Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health
Wednesday, September 16, 2015

A quarterly meeting of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health was held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at the St. James Hotel in Red Wing. The following people were present:

Board Members

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

Consultants to the Board

Stephanie Rossow, Interim 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
Mary Donahue, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
Joni Scheftel, Minnesota Department of Health
Emma Leof, Minnesota Department of Health extern
Andres Perez, University of Minnesota
Julio Alvarez, University of Minnesota
Alisha Stevens-Backus, Board of Animal Health extern
Julie Gerdes, Animal Safety League
Julia Wilson, Minnesota Board of Veterinary Medicine

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
Bethany Hahn, Communications Director
Ray Scheierl, Information Technology Supervisor
Brad Peterson, District Veterinarian
Greg Suskovic, District Veterinarian
Terry Sistad, Agriculture Advisor

Approval of Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Animal Health held on Thursday, June 11, 2015

A motion was made by Paul Hanowski and seconded by Dr. Holly Neaton, with all present voting aye to approve the minutes of the Thursday, June 11, 2015 meeting.

Global Food Access Challenge Program

Andres Perez summarized the features of the Global Food Access Challenge Program, recently launched in the context of his appointment as the new Endowed Chair of Global Animal Health and Food Safety at the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), University of Minnesota (U of M). The program includes four initiatives, namely, (1) Professional Development on Animal and Public Health, Food Safety, and Primary Production; (2) Identification of Strategic External Collaborations; (3) Veterinary Services Capacity Building; and (4) Visibility and Outreach.

Opportunities for the Board of Animal Health (Board) are related with activities on research, education and outreach on animal health and food safety for which the Board is welcome to share priorities, and facilitating communication and contact with countries and experts overseas.

A number of initiatives on quantitative analysis of big data to support the decision-making process were highlighted. Suggestions and recommendations from the Board were encouraged.

College of Veterinary Medicine

Trevor Ames reported that students had just returned to the U of M for the start of fall semester. In addition to welcoming new students back to campus, the CVM is currently busy with a number of building projects. The lobby and receiving area of the animal care hospital are undergoing a complete remodel. With a $200 thousand grant gift received by the CVM, they intend to remodel exam rooms in the animal care hospital as well.

During the most recent legislative session the University received funding for expansion of the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) in Willmar. This expansion will add the capability of PCR testing to be completed at the MPTL, which is critical in avian influenza disease response. It is projected the MPTL expansion will be complete in approximately 18 months.

Legislative funds will also be used to build a veterinary isolation laboratory on the St. Paul campus. Since 1990 there have been seven major animal diseases introduced into the United States. Having an isolation laboratory at the University will be vastly important in identifying and responding to these types of animal disease introductions. The isolation laboratory will be linked to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) which will allow for additional types of research in disease transmission and vaccination efficacy. The timeline for completion of the isolation laboratory is approximately two years.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Mike Stine provided an update on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Mary Donahue came on board in July. She is the new epidemiologist for Minnesota. She can help with general projects and will also review cooperative agreements.

The USDA provided incident management teams (IMTs) to assist various states with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) response. The federal government also provided help through funding via cooperative agreements and contracts. The USDA is planning for a recurrence of HPAI in the fall and is working with states in all four flyways to prepare. In Minnesota additional staff members are being hired as part of the preparedness effort. The USDA office in St. Paul has hired two administrative officers that will write contracts and there is one veterinary medical officer and one animal

health technician being hired to work in the field. The St. Paul office will be moving in the near future but will hopefully remain in the St. Paul area.

Animal disease traceability is also a priority now that HPAI is slowing down. The USDA conducts trace exercises to make sure states are able to trace animal identification numbers.

Bill Hartmann thanked the USDA for their high level of support and assistance during Minnesota's response to HPAI.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Stephanie Rossow provided an update on all of the changes that have taken place at the VDL over the summer. A number of experienced staff members that worked in the laboratory, serology, and receiving departments have submitted their resignations. The VDL has been able to hire some well qualified staff to replace those that resigned, but there are still positions that need to be filled. They are being incredibly diligent in hiring highly skilled technicians for the PCR laboratory due to the nature and scope of the job. The lab director position is also currently vacant while Jim Collins is on sabbatical. In his absence, Stephanie Rossow will be serving as interim lab director.

During the spring HPAI disease event, the VDL ran over 18,400 PCR tests for HPAI. This testing was done in addition to all of the other work that the laboratory does, and was handled entirely by their own 14 technicians. Testing for HPAI slowed considerably over the summer months; however, as fall approaches the VDL is prepared to increase their staff and will again be equipped with the capability for HPAI testing on weekends.

Seneca Valley Virus

Stephanie Rossow spoke about emergence of Seneca Valley Virus (SVV). Cases of SVV began to pop up in the U.S. in July; however, it arrived in Brazil before that which gave the U.S. a chance to develop PCR tests so that we were ready to test for it. SVV is in the same family as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). It looks and acts similar to FMD because it causes vesicles on the hoof and on the snout and is highly contagious. The virus is shed in the fecal material and it is very durable. When pigs are infected with SVV it gets into the bloodstream. The virus was also recently found by Iowa State in a semen sample. SVV has been identified in several states in the U.S., and also in Canada, Australia, Italy and New Zealand.

We need an ELISA test (virology test) for SVV so we can determine if Minnesota has active infections or antibodies. We are currently working on a case of SVV in a Minnesota sow farm. Tests were negative for FMD and were positive for SVV. The two sow operations have a common gilt source, but one farm is negative and one is positive. At this point we are not sure why that is. The VDL has proposals to find answers to some of the unanswered questions about SVV.
It would be a good idea to develop a swine communicators group similar to Minnesota's poultry communicators group that was formed to address HPAI. That way all involved parties can work together to address SVV along with any other swine diseases that come up. There's an upcoming meeting with the Pork Board, surrounding states, and the Board to determine how to manage the event should it occur at a packing plant. Mary Donahue suggested including the Food Safety and Inspection Service in the discussions.

Cases of Seneca Valley Virus in Minnesota

Beth Thompson spoke about the occurrence of SVV in the United States over the late summer months. Several cases have been found in the Midwest with Iowa identifying SVV in some of their commercial operations and hogs participating in exhibition. Minnesota has had two confirmed cases of SVV thus far. The first case was discovered in a hog coming home from a county fair in southwestern Minnesota. The hog showed some clinical signs with vesicles. A foreign animal disease diagnostician (FADD) was sent to collect samples which came back positive for SVV.

Greg Suskovic provided details about the second case of SVV in Minnesota, which occurred in a large sow operation that has several different production sites. In the site that was affected, the sows were reluctant to stand, were off feed, and had erosions and vesicles on their snouts. Suskovic took samples of the vesicular fluid and collected blood, serum and nasal swabs from the affected animals. The samples were sent to Plum Island and hand delivered to the VDL in St. Paul. A quarantine was placed on the farm and lifted approximately 48 hours later once the diagnosis of SVV was confirmed. Pigs at the infected site are being sampled for SVV on a weekly basis. The results are still coming back positive; however, the affected hogs are healing and recovering from the virus.

National Policies on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Bill Hartmann spoke about all of the steps the Board has taken to prepare for the possibility of HPAI returning this fall. The Board is planning to manage future disease events within the agency and has hired additional staff to handle the tasks needed for a complete response. Backyard surveillance, a portion of the response that took a lot of time and resources in the spring, will be modified and possibly handled by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps. This will allow state animal health officials to focus personnel and resources on other aspects of the response. The Board is also preparing to handle case management within the state to help improve continuity for affected producers.

The USDA has made changes to the appraisal processes in order to decrease paperwork confusion for case managers and speed the rate at which producers are approved to receive indemnity payments and reimbursements. They are also exploring the option of producers being able to test for HPAI on their own. Producers would use a pen side antigen capture test if they start to notice an increased mortality in their flock. Positive results could be acted on right away with concurrence of state and federal animal health officials. Samples would also be sent to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in St Paul for confirmation.

For future HPAI disease events the goal is to depopulate affected flocks within 24 hours of detection. Epidemiological investigations completed during the spring outbreak revealed that immediate depopulation is crucial for preventing lateral spread of the virus. The Board will act on presumptive positives and will be able to depopulate a flock as soon as results are back from a NAHLN lab. Minnesota has purchased additional foamers and is exploring other approved methods for mass depopulation in order to respond to future disease events as quickly as possible.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Dale Lauer provided an update on where the state stands with regard to HPAI response and recovery. Out of 108 affected farms, 89 have restocking agreements signed and 41 have received a quarantine release. Many more are scheduled to restock or receive a quarantine release notice in the coming weeks. At this time all affected farms are planning to restock when they are eligible. While this is positive news for our poultry industry, the spring event has caused a huge shortage of poults and pullets, leaving many growers without an option for restocking right away. It is estimated that it will take several years to completely recover from the spring HPAI outbreak in Minnesota.

Shauna Voss stated that we are nearing the end of our HPAI incident response. We closed down the incident command post (ICP) in Willmar on August 1. We moved our smaller operation to the Health and Human Services Building across the street. If Minnesota ever needs to ramp up the response again, we have a space ready to go. Thank you to the emergency managers at Kandiyohi County for being so hospitable for the duration. The Board is also prepared with enough personal protective equipment and testing supplies to last for a month or two. The MPTL is in the process of updating the AI submission form so that it’s more user friendly and easy to understand for the producers, veterinarians, the VDL and the MPTL.

Brad Peterson summarized all of the processes that must be completed on a farm infected with HPAI. These include: quarantine, appraisal, depopulation, carcass disposal, cleaning and disinfecting, restocking and retesting. Because the

spring HPAI outbreak was the first ever in Minnesota, many of these processes had to be developed at the same time the response was unfolding. Now that all of the procedures and criteria have been established, completing the required processes should be smoother for farmers and animal health officials moving forward.

Greg Suskovic talked about the appraisal and depopulation process. There will be a new standard operating procedure for appraising flocks. We currently have two USDA appraisers in Minnesota. Moving forward, appraisals can be done by any state or federal animal health official. As soon as the necessary information is collected from the farm we can start the depopulation process. Our main method of depopulation has been foaming. Our foaming crew will be West Central Environmental Consultants (WCEC) out of Willmar. Minnesota is in the process of attaining additional foaming units. Eventually we should have a total of seven foamers. WCEC has two crews that can complete the whole depopulation process from start to finish. One crew can prepare the barn while the other operates the foamer. In-house composting will again be the primary method of carcass disposal should HPAI return.

Scrapie Testing

Board member Dr. Holly Neaton made a motion to direct Dr. Hartmann and staff to test sheep and goats owned by, managed, and/or in possession of Elroy and/or Lisa Rogers in accordance with the National Scrapie Eradication Program. Specifically, Dr. Neaton motioned that the scrapie-exposed sheep purchased in 2012 by Lisa and/or Elroy Rogers be euthanized and their tissues be tested for scrapie and that the remaining animals in the flock be tested using a rectal biopsy technique. The motion was seconded by Board member Matt Anderson. A roll call vote was taken, with all Board members individually voting in the affirmative. Motion carried.

In addition to the specific authority given to Dr. Hartmann and staff to test sheep and goats belonging to Elroy Rogers, the Board also passed a motion giving Dr. Hartmann the general authority to test any sheep or goat in accordance with the National Scrapie Eradication Program. This motion, made by Board member Paul Hanowski, directed Dr. Hartmann and staff to test sheep and goats in accordance with the National Scrapie Eradication Program. Specifically, he motioned that the Executive Director has the authority to carry out testing needed to determine if a scrapie exposed flock, as defined in 9CFR 79.1, is infected with the disease. This testing may include: 1) a genotype test of a scrapie exposed animal, as defined in 9CFR 79.1, to determine its susceptibility to scrapie; 2) testing of tissues from a genetically susceptible scrapie exposed animal following death or euthanasia; and 3) biopsy testing of sheep in an exposed flock to determine the presence of scrapie in the flock. The motion was seconded by Board member Peter Ripka. A roll call vote was taken, with all Board members individually voting in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Mycoplasma Synoviae Rule Variance

Dale Lauer explained that in 2003 the Board was awarded *Mycoplasma Synoviae* (MS) clean status and has maintained MS free since. In order to protect Minnesota flocks from the disease, the Board included an MS clean import requirement in the last rule change. The requirement states that any poult or chick from commercial operations must originate from an MS clean hatchery. Unfortunately, Valley of the Moon, an Iowa hatchery that does a lot of business with our state's growers, lost their MS clean status in early September.

Dr. Lauer explained that as a result of HPAI, the turkey breeder industry in Minnesota has been devastated. There is a shortage of breeding stock across the country and Minnesota growers are struggling to restock their farms with poults due to lack of sufficient supply. Valley of the Moon hatchery is projected to supply two million poults to Minnesota growers over the next 15 months which is very important for growers recovering from HPAI. With the current MS clean import requirement however, poults from Valley of the Moon would not be allowed into the state.

Dr. Hartmann told the Board that after seeking counsel from the Attorney General's office it was confirmed that a variance to the import rule requirement could be allowed if it was supported by the poultry industry and delivered to

the Board members for action. This rule variance would allow Minnesota growers to bring in poults from Valley of the Moon, but doing so would cause Minnesota to lose its MS clean status. A number of requirements would have to be met in order to allow for a rule variance including:

1. The variance would be a one-time option for the particular flock. Once it is finished with egg production, the variance would no longer be in effect.
2. The flock remains on antibiotics for the duration of production.
3. MN producers must be notified about the MS clean status of flock sources.
4. Strategies for the separation and identification of eggs are developed at the hatchery level.

After further discussion, Board member Paul Hanowski made a motion to direct Dr. Hartmann and Board staff to work with the Attorney General's office to pursue a Rule Variance to the Board's Importation of Hatching Eggs, Poultry and Ratites Import Rule (Minnesota Administrative Rules Chapter 1721 – 1721.0280) as allowed by Minnesota Statute (Chapter 14 – 14.055, 14.056). The variance, if approved by the Attorney General's office, would allow movement of turkey poults from an Iowa turkey hatchery which had lost their *Mycoplasma Synoviae* (MS) disease classification into Minnesota under conditions and standards set by the Board. The motion was seconded by Board member Matt Anderson. A roll call vote was taken, with all Board members individually voting in the affirmative. Motion carried.

Date and Place of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold its next quarterly meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 16, 2015 at the Orville Freeman Building in St. Paul. A motion was made to adjourn with all voting aye.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. William L. Hartmann
Executive Director