

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 29 **APPROVED**
SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON PARASITIC DISEASES
SUBJECT MATTER: TROPICAL BONT TICK

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The tropical bont tick (TBT) *Amblyomma variegatum* and *Cowdria ruminantium*, the causative agent of heartwater disease, were introduced into the Western Hemisphere on cattle imported from Senegal in western Africa to Guadeloupe, French West Indies in the late 1700's to early 1800's. The tick remained on three islands, Guadeloupe, Antigua, and Marie Galante from the mid-1800's to 1949, but since 1949 has been found on numerous islands from Puerto Rico in the north to St. Vincent in the south. Heartwater occurs in Guadeloupe, Antigua and Marie Galante, and acute bovine dermatophilosis, another disease associated with the TBT, is found on all of the islands where the TBT now inhabits.

The TBT, heartwater and acute bovine dermatophilosis limit the potential for livestock production in the affected countries. Furthermore, the presence of the tick and its associated diseases in the Caribbean region presents a risk for introduction of the TBT and these diseases into the Americas. The introduction of heartwater into the United States could result in a cycle of transmission involving the TBT and native ticks, domestic livestock, and exotic and native wildlife. Spread of the TBT and its associated diseases could result in annual losses estimated at \$655,000 to \$3 billion annually.

Until 2007, efforts to control and/or eradicate the TBT were underway through the Caribbean *Amblyomma* Program (CAP) in the eastern Caribbean nations, the POSEIDON Program in the French West Indies, and through the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands. The CAP ended in 2008 and has been followed by projects of the national epidemiologists of eastern Caribbean nations under the strategy of the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET).

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), International Services (IS) and/or Veterinary Services (VS) establish a working group to review successes and failures of the previous tropical bont tick (TBT) control/eradication programs, to review the current status of the TBT in the region, and to develop a strategic plan to address support for and participation in programs for control and/or eradication of the TBT in St. Croix and the Caribbean region over the next 5 to 10 years.

RESPONSES:

USDA, APHIS, International Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), International Services (IS) recognize the United States Animal Health Association's concerns and appreciates the opportunity to respond. Regarding Resolution 29 from the Committee on Parasitic Diseases on Tropical Bont Tick and the USAHA request to have a working group established to review the successes and failures. Establishing a working group is a very reasonable request and also an excellent method to review the program to date. Currently there is a Tick and Tick Borne Diseases Technical Working Group in existence formed by the CaribVET Steering Committee. Dr. John Shaw, APHIS IS Senior Attaché in the Dominican Republic, will take the lead on working with this group, drawing in expertise from Veterinary Services as needed. He can work with the group to develop a strategic plan that takes into account each of the island's individual needs. Further, Dr. Shaw will develop a recommendation on USDA involvement in the control/eradication program.

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's concerns. A tick and tick-borne diseases technical working group has been formed by the CaribVET steering committee. Dr. John Shaw, APHIS International Services Senior Attaché in the Dominican Republic, will take the lead on working with this group, drawing in expertise from Veterinary Services as needed. The group will develop a strategic plan that takes into account each island's individual needs. Further, Dr. Shaw will develop a recommendation on USDA involvement in the control/eradication program.