

Meeting Minutes: Quarterly Board Meeting

Date: September 20, 2017

Location: Chase on the Lake Resort, 502 Cleveland Boulevard, Walker, MN

Attendance

Board Members

Dean Compart, Chair

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 Schaeffbauer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services

Mary Donahue, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services

Guests

Michelle Carstensen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Zach Kayser, Brainerd Dispatch

Dave Preisler, Minnesota Pork Producers Association

Saad Gharaibeh, Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory

Staff

Beth Thompson, Executive Director

Linda Glaser, Assistant Director

Dale Lauer, Assistant Director

Stacey Schwabenlander, Senior Veterinarian

Greg Suskovic, Senior Veterinarian

Shauna Voss, Senior Veterinarian

Courtney Wheeler, Senior Veterinarian

Michael Crusan, Communications Director

Morgan Grelson, Business Manager

Don Myren, Agricultural Consultant

Perry Burros-Lemke, District Veterinarian

Kayla Pierson, State Program Administrator Intermediate

Erin Crider, Communications Specialist

Call Meeting to Order/Approval of Minutes

Dean Compart called the meeting to order. Graham Brayshaw made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Paul Hanowski seconded, with all voting aye. Mr. Compart then called the meeting into a closed session for the kennel hearing.

(Closed Session) Kennel Hearing: Almost Home

Courtney Wheeler facilitated the hearing for Almost Home kennel (Mora, Minnesota). President Dean Compart determined there was a quorum, for purposes of the hearing.

Written notice of the hearing was delivered to the owner in late July. Prior to the hearing, kennel information was provided to the Board members for review. During the hearing, Board members reviewed Minnesota statutes, rules and written records associated with inspection of the licensed premises and considered testimony from inspectors and program administrators. Based on information presented, the Board concluded that the owner violated Minnesota Rule 1721.0520 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 347.31-347.40. The Board voted unanimously to revoke the kennel license in accordance with Minnesota Statute 347.38. The Board then returned to open session.

Cervid Program

Linda Glaser offered an overview of the Farmed Cervidae program. Dr. Glaser took over the program from Paul Anderson in June, and she noted that it is an intensive program. She stated the importance of getting accurate data into CoreOne and that staff is taking steps toward having more complete and accurate records.

This summer, the Board completed the herd certification annual report. Minnesota has 421 farmed herds, comprised of 95 elk herds, 245 deer herds and 81 mixed herds. The number of animals in all herds is 10,607, which fluctuates throughout the year. In FY17, 1,376 animals (13 percent) tested negative for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

Dr. Glaser said the Board assigns a status level to herds that test for CWD. For every year the herd tests, its status goes up by one. Status level numbers range from one (1) to six (6). Levels four (4) and above allow intrastate movement, and Level six (6) allows interstate movement, but the herd must meet federal program requirements, including having two forms of identification for each animal, and submitting both the obex (brain stem) and medial retropharyngeal lymph nodes (MRPLN) for all CWD testing.

The Board created the Minnesota Farmed Cervidae Handbook, which outlines the program requirements in plain language to improve producer comprehension. Veterinarians also received a letter explaining their responsibilities in officially identifying animals.

Dr. Glaser gave an update on Minnesota's CWD-positive herds. The Crow Wing County herd owner decided not to depopulate their herd. They signed a herd plan and double fenced the breeding pens. The preserve will harvest all animals and will be empty by January 10, 2018, and all harvested animals will be tested. Don Myren stated that the herd owner had done a voluntary reduction of 14 animals and submitted samples for testing. The results should be available tomorrow. Dr. Glaser said the herd plan will be reevaluated annually.

Dean Compart asked if the animals are old enough to be reliably tested. Dr. Glaser stated that the does tested are 2.5 to 3.5 years old, so they are old enough. Dr. Stephan Schaeftbauer mentioned that the herd owner allowed Dr. Tracy

Nichols, a leading CWD researcher, to collect environmental samples in the congregation areas. Dr. Donahue said the does spent their entire lives in the same pen, which is where Dr. Nichols collected samples.

Dr. Glaser then discussed the CWD positive herd in Meeker County. This herd was connected to the Crow Wing County herd by an animal that came to Meeker County in 2014. The Meeker County herd was depopulated in April. The owner signed a herd plan, and testing showed a high prevalence of infection (five of 15 animals were positive). Staff have been cleaning and decontaminating feeders, waterers, and other equipment. Anything that cannot be cleaned will be destroyed. Once these steps are complete, the property will have to pass an inspection.

A herd in Wright County was also traced to the Crow Wing County herd. That herd was depopulated on September 12, and test results are expected soon.

Dr. Glaser then discussed the CWD Endemic Area in southeastern Minnesota. The Board identified a 10-mile area surrounding the positive cases found in the wild population. The Board placed movement restrictions and required exclusionary fencing on farms within this area to prevent comingling of farmed herds with wild animals. Currently, there are five herds in the endemic area, and all have exclusionary fencing in place. Field staff will be informing nearby farms about the endemic area and the possibility of expanding that area based on what happens during the upcoming hunting season. Herds in the endemic area will be tracked until CWD is not found in the area.

Dr. Glaser gave an overview of the farmed cervidae escape policy. In FY17, Minnesota had a total of 18 escapes, three of which were elk, and the rest were white-tailed deer. Dean Compart asked if the numbers show how many escapes happened at each facility. Dr. Glaser said there was only one escape per farm.

Cervid farm inspections are entered directly into a form in the CoreOne database. Farms are inspected on a variety of criteria, including inventory match, exclusionary fencing, recordkeeping, official ID, supplemental ID, movement reports, death reports, and CWD testing. Dr. Glaser emphasized that these are minimum standards; staff are looking for more than just these items. If producers fail any of these, Board staff will issue a correction order or notice of violation.

Dr. Glaser plans to work to improve the quality of samples submitted for CWD testing. The samples need to be taken as soon as possible after death, be in good condition, placed in formalin, and sent in with the proper form(s). Samples also need to be accompanied by all tags, with part of the ear or tissue attached to the tags. Board staff will be working with producers to make sure they know how to correctly collect samples. Without the proper tissue, the test results are not accurate.

Other priorities for the Farmed Cervid Program include:

- **Official ID:** all animals need official identification, and all identification must be written on the herd inventory. All numbers on each tag need to be included to make it official ID.
- **Definition of exclusionary fencing:** there needs to be a decision on what criteria is approved (double fencing, solid, electric, distance between fences, etc.).
- **Farmed Cervidae Advisory Committee:** this group does not meet the guidelines for an advisory committee, so its structure, size, participants, and relevant issues are being rethought.

DNR CWD Surveillance

Michelle Carstensen gave an overview of the DNR's plans for CWD surveillance this fall and winter. They will be doing surveillance in all three areas where CWD positive cases were found last year. They will continue to test in the CWD Management zone in southeastern Minnesota, where positives were found during last fall's hunting season. They have expanded hunting opportunities and are requiring testing of all harvested deer one year or older. They are not allowing

carcasses to be moved out of the zone until the animal tests negative for CWD. A feeding ban will be in place within the zone.

During opening weekend of firearm season, the DNR will be doing surveillance in the areas surrounding the CWD Management Zone and in areas where positive cases were found in farmed cervidae. All adult deer harvested during opening weekend must be registered and tested for CWD. Forty-five sampling stations will be open until about four hours after sunset on Sunday evening, and they also have a network of taxidermists trained to collect samples. There will not be any carcass movement restrictions after the test sample has been collected; however, feeding bans will be in place in all surveillance areas during the hunting season.

Dr. Carstensen also mentioned the DNR will be doing a collaring study on the deer surrounding the CWD Management Zone this winter, focusing mainly on the counties bordering Wisconsin. They are looking to learn more about the movement of the animals. Wisconsin is also doing a large collaring project. Dr. Carstensen expressed the need for a closer partnership with neighboring states.

Board of Animal Health Update

Dr. Beth Thompson offered an update on activities at the Board. States may not be able to count on continued USDA funding for certain activities. Tuberculosis (TB) is becoming less prevalent, so the USDA may not be asking for more funding for TB-positive herds. The Board will be looking for more state funding to help with these activities.

The new fiscal biennium began in July. Dr. Thompson commended Morgan Grelson for his work on the Board budget. The Board will be watching what happens with USDA funding and will be careful with the funding the Board has received. The Board is using some of the general emergency planning funds (formerly HPAI funding) to pay for Senecavirus A testing, which was formerly paid for by the University of Minnesota or producers. The Board is also using emergency planning funds to work on ways to get identification in all animals and a secure food supply plan for all premises in all commodity groups. Dr. Dave Wright is working on the secure pork supply. The Board and the Department of Agriculture are creating a shared position focusing on the dairy program. They are hoping to have this position filled in the next few months.

Dr. Thompson briefly updated the Board on the upcoming legislative audit. She has been communicating with the Office of the State Auditor, and they are planning to start the auditing process in mid-October. Auditors are uncertain what they will be reviewing; they will involve more agencies in addition to the Board, but to what extent remains to be determined.

Budget Update

Morgan Grelson gave an update on the Board budget. Total expenditures for FY17 were \$5.7 million. Payroll was the largest portion of the budget, and the next largest was professional/technical services, including the University of Minnesota and the federal and state government contracts. A sizeable portion also went into a "miscellaneous funds" category, which covers expenses that are difficult to categorize.

Mr. Grelson noted that the Board decided to use state and federal funds to pay expenses first and used restricted miscellaneous special revenue (money collected from Board fees) as needed for emerging expenses. These dollars can be moved forward into the next biennium, while state and federal funding sources can only be used in the current biennium.

In FY18, more expenses will be paid using miscellaneous special revenue (\$62,100, compared to \$2,990 in FY17). The Board will also be using more Emergency Preparedness funds for the new contract with the Swine Health Monitoring Project (SHMP). Federal funding amounts are unknown, as appropriations may change after March 2018.

USDA Update

Dr. Stephan Schaeftbauer gave an update on USDA activities. The USDA has made changes to the Comprehensive Integrated Surveillance in Swine (CIS). First, they are reducing the number of National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) labs that could perform swine testing from 22 to 10. This change would still capture 97.5 percent of pseudorabies (PRV) and 94.5 percent of classical swine fever (CSF) cases. It also will streamline data management, simplify the submission process, and save on operational costs.

They are also changing the sow-boar slaughter surveillance for PRV and swine brucellosis (SB). The commercial swine industry has been free of both PRV and SB since 2011. Currently, the USDA tests around 200,000 samples for PRV and SB each year. Analysis has shown that testing 100,000 samples will still provide enough results to maintain the disease-free status. Testing will increase in herds within areas with documented feral swine populations, which increase the risk of infection. In Minnesota, testing will decrease from five percent of the total commercial swine population to one percent.

USDA Veterinary Services (VS) staff continue to serve deployments to assist with the Texas Cattle Fever Tick response. Courtney Wheeler and Robyn Corcoran recently finished their deployments. Duties include erecting and filling deer feeders, weighing and replacing Ivermectin-treated molasses tubs, and dipping and scratching cattle.

Dr. Schaeftbauer stated that USDA indemnity funds in Minnesota totaled \$173,402 and covered nine cervid herds (69 animals). The last herd was the Wright County CWD depopulation that occurred on Tuesday. USDA and Board staff worked together to collect samples at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. She said this type of partnership reduces the risk of disease spread and eases the workload of sample collection.

The Bluetongue Virus Pilot is in progress. The pilot does serologic testing of samples collected for cattle brucellosis testing. From April to August, the pilot tested 541 samples from two slaughter plants, one each in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The results showed 13 positives with seven traces: two in Minnesota, one in Iowa, two in Wisconsin, and two in South Dakota.

Dr. Schaeftbauer also mentioned recent USDA staffing changes. Dr. Corcoran has been hired as a permanent Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO), and they are in the process of hiring another VMO, who should start in mid-October. They are also working on hiring Animal Health Technicians and Liaisons.

Veterinary Diagnostic Lab Update

Jerry Torrison presented updates from the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). The VDL is exploring new developments in Point of Care (POC) Testing, which offers rapid results for common diseases. Immunoassay (Directigen™) testing for Influenza A can accurately detect the virus in less than 15 minutes. Dr. Torrison also mentioned a new device, called the MinION, which is the smallest high-throughput DNA-sequencing device available and can be used in conjunction with a smart phone. In the future, this could be a tool used to detect Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The VDL sent a researcher to Oxford this summer to learn more about the MinION. This device is relatively affordable (about \$1,000) and should be available in 3-5 years.

In 2018, the VDL is due for its five-year accreditation with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. Preparations are focusing on renovation of the entry to the necropsy lab to make it more biosecure. They are setting accreditation appointments for mid-May.

Dr. Torrison updated the Board on state-funded projects. They finished installing new equipment in the Molecular Development lab and the new computation room, or “dry lab,” for sequencing and bioinformatics. Dr. Torrison noted the VDL has done \$5 million in PCR tests in the past five years, so molecular development is an area of growing importance. VDL IT system upgrades are currently focusing on user interface functionality and making it mobile friendly. Once that is done, they will work on uploading data to make VDL operations more efficient.

The VDL is looking for better ways to manage expenses and revenues. Nearly three quarters of their revenue is from testing fees. State funding was cut in 2008, and there have been no increases since then. They have also lost federal funding for swine influenza testing and PED testing. They are saving some money through staff attrition, and as a result the remaining employees have had to take on more work. Testing fees will have to be raised, and that information will be shared with veterinarians. Dr. Thompson asked how the VDL’s fees compare with other state labs. Dr. Torrison said that their rates are competitive, but they are on the higher end of cost and are depending on loyalty to maintain their client base. Dr. Thompson asked how the VDL planned to gain support for increased state funding. Dr. Torrison said that the VDL has approached a few legislators about proposing additional funding during the upcoming legislative session, and they have been responsive. They are also talking to commodity groups to rally support.

Trevor Ames noted that the VDL is the only official lab of any state agency located within the University of Minnesota, and they have been operating with flat funding, including a cut to the budget in 2008. However, they still have inflationary increases. The university struggles to offer the competitive salaries employees want. After the HPAI outbreak, the university lost half of the diagnostic staff to other public agencies. The university needs support for increased funding.

College of Veterinary Medicine Update

Trevor Ames gave an update on the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM). Construction on the veterinary isolation building is mostly complete, and equipment is being installed now. The lab will then go into a biosafety level (BSL) 2 and BSL 3 commissioning phase, which will test all systems to make sure they are working properly. The CVM is also renovating the pathology demonstration area at the college. They are adding bleachers, overhead lights, and videoconferencing capabilities for remote education. Dr. Ames invited the Board and other state agencies to make use of the renovated space.

The CVM is in the process of hiring six new positions funded by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and University of Minnesota strategic plan funds. Three of the positions have been filled, and three more are in various stages of the hiring process. With other funding they have received, they will be hiring for two additional positions. All of these new hires will work together as a cohort, and some will support the VDL.

The CVM Class of 2021 started this fall. The CVM raised tuition by less than one percent, and 3.4 percent over the last three years. Well-over a third of available scholarship money was awarded to VetFAST (Veterinary Food and Animal Scholar Track) students. This money reduces their tuition payments by one third.

The OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) has created standards for veterinary education, and the CVM is the first school in North America to meet the new standards. The CVM will be sending out a press release on this soon.

Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory and Poultry Updates

Dr. Dale Lauer offered an update on the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL). He began with an overview of testing done at the MPTL. All serology testing for poultry is done at the MPTL; any samples sent to the VDL are forwarded to the MPTL. In bacteriology, the MPTL has been doing salmonella culture and serotyping. However, all samples for other bacteriologic testing are now forwarded to the VDL for same-day testing. The MPTL has added molecular diagnostic testing. The technicians have been trained and proficiency tested to meet NAHLN standards. The MPTL exclusively does all molecular diagnostic testing except for Avian Influenza (AI) and Newcastle Disease.

The MPTL has added a daily courier service to the VDL. If samples are delivered to the MPTL by 9:00 a.m., they can be delivered and tested at the VDL the same day. This allows time for the MPTL to assign case numbers in the VDL-LIMS system before sending. The courier cost is covered by the University of Minnesota, so the service is available at no cost to producers and veterinarians.

Dr. Shauna Voss discussed the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) Biosecurity Principles and the biosecurity audit process. After the HPAI outbreak in 2014-2015, it became clear that biosecurity needed to be required for each facility in order to prevent future spread of infection. In order for facilities to receive indemnity payments, the USDA has set a new rule requiring owners and contractors to certify that a biosecurity plan was implemented at the time of HPAI detection to prevent the spread of avian influenza.

The NPIP Biosecurity Principles were developed by the members of the poultry industry as acceptable minimum biosecurity standards that all producers should be able to follow. These standards were approved and went into effect on July 5, 2017. These principles are:

- Biosecurity Responsibility.
- Training.
- Line of Separation.
- Perimeter Buffer Area.
- Personnel.
- Wild Birds, Rodents and Insects.
- Equipment and Vehicles.
- Mortality Disposal.
- Manure and Litter Management.
- Replacement Poultry.
- Water Supplies.
- Feed and Replacement Litter.
- Reporting of Elevated Morbidity and Mortality.
- Auditing.

The auditing principle requires the official state agency of each state must complete audits for the producers in their state. The Board is Minnesota's official state agency. Audits will be paper only. Dr. Voss and Dr. Lauer have started the auditing process, which includes reviewing the biosecurity plan to ensure it complies with minimum standards and verify that the plan is being implemented as written at specific sites. Companies must provide the requested material within 30 days. There are about 400-500 audits to complete within two years, so Dr. Lauer and Dr. Voss will be requesting help from Board field staff once they have the procedures in place.

Dr. Voss stated that there are resources to help producers write their biosecurity plans. The U.S. Poultry and Egg Association produced a plan template that any producer can use. Abby Neu from the University of Minnesota Extension Service is also available to help producers develop their plans.

Dr. Lauer discussed the plans for Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) response. As seen in this year's H5N7 LPAI outbreak in the Southeastern U.S., companies currently lean toward depopulation over controlled marketing. However, the USDA has little funding for LPAI response and may not indemnify for LPAI activities. Poultry stakeholders recently met to gather feedback from states and discuss trade implications. They also talked about determining LPAI risk in individual flocks, but they did not make any final decisions.

TB Traces to Minnesota

Dr. Stacey Schwabenlander updated the Board on the recent TB traces in Minnesota. TB was found in two herds in South Dakota, and there were traces to Minnesota from each these herds. There were three separate traces of animals from the first herd.

- **Primary trace:** 36 traces entered Minnesota through six livestock markets. One thousand four hundred sixty head were found. TB tests on 825 animals were performed to complete whole herd testing, and seven TB exposed animals were found. All seven were indemnified and found TB negative. This trace is complete.
- **Secondary trace:** These are animals that entered Minnesota, left again, and then returned to Minnesota. This trace is ongoing. Information on a large group of animals arrived on Friday, and Board field staff are working to find out how many buyers are involved. There will be 38-54 traces through four markets, including 581 head and 488 still pending. More than 430 TB tests will be needed; the final number will be higher. So far, 100 head in three herds are complete and clear. Five TB exposed animals were found, which were indemnified and found TB negative.
- **Tertiary trace:** These animals left the state and came back a third time, or were transferred to a third producer in Minnesota. Two traces were found, comprised of six head. Fifty animals were TB tested in two herds. One herd has yet to be cleared, but testing has found no TB exposed animals. Final results are expected soon.

The second South Dakota herd brought three traces to Minnesota through three markets. Investigation at one of the markets is still pending. The Board believes all of the animals involved have been slaughtered, but field staff are working to track down the records for verification. No TB testing is likely.

Horse Carcass Composting Site Update

Dr. Beth Thompson gave an update on the horse composting site plans presented by Peter Karpe at the April Board meeting. Dr. Thompson said that the Board contacted the Pollution Control Agency (PCA), and they were concerned with the plans. They wanted detailed information, including time requirements, temperature requirements, records, biosecurity plans, and what drugs were being used to euthanize the animals. The PCA met with Mr. Karpe, who planned to hire a consultant.

Don Myren stated that the consulting firm wanted a \$20,000 down payment. Considering this, the \$800,000 in construction costs, and additional transportation costs, Mr. Karpe has decided not to pursue the project.

Next Meeting and Adjourn

The next meeting of the Board of Animal Health will be on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (1333 Gortner Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108).

Peter Ripka made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Graham Brayshaw seconded, with all present voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Thompson
State Veterinarian
Executive Director