

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION – 2006

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 11 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON JOHNE'S DISEASE

SUBJECT MATTER: INDEMNIFICATION TO ELIMINATE CATTLE CONFIRMED POSITIVE FOR *MYCOBACTERIUM AVIUM PARATUBERCULOSIS* (MAP)

DATES: MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA – OCTOBER 12-18, 2006

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Providing indemnification to producers for culling cattle confirmed positive for *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP) by an officially recognized test for slaughter when such cattle are clinically normal and a high or moderate MAP shedder, will serve to prevent further transmission of the disease. Indemnification tied to program participation will also enhance identification, testing and confirmation of MAP positive animals, thereby promoting Johne's disease free status herds.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) recommends that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) request necessary funding to provide limited indemnification of cattle for producers who participate in the National Johne's Control Program, meet all Program Standards and cull to slaughter any animal confirmed positive for *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP) by an officially recognized test provided further that the indemnification will apply only to animals determined to be clinically normal and a high or moderate MAP shedder.

The USAHA further requests that Congress recognize the importance of funding a Johne's disease indemnification program to augment, and not subtract from, current minimal funding for the National Johne's Control Program. USAHA recommends that this program remain voluntary.

RESPONSE:

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) appreciates this recommendation

and remains committed to improving our Johne's control program. However, we have several concerns regarding the request to provide indemnity for cattle confirmed positive for *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP).

These include:

- No authorization for indemnity in the statute which establishes the Johne's program (7 USC Sec. 7626). This statute limits USDA to funding requests for conducting research, testing, and evaluation of programs for the control and management of Johne's disease in livestock. In addition, authorizations of appropriations for the Johne's program only extend through 2007. USDA can not consider acting on this request until the new farm bill updates this restriction.
- Indemnity can only be applied to eradication programs (regardless of whether they are voluntary or mandatory). The Johne's program is a **control** program. Removal of some infected animals, while leaving others within the herd, will not produce a reduction in the national herd prevalence and can not be considered eradication. Currently, the economic models published show that test and cull programs can not remove the infection from the herds and would not be cost-effective methods to eradicating Johne's disease.
- Any herd owner that would participate in the indemnity program would have to make eradication of the disease the goal of their herd plan which requires the removal of all infected animals. Removal of some infected animals, while leaving others, will not produce a rapid reduction within a producer's herd prevalence levels, thereby prolonging the cleanup efforts.
- Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) testing is the most cost-effective method of managing the infection on the farm after the presence of MAP has been confirmed in moderate to heavily infected herds. Confirming ELISA positive animals to establish their eligibility for indemnity delays removal of the animal from the herd, in addition to accumulating further costs to the program.
- Producers that are only willing to remove heavily shedding animals after applying for indemnity would not be considered committed to Johne's eradication in their herd. Industry has not provided any information supporting how the inclusion of indemnity would increase participation in the voluntary program, or increase the commitment of producers already enrolled.

As a result of these concerns, VS will not pursue indemnity funds for the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program at this time.