

Bovine TB traced to Saginaw County Dairy Cow; Laboratory tests indicate Michigan strain

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Agency: Agriculture and Rural Development

March 21, 2013

Lansing - The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) announced today the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa has confirmed bovine Tuberculosis (TB) in the lymph nodes of a Saginaw County dairy cow identified during slaughter surveillance. The strain of bovine TB is unique to Michigan deer and cattle.

"Slaughter surveillance is an important part of the food safety net. USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service is charged with removing anything that looks suspicious from the food system," said Kevin Besey, MDARD's Food and Dairy Division Director. "Although pasteurization kills the bacteria and is an important component of public health, MDARD will not permit milk from reactor animals to be sold for human or animal consumption."

"In accordance with our bovine TB response plan, the farm has been quarantined and a whole-herd test conducted," said Dr. Steven Halstead, MDARD's state veterinarian. "Some animals responding to the on-farm test have been necropsied at Michigan State University's Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health. Samples collected at necropsy are undergoing further diagnostic tests to confirm TB and these tests may take days to weeks. Since Saginaw County is in a bovine TB Free area, we are moving quickly to stamp out and contain the disease at this one location."

MDARD does not expect this one animal to affect Michigan's TB Free status in this area. Epidemiologists will be conducting a farm visit to look at everything from farm bio-security measures, potential wildlife incursions including feral swine, animal husbandry practices and purchase and sale records.

"As a partner to MDARD, DCPAH is here to help protect public and animal health in Michigan. Helping to address these types of disease incidents is core to our mission," said Carole Bolin, Director, Michigan State University (MSU) Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health (DCPAH) "Our ability to perform testing quickly and reliably plays a key role in getting information back to all the stakeholders without delay. We know this is a difficult situation for producers to be in, and we are dedicated to getting answers to them as quickly as possible."

Bovine TB affects all mammals, with cattle being especially sensitive. In 1994 a bovine TB positive white-tailed deer was harvested by a hunter in Alpena County. In 1998, USDA, MSU, the Michigan Department of Community Health, MDARD and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources created an interagency project to address eradicating bovine TB by surveillance testing 1.3 million domestic animals, testing hunter harvested deer, establishing cattle and bison testing zones, assisting with disease risk mitigation practices, depopulating some beef and dairy cattle farms and removing test positive animals from herds on other farms.

In 2000, the entire state of Michigan lost TB free status and Michigan has methodically taken steps to block transmission of the disease which is now only endemic in a small four-county area of Northeastern Lower Michigan. The Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ), where the disease still occurs, is Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda counties. The Saginaw County border is approximately 115 miles and has three counties between it and the MAZ.

To receive information regarding disease outbreaks, or regulatory changes that impact your livestock, please join our Animal Health Listserv by visiting www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases.

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