



Western Stock Growers' Association

BULLETIN #5

December 2, 2016 Volume 4, Issue 5

UPDATE: Bovine TB in Alberta

The following information comes from conference calls with CFIA on November 29 and December 1.

What we know:

- The infected herd is, from an epidemiological standpoint, one herd with several owners on 18 premises. This was determined from lab results combined with the epidemiological assessment and information on the movement of cattle. All the animals that comingled with the positives represent equivalent risk as the previously declared infected premises.
- Some of these 18 premises have not completed the scheduled caudal fold tests. These will go on as planned and the results from the caudal fold test and the post-mortems on reactors will add to the epidemiological information on the extent of this disease incident. This information will help determine the scope and design of the investigation going forward.
- Field testing for all farms under quarantine is scheduled to be finished December 23, barring any unforeseen obstacles.
- There are now approximately 50 herds under quarantine. We could expect slight fluctuation on that number for two reasons: 1. There were a few one off animals identified in the traceout that were located in feedlots. These animals have since been destroyed which results in those feedlots being released from quarantine. 2. As the investigation continues with new information from the testing and post-mortems, new traceouts may identify more herds to be quarantined. The addition of more herds is not expected to change the December 23 testing end date but it could affect it.
- Finding time at processing plants to schedule the humane slaughter of the non-reactors in the infected herd has been a challenge. Many plants are reluctant to open up time and space. Options are still being pursued to get the infected premises depopulated as soon as possible to get the ranchers affected on the way to compensation and repopulation. Early this week, 31 truckloads of 1300 animals (non-reactors) went to slaughter. The shipping went smoothly and no lesions consistent with TB were found in these animals.
- There are approximately 4000 calves from infected premises to be destroyed. These animals are too young to be tested. One facility has come on board to euthanize the calves.
- A feedlot has been given the green light from CFIA (protocols for isolation, tracking, etc. meet CFIA requirements) and can start accepting calves under quarantine immediately. This feedlot option will help to relieve the pressure for ranchers who don't have the facilities or feed to overwinter calves. This will be a retained ownership program with quarantined ranchers negotiating rates directly with the approved feedlot(s). CFIA and industry are hopeful these calves will be released from quarantine before they reach slaughter weight next summer.
- To date, no decision has been made on the other species under quarantine (horses, dogs, cats etc.). These will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis; there will be no blanket decisions for these animals. Rather the risk of exposure to infected animals will be evaluated on essentially an individual animal basis so a house pet might have a different outcome than a herd guardian dog for example.
- The province has instituted an education program for hunters entering the Suffield base to fill their elk tags. Hunters are asked if they see any abnormalities while dressing the animals, they are to report it to Alberta Fish and Wildlife. There is also a possibility of testing lymph nodes in the heads that are submitted for Chronic Wasting Disease testing. To date hunters have reported no abnormalities to AFW.

AAFC News Release: Governments commit support to help Alberta producers deal with bovine tuberculosis quarantine

November 30, 2016 – Ottawa, Ontario – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lawrence MacAulay, and Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Oneil Carlier today announced that producers experiencing extraordinary costs due to *bovine tuberculosis (bovine TB)* quarantine measures will be eligible for financial assistance under the AgriRecovery Framework.

The 2016 Bovine Tuberculosis Assistance Initiative will provide assistance to producers to cover the extraordinary costs they are facing as a result of the quarantine measures. This includes feeding and water infrastructure, feed for the animals, transportation, cleaning and disinfection as well as interest costs on loans due to the circumstances. Governments will be working with the industry in the coming days on the program specifics to ensure the program meets producers' needs while being delivered in a simple and timely manner.

In the meantime, producers can continue to access immediate help to address cash flow pressures through the Advance Payments Program. Under APP, producers are eligible for an advance up to \$400,000, with the first \$100,000 being interest free.

For more information, producers should contact Agriculture Financial Services Corporation toll free at 1-877-899-2372 or by email at info@AFSC.ca.

Quick facts

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) notified the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) that a case of *bovine tuberculosis (bovine TB)* had been detected in a Canadian cow when it was slaughtered in the USA. The cow was from Alberta.
- The Government of Canada is committed to protecting human and animal health, and has launched a full disease investigation.
- Generally, findings of *bovine TB* do not pose a threat to public health in the Canadian context. This is due to the extremely low prevalence of the disease in Canada.
- The federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) cost-shared suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs can assist producers experiencing severe income declines due to quarantine measures. AgriRecovery was designed as an FPT disaster relief framework intended to work together with the core BRM programs to help agricultural producers recover from natural disasters.
- The 2016 Bovine Tuberculosis Assistance Initiative funding is pending the provincial government finalizing program authorities.
- Producers may also be eligible for compensation through CFIA under the *Health of Animals Act* for animals ordered destroyed; other things ordered destroyed, such as contaminated feed or animal products; and the disposal costs of animals ordered destroyed.
- Federal and provincial government officials are continuing to monitor the situation in Saskatchewan.

Latest information from CFIA:

CFIA has committed to keeping the TB investigation web page updated with the most current information they can share.

Click on this link: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/tuberculosis/investigation-southeast-alberta/eng/1477438380160/1477438380659>

On this page is a link to ask questions of CFIA via email regarding the current investigation.

Help for Families and Individuals Dealing with Stressful Situations

Alberta Health Services (AHS) public health officials are receiving regular updates on the TB investigation findings. The risk to humans is considered extremely low.

This investigation situation may add emotional and financial stress to individuals and families. AHS offers community mental health services in the Brooks and Medicinal Hat area, as well as by phone, 24/7.

Confidential, no charge services are provided for addiction and mental health issues, as well as support for individuals and families dealing with stressful situations. Open weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- In Brooks call, 403-793-6655
- In Medicine Hat call, 403-529-3500
- Mental Health Helpline – 1-877-303-2642, available 24/7
- Addictions Helpline – 1-888-332-2322, available 24/7



Can bovine tuberculosis be spread to humans?

Bovine TB is a zoonosis, that is, an infection that can be transmitted from affected animals to people, causing a condition similar to human TB. People are most commonly infected through the ingestion of unpasteurized dairy products derived from infected animals but also through inhalation of infectious aerosols or direct contact through breaks in the skin.

Currently **the risk to the general population in Canada is considered to be very low** due to pasteurization of milk and livestock surveillance and testing programs. Owners and handlers of infected cattle may be at risk and anyone who may have been exposed to an infected animal should seek medical advice. For those who contract Bovine TB it can be treated successfully with antimicrobial drugs. Untreated infectious have the potential to be fatal.