CVM has had an on-going project with the U.S. Agency for Agricultural International Development. Funding for the project was recently renewed. In the previous proposal, the lead agency for this work was based in Washington D.C. The U of M is now the primary and the lead college is the CVM. The ceiling of the grant is 50 million. The funds go towards working with universities in East Africa and Southeast Asia to teach them about dealing with pandemics. Specifically, teaching public health agencies and hospitals and doctors to work together.

The CVM again hosted the Lehman Swine Conference this year and it was the largest attended to date. The college also hosted a similar meeting in China with roughly 1,500 in attendance. The format of the Lehman conference has been copied to host a dairy conference in China as well. Hosting these types of events creates a source of funding for graduate students and helps China learn more about the U.S. agriculture industry.

During the upcoming legislative session, the CVM will be working with elected officials to secure funding to build new veterinary isolation laboratories. New facilities would allow the college to do important work in a safe and secure environment. This summer the CVM should have been doing trials on porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv) in feed but could not because the current facilities do not have air conditioning. The college will ask for 27 million for the project.

### **Minnesota Preparedness and Ebola**

Stacy Holzbauer presented information on the current Ebola outbreak affecting West Africa and what it could mean for people and animals in Minnesota. Currently, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is monitoring travelers into the state from the most heavily affected African countries as part of a surveillance protocol set in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Due to a large West African refugee population, Minnesota has the seventh highest rate of travel from the affected countries. At this time, the MDH is monitoring an average of 20-30 travelers each week with a total of 80-90 people under surveillance at any given time. Thus far, all travelers have been in a low-risk category.

The Zaire strain of the Ebola virus, which is the strain responsible for the current outbreak, has not been isolated in any animals thus far. Antibodies have been found in three species of tree fruit bats. Research on Ebola in canine species has found that antibodies rise in dogs that have been in contact with bodily fluids from infected Ebola patients, but no additional information on Ebola infection in dogs exists. The MDH has decided to make recommendations for isolating and/or testing pets on a case by case basis. If isolation were necessary, the CVM has facilities to host the pets.

### **Public Health Investigation**

Samantha Saunders provided information on recent Salmonella infections in a turkey hatchery in Benton County. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) conducts routine disease surveillance, including Salmonella. In October 2014, the MDH found Salmonella typhimurium-type illness in a former turkey hatchery employee. Further investigation found that there were eight or nine other ill employees that worked at the same hatchery. This type of Salmonella occurs in eight – ten cases in Minnesota each year. However, the infections are usually pork-related and associated with live animal markets. This is the case nation-wide as well.

The MDH developed a questionnaire for employees of the hatchery. Forty-four employees were interviewed. Of the 12 people that reported illness, all had diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Other symptoms included

fever, bloody stools and vomiting. In summary, sporadic cases of Salmonella among agricultural workers are expected and even common among short-term workers due to lack of immunity. However, outbreaks of Salmonella generally indicate more serious issues such as environmental contamination or ill animals.

Hatchery management personnel and the MDH collaborated very well in this situation. Both parties were able to learn from the experience.

### **Breeding Flock Update**

Dr. David Mills reported on findings from a recent Salmonella outbreak at their hatchery in Foley, Minnesota. Hatchery management and staff from the MDH looked at each process in the hatchery in an effort to identify areas where risk of spreading Salmonella infection was greatest. There were a few areas of concern, including accidental double dilution of sanitizer, lack of employees wearing personal protective equipment, the use of high pressure cleaning and a transfer of box pads back to the hatchery from the farm after trucks returned from delivering the hatched birds. The hatchery was able to make adjustments in each of the identified risk factor areas to help prevent future Salmonella infections.

Dr. Dale Lauer explained that the Board assisted in this situation by connecting the industry with the MDH so that the investigation could begin and move along more quickly. The Board's relationship with the poultry industry paired with ongoing surveillance for Salmonella play a big role in identifying infections and stopping the spread as quickly as possible. The Board also completes regular inspections of all breeder flocks to make sure things are operating under current standards for sanitization.

### **Avian Metapneumovirus**

Dr. Dale Lauer gave an update on avian metapneumovirus (aMPV). Since the board meeting in September, two additional positive cases have been found. One case was found in Becker county and the other in Kandiyohi County. To date, five breeder flocks have tested positive for the disease.

The MPTL has the option of using other facilities to test for aMPV. A positive serum bank at McGraw has been created to help improve diagnostics. Additional federal funding will be used in a special project to identify sites where a history of aMPV has been found in the past. The MPTL is also working on creating a subcommittee that will help determine how to deal with future positive cases of aMPV in Minnesota.

### **Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy**

Dr. Paul Anderson summarized this year's equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) events and the proposed EHM response plan. Dr. Holly Neaton, board member, listened in and participated in this discussion via conference phone.

In March and April 2014, Minnesota dealt with several cases of EHM. At the quarterly meeting of the Board of Animal Health held in April, many representatives of the equine community requested that the Board make EHM a reportable disease and create a response protocol for future cases. The Board members voted unanimously to make EHM a reportable disease during that meeting.

In October, Board staff members hosted a meeting with equine industry representatives to develop an EHM response protocol as requested. The policy includes mandatory testing, quarantines and public notification standards.

After discussing the proposed protocol during the board meeting on December 3, 2014, Paul Anderson asked for an affirmative vote from all of the board members to approve the EHM policy. A motion was made by Dean Compart and seconded by Matt Anderson, with all members voting aye to approve the EHM policy with the following changes:

- Definitions: Sub. 6 – Official test for EHV-1

Change to: “An official test for EHV-1 is a real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test conducted on nasal swabs or blood samples at a laboratory approved by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), a confirmed necropsy diagnosis, virus isolation, or other test approved by the board.”

- Note: The U of M VDL and the Board would like an official test to be made available at the VDL so that samples could be tested in-state. At the direction of Dr. Trevor Ames, the VDL could begin offering that test in Minnesota.

- EHM: Sub. 2, Part G: Change the word ‘disinfectant’ to ‘disinfected’

Board staff members will send Board members the final EHM protocol document and will notify stakeholders by posting the information on its website and in Animal Bytes.

### **Commercial Dog and Cat Breeder Program**

Dr. Paul Anderson gave an update on the new commercial dog and cat breeder program. Breeders must be licensed by July 1, 2015. We currently have 10 licensed breeders. The first meeting of the dog and cat breeders advisory committee is scheduled for December 10 in St. Cloud. The committee is made up of veterinarians, U of M staff members, one cat breeder and representatives of the Minnesota Pet Breeders Association, Animal Folks and the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association. Dr. Holly Neaton, vice president of the Board of Animal Health, is also on the committee.

The law requires commercial breeders to develop and maintain a veterinary protocol. At the committee meeting, we will go through the proposed protocol and ask for feedback from the committee. Paul Anderson will update the board members on the committee meeting at the next meeting of the Board of Animal Health in February.

### **Date and Place of Next Board Meeting**

The Board will hold their next quarterly meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at the U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in St. Paul, Minnesota. Paul Hanowski motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dean Compart with all present voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W L Hartmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. William L. Hartmann  
Executive Director