

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health

Thursday, June 11, 2015

A quarterly meeting of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health was held at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 11, 2015 at the Orville L. Freeman Building in St. Paul. The following people were present:

Board Members

Steve Brake, Producer

Holly Neaton, Veterinarian

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

Steve Olson, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association and Chicken and Egg Association of Minnesota

Carol Cardona, University of Minnesota

Montserrat Torremorell, University of Minnesota

Rob Porter, University of Minnesota

Stephanie Rossow, University of Minnesota

Julia Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine

Joni Scheftel, Minnesota Department of Health

Stacey Holzbauer, Minnesota Department of Health

Jessica Serbin, Veterinary Student

Chris Janelle, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Lou Cornicelli, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Michelle Carstenson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Mark Nisley, Representative Rod Hamilton's Office

Dave Frederickson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Mike Starkey, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Doug Busselman, Minnesota Farm Bureau

Gary Wertish, Minnesota Farmers Union

Dave Preisler, Minnesota Pork Board

Taylor Homann, Minnesota Pork Board Intern

Valerie Earley, Minnesota Pork Board Intern

Staff Members

William Hartmann, Executive Director

Paul Anderson, Assistant Director

Dale Lauer, Assistant Director

Beth Thompson, Assistant Director

Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian

Shauna Voss, Senior Veterinarian

Linda Glaser, Senior Veterinarian

Kris Petrini, Assistant Director

Erica Gunderson, Communications Specialist

Shelle Ritchie, Office and Administrative Specialist

Bethany Hahn, Communications Director

Ray Scheierl, Information Technology Supervisor

Andrea Ramsey, State Program Administration Specialist

Travis Miles, State Program Administration Specialist

Approval of Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health held on Wednesday, February 11, 2015

A motion was made by Paul Hanowski and seconded by Dean Compart, with all present voting aye to approve the minutes of the Wednesday, February 11, 2015 meeting.

Recognition of Service

Bill Hartmann and Dave Frederickson thanked Steve Brake and honored him for his service of three terms as a board member representing the cattle industry. Dr. Hartmann and Commissioner Frederickson also thanked Jim Collins for his years of service as consultant to the board and recognized his contributions to the livestock industry in Minnesota.

College of Veterinary Medicine

Trevor Ames spoke about how the University of Minnesota (U of M) has been involved in responding to highly-pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The U of M's involvement with HPAI started over 10 years ago when Minnesota began to develop business continuity plans. These plans provide guidelines which allow poultry and poultry products from non-infected farms to be marketed during a HPAI event. Additionally, Dr. Carol Cardona began sharing her concern in November 2014 for what was happening with HPAI in Asia and initiated conversation with animal health officials and industry partners in Minnesota.

Many parts of the U of M have ultimately been involved in HPAI response, including Extension, Applied Economics, Animal Science, Raptor Center, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) and graduate students. The Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center in Willmar has also been heavily involved. Swine faculty members have been involved through their research with aerosol detection of HPAI virus. The university will continue to be involved and will participate in the upcoming 'HPAI: Refining the Response' conference June 29 – 30.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Rob Porter thanked the Board and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for their collaboration over the last few months and described the VDL's HPAI-related testing activities. In January and February of 2015, the VDL was testing about 150 samples per month for avian influenza or about 5 – 10 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests per day. From March – May 2015 the VDL has ran a total of 11,521 PCR tests and over 6,000 matrix/H5/H7 tests. Staff members at the VDL have logged over 1,000 hours of overtime since April 1.

The current VDL AI testing schedule is two AI PCR runs per day and one on Saturday and Sunday. During the height of the outbreak, the VDL was testing for AI three times a day Monday through Sunday. The laboratory is now at capacity with 15 technicians certified to run AI PCR tests. Moving forward, the VDL will continue to be involved with testing samples for the purposes of surveillance, premarket and movement requirements. The laboratory will also run environmental samples and conduct necropsies on request. Necropsies will be conducted in the BSL 3 laboratory necropsy room. All of this AI-related testing is in addition to other usual testing.

The veterinary diagnostic laboratories in Iowa and South Dakota have begun testing more samples for Minnesota; primarily backyard flock samples. Their assistance is greatly appreciated.

Legislative and Budget Update

Bill Hartmann and Kris Petrini provided a summary of the legislative session and the Board's budget. The bill including funding for the Board, Department of Agriculture and HPAI response has not yet been passed. The Board is preparing for a shutdown in case the bill is not signed by July 1. There may be a call for a special session soon. In the bonding bill that is still in process, there is \$18 million for the U of M to build a new isolation facility on the St. Paul campus. An additional \$8.5 million for the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) expansion was in a bill that has already been signed by the governor.

General fund appropriation for FY16 and FY17 is in the Agriculture Appropriations bill for the special session. In addition, the Board has an additional \$379,000 for HPAI expenses for fiscal year 2015. This will be used primarily for overtime salaries, courier services, supplies and equipment. The Board has also received federal funding for HPAI and has requested another \$862,000 to help pay for response activities. About one-quarter of that money has already been awarded to the Board. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been a tremendous partner in this. The USDA was given \$400 million to fight HPAI.

The Board receives approximately \$34,000 each year through the farmed cervidae program and will also collect money for the commercial dog and cat breeder program beginning this year.

H5N2 HPAI

Carol Cardona spoke about the U of M's role in research related to HPAI. The university's research model is collaborative and involves multiple entities including other colleges and departments within the U of M, state and federal agencies, and private industry. The university is working to fill in research gaps that are not currently being explored by one of these other entities.

Research goals for the U of M are multi-faceted. The researchers seek to determine and understand sources of the virus, explore biosecurity measures that are effective in preventing spread of the disease, and enhance

communication and outreach to stakeholders. They will be looking into virus transmission, including what role song birds may play in HPAI spread, molecular epidemiology, the possibility of swine as a host for the disease, developing ways to communicate about HPAI with non-English speaking audiences and how to improve outreach and education to non-commercial growers. In addition, the U of M intends to conduct research and field studies on the possibility of depopulating one barn on infected sites with multi-barn complexes, rather than all poultry housed on the premises.

Carol Cardona also provided a brief overview of the Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center (MCROC), a laboratory located in Willmar, Minnesota. During the recent HPAI outbreak, MCROC developed an environmental testing method that has been used to gain a better understanding of the existence and saturation of virus in the environment inside and around poultry barns. Samples from feed trucks, boots, fans, boot dip pans, and other areas around infected barns were tested for virus. Through this type of environmental testing, it was discovered that landscape fabric can contain the virus. This discovery has resulted in exhaust fans of infected barns being wrapped in landscape fabric to help prevent lateral spread of the disease. The lab continues to test samples and conduct research that may prove valuable in preventing widespread infection during the fall migration.

State Incident Management Team Response to HPAI

Dale Lauer provided a summary of Minnesota's HPAI response efforts beginning with the state's first case in March. Since the first positive case, our state has had 108 infected flocks spanning 23 counties. In Minnesota, the virus has primarily affected commercial turkey operations, but has also been found in commercial layers and one backyard flock. On a national level, the virus has been confirmed in 21 states with over 47 million birds affected in a time period of approximately six months. HPAI has been the largest foreign animal disease outbreak that the United States has ever had to respond to.

When a flock in Minnesota is determined to be infected with HPAI, a series of protocols are carried out in order to effectively respond to the disease and prevent it from spreading. These protocols include: quarantine, depopulation, establishment of control and surveillance zones, carcass disposal of the infected flock, cleaning and disinfecting of the infected farm, control zone testing, restocking, and additional testing of the restocked farm. All of these activities not only help to ensure the virus is killed and prevented from spreading locally, but also help reassure trading partners that trade with Minnesota remains safe.

Beginning in early April after Minnesota had identified seven farms infected with HPAI, it was determined that we could no longer manage the disease response on our own. We requested support from the USDA, who sent a trained incident management team (IMT) to Minnesota. They have provided personnel and other resources that have been critical to the success of our response efforts.

As the summer approaches and we move into a recovery phase, Minnesota is working with other state and federal agencies and poultry industry partners to determine how to effectively manage HPAI should it reoccur in the fall and next spring as scientists are predicting. We will be spending time reviewing current procedures, analyzing areas where our protocols could be improved, and preparing for the possibility of future cases. We will also be working on a plan for the USDA IMT to transition control and management of the incident back to the Board of Animal Health and other state agencies when we no longer have active cases of the disease.

HPAI Communications

Bethany Hahn and Erica Gunderson spoke about communications activities while responding to HPAI. A group of communications professionals from state agencies, organizations and the poultry industry formed a poultry communicators group before HPAI was identified in Minnesota. The purpose was to build relationships, learn about the roles each person or group would play during HPAI response and to collaborate on creating talking points, fact sheets and other educational materials. The group also talked about the importance of creating a dark (not live) HPAI website that could be launched at a moment's notice if the need arose.

In March, the poultry communicators group's proactive measures were put to good use as Minnesota began responding to HPAI in the state. The Board launched its HPAI website that the communications division had already developed. Since that time, the Board has gained 4,000 new users on its website and there have been over 9,000 visits to the AI page.

The Board's Facebook page has also been a successful communications tool. On May 15, the day that the Board announced the cancellation of poultry exhibitions, the post reached 8,400 people. There were 177 post shares and dozens of 'likes' and comments.

With the help of the Joint Information Center (JIC), the Board has also released 32 HPAI Briefings and conducted eight media conference calls and three live press conferences. Additionally, the Board has handled over 80 individual media interviews. Overall, HPAI media coverage has been positive.

HPAI Permitting

Linda Glaser and Paul Anderson spoke about permitting activities for poultry producers and backyard flock owners within HPAI control areas. Since HPAI was identified in Minnesota, the Board has been permitting movement of poultry and products in order to keep business going for uninfected premises.

The concept of secure food supply plans was first considered in 2005. Over the years, risk assessments, biosecurity protocols, procedures and draft permits have been created. During a large scale animal disease outbreak, the responsibility surrounding a secure food supply plan lies on both sides of the permit – the government and the producer. In order to receive a permit, producers and backyard flock owners comply with testing and biosecurity requirements. They also provide detailed information about their premises and the location they wish to move birds or products to.

We permit birds and products for movement within Minnesota and within the country. The process for permitting is as follows:

1. An individual requests a permit to move poultry/products into or out of a HPAI control area
2. An animal health official enters pertinent data into EMRS (Emergency Management Response System), the USDA's livestock database
3. The permit is approved when all conditions met
4. The permit is distributed

A team of people in the Board's office building is needed to carry out permitting functions. Several temporary employees have been hired specifically for this purpose. The Board works on permitting seven days a week.

Effects of HPAI on the Poultry Industry

Paul Hanowski thanked everyone in the room for their contributions to the HPAI response in Minnesota. This disease event has been one of the largest in our country and the amount of collaboration that has taken place in order to carry out all activities required to eradicate the disease is very impressive.

Michelle Kromm thanked everyone for their continued cooperation and ability to work together in responding to HPAI. There is consistent open dialogue between government agencies and industry that has helped decision making go as smoothly as possible. Because local support and control over the situation is crucial in a successful response, the industry appreciates the invitation to provide input and help guide policymaking when it was possible. There are still many decisions and policies that need to be finalized. The industry will continue to work collaboratively with state and federal counterparts in order to continue forward progress with response efforts.

Steve Olson spoke about the role that the Minnesota Turkey Grower's Association (MTGA) and Chicken and Egg Association of Minnesota (CEAM) have played in the HPAI response efforts. These organizations have primarily focused on distributing information to their members in order to keep the industry updated on the situation. Prior to HPAI, the dissemination of information was accomplished by posting disease alerts on a member-only website. Because the situation was evolving so quickly with multiple flocks becoming infected daily, MTGA and CEAM implemented a new strategy for information dispersal. They utilized a service to send out alerts via phone and email to notify members when any new developments took place. This new system was very useful in keeping the industry updated in a timely fashion.

Another important role of MTGA/CEAM is to represent the industry in the media by providing interviews and presentations when requested. They also work with the legislature in Minnesota and nationally in order to advocate for adequate funding for indemnity and response activities. At this time there are funds appropriated for research, state agency response, emergency response equipment, low interest loan programs and cost sharing programs. HPAI has had a large financial and emotional impact on producers. MTGA and CEAM work very hard to help minimize these effects and get farmers back in business as quickly as possible.

HPAI Surveillance in Wild Waterfowl

Lou Cornicelli summarized the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) surveillance in wild birds. After the first farm was identified with HPAI in Minnesota, the DNR conducted a low-level fixed wing aerial survey of 700 square miles around the infected farm. About 100 resident mallards and 18 swans in three groups were noted about six miles west of the farm. At that same time the DNR also collected 148 environmental (fecal) samples. Some samples came back positive for low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) but no HPAI was identified.

The DNR's initial surveillance plan was a three-pronged approach, including environmental sampling, dead wild bird sampling and hunter-harvested turkey sampling. Over 3,000 fecal samples were collected. One hundred were positive with LPAI (which was to be expected) but no HPAI was detected. Out of 81 samples

collected from dead birds, one Cooper's hawk was detected with HPAI. There were 84 hunter-harvested turkeys tested; none were positive for HPAI.

The DNR's plan moving forward involves a research project in collaboration with the University of Georgia, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Wildlife Services using serum and PCR swabs from Canada geese and mallards this summer and fall. As part of this large collaborative project, results will be used to examine AI virus communities and virus reassortments. The hope is to collect samples from counties with HPAI-infected farms and also in non-affected counties.

In summary, Minnesota is the only state that has responded to the recent H5N2 outbreak with broad-scale intensive environmental and other bird samples. The DNR's goal is to use scientifically-sound approaches to better understand AI in wildlife to help lead prevention and management responses. The agency would like to continue coordination and collaboration with fellow agencies and organizations.

Human Health Monitoring During the HPAI Outbreak

Joni Scheffel provided an overview of the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) involvement in HPAI response. Because avian influenza is a disease that has the possibility of infecting humans, MDH monitors exposed poultry workers and provides them with guidance and recommendations for any follow-up care that may help mitigate their risk of becoming ill as a result of their exposure to HPAI. They conduct interviews with workers on infected farms to learn about workplace procedures that may need to be modified in order to best protect workers from coming into contact with virus. MDH acts as a source of information to the general public and they provide support to other responding agencies as needed.

Beginning with the first positive case of HPAI in Minnesota, MDH has monitored over 400 poultry workers for signs or symptoms of HPAI. Monitoring involves contacting all of the poultry workers associated with each infected flock and evaluating them for exposure to the virus. Those that are considered exposed are monitored for a ten-day period. To date, there have been no human infections identified with the H5N2 strain of the virus in Minnesota or elsewhere. However, because follow-up interviews with exposed poultry workers indicated a lot of unprotected exposure to the virus, over 200 workers were recommended to take the antiviral medication, Tamiflu, as a precautionary measure.

University of Minnesota HPAI Research

Montserrat Torremorell provided information on the U of M's research project related to HPAI. Viruses can transmit through particles such as fecal, water, mucous droplets and dust. The purpose of the research project was to evaluate the potential for airborne transmission of HPAI virus in turkey and layer flocks and to identify the particle size distribution of HPAI virus.

The U of M researchers investigated six flocks with confirmed infections of HPAI. Three were turkey flocks in Minnesota and three were layer flocks in Iowa and Nebraska. Air sampling took place within three to ten days after diagnostic confirmation of HPAI on these farms. Mortality rates were between five and eighty percent at the time of sampling, and one flock had already disposed of a large portion of dead birds. Air samples were taken inside and outside the barns. Environmental samples were also taken from surfaces in locations at high risk of direct exposure to the air exhausted from the layer flocks.

HPAI could be detected and isolated in air samples collected from the inside and immediately outside flocks. Five out of the six flocks had positive air samples and the one that tested negative was half way through depopulation. HPAI virus could be detected in a wide range of particle sizes but it was only isolated in particles larger than 2.1 microns. Environmental contamination as a result of airborne particle deposition was also documented. In summary, HPAI can be aerosolized from infected flocks and we concluded that both aerosols and environmental deposition represents a risk for HPAI spread between flocks.

Election of Officers to the Board of Animal Health

Executive Director Bill Hartmann took over direction of the meeting for the election of next year's Minnesota Board of Animal Health officers (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). He opened nominations for president. Holly Neaton nominated Dean Compart, seconded by Matt Anderson with all voting aye. Nominations for vice president were then opened. Dean Compart nominated Holly Neaton, seconded by Paul Hanowski with all voting aye.

Appointment of Executive Director

The board members met in a closed session with Beth Thompson to discuss the appointment of the executive director of the Board of Animal Health for the coming fiscal year July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016. A motion was made by Paul Hanowski to rehire William L. Hartmann as the executive director, seconded by Holly Neaton, with all voting aye. A motion was made by Paul Hanowski to approve an achievement award for the executive director, seconded by Matt Anderson, with all voting aye.

Date and Place of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold its next quarterly meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 in the Zumbrota area. A motion was made to adjourn with all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W L Hartmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Dr. William L. Hartmann
Executive Director