



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2014 RESOLUTION

118TH ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 16-22, 2014 ~ KANSAS CITY, MO

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19 **APPROVED**

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON BRUCE4LLOSIS**

SUBJECT MATTER: **Brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The State and Federal governments and the livestock industries have spent billions of dollars since 1935 to eradicate *Brucella abortus* infection from livestock in the United States. The presence of *B. abortus* in the United States has a significant economic impact on the livestock industry and may have an impact on international trade.

The only known remaining focus of brucellosis caused by *B. abortus* in the United States is in the bison and elk in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) and all signatory parties to the original Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee (GYIBC) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Secretaries of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and United States Department of the Interior, and the Governors of the states of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming), which created the GYIBC, agreed to a shared objective to eliminate *B. abortus* from the GYA. With the expansion of this disease in elk populations remote from feedgrounds and the resulting transmission to livestock, a plan to eliminate *B. abortus* from bison and elk in Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and the National Elk Refuge, and other areas of the GYA, consistent with the objectives of the original GYIBC MOU, is urgently needed.

After more than a decade of work on an environmental impact statement concerning remote vaccination of bison in Yellowstone National Park using biobullets, the Park chose a "no action" alternative, in part due to potential inadequacies of the use of biobullets to deliver RB51 vaccine to bison in the Park setting.

Recent *Brucella* research conducted by USDA, Agricultural Research Service scientists has demonstrated statistically reduced abortions and colonization in bison following a single annual RB51 booster vaccination. Additionally, USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service personnel are testing prototypes of a new darting system designed specifically for delivering lyophilized RB51 vaccine to bison in a free range setting.

Results of vaccine efficacy studies conducted on captive bison in containment are not necessarily indicative of results that would be achieved in a field study.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association strongly urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; USDA, Agricultural Research Service; United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service; and the State of Montana, to initiate a multi-year field trial to evaluate delivery methods and efficacy of RB51 vaccination on Yellowstone bison. Even preliminary results of such a field trial will indicate the efficacy of remotely delivered, boosted, RB51 vaccination in free-ranging Yellowstone bison and determine its utility as a tool to eliminate *Brucella abortus* from the bison population.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

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

VS recognizes the need for further study and evaluation of RB51 regarding its efficacy and field delivery methods for vaccination of Yellowstone bison. APHIS will continue to collaborate with USDA Agricultural Research Service, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and the State of Montana in development of methods to deliver brucellosis vaccines to bison and develop projects to assess the efficacy of vaccination in Yellowstone bison.