

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

A quarterly meeting of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health was held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at the Best Western Plus Kelly Inn in St. Cloud. The following people were present:

Board Members

Dean Compart, Producer
Holly Neaton, Veterinarian
Paul Hanowski, Producer
Peter Ripka, Producer

Consultants to the Board

Stephanie Rossow, Interim Director, University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Guests

Mary Donahue, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
Joni Scheftel, Minnesota Department of Health
Erica Nelson, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association
John Piehl, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
David Preisler, Minnesota Pork Board

Staff Members

William Hartmann, Executive Director
Kris Petrini, Assistant Director
Paul Anderson, Assistant Director
Dale Lauer, Assistant Director
Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian
Linda Glaser, Senior Veterinarian
Michael Crusan, Communications Director
Michael Thompson, state Program Administrator-Intermediate

Approval of Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health held on Wednesday, December 16, 2015

A motion was made by Paul Hanowski and seconded by Peter Ripka, with all present voting aye, to approve the minutes of the Wednesday, December 16, 2015 meeting.

Proposed PRRS, PED project with Pork Producers

Dr. Bill Hartmann introduced a project that is currently under consideration by the Minnesota Pork Board and pork producers. This project is essentially a recommendation that import Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVIs) for pigs would include status for Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv), and vaccinations. These CVIs would be entered into a database, and a county-level or zip-code-level map of any positive status herds would be produced and made available to participants.

David Preisler explained the project further. They are currently focused on raising awareness among producers and including them in the development by providing a question and answer document for a newsletter and scheduling meetings. There is concern among producers that the disease status information in the CVIs could one day be used for pre-movement testing requirements and movement restrictions. The project would not involve intra-state movements; it would only involve pigs imported from another state or country under a CVI.

Budget Update and Legislative Session

Dr. Bill Hartmann reported that the federal cooperative agreement still contains \$350,000, but that this money is earmarked for High Path Avian Influenza (HPAI) response activities only. Dr. Kris Petrini was able to extend the deadline of this agreement through March of 2017 to keep the federal money on hand if HPAI returns in 2016. There is roughly \$1.1 million remaining of state HPAI money, but this money is also earmarked for HPAI response and cannot be used for retaining trained staff. A proposal to change those restrictions has been sent to the Governor's Office.

Minnesota Management and Budget has approved funds to pay the first year of salaries for a diagnostician and three Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) technicians who will work at the expanded Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL). After the year, the University of Minnesota will pay these salaries. The Board will continue to pay some direct salaries and information technology costs, and instead of providing a lump sum for testing for the year, the Board will instead pay a cost per test under contract.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Dr. Stephanie Rossow reported on recent disease trends. PRRS activity in the state has increased in the past few months and the virus is mutating rapidly, but the overall picture is somewhat better than it was a year ago. PEDv has been relatively quiet as compared to last year; there is a cluster in south central Minnesota. Near the end of December 2015 some 50 swine production sites broke with either PEDv alone or PEDv and Porcine delta corona virus (PDCoV); the transmission pattern suggests a feed-related spread, though there is some denial of this.

The search for a new director for the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) is progressing with four remaining candidates. The isolation building across the street from the VDL is progressing.

USDA Update

Dr. John Piehl reported on upcoming turnover at all levels of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS). Dr. Mike Stine will be leaving his position as Assistant Director for the state of Minnesota in March, and Dr. John Clifford will be leaving his position as Chief Veterinary Officer as well. More broadly, over the next four to five years a significant percentage of current APHIS personnel will become eligible for retirement.

Dr. Piehl also reported on the Indiana HPAI response. Through the experience of HPAI 2015, they were able to reduce the amount of paperwork required, which helped streamline efforts to depopulate quickly. If APHIS cannot get to the affected farm quickly enough to begin depopulation, the producer will be allowed to begin depopulation procedures and then be compensated for it. The Cooperative Compliance Agreement was reduced to around six pages down from 15-20. Cleaning and disinfection will be compensated on a per-head basis.

Of the 110 premises involved in HPAI 2015 in Minnesota, most have received most of their money, but some producers have not provided any paperwork. Some producers are also still adding to their recovery bill. As the compensation period expires after one year, the deadlines for producers to complete their paperwork are fast approaching. Dr. Hartmann suggested that the case managers might be able to help speed things along.

Swine Vesicular Virus

Dr. Mary Donahue reported on the previous six months of swine vesicular Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) investigations in Minnesota. The clinical presentation of the swine vesicular virus (Senecavirus A) that has been found in these investigations is nearly identical to that of Foot and Mouth Disease virus, which is why rapid identification is so important. Starting in mid-

September, the Minnesota VDL has been running PCR and virus isolation for Senecavirus A; previously these samples were tested only at Plum Island Animal Disease Center, where the turn-around time was typically two to three days. With the VDL online for testing as well, an initial diagnosis can be found more quickly.

HPAI in Indiana

Dr. Dale Lauer reported on the recent HPAI incident in Dubois County, Indiana. H7N8 HPAI was identified on January 15, 2016. These samples had been collected on January 6. Two premises were identified as dangerous contacts to the initial premise and were also depopulated. A control zone that went into effect included around 65 producers. Eight additional flocks were identified with H7N8 through surveillance testing; these flocks were asymptomatic at the time of detection, and the virus found at these flocks was classified as Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI). None of the approximately 100 backyard flocks tested in the area was positive for either HPAI or LPAI. All dangerous contact, HPAI and LPAI positive flocks were depopulated within five days. It is thought that H7N8 LPAI circulates widely in wild birds in that part of the country and elsewhere. Given that the presence of LPAI went undetected in eight flocks, it is likely that the initial - and only - HPAI flock was similarly infected by a LPAI virus that became highly pathogenic. It is unlikely that H7N8 HPAI is circulating in wild birds, but this case demonstrates the vital importance of surveillance for both high and low pathogenic avian influenza.

Dr. Lauer said that another key takeaway from Indiana HPAI was the importance of speed and decisiveness in the earliest stages of the incident. This means future outbreaks need to work very hard to make the 24 hour depopulation goal.

Dr. Piehl reported the numbers for the incident. At its height, around 40 people were working on the incident. 2,100 diagnostic tests were run and 700 permits issued. Around 9,000 potential backyard premises were contacted, which turned up around 100 flocks that were tested.

MPTL Advisory Committee and Renovation

Dr. Lauer provided an update on developments at the MPTL in Willmar, Minnesota. Testing at the old building ceased on December 28, 2015, and it resumed in a nearby warehouse on January 4th, 2016 after all the equipment was moved. The old building was taken down to the studs early on, and construction is on budget to add 8235 square feet to the original building's footprint. When complete, the MPTL will be the second National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory in the state and will be able to run the PCR tests that were

previously only run at the VDL in St. Paul. Other molecular diagnostic capabilities will expand, and there are currently 16 applicants for nine new technician positions.

Dr. Lauer and Dr. Rossow are co-chairs of the MPTL Advisory Committee, an industry board of poultry producers, industry representatives and veterinarians serving the poultry industry to provide guidance to University of Minnesota VDL and Board of Animal Health on support services and diagnostic testing capacity at the MPTL. The committee will review the offered diagnostic tests, provide recommendations for additional tests, and provide input on the qualifications for the MPTL diagnostician and for MPTL operations. The committee will also collaborate with researchers at the nearby Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center and the University of Minnesota Extension.

HPAI Preparations

Dr. Linda Glaser reported on the work that is going in to prepare for HPAI 2016 and beyond. One focus is on speeding up depopulation efforts, either by increasing the number of available foamers throughout the state or by looking for alternate methods, such as mass-euthanasia via CO₂ introduction into sealed barns. Ventilation shutdown of a barn was agreed upon as a method of last resort that is more humane than letting the birds die from disease. Another change for future incidents will be at the Case Manager position. Going forward, all Case Managers will be in-state personnel who will remain with a particular producer throughout the entire incident. This will eliminate the confusion and other problems brought about in HPAI 2015 by rotating new Case Managers every few weeks. Paperwork will be standardized with new procedures for indemnity, the flock plan and compliance agreements. USDA reimbursement money will be on a per-bird basis and there will be an hourly maximum for certain kinds of work.

Dr. Glaser also reported on the University of Minnesota's Secure Food Supply Team, which is split into two working groups. One group is focused on producing an interactive incident map of control zones that would be made available to response personnel and to industry partners. The map will be web-based with password protection and different levels of access. Township-level data might be made available to the public. This map should be up and testing by the end of February. The other group is working to revise the existing food supply plan to make it more practical and less theoretical. This group is working to modify the permitting process, which will now be centered on setting criteria for achieving a "Monitored Premises" status. The goal is to help return these non-infected premises to relatively normal operating levels as soon as possible.

Organization charts are also being created with people's names attached to each position for the initial response. Multiple sizes of charts have been created for incidents of different scales. Dr. Hartmann suggested that state agencies beyond the Department of Agriculture could become involved in future incidents by preparing their own groups of personnel to plug into the incident response team.

Dog and Cat Breeder Inspection Program

Dr. Paul Anderson provided an update of the Commercial Breeder Program. As of the meeting, there are 108 licensed breeders in the state with 14 more preparing for their initial inspections. 187 non-commercial "hobby" breeders have also been identified; these operations produce fewer than six litters per year or have fewer than 10 intact breeding-age animals. Dr. Anderson suspects that there are many more breeders in the state who qualify for licensure. New commercial breeders are being identified every week.

Dr. Anderson thinks the program is doing what it was intended: getting people to improve the conditions at their facilities and the care of their animals. The law requires every breeder have a veterinary protocol signed by a veterinarian, who is responsible for inspecting every animal sold. Increased involvement of private practice veterinarians has made a significant improvement in the level of healthcare at these facilities. Some people have protested the licensure of certain breeders, and the issue has been brought up in the media. One contentious issue has involved ordinances at the county-, city-, or township-level requiring conditional use permits for dog or cat facilities. If the Board becomes aware that a commercial breeder has not obtained the appropriate conditional use permits, the breeder is instructed to remedy the situation as soon as possible. The Board is working with all commercial dog or cat breeders to make sure they've secured the proper permits and are in compliance with local ordinances.

Dr. Anderson also reported on a number of canine brucellosis-positive dogs imported into the state by rescue groups. These animals came from certain reservation lands in South Dakota, where brucellosis appears to be endemic in the free-ranging dog populations. Many of these dogs were diagnosed with the disease after they were placed in adoptive families here in Minnesota. None of the positive dogs were purchased by commercial dog or cat breeders. Every dog determined to be infected with canine brucellosis has been either euthanized or placed under a lifetime quarantine.

Executive Director Position

The Board discussed the need to conduct interviews for the Executive Director position. Dr. Bill Hartmann will be retiring June 1, 2016 and someone needs to be in place on or before that date. The application period ends February 29, 2016 and then the human resources

department will forward a list of qualified candidates for the Board to interview in March. The Board will provide an update on its progress at the next meeting.

Date and Place of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold its next quarterly meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 6 in St. Cloud. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Peter Ripka, seconded by Holly Neaton, with all present voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W L Hartmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. William L. Hartmann
Executive Director