Animal Disease Traceability Status Report for USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (ME DACF)
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- ME DACF Traceability goals, 2021 and beyond: Maine continues to use a combination of a paper-based system and electronic databases to record all of our livestock data, but has made significant progress in digitizing most of the animal movement information that comes to our office and encouraging our constituents, particularly private veterinarians, to take advantage of all electronic resources available. Through six virtual large animal veterinary continuing education meetings (FY20 and FY21) and regular written, electronic and in-person correspondence with Maine's agricultural stakeholders, we keep information exchange between ME DACF and our animal agriculture sector open, eliminating the need for an animal identification advisory group. We have adopted and integrated SCS/CoreOne software and have consistently used the funds from our ADT cooperative agreements to contract with an individual to transfer files and enter and manage animal health data. As of FY17, we have made aspects of ADT – specifically animal movement data entry and CVI processing and animal traces – the primary responsibility of ME DACF administrative staff. We continue to work with TraceFirst on webinar trainings to maximize our understanding and fluency with SCS/CoreOne. Our most recent projects focus on utilizing CoreOne and/or EMRS to document and track any disease investigation-related visits to animal premises and related quarantines. We will continue to integrate our Reportable Animal Disease (RAD) database into CoreOne also. As of FY17, all of our RAD reports are digitized. For FY21 and beyond, we aim to make Premises ID and import permits available to constituents online, and will further develop the resources and educational materials re: ADT available on our newly-expanded, state-based ADT webpage: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/adt/index.shtml

- Vision Statement: Since this Road Map was drafted twelve years ago, we have made substantial progress toward an electronic-based system of livestock health information. In FY17, Maine approved the use of the mCVI (now AgView) software, and in subsequent years we have added other companies that meet the USAHA/USDA Data Standards for eCVIs, including Global Vet Link/GVL and USDA VEHCS. Other programs are under consideration as requested by our veterinary practitioners. Our staff actively promote the use of such programs to increase our progress towards the digital age with regular reminders as our large animal veterinary CE meetings (mentioned above.) We need to continue to transition our accredited veterinarians toward using electronic CVIs, digitized test charts and, to the extent possible, electronic form of animal identification. *Please see Section IV below for details on progress we've made towards these digitization goals.*

- Mission statement: Our mission is to continue to make more improvements over the next three years in animal disease traceability, specifically through increasing

Maine veterinarians' access to traceability software; maximizing our use of SCS/CoreOne data management capabilities; through continuing education of livestock stakeholders on the ADT rule and the advantages and importance of official ID; and through training of our own staff on innovations in this field.

- Traceability requirements: we accept as a strategic goal being able to sustain and continue development of a state-wide infrastructure for advancing animal disease traceability compatible with state, territory and USDA standards.
  Programmatic goals:

  o 2021 (10th year):
    o **Maintain ID tracing skills in at least two staff positions**, providing more flexibility if staff resign or are allocated to other work priorities.
    o **Continue to improve standard operating procedures (SOPs) and outreach and education efforts with constituents to improve documentation of interstate and intrastate movement of cattle, sheep, goats, swine and horses**, as established in previous ADT CAs. *For example,* in FY20, with the cancellation of agricultural fairs and exhibitions due to the COVID pandemic, we increased our outreach and education re: Animal ID requirements for 4H/FFA youth by partnering with state 4H leadership to distribute informational materials and promote a series of online workshops and tagging instruction videos produced by ME DACF staff. In 2021 and beyond, we will continue those education efforts with a focus on record-keeping for FY21, with specific activities contingent on pandemic mitigation recommendations.
    o **Convert import permitting and Premises ID allocations to digital system** - Execution of TPM exercises by ME DACF will adhere to updated in-house SOPs, which include attention to our import permitting system, which we will convert to an on-line request system, as well as ME DACF monitoring of auction and livestock show and sale activities to maximize compliance, minimize transgressions and facilitate producer education regarding the benefits of the ADT Rule.

  o 2022 (11th year):
    o Continue activities detailed above and refine data sharing with other state and federal entities.
  o 2023 (12th year):
    o Continue activities detailed above and refine data sharing with other
      state and federal entities.

  Performance measures: *Location identification*: We have received training from our USDA APHIS VS district 1 partners on EMRS and have fully assumed responsibility for issuing premises identification for Maine farms. See notes re: automation of that allocation system, above. *Official ID*: As prescribed in the ADT rule and updates to

that rule. *Tag distribution*: System described in FY21 ADT work plan. We have initiated education, outreach and distribution of free RFID tags to cattle veterinarians as well as dairy and beef producers as of January 2021; tag allocation tracked via in-house (state) database, as well as SCS/CoreOne and, eventally, AIMS. *Record keeping*: electronic and paper combination until we have faith that the electronic system is failproof. Multiple issues with accurate extraction of data from both EMRS2 and SCS/CoreOne reinforce need for back-up. No commuter herds. Data shared with other state, federal and tribal entities upon request. Currently, we accept both paper and electronic CVIs. No current plans to discontinue paper CVIs until state budgets prohibit reorder of forms.

Information technology plan: The development of this plan is entirely dependent on resources which are currently very meager, outside of our USDA cooperative agreement. USDA assistance continues to be critical in moving this initiative in the right direction.

Resource requirements: We rely on at least 0.5 FTE staff position, provided via the USDA ADT CA, to carry out the investigations associated with ADT violations, in a non-animal disease outbreak situation. We don't anticipate any additional space needs and we will use in-house IT personnel or USDA TPM employees when we need assistance to conduct urgent tracebacks.

Organizational needs: We don't anticipate any change in organizational infrastructure at this time.

Executive Support: The current executive (the Commissioner of Agriculture) is fully supportive of enhanced animal disease traceability.

Coordination and Oversight: Within the socio-political group, the State Veterinarian bears overall responsibility for advancing animal disease traceability. She is also the Department's primary representative on the state's Emergency Response Team so she is actively engaged in emergency preparedness and response. Since 2018, our Asst. State Veterinarian for Animal Welfare (shared position with Animal Health) has developed expertise in emergency management and oversees outreach and training exercise opportunities related to emergency response involving animals. The State Veterinarian has responsibility for assigning tasks involved in implementing the plan. Feedback is obtained through active engagement with producer groups and accredited veterinarians.

Policy: No policy amendments have been necessary to align state policies with ADT rule.

Staffing: Currently, handling animal disease traceability information is shared between the diagnostic laboratory director, the clerk for the Division of Animal and Plant Health, the ADT Technician (a USDA-funded portion of our Poultry Health Technician's position) and to a lesser extent, the State Veterinarian and the Assistant State Veterinarian. This situation will continue over the next three years, with possible elimination or absorption of the ADT Tech's responsibilities into the DAPH Clerk's responsibilities.

Budget requirements: With the exception of the ADT/PHT employee, who is funded by a USDA ADT cooperative agreement, all of the above-mentioned individuals are funded by state general fund dollars. They of course have numerous other job responsibilities in addition to ADT. The question asked by the previous Maine State Veterinarian persists: how can anyone insulate against budget shortfalls in the current climate of budget austerity and fiscal uncertainty? Unfortunately, ADT is not

a high priority in the minds of most state legislators when animal disease emergencies are not underway. ME DACF continue to education our state peers about the importance of preparation, and the limited expansion of some ME DACF staff hours is a tiny step in the right direction.

<u>Outreach</u>: Accredited veterinarians: We continue to offer continuing educational meetings for large animal veterinarians. We always take the opportunity to remind these individuals of their responsibilities as accredited veterinarians and will continue to do so in the future when the ADT rule becomes law. Livestock markets: We only have one market and our livestock specialist attends this market every week to assure that animals are correctly identified and that only health animals are offered for sale. We have used this forum to educate producers and livestock dealers about the ADT rule and enforcement of official ID requirements (eg scrapie tags.) Livestock industry: We continue to attend monthly and annual meetings of each of our producer groups and they are well-versed on the ADT rule. Outbreaks of SECD and HPAI have underlined the importance of traceability to our pork and poultry stakeholders. CWD has captured the attention of our state and federal wildlife colleagues, as well as our captive cervid producers. We'll continue to provide education and outreach to this vital community. Our primary species are dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine, sheep, goats and poultry.

<u>Monitoring</u>: We rely on SCS/CoreOne to retrieve data on number of animals and number of shipments, as well as animal import and export data. Paper records and an Access database of eartags, as well as animal auction databases provide additional or supplemental information as needed.

V. <u>Traceability implementation</u>: Please refer to the FY21 ADT CA work plan for details.