

## UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2007

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 43 APPROVED**

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON TRANSMISSIBLE DISEASES OF SWINE

**SUBJECT MATTER:** 30-DAY HEALTH RULE INTERPRETATION

**DATES:** RENO, NEVADA, OCTOBER 18 – 24, 2007

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Historically, animal health officials have allowed accredited veterinarians, working within the context of a herd health plan requiring routine herd visits, to issue a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) covering animals born into the herd since the previous herd visit without having to inspect the individual animals. Recently, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) has reviewed the statute governing the interstate movement of animals outside a routine production flow and issued an interpretation disallowing this practice. The wording in question is contained in 9 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 161.3(a)(2) and reads as follows:

*(2) Following the third and subsequent inspections of a herd or flock in a regular health maintenance program, an accredited veterinarian shall not issue a certificate, form, record or report which reflects the results of any inspection, test, vaccination or treatment performed by him or her with respect to any animal in that program, unless he or she has personally inspected that animal within 30 days prior to issuance.*

USDA-APHIS-VS has interpreted this language to mean that the individual animals must be inspected by the accredited veterinarian within 30 days prior to the issuance of a CVI. It is not uncommon in the swine industry today to transport weaned pigs interstate at less than 30 days of age. Similar movements also occur in other species as well (e.g. day-old chicks and dairy calves).

Through the practice of conducting routine herd health visits within the confines of an established herd health program, the accredited veterinarian can establish an understanding of the health status of the herd. It is medically sound to believe that the newborn animal assumes the health status of the herd or flock into which it is born or hatched. Thus by inspecting the herd or flock, the accredited veterinarian can issue a CVI with confidence in the integrity of the health of the

animals yet to be born or hatched into the herd or flock. The veterinarian's knowledge of the herd or flock accumulated through a regular health maintenance program exceeds that which could be gained from a one-time inspection of only those animals being shipped.

The current interpretation places veterinarians at risk of violating their accreditation while failing to improve the health status of United States (US) livestock or the safety of interstate movements. The proposed interpretation actually enhances the security of livestock shipped interstate by encouraging producers to establish herd health programs involving routine herd visits by accredited veterinarians. This promotes a much more thorough understanding of the health status of US livestock and poultry and provides for the early recognition of potential disease risks associated with interstate movement.

These proposed changes have the support of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, the American Association of Avian Pathologists, the Animal Agriculture Coalition, the National Pork Board's Swine Health Committee and the National Pork Producers Council.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) respectfully requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) change the wording in 9 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 161.3(a)(2) as follows:

*(2) Following the third and subsequent inspections of a herd or flock in a regular health maintenance program, an accredited veterinarian shall not issue a certificate, form, record or report which reflects the results of any inspection, test, vaccination or treatment performed by him or her with respect to any animal **residing in the herd or flock at the time of the last inspection or born into the herd or flock since the last inspection** in that program, unless he or she has personally inspected that ~~animal~~ **herd or flock** within 30 days prior to issuance.*

USAHA also urges the USDA-APHIS to adopt these proposed changes while awaiting approval of the amended final rule.

#### **RESPONSE:**

##### **USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services**

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

VS acknowledges the common practice in certain industries whereby young animals or poultry are shipped based on herd or flock health status. Regulations do not currently restrict these types of movements, nor do they require individual inspections of the animals to be completed in the specified time frame. However, VS accreditation standards require an accredited veterinarian to issue certificates that reflect the actual inspections conducted. Specifically, if the animals being shipped (i.e., early weaned pigs) were not inspected, the statements on the certificate should attest to the animals that were inspected (i.e., the sow herd from which the early weaned pigs were derived). Poultry certificates already utilize this approach, providing a statement that allows accredited veterinarians to certify that “the flock or flocks and the hatchery or hatcheries from which the above-described hatching eggs or newly hatching poultry originated were inspected by me or another accredited veterinarian within 30 days prior to shipment .... and found free from evidence of communicable diseases.”

APHIS will issue a Veterinary Services Notice clarifying the policy regarding the accuracy of language on the certificate of veterinary inspection. We encourage the industry to work with States to accept the certification of herd status as described.