

# Brucellosis Eradication Task Force Report

April 7, 2004

The task force met beginning at 3:00 PM April 7, 2004 in the Amethyst Ballroom in the Marriott City Center Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. There were 14 persons in attendance to participate in a six item seminar of timely topics followed by the business meeting.

Dr Debbie Douch, National Brucellosis Epidemiologist, USDA, APHIS, VS presented a review of the high points of the long history of the brucellosis eradication program in the US with emphasis on the elements that contributed most heavily to the successes of the program such as adult vaccination, wide spread application of epidemiology and the rapid completion plan . She also gave a brief report of the program noting that the US currently has no known infected cattle herds and that there were only two states not yet recognized as 'free'. Wyoming, which had been brucellosis free since 1985 lost status as the result of finding two infected premises that had clearly become infected due to spread of the disease from elk to domestic cattle. A major challenge for the future remains the persisting high levels of infection in the free ranging bison and elk in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Dr. John Korsland USDA, APHIS, VS National Swine Programs Liaison Veterinarian spoke to the topic ' The Future of Swine Brucellosis Eradication-Proving Victory, Maintaining Separation'. In his presentation he addressed the material challenges presented by the widely spread populations of feral swine, many of whom are infected with brucellosis. He addressed some of the changes in the swine industry and posed questions related to the possible need to reexamine how we conduct disease surveillance in light of those changes. He also detailed some of the changes that are occurring in other swine disease regulatory programs and the desirability of harmonizing the brucellosis and PRV programs in relation to management of the commercial swine feral/transitional swine interface. His perception is that the management of this interface presents the greatest challenge to the future of Swine brucellosis and PRV eradication programs. He also stressed the need to develop workable plans to address solutions to interface management problems at the local level.

Dr Arnold Gertonson, Yellowstone Brucellosis Coordinator USDA APHIS VS provided the group a look at the future of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area. He reviewed some of the problems of the past that had negatively impacted the disease elimination efforts in the past. However he indicated that the Park Service had resumed vaccination in the park this year after a 40 year hiatus. He expressed cautious optimism about the future of disease elimination programs in the area due to the fact that key decision makers have agreed in principal to the elimination of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Specifics of such activities remain to be developed.

Dr Jim Logan, State Veterinarian of Wyoming detailed the history of eradication efforts in his state and described the circumstances leading up to the reversion to Class A status. He provided the specifics information that confirmed the spread from free ranging elk to the index cattle herd and the subsequent movements that led to the loss of Wyoming's Brucellosis Free Status. Prevention measures put in place to prevent any reoccurrence included vaccination, spatial separation from feed ground elk, animal identification measures and additional surveillance. For information and reference he detailed some of the negative effects the loss of status had had on Wyoming cattle growers.

Dr Philip Elzer, A noted Brucellosis researcher from Louisiana State University reviewed some of the challenges needing research in the future if the tools needed to effectively meet the challenges posed by free ranging species affected by various Brucella. These include bison, elk, feral swine, and reindeer/caribou. He provided a comprehensive review of available information about the effectiveness of Strain 19 and Strain RB51 as well as novel vaccines VTRS-1 and VTRS-1/D in various age and sex classes of wildlife.

The available information paints a discouraging picture and clearly supports Dr Elzer's assessment that development of highly efficacious vaccines for use in the free ranging species that carry various strains of Brucella abortus and Brucella suis are among the most pressing challenges in the fight to eradicate brucellosis from the US.

Dr Coats made an abbreviated presentation to those interested following adjournment detailing the use of the newly approved Florescence Polarization at Livestock Markets as a replacement for the CITE test which is no longer available. The presentation explained the process used to establish the cutoff criteria for determining disposition of consignments at markets.

Review of resolutions and other business items followed. The task force adopted positions and resolutions have been submitted. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.