RESOLUTION NUMBER: 38 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON TUBERCULOSIS

SUBJECT MATTER: APPROVAL OF THE CERVIDTB STAT-PAK AS AN OFFICIAL TEST FOR THE CERVID TUBERCULOSIS ERADICATION PROGRAM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Infection with *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*) continues to plague the United States cattle and cervid industries with a significant number of tuberculosis (TB) infected herds detected annually. During 2009-2011, TB strains were detected in cattle and captive cervid herds that were similar to strains from TB outbreaks in captive cervid herds found during the 1990’s. In all of these cases the approved Single Cervical Test has proven to be inadequate.

Advances in the science of TB testing have led to the development of antibody tests. The approval of antibody tests for farmed cervids would decrease the need for handling of these species, and would allow for increased interest in TB testing by producers. Blood-based antibody tests for use in cervid species would lead to increased participation of farmed herds in the TB eradication program.

At the 2006 United States Animal Health Association Annual Meeting, the following resolution was approved as Resolution 21: “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) validate a serological tuberculosis test for captive cervids…”

At the 2007 USAHA Annual Meeting the following resolution was approved as Resolution 26: “The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to expedite the validation process for tuberculosis (TB) serological tests for cervids to enhance surveillance for TB.”

The USAHA has recognized in recent years through discussion and these resolutions that many companies are generating promising data on antibody based TB diagnostic tests. Antibody-based tests have the potential to be more widely accepted by producers, due to reduced handling, and subsequent injury and death. Increased acceptance would in turn result in improved surveillance and herd management for bovine TB in captive cervids. Blood-based antibody tests represent viable alternatives to current TB test methods and many such tests have demonstrated promising results.
RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services approve the CervidTB Stat-Pak as an official test in the Cervid Tuberculosis Eradication Program.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) supports the request of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Committee on Tuberculosis to approve the Chembio CervidTB Stat-Pak® as an official tuberculosis (TB) test for the Cervid Tuberculosis Eradication Program.

VS funded a project in fiscal year 2011 to evaluate the Stat-Pak as a primary test for official bovine TB program use in captive and free-ranging Cervus canadensis (North American elk), Odocoileus virginianus (white-tailed deer), and reindeer (Rangifer tarandus). Approximately 1,800 animals were tested, and the performance of the Stat-Pak was compared to the single cervical tuberculin test. Findings from this project are encouraging, and we recognize the importance of developing and utilizing new diagnostic tests in the TB program.

However, VS agrees with the USAHA TB Committee’s Scientific Advisory Subcommittee (TB SAS) conclusion that the comparative cervical test (CCT) is not a suitable secondary test for the Stat-Pak, given that the two tests detect different types of immune responses to different antigens. Without a suitable secondary test, the false positive rate observed in our FY 2011 project suggests that an unacceptably high number of animals with non-negative results on the Stat-Pak would be destroyed in order to determine the infection status of the animal.

VS is delaying program approval and implementation of the Stat-Pak as an official TB program test until a suitable secondary test for animals with non-negative results is available. We are continuing to investigate alternatives and will report on our progress at the annual USAHA meeting.