



Wyoming Livestock Board

"To represent and serve Wyoming's livestock industry through protecting livestock health and verifying livestock ownership."

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2023 APHIS Wyoming Brucellosis Program Review/ Wyoming Livestock Board Response

The Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) appreciates APHIS' 2023 brucellosis program review. WLSB will continue working with APHIS and various other state and federal agencies to mitigate the risk of cattle exposure to brucellosis infected wildlife.

Thank you for the overview of our program, and insightful recommendations.

Recommendations

Communication and collaboration

1. *Renew interagency meetings to strengthen working relationships and improve communication and collaboration to ensure the success of the cooperative State-Federal brucellosis program.*

WLSB appreciates the collaborative efforts of current personnel within Veterinary Services (VS) Wyoming (WY). Joint meetings are held every other week between VS WY and WLSB. Further interagency meetings with intrastate agencies are occurring and will continue to be scheduled on a routine basis.

2. *Continue to collaborate with other Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) states to maintain consistency and transparency throughout their brucellosis management plans.*

State animal health officials (SAHOs) maintain contact through the National Association of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO), with monthly meetings at a minimum. The three Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) SAHOs meet monthly to discuss Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) specific issues.

3. *Continue to collaborate with WGFD to ensure wildlife surveillance for brucellosis is conducted in all areas of concern around the DSA boundary and other areas in the state.*

Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) publishes their brucellosis surveillance focus areas through their annual report, with all DSA areas remaining on the continual surveillance list. All results are available through the report, which may be accessed through their website, <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-in-Wyoming/More-Wildlife/Wildlife-Disease/Brucellosis>.

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WLSB collaborates with WGFD regarding temporary areas of concern for increased brucellosis surveillance within specific regions as needed.

4. *Develop communication standard operating procedures for non-negative brucellosis test results and follow-up including affected herd management, especially if non-routine decisions are considered.*

WLSB appreciates the support of the VS WY epidemiologist and Ruminant Health Center staff. WLSB will continue meeting routinely with VS WY, working through communication and affected herd management protocol.

5. *Continue building relationships with State, Federal and custom slaughter plants to maintain and encourage required and voluntary slaughter surveillance for brucellosis. Develop method of tracking sample submission to ensure compliance.*

WLSB is grateful to VS WY personnel for continued support of our voluntary slaughter surveillance program. WY custom slaughter plants are requested to submit brucellosis samples on all cattle >12 months of age statewide. Both WLSB and VS WY personnel continue to visit the facilities on a recurring basis.

Data management

6. *Develop data entry and sharing standard operating procedures to ensure all program data is available in a timely manner to State and Federal personnel involved in the brucellosis program.*

WLSB appreciates the availability of information system resources provided by USDA for data storage and analysis. VS WY and WLSB have established a protocol for shared data entry responsibilities and will continue to ensure all data is entered through shared systems.

7. *Develop standard evaluation criteria for brucellosis herd mitigation plans to ensure recommendations are applied appropriately and discuss evaluations with Federal personnel involved in the brucellosis program.*

WLSB received approval to purchase a significantly improved software system in Fiscal Year (FY) 25. Brucellosis herd mitigation plans will be updated in consultation with VS WY personnel.

8. *Consider methods to better evaluate DSA inventory both by herd and individual animal to improve understanding of brucellosis surveillance numbers, disease prevalence and other metrics.*

WLSB's future software system, to be installed in FY25, will allow further data analytics on both the herd and individual basis. The lack of definitive tests for brucellosis further complicates data analysis. Continued non-negative samples, which are likely not brucellosis, significantly complicates data, along with herds which do not culture positive.

9. *Develop method for tracking cooperative agreement funds for brucellosis management and request to decrease de-obligated funds.*

Funds provided through USDA's cooperative agreement funding are extremely appreciated by WLSB and vital to our brucellosis surveillance program. WLSB personnel developed solid management software following hiring of our current financial analyst. WLSB now has an increased need for funding and does not anticipate de-obligated funds in the future.

10. *Develop a system/strategy to monitor testing compliance associated with animal movements and correlated official identification with brand inspection to achieve more real-time compliance.*

WLSB sincerely appreciates the availability of data storage systems such as Surveillance Collaboration Services (SCS) for animal disease traceability. Through SCS, WLSB is able to correlate animal movement ID with brand inspection in most situations. Due to the sensitivity of data management within WY, correlating brand inspection with official identification onsite remains challenging. Final approval of the animal disease traceability rule may provide opportunity in the future for further exploration of this request.

11. *Continue Mobile Information Management (MIM) outreach and education to increase use of electronic data systems.*

WLSB continues to utilize cooperative agreement funding for the enhancement of MIMS through radio frequency identification device (RFID) application for brucellosis surveillance. WLSB is appreciative of USDA's continued availability of RFID tags for state distribution along with the cooperative agreement funding. Utilizing these funds, WLSB purchased approximately 30 RFID wands for distribution to category II accredited veterinarians, with an emphasis on veterinarians practicing within the DSA. Neither of VS Wyoming's two field veterinary medical officers (VMOs) are trained on MIMS, nor do we have a VS animal health technician (AHT) or animal identification coordinator (AIC). Two of WLSB's three veterinary staff are fully trained in MIMS, and attempting to train WY veterinarians as time allows. WLSB has continually requested a MIMS specialist to assist with further training for private practitioners, offering to schedule several veterinary clinics within a one-week period. WLSB has repeatedly been denied assistance through requests submitted to the WY Area Veterinarian In Charge (AVIC) for a MIMS specialist to briefly help with training. WLSB earnestly requests assistance for a minimum of one week to help with MIMS training category II veterinarians using RFID tags and readers.

Livestock markets, slaughter plants, producers

12. *Evaluate alternative education and outreach methods to reach hobby farmers and others that may not understand the DSA rules. Continue to educate all producers about brucellosis and DSA rules.*

WLSB appreciates the assistance of VS WY personnel with education and outreach to all WY producers. WLSB presented two brucellosis educational webinars, available both in-

person and through ZOOM, in the fall of 2023. Further brucellosis educational webinars are scheduled for 2024, including in-person presentations. USDA cooperative agreement funding provided WY the opportunity to create professional brucellosis surveillance brochures for producers, slaughter plants, and stakeholders throughout the state.

- 13. Ensure the DSA box on the G-slip is consistently marked by the producers or brand inspectors or develop another method to allow the market to clearly tell which cattle should be tested.*

WLSB veterinarians continue to attend all brand district meetings to provide training, answer questions, and open dialogue between brand inspectors and animal health staff regarding DSA brucellosis surveillance.

- 14. Regularly visit livestock markets to ensure compliance with DSA rules and adequate operations, including accounting for official identification devices.*

VS WY field staff is limited to two field veterinarians, no AIC, no AHT. WLSB has one field veterinarian responsible for the entire western half of Wyoming, including all of the DSA. Visiting Wyoming's four livestock markets routinely is challenging with the limited staff available. Lack of an AIC limits the resources available to our livestock markets regarding animal disease traceability information. WLSB respectfully requests USDA reconsider the addition of an AIC to VS WY, significantly enhancing our communication capabilities to livestock markets.

- 15. Develop a protocol for how to handle brucellosis non-negative cattle at the livestock markets or other clear guidance in cooperation with VS FiOps in WY and RHC brucellosis program staff.*

WLSB works collaboratively with VS WY, and will continue training and guidance for all livestock market veterinarians. Development of clear, written guidance will be pursued with the availability of USDA cooperative agreement funding.

- 16. Update the livestock market lists of DSA producers quarterly to stay current.*

WLSB will coordinate with brands and the livestock markets to update DSA producer lists on a regular basis.

- 17. Continue building relationships with State, Federal and custom slaughter plants to maintain and encourage required and voluntary slaughter surveillance for brucellosis. Develop method of tracking sample submission to ensure compliance.*

WLSB is grateful to VS WY personnel for continued support of our voluntary slaughter surveillance program. WY custom slaughter plants are requested to submit brucellosis samples on all cattle >12 months of age statewide. Both WLSB and VS WY personnel continue to visit the slaughter facilities on a recurring basis.