

2024
Advancing Animal Disease Traceability
(ADT) Road Map for
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (ME DACF)

A Three-Year Plan

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I. ME DACF Traceability goals, 2024 and beyond:

The Animal Health Program in the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ME DACF) has continued its work in animal disease traceability to improve animal disease detection, reduce transcription errors, increase adoption of electronic identification, and reduce data entry requirements. In the past three years, ME DACF has required radio frequency identification (RFID) tags in all cattle attending our state agricultural fairs as well as any cattle/bison shipping into or out of the State of Maine. ME DACF has provided RFID tags to producers and to veterinarians. ME DACF has handheld readers to provide to veterinarians, shows, sales, and other entities that may require a reader. We are in the process of purchasing additional RFID readers for field staff. ME DACF has completed multiple traces in 2023 and 2024 and completed all Traceability Performance Measures for USDA. We continue to use SCS/CoreOne for animal disease traceability. Currently we have four staff members that can use EMRS, SCS/CoreOne, VSPS, and DIS. Two staff are overseeing AIMS submissions.

II. CURRENT TRACEABILITY SITUATION

2.1 Who are we?

ME DACF Animal Health has the responsibility for the control and eradication of disease in livestock and poultry statewide and implementation of

animal disease traceability systems for the State of Maine. As of FY24, we have made aspects of ADT – specifically animal movement data entry and CVI processing and animal traces – the primary responsibility of the ME DACF ADT technician and administrative staff. We continue to work with TraceFirst on webinar training to maximize our understanding and fluency with SCS/CoreOne. We have actively used SCS/CoreOne and EMRS to document and track any disease investigation-related visits to animal premises and related quarantines. We have expanded our use of VSPS, DIS and AIMS to enable traceability of animal disease. We will continue to integrate our Reportable Animal Disease (RAD) database into CoreOne also. As of FY24, all our RAD reports are digitized. For FY24 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.

2.2 Where are we now?

ME DACF Animal Health has seen an increase in electronic CVIs, both import and export. We have also seen an increase in the use of EIA submittance via the electronic system. Three ME DACF staff are learning GIS mapping of herds (cattle/bison, sheep, goat, cervid) and NPIP flocks.

DACF staff send paper export CVIs to the state of destination electronically using the email addresses shared by USDA. The same documents are saved in SCS/CoreOne, and a

scanned copy saved in our internal files. Through Global Vet Link (GVL) and StateVet.com we can process eCVI directly into SCS/CoreOne.

2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths:

We have seen an increase in requests from producers to get a Premises ID for cattle/bison, cervid, sheep and goat producers. We have been able to complete this within hours of request, if not immediately. Our Maine veterinarians are incorporating the ADT Rule changes and alerting their clients prior to a farm visit.

Our knowledge of data systems is becoming more fluid and functional. Having two Assistant State Veterinarians with knowledge of our electronic management systems has made trace backs and pulling vaccination, TB, and Brucellosis test records quicker and easier.

The State of Maine has prioritized ADT and funded a full time position for this work. This person maintains databases, reaches out to producers, and provides education on official Identification and use of tools for applying tags as well as record keeping tools.

Weaknesses:

There is a need for ME veterinarians to shift to electronic formats for CVIs.

Maintaining office support staff has been difficult for ME DACF. We have had inadequate staffing in the administrative support personnel role to keep up with the data entry requirements associated with paper-based ADT records.

Since the inception of SCS/CoreOne (several years ago) we have had several staff turnovers. The database does need some “cleaning up” as several Premises have the same address and have multiple listings. Occasionally, we do see some P.O. Boxes. It is a goal to validate addresses and owner information within the system.

Sharing test and vaccination charts with the State Animal Health Laboratory is a challenge. Documents can end up in both places and the current process is person-dependent.

2.4 Opportunities and Threats

Handling of import and export of all livestock as well as herd test/vaccination records could all be handled electronically. Some veterinarians in Maine hesitate at the expense of purchasing these applications. CVI Central is a fine example of an application to support veterinarians to do eCVI/testing/vaccination records. The cost is prohibitive to an individual as well as the State of Maine. State of Maine cannot financially support the cost to purchase a database that can accept paper CVI and convert them to electronic (CVI Central). Other states have supported such applications and are able to offer this to their veterinarians at no cost.

ME DACF often deals with individuals that do not want the State involved in their business. This is an opportunity for outreach and education, if/when we are able to talk to these individuals. There is an opportunity to follow through on enforcement and ensure consequences for delinquencies.

2.5 Inventory of existing infrastructure and suitability assessment

ME DACF has one ADT technician fully focused on ADT and three veterinarians that give a small amount of time to ADT work. We are currently without office associate support. We store all CVI in an interdepartmental database. Each CVI is scanned and placed in the appropriate import or export, year and species folder. Paper copies are filed in import/export folders within our office.

Tag distribution is maintained in a similar fashion. We use Excel spreadsheets, AIMS and SCS/CoreOne. The RFID agreements are filed physically in our office.

Maine IT department is imperative to our operations. As we move to more electronic means of receiving and sending data, we need a support system.

We use USDA APHIS websites, VSPS, SCS/CoreOne, GVL, StateVet, DIS, EMRS and AIMS to track our livestock activities.

In some areas of Maine, it is impossible to have cell phone coverage, knowing this ahead of time we can work around it.

III. VISION AND MISSION CONTEXT FOR ADVANCING TRACEABILITY

3.1 Vision Statement

Protect the health and welfare of Maine's producers and their livestock through the advancement of a safe and secure food supply within a marketplace that provides fair and equal access to consumers and processors while enhancing Maine's working landscape, rural character, and local economies.

3.2 Mission Statement

The ability for Maine producers to sell locally, nationally, even internationally must be maintained. Working with the USDA to meet and even exceed federal guidelines can accomplish this.

IV. TRACEABILITY REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Strategic goal(s)

Enhance our State-wide infrastructure for advancing ADT in line with State, Tribal, and USDA standards.

Ensure Animal Health staff, as well as our external stakeholders, are aware of official identification requirements. Shift, as appropriate, from an education/outreach program to a implementation to compliance with enforcement activities.

4.2 Programmatic goals

Increase the review of import and export CVIs and vaccination and test charts for compliance with ADT requirements. Provide letters to veterinarians who do not comply with ADT requirements.

Provide training to key personnel within the Animal Health Division to build maps and interactive maps for tracking and publishing disease event information and updates on our website.

Build our Geospatial Information System (GIS) capabilities related to ADT to track outbreaks.

Increase adoption of RFIDs in beef cattle through education of producers and veterinarians and coordination with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Maine will distribute RFID tags direct to producers who sign an agreement to keep records for 5 years. We are currently tracking RFID tags sent to accredited veterinarians and individual producers in SCS/CoreOne and AIMS. We also maintain an Excel spreadsheet for quick retrieval and back up of tags.

4.3 ADT Trace Performance Measures (TPMs)

DACF staff continue to receive training from our USDA APHIS VS, District 1 partners in EMRS database. We have fully assumed responsibility for issuing premises identification for Maine farms. Since 2017, our Trace Performance Measures (TPM) timeline conducted via USDA APHIS, has gone from 3–5-hour completion per TPM to an average of 10-12 minutes.

4.4 Data requirements

Build a robust geospatial information system (GIS) within the Animal Health Program and other Programs within the Animal Industry Division to further our ability to geocode and map our premises for use with interactive mapping for disease traceability and response to possible outbreaks.

Coordinate assets and capabilities with the ME DACF GIS Coordinator to provide geocoding and mapping to our farm premises.

Provide training to key personnel in the Animal Health Program and our other Programs to learn to build and manipulate interactive mapping for our cattle, swine, sheep, goats, cervid and poultry populations within Maine.

4.5 Information technology plan

Maine does not have fully adequate resources for its ADT needs. Paper CVIs continue to take up a lot of staff bandwidth and software to scan, and having them electronically would be highly beneficial. Animal health team laptops and cell phones struggle with connectivity at times and we don't always have the latest software. We work with Maine IT when possible, on effective solutions and storage needs for ADT-pertinent data. At some point and ideally, all Maine veterinarians will possess tools that allow them to

electronically capture ID data and complete eCVIs, and licensed livestock dealers and some farmers will transition to RFID technology using electronic tags and readers.

4.6 Resource requirements

We rely on one FTE staff position, funded primarily by the state, and supplemented by the USDA CA to carry out all ADT functions. When filled, the Office Associate position also assists with ADT records and paperwork. We would benefit from additional software funds. We would also benefit from newer technology (tablets, readers) to use at agricultural fairs and other events. 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.

4.7 Organizational needs

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

4.7.1 Executive support

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

4.7.2 Coordination and oversight procedures

The State Veterinarian bears overall responsibility for advancing animal disease traceability. 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. The ADT technician is the primary contact and the primary person for seeing this ADT plan through.

4.7.3 Policy

Maine aligns its ADT policy to the federal ADT rule to maintain consistency and allow us to implement a strategic plan aligned with federal goals.

4.7.4 Staffing

- One full-time ADT technician that is resourceful and well connected to Maine agriculture.
- When we are staffed with an office assistant, they support the ADT technician with data entry.

4.7.5 Budget requirements

- Cooperative agreement funds are used to partially support one full time ADT coordinator position. This position is fully devoted to meeting ADT goals laid out within this plan.
- The State General fund meets the needs of other staff members whose work contributes to ADT goals.
- Projected 2024 cooperative agreement funding is not enough to meet current needs. We could benefit from additional staff funding support and funding to upgrade our IT infrastructure.

4.7.6 Outreach (required to be addressed within the Road Map)

The ADT technician is in regular contact with our ME producers and other stakeholders. She is well connected in the state and available, as needed, to work with producers one on one. We also communicate with ME veterinarians on ADT through our monthly newsletter and through state-hosted CE events and accreditation meetings.

Livestock dealers are reminded of their ADT responsibilities upon license renewal annually and any other time we have contact with them. ME does not have any current largescale livestock market. This has led to the creation of underground markets or increased movement out of state. We are targeting the underground markets and offering support and education.

4.8 Monitoring and reporting interstate movement activity

The movement of livestock into and out of the State of Maine is entered into SCS/CoreOne. Prior to the entry, the information is logged into an Excel spreadsheet which includes for imports: Origination state, originating owner, Health Certificate #, date of shipment; species, how many and destination within Maine. Exports include; date of shipment, origin of owner; destination owner and state, species, how many and Health Certificate #. On both import and export, it is also recorded if CVI is an eCVI or paper CVI. All tags issued to a producer are entered into the AIMS database. All tags are also entered into an Excel spreadsheet in the occurrence of database loss due to acts of a terrorist. Backtags issues to livestock dealers and any auction are also kept on an Excel sheet. The use of 9-3 for the NPIP are used for importation of poultry, game birds and domestic waterfowl into the state of Maine.

Communication with our New England neighbors has allowed “show season” CVI. These are handled the same as “30 day” CVI but are valid for New England show season (April through October). Only one CVI is needed, saving the producer money as well as veterinarian time.

V. ADVANCING TRACEABILITY

5.1 Ranking of priorities for advancement

We plan to advance and enhance ADT by increasing the usage of E-CVI platforms by ME accredited veterinarians and entering tags in to our SCS/CoreOne database.

Additionally, increasing electronic reader usage by our veterinarians and producers. Lastly, maintaining communication and effective working relationships with our industry stakeholders.

5.2 Implementation of objectives

Many of what is described in here is already being implemented and will continue to be expanded as resources are available.