



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Sheep and Goat Sector
3rd Quarterly Stakeholder Conference Call
Meeting Notes

Monday, December 7, 2020

Attendees: *Diane Sutton, Paul Hauer, Elizabeth Miller, Dawn Hunter, Shanna Siegel, Alex Turner, Tom Boyer, Anita Dahnke, Randy Dusek, Erica Sanko, Amy Hendrickson, Peter Orwick, Jim Logan, Lisa Shepard, Normal Tillman, Joan Dean Rowe, Katherine Marshall, Natalie Urie, Stephen White, Cindy Wolf, Chuck Gaiser, Stephanie Brault, Dianne Norden, Randy Pritchard*

Welcome

Diane Sutton

- Welcome to 3rd quarterly stakeholder call (last call was superseded by annual meeting)
- Summarized tags provided so far in FY 2021 under contracts to new producers and markets and dealers
 - 841 orders (73,960) plastic tags to new producers
 - 52 orders (146,600) metal tags to markets, dealers, and regulatory veterinarians

Wildlife Services

Elizabeth Miller

- WS is operating business as usual, despite COVID-19.
- WS' FY20 budget included new funding for nonlethal livestock protection from large carnivore predation. We are currently compiling information about the operational and research achievements made possible by the funding for a report. Highlights from the report can be shared on the next quarterly stakeholder call. We are awaiting the FY21 budget bill, to know if the funding will be received again for the current fiscal year.
- WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) is in discussion with ASI to determine the most optimal timing and venue for a webinar on Livestock Protection Dogs.

National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) Update

Katherine Marshall/Natalie Urie

- The NAHMS Goat 2019 study ended in March and the response rates were 60.0% and 60.5%, respectively for phase I and phase II of the study. All of the biologic testing, including enteric microbes, internal parasites, and Scrapie genotyping has been completed and results

have been returned to producers. We have received a few results from the *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* testing and are hopeful we will receive more from KSVDL after the new year. The first report is undergoing in-house editing and once that is completed it will be shared with goat industry stakeholders prior to publication. We will start working on the second report here soon.

- The Sheep 2023 Needs Assessment will be deployed in late January. We will need input from all stakeholders to help identify pertinent industry topics and issues facing the U.S. Sheep industry from the upcoming NAHMS study.
- Sheep death loss study – data were collected early in 2020 and are being analyzed in preparation for the Sheep Death Loss report due out in 2021.
- The *M. ovipneumoniae* article published in 2019 was corrected to remove individual animal identifications that had been included in a dataset associated with the article, and a clarification was made to indicate that some of the domestic sheep and goat samples were obtained by convenience sampling of private operations by the Besser lab. No recent update from WSU regarding their efforts working with NCBI to remove state-level identifiers from sequences uploaded to the GenBank.

Center for Veterinary Biologics Update *Paul Hauer*

- Close to finalizing rewrite of autogenous vaccine policy
- Intent is to make it easier to extend isolates and extend use range for autogenous vaccines

Trade Update *Dawn Hunter/Shanna Siegel*

- Question about how to open markets to China for lamb
 - APHIS has ensured FAS is aware of the American Sheep Industry Association's request.
 - Because the meat is intended for human consumption, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service will ultimately be the Department's technical lead for this request.

Agricultural Research Services Update *Stephen White*

- There is formal guidance this year from national programs for continuation of scrapie research, research on *M. ovipneumoniae*, and coxiellosis, and research on malignant catarrhal fever. First time that coxiellosis research is written into the project plan. Will study vaccine candidates and host genetics for both *M. ovipneumoniae* and coxiellosis. Have good preliminary data for MCF vaccine in a rabbit model for MCF.
- ARS is responsive in context of limited resources
- Now have access to use of BSL-3 laboratory on the Washington State University campus to study coxiellosis.
- For *M. ovipneumoniae* will be doing research on host genetics in sheep that determine shedding and could provide risk of outward transmission to other domestic sheep and potentially to bighorn sheep. Later conversation in meeting that it is important to emphasize that domestic sheep are only one possible source of *M. ovipneumoniae* to bighorn sheep, and other wildlife could be potential sources.

Animal Disease Traceability Update

Alex Turner

- Cattle and bison have been at the forefront of the discussion most recently
- Currently, CFR says that the APHIS Administrator can make decision about what and what is not official ID for livestock
- Response to a proposed move to electronic official ID in cattle and bison resulted in lawsuits and executive orders that resulted in a change in the amount of input that was requested from stakeholders prior to an APHIS Administrator change.
- This year a Federal Register notice requested input about a transition to electronic ID as sole official ID for cattle and bison, essentially asked question about whether USDA-APHIS should make transition to electronic ID for cattle and bison
- By January 1, 2022 would no longer approve anything but electronic ID
- By January 1, 2023 the only official ID allowed to be placed would be electronic ID
- If placed before January 1, 2023 all official ID in cattle and bison would be "grandfathered in"
- Over 900 responses to Federal Register notice, these have been compiled and a response will be posted by the end of this year.
- These activities in cattle and bison have generated a lot of discussion in the industries of other species
- It was noted that the cattle industry has received a large amount of funding for infrastructure and tags free of cost, and that the sheep and goat industry would also need support for making a possible transition to electronic ID as official ID.
- Dr. Turner noted that 8 million electronic tags are slated to be provided to producers intended for replacement age cattle and bison (4-12 months) by end of FY 2021. Each State has an allocation based on the number of the cattle in the State. USDA-APHIS has distributed 4 million tags since February of 2020. The number of 8 million was arrived at based on past distribution from the Kansas City warehouse and NASS numbers of cattle, using 15% for replacement numbers for beef herds and 30% for dairy herds
- A question was asked about whether there were any other possibilities for financial support in making potential transition to electronic ID in the industry other than free tags. For example, could support be obtained for doing pilot projects. Also can funding go to species other than cattle and bison. APHIS has supported transition by providing RFID readers and wands; most producers will not need readers because they are also visual and have a number that can be visually read, only need to place tags. ADT cooperative agreements tend to be administered at the State level and decisions are made there about where funding goes. Personnel are often funded with cooperative agreements, and these personnel perform functions that are not limited to just 1 species.

National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) Update

Suelee Robbe Austerman (provided by Diane Sutton)

- A request was made to NVSL to provide an update regarding the FY 2021 commitment made for NVSL to work with industry and State Animal Health Officials to develop a serum bank for *Brucella ovis* with both false and true positive sera that can be used to evaluate antigens for use in assays.

- Industry is still in discussion about the best way to provide tissues and serum from true and false positive animals for creation of a serum bank.
- Joan Dean Rowe suggested that Ashley Hill at the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System may have access to some specimens. There may be access to infected flocks with potential access to rams for confirmatory diagnosis
- Jim Logan noted that he has been aware of a few flocks with ELISA positive rams that the owners were willing to donate, but lack of funds has made it impossible to get tissues from these rams. Opportunities are going by. There is no place to hold the rams and no funding sources identified. In many cases in the west as well, the positive rams are hundreds of miles from the nearest laboratory.
- Could there be discussion about whether rams could be dropped off at a diagnostic lab, donated, and processed to obtain tissues and sera? How much would it cost for the lab to process them? Could funding be identified in the umbrella cooperative agreement? Dr. Logan noted that Wyoming plans to add the *B. ovis* issue into their next cooperative agreement.
- Joan Dean Rowe and Jim Logan agreed to look into this and reply back to Diane Sutton and Suelee Robbe Austerman

Industry Concerns and Questions

- No further issues brought up

Meeting closed at 12:05 p.m.