

**Cattle Species
Committee Report**

2008 Mid Year Report

September 2008



Chair: Dr. Karen Jordan, Dairy Farmers of America
Vice Chair: Jon Johnson, Texas Farm Bureau

There has been no activity of the Cattle Species Committee since the NIAA annual meeting of 2008.

Issues happening within the cattle industry:

- The Johne's disease Strategic Planning Subcommittee group met March 13 and 14 of 2008 in Chicago Illinois to update the previous strategic plan. This is a draft strategic plan to give guidance to the Johne's program over the next 5 years and is to be presented at USAHA Johne's Committee at the annual meeting in Greensboro, NC.
- This past year the animal welfare practices of the dairy industry were questioned with the release of the video showing inhumane acts to black and white cattle at the Hallmark Plant. The dairy industry, National Milk Producers Federation and member cooperatives, have distributed to their membership a "top ten" list for consideration before shipping animals. This "LIST" is a document suitable for displaying for dairy farm workers to view on a daily basis to remind employees how to select and appropriately ship animals off the farm for travel to a sale barn or directly to a processing facility.
- North Carolina's Dairy Biosecurity Committee continues to strive to figure out how to continue to do business, "Business Continuity", should we be faced with a highly contagious disease. This summer biosecurity training was offered across the state for dairy farm owners and employees. This training described the extreme measures to be taken to "secure" your farm should a disease event occur, for example. Decontamination of all vehicles coming into and off of your farm, gated drives so that traffic can be monitored and controlled, unnecessary traffic prohibited, etc... The purpose in having individuals trained is to hopefully convince officials that if our dairy farms are negative for disease that we can still safely ship product off our farms, hence, stay in business. The question that has risen is: Who has the authority to enforce this?
- Tuberculosis continues to keep popping up, especially in large dairy herds. Does there need to be stronger TB regulations, enforcement of regulations, is slaughter house surveillance doing its part to find TB? Have we given up on eradication of TB? Are adequate research dollars being invested into a "better" test? Is there a dairy herd west of the Mississippi River that is infected and not identified? Are calf ranches contributing to the spread of TB? USDA will be evaluating Mexico's National TB Program in January of 2009. The USDA TB Strategic Plan for the 20 Mexican States with export status will become effective in 2012. This plan will remove the designated "B Zones Areas" of highly infected herds and include them with the other herds in the state to determining the TB incidence level of the whole state. This will place the states in one of the 5 TB status levels and establish their export status to the U.S. Cattle producers in Mexico are concerned that they will have to do more testing and their state could possibly lose its export status. Brucellosis in the Yellowstone National Park continues to be an issue for grazing cattle. What is USDA and Department of Interior doing to alleviate this problem?

- The Fever Tick continues to spread over South Texas. The designated permanent quarantine zone along the Texas/Mexico Border from Del Rio, Texas to Brownsville, Texas covers 500,000 acres. Since July of 2007, an additional 1,000,000 acres in 6 counties has been classified as a temporary preventive area due to incursions of the tick outside the permanent quarantine zone. Increased tick pressure from Mexico, lack of treatment options, a growing number of wildlife species found to support the tick, and insufficient resources have contributed to the current fever tick crisis. Early this year, the fever tick program received \$5.2 million of the \$13 million of federal funds initially requested in 2007 to fight the tick. The amount was appreciated and used, but it was not adequate for the equipment, personnel, supplies and treatment products needed to eradicate this outbreak. As preventive quarantines are expanded due to the spread of the tick, the workload has also increased, raising the cost of this battle against the tick. The Texas Cattle Industry has written Secretary Ed Schafer, requesting an additional \$15.4 million to address the current infestation in the temporary quarantine zones. Scratching and dipping of cattle at 6 South Texas Auction Markets is being considered as buyers from outside the area are concerned about the spread of the fever tick. State Veterinarians are also developing a letter to go to USDA in support of funding for the program. Another letter from NIAA in support of this current request would be appreciated.