



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2014 RESOLUTION

118TH ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 16-22, 2014 ~ KANSAS CITY, MO

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 31 **APPROVED**

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS

SUBJECT MATTER: *Brucella ovis* Testing of Rams

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Many States require a negative *Brucella ovis* Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) test for rams being imported from other states and countries. Likewise, many grazing associations and ram sales require a negative test. In spite of attempts to standardize the ELISA test reagents, antigens, dilutions, low positive controls, and protocols, many laboratories continue to get *B. ovis* ELISA test results that are called "indeterminate" or may be interpreted as "positive" at one laboratory and "negative" on the same animal's sample at another laboratory. There is, at times lack of consistency or agreement between laboratories on the *B. ovis* ELISA test. The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Veterinary Services Laboratory had earlier suggested standardized test protocols, but there is still lack of consistency between laboratories on applied test protocols.

These discrepancies create inconvenience and added expense for producers, lack of producer and veterinary practitioner confidence and trust in the laboratories, and leave regulatory personnel with many questions about proper disposition of test positive and "indeterminate" rams.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, National Veterinary Services Laboratory and the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to review the protocols for enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) *Brucella ovis* testing (test reagents, antigens, dilutions, low positive control) among laboratories conducting the ELISA test and develop an explanation for the "indeterminate" and discrepant results between labs.

USAHA also urges USDA-ARS and USDA-APHIS-NVSL to develop strict, standard testing protocols for all laboratories for the *B. ovis* ELISA test. We further urge American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians and state diagnostic laboratories to adhere to these standard testing protocols.

USAHA further urges USDA-ARS to develop an accurate and consistent *Brucella ovis* confirmatory test for samples with "indeterminate" results to help facilitate prudent regulatory and sheep management decisions.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

VS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) will continue to provide annual proficiency tests for the *Brucella ovis* ELISA, and will survey the testing laboratories to follow up on protocol adherence. NVSL will work with USDA-ARS to develop an explanation for the indeterminate and discrepant results between laboratories, and to investigate the possibility of a more accurate test for use in the future.