



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA CHANGES NEW MEXICO'S BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS STATUS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is reclassifying New Mexico as modified accredited advanced for bovine tuberculosis (TB).

Although this action is consistent with the reclassification of other accredited-free states with two or more TB-affected herds during a 48 month period, intact heifers still can be shipped interstate if moved directly to a feedlot or in feeder channels. Also, the movement of spayed heifers and steers, cattle from a TB-accredited free herd and cattle or bison less than 6 months of age, can continue.

APHIS is working closely with New Mexico animal health officials to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to further examine the state's TB status. APHIS will evaluate thoroughly and consider all scientific information collected during the assessment. This information will be used when deciding any future actions that should be taken in New Mexico, which could result in less restrictive measures.

New Mexico officials took immediate action to stop the spread of the disease and have worked cooperatively with APHIS to maintain normal movement of cattle while taking appropriate steps to stop the spread of TB. APHIS will continue to work closely with the State to further test for TB and revise the restrictions as necessary.

APHIS had divided the state of New Mexico into two zones for the purpose of TB status classification, with an accredited-free zone and a modified accredited advanced zone. In April 2007, New Mexico officials confirmed an affected dairy herd in the accredited-free zone during an epidemiological investigation of a TB-positive cow found through slaughter surveillance. Recently, a second affected herd was identified in the same zone. The finding of the second affected herd within a 48-month period means that the zone no longer meets the requirements for accredited-free status.

Bovine TB is a contagious and infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*. It affects cattle, bison, deer, elk, goats and other warm-blooded species and can be fatal. The disease can be transmitted to humans through direct contact with infected animals or consumption of raw milk. It is not transmitted through consumption of pasteurized milk. If a producer suspects TB in their herd, they should isolate the animal immediately and contact their veterinarian for a proper diagnosis.

Notice of this interim rule is published in the Sept. 11 Federal Register and becomes effective upon publication.

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Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Nov. 10. Send two copies of postal or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0068, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0068>.

Comments received are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be viewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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