



## BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE)

### United States (US) Border Open to Canadian Cattle

- On July 13, 2005, the United States (US) Ninth Federal Circuit Court of Appeal issued an order staying a preliminary injunction granted on March 2, 2005 by the US District Court for the District of Montana.
- This allowed the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) minimal risk rule to be implemented, meaning Canadian cattle under 30 months and certain beef products can once again be exported into the US.
- On July 18, 2005, cattle from Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta were successfully exported to the US for the first time in 26 months.
- Currently, the border is open to cattle and bison less than 30 months of age, as well as goats and sheep that are less than 12 months of age. These animals are for immediate slaughter or feeding for slaughter. In addition, many other meat products can be shipped to the US. The US rule also means that elk, deer, llamas and alpacas can once again be exported to the US.
- Canadian exporters must have their shipments certified by a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)- accredited veterinarian and endorsed by CFIA. This means animals must meet certain health and identification requirements. Most importantly, they must be under 30 months of age and females must not be pregnant. Shipments also need to bear specific Government of Canada seals. Additional information is available by calling 1-800-442-2342 or visiting the CFIA website at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/bseesb/america/factfiche.shtml>.
- As of October 6, 2005, 211,725 live animals have been exported to the US from Canada, since the border reopened.

### Canada-Alberta BSE Surveillance Program (CABSESP)

- The Canada-Alberta BSE Surveillance Program (CABSESP) was designed to increase the number of samples received from high-risk cattle for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) testing.
- Our target is to test at least 10,425 high-risk Alberta cattle annually.
- A total of 34,275 cattle were tested for BSE in Alberta between July 1, 2004 to October 1, 2005.
- Cattle north of Innisfail are tested at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's (AAFRD) Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) laboratory in Edmonton. Cattle south of Innisfail are submitted to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) laboratory in Lethbridge.
- Eligible cattle include those that are dead from unknown causes, down, distressed and in need of emergency slaughter, or diseased with a condition that resembles BSE and unlikely to respond to treatment.
- Producers are encouraged to contact their local veterinarian or call the CFIA at 1-800-400-4244 if they believe they have an animal that qualifies for the program.
- Carcasses of cattle sampled for BSE must be disposed of in accordance with the *Destruction and Disposal of Dead Animals Regulation* after negative results are received.
- Weekly and cumulative BSE testing totals are available on the CPV website at: <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/chiefvet>

# chief provincial VETERINARIAN'S REPORT

## WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV)

- WNV in horses is a reportable disease in Alberta. This means anyone knowing of, or suspecting a case of WNV in horses, must report it to the Chief Provincial Veterinarian at (780) 427-3448.
- As of October 28, 2005, three horses have tested positive for the virus in Alberta in 2005. Weekly statistics are published on the Chief Provincial Veterinarian website at: <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/chiefveter>
- The following table contains the number of WNV positive horses, humans, birds and mosquito pools detected in Alberta from 2003 to October 28, 2005.

### WNV Detected in Alberta (2003 - 2005)

Year	Horses	Humans	Birds	Mosquito Pools
2003	170	275	439	31
2004	4	1*	9	1
2005	3	10	6	1

(up to Oct 28/05)

\* travel related

- More information about WNV in humans can be found on Alberta Health and Wellness's website at: <http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/public/WNV/Index.html>
- Information about the disease in birds can be found on Fish & Wildlife's website at: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/diseases/WNV/index.html>
- Two vaccines are currently licensed in Canada for use against WNV in horses. They are available from veterinarians.

## FOREIGN ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION SUPPORT (FADES)

- In Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is legally mandated to control or eradicate foreign animal disease incursions.
- It is likely that CFIA manpower and resources would become quickly overwhelmed if a highly contagious livestock disease, such as foot and mouth disease (FMD) were to occur.

- Alberta's draft Foreign Animal Disease Eradication Support (FADES) plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of all levels of government and industry required to support the CFIA, should a highly contagious foreign animal disease outbreak occur in Alberta.
- Each of the key provincial government ministries that have roles to play in a foreign animal disease emergency have developed contingency plans describing in detail how they will fulfil their commitments outlined in the overarching FADES Plan. These ministries include Alberta Environment, Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, and Alberta Health and Wellness.
- A series of three tabletop exercises were held last fall and winter to test the FADES draft and each of the provincial government department contingency plans.
- AAFRD's Contingency Plan was drafted in 2003 and is currently being revised according to lessons learned from the FADES exercises.
- Livestock industry organizations in Alberta are also developing their own contingency plans for use in the event of a highly contagious disease incursion. The Alberta Poultry Industry Emergency Response Plan was finalized in late summer.

## BIOSECURITY INITIATIVE

- The Office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian has developed a project plan to increase biosecurity awareness and improve biosecurity practices within Alberta's livestock industry.
- The plan involves collaborating with industry stakeholders to determine what information materials are needed and how best to disseminate the information.
- Surveys to measure success will be conducted and excellence in biosecurity within Alberta's agri-food industry will be highlighted in information materials.

# chief provincial VETERINARIAN'S REPORT

## AVIAN INFLUENZA and SWINE INFLUENZA

- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is widespread in Southeast Asia. The virus (H5N1) has resulted in the death or culling of millions of birds. As of October 24, 2005, a total of 121 humans in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia have been infected with H5N1 avian influenza, resulting in 62 deaths.
- The H5N1 strain has recently been detected on numerous poultry farms in eastern Russia, Turkey and Romania. In late October 2005, the virus subtype H5 was detected in domestic poultry in Croatia. At the time of printing, testing had not yet determined the strain and pathogenicity.
- The CPV office continues to watch the global HPAI situation. Information updates are posted on the CPV website at: <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/chiefvet>.
- Swine veterinarians in Canada have recently reported a number of outbreaks of swine influenza (SI), most notably in Manitoba and Alberta. Most of the strains of SI virus have been H3N2 or H1N1, which have low pathogenicity. These strains can be transmitted to humans and vice versa, but the illness they produce is mild.
- SI is classified as a production disease as it can cause abortions or delay the ability of pigs to reach market weight by up to 14 days.
- SI virus is contagious and commonly transmitted from pig to pig via respiratory secretions and via fomites (contaminated bedding, equipment, etc.). It is also suspected that the virus can be carried airborne to neighboring down wind premises.
- Employing effective biosecurity measures, such as isolating new stock, preventing contact between birds and pigs, and minimizing human contact with pigs are the primary methods of preventing exposure. Vaccines are not routinely recommended because they are strain-specific, with no cross-protection between strains.
- Recently, a turkey layer flock in British Columbia (BC), was confirmed affected with H3N2 SI virus. The flock is situated across the road from a pig farm confirmed affected with H3N2 SI virus. The influenza experienced by this turkey flock is NOT related to the outbreak of avian influenza experienced in BC in the spring of 2004.
- Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) is working with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Sustainable Resources Development (Fish and Wildlife) to maintain an awareness of influenzas in the livestock, wildlife and human populations in Alberta.
- AAFRD is currently developing a project to conduct surveillance for influenza in pigs and domestic poultry.

## FINDING INFORMATION

### Ropin' the Web (AAFRD)

[www.agric.gov.ab.ca](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca)

### Chief Provincial Veterinarian

[www.agric.gov.ab.ca/chiefvet](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/chiefvet)

### Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)