

Tropical Bont Tick Update

St. Croix, USVI



Dr. Francisco Collazo
District 2 Director

Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, South
Carolina, Georgia, Puerto Rico, USVI

Background

- On Nov. 6, 2013 an adult male *Amblyomma variegatum* tick was found on a routine visit to a premise located on the western end of the island of St. Croix.
- This premise was the last farm waiting for release from quarantine after being treated with Coumaphos every 2 weeks .
- Finding was reported to VSPR AVIC and notification to VSLT was performed.

Historic information

- The index premises had a previous history of TBT during prior infestations on the island
- The most recent TBT finding on the island was in July 2010; that premises was quarantined and it, along with the surrounding premises, completed a three year protocol of treatments and follow up surveillance in 2013.
- The last TBT finding on the index premises was apparently in 2009 followed by treatment and surveillance that ended in 2012

Premise information

- Situation Update as of March 20, 2014
- Number of premises positive: 1 (no change from previous report)
- Number of premises quarantined: 1 (no change from previous report)
- Number of animals quarantined: 105 (32 bovine, 58 sheep, 13 goats, 2 horses as of 3/7/14)
- Number of ticks found: 28
- Number of animals infested: (?) (Information being verified)
- Number of premises under surveillance: 14 (including index premises)
- Total animals under inspection: 228 (approximate)



Safeguarding Animal Health

- Wildlife surveillance conducted by Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) and no TBT were found on mongoose trapped on the index premises and on properties across the street on all sides of the index premises

Interstate Movement Issue

- Puerto Rico initially banned animals from moving from St. Croix then extended the ban to include all of the US Virgin Islands.
- . A process to transport animals under seal on VS 1-27 from the USVI to quarantine in PR for further transit to other states was worked out. The PR restrictions remain in place.

Follow up reports

- Assessment Team Visit – A three member team deployed to St. Croix, VI, May 19-23 to assess the current situation and determine the adequacy of controls to eradicate TBT from the island. The team was composed of Dr. Jim Miller, Epidemiologist; Dr. Noelia Moyeno, VMO; and Israel Gonzalez, AHT.

- An injectable acaricide (Dectomax) should be added to the current treatment protocol. An injectable would be effective regardless of weather conditions and target ticks attached in atypical sites topical applications cannot contact. Additionally, an injectable would be a good fallback option in the event the coumaphos spray unit is non-operational and the treatment window will be exceeded

Current Status

- Amblyomma ticks continue to be found during treatment visits.
- No reports of additional premises being affected
- No clinical signs of Heartwater disease has been reported in small ruminants.
- A Cooperative Agreement between VS and USVI was signed in March 2014 to provide extra funds for equipment and supplies.



Figure 7. Severe dermatophilosis lesions with resulting hide damage and helath problems on a cow, which were facilitated by feeding wounds caused by the tropical bont tick, *Amblyomma variegatum* Fabricius. Photograph by CIRAD, CarbiVet.

