



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Resolution

114th Annual Meeting ~ November 11-17, 2010

Minneapolis, MN

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 24 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON BRUCELLOSIS

SUBJECT MATTER: WINTER FEEDING OF ELK AND BISON IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Free ranging elk and bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) represent the last reservoir of *Brucella abortus* in the United States and create a risk of repeated transmission of brucellosis to livestock.

Supplemental winter feeding of wild elk and bison has been practiced for decades in parts of the GYA for several reasons. Primary among these is to maintain higher elk populations to prevent commingling of brucellosis infected wildlife with livestock and to allow vaccination of elk.

However, there is significant evidence that winter feeding creates abnormal animal densities and distributions associated with increased prevalence of, and transmission potential for (both intra and inter species), density dependent diseases such as brucellosis. Winter feeding perpetuates and exacerbates the very disease such management is attempting to control and at best is only partially effective at preventing transmission to livestock as evidenced by recent transmission events.

The Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee, comprised of state and federal wildlife and agriculture agencies of the GYA, reached consensus that wildlife feeding is contrary to effective disease elimination and control and issued a position statement that no new winter feedgrounds should be established.

Wild ungulate feeding in the GYA is contrary to the goal of reducing brucellosis transmission and should therefore be eventually eliminated. The United States Animal Health Association recognizes that phasing out of wild ungulate winter feeding in the GYA will need to be performed in a manner that maintains the balance between wild population abundance and available native forage across the landscape, and should include other concurrent actions to manage livestock feed depredation and commingling.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the wildlife agencies of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) states to not establish additional public or private feedgrounds and consider decreasing and eventually phasing out winter feeding of elk and bison in the GYA.

RESPONSE:

Idaho Dept of Fish and Game

IDFG supports your association's goal of reducing the risk of brucellosis transmission and we are committed to maintaining a cooperative working relationship with ISDA to implement solutions that meet the needs of

livestock producers and fulfills our statutory authority to manage wildlife for the benefit of Idaho citizens.

Wyoming Game and Fish Dept

This is an issue of utmost importance to the people of Wyoming. The Department continues to explore options to reduce or eliminate feeding on a case-by-case basis and will continue to work toward finding solutions to this complex problem.