

# **Brucellosis Eradication Task Force**

## **Mid-Year Report**

**August 27, 2004**

During the period since the annual meeting the following significant events have occurred related to the national brucellosis eradication efforts:

Missouri was declared a Brucellosis Free state in February 2004 but an infected herd was detected in May. Because the state had achieved free status and because they were able to depopulate the herd promptly, and completed the required through epidemiological investigation without disclosing additional infection the states 'Free' status was not removed.

Wyoming discovered additional infected brucellosis herds. The total number of herds discovered in the current situation is 4. The most recent is located in the northeast portion of the state and there have been no links to the previously disclosed infected herds. The most likely source of infection in this recently discovered herd is not known. All possible sources are being considered in the investigation. The Wyoming Governor has appointed a Brucellosis Task Force and charged them with dealing with the brucellosis issues related to four areas. There are regulatory aspects, public health aspects, impacts on the cattle industry, and wildlife related issues. The Governors Task Force is expected to complete their work and render a report by the end of the year.

Texas reports a new infected cattle herd was quarantined on 31 August 2004. The epidemiological investigation and adjacent testing is underway.

Activity related to the creation of a new MOU continues. Members involved include the states animal health and wildlife agencies from ID, MT, and WY, APHIS, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Non-voting participants include the Intertribal Bison Cooperative, representing Native American interests as well as US Geological Service and the Agricultural Research Service.

Several research projects are underway related to feral swine and their diseases and activities. I anticipate reporting of the results of these projects at the next meeting.

I do not anticipate any significant revision of the mission or objectives for the Task Force before the next annual meeting. There continues to be local, regional and in some quarters national concerns related to the continued existence of brucellosis in domestic and free ranging animal species and the threat that poses. Concerns related to the ongoing surveillance for this disease is expected to continue for the foreseeable future not only because of the potential transfer from free ranging species to domestic animals or people but also because this organism is considered to be well suited to use as a biological agent.

The successful completion of the brucellosis eradication in most jurisdictions has seriously impacted the ability to trace cattle in the US because for many years the brucellosis program was the primary system that required identification and tracking movements of cattle. The task force recognizes the critical need for the rapid implementation of the comprehensive animal ID and movement tracking system and urges the Board to continue to do all they can speed up the implementation of the US Animal Identification Plan.