

occurs because routine TB slaughter surveillance has limited detection capabilities. The estimated sensitivity of slaughter surveillance for beef herds in the US ranges from 3-7%, and the probability of detecting an affected beef herd within five years ranges from 15-35%, depending on herd size (USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health 2009). Mexican origin feeder and rodeo cattle are listed as one of the three most likely sources of TB introduction in the US (Camacho, 2021).

Despite tremendous efforts to eradicate *Mycobacterium bovis* from the US cattle herd for nearly a century, novel strains of TB continue to emerge in western states in beef and dairy herds with inconclusive epidemiological investigations. With the availability of EIDs, the US has an opportunity to make important changes to identification requirements for Mexican rodeo cattle, align import rules with those of Canada, and improve traceability to safeguard the domestic cattle herd.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to require electronic 484 prefix official identification ear tags in addition to "M" branding for all rodeo type cattle born in Mexico (regardless of end use) that enter the United States. To further improve animal disease traceability, USAHA urges USDA to provide guidance on how to officially identify Mexican origin cattle that lose ear tags.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

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

While use of radio-frequency identification (RFID) is not required for all cattle imported from Mexico, VS is supporting a project that leverages technical capabilities to facilitate cattle exports from Mexico. This project allows importers to use Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS) for RFID-tagged rodeo cattle, spayed heifers, and steers from Chihuahua and Sonora. This project could potentially expand to other states, depending upon interest and availability of required technological infrastructure/equipment.

APHIS remains committed to leveraging technology, including use of RFID tags, to facilitate cattle imports and animal traceability. Until the time where RFID becomes the standard for domestic cattle identification, APHIS helps to ensure traceability of Mexican-origin cattle by requiring them to have an "M" brand as well as two forms of additional identification upon entry to the United States. APHIS requires both the blue metal ear tag, issued by Mexican State of origin, and the yellow SINIIGA tag, "official ID" recognized by Mexico's Servicio Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria, for all cattle imported to the United States from Mexico.

APHIS is considering options to officially identify Mexican cattle that lose their official Mexican tags once imported. The initial options include moving cattle directly to slaughter or a terminal feedlot with a USDA backtag or using a non-840 RFID tag. APHIS looks forward to working with the committee and other stakeholders to evaluate the most viable options to further improve animal disease traceability.