

# UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

---

**RESOLUTION NUMBER:** 22 APPROVED

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON BRUCELLOSIS

**SUBJECT MATTER:** REVISE THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR BRUCELLOSIS AND PROVIDE FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION FROM WILDLIFE IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA

---

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Wild elk and bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) are infected with *Brucella abortus* (*B. abortus*) and represent the last focus of infection of *B. abortus* in the United States. There is an increased risk of wild elk and bison transmitting brucellosis to livestock when they occupy the same habitat geographically and temporally. However, areas of the GYA states with no brucellosis infected wildlife are not at increased risk of transmission of brucellosis from wildlife.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for brucellosis does not adequately address the risk of transmission of *B. abortus* from infected wildlife to livestock and the subsequent variable risk of transmission within state boundaries. Further, the Brucellosis Class Free designation as directed by the CFR, does not adequately address the ongoing risk of transmission in GYA states where brucellosis infected wildlife and livestock share habitat.

## **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to revise the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to further the goal of eliminating brucellosis from the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA), and address the ongoing risk of brucellosis transmission from infected bison and elk.

The key concepts of an amended CFR for brucellosis should:

- Recognize that the risk of brucellosis transmission from wild elk and bison to livestock in the GYA is geographically and temporally variable within a state based on proximity to infected wildlife;
- Implement enhanced traceability, more rigorous testing, and standardization of movement controls for livestock as determined by risk within a regionalized area that satisfies the criteria of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE);
- Allow for additional cases of brucellosis in livestock, within a regionalized area, that satisfies the criteria of the OIE, without a downgrade to a state's brucellosis status; and
- Advance the elimination of *Brucella abortus* from the GYA through coordinated multi-state and multi-jurisdictional strategies for brucellosis in wildlife.

USAHA further urges that USDA-APHIS-VS fund ongoing and enhanced efforts for surveillance in the GYA, with the goal of elimination of *Brucella abortus* from the region.

## **RESPONSE:**

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

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the immense accomplishments in eliminating brucellosis from our domestic cattle herds. VS also shares the concern regarding the presence of brucellosis in free-ranging bison and elk in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) and the threat it poses to the brucellosis status of surrounding States and the health of domestic cattle herds. Final eradication of brucellosis from the United States continues to be a challenge due to the presence of the disease in the GYA.

The brucellosis program and VS' National Surveillance Unit are developing options for a national brucellosis surveillance system that is risk based and utilizes epidemiologic concepts such as the length of time a State has been free of brucellosis, geographic location, and the movement of high-risk cattle. This surveillance planning will consider the development of a National Brucellosis Elimination Zone (NBEZ) plan for the GYA. The establishment of this zone would facilitate the elimination of brucellosis from livestock and provide clear, consistent control and surveillance guidance to livestock producers in the NBEZ while simultaneously allowing the balance of the United States to be considered free of bovine brucellosis. Implementation of the NBEZ concept, if accepted and supported, will require regulatory changes, creation of oversight and monitoring responsibilities, and determination of appropriate levels of surveillance to demonstrate mitigation and movement control effectiveness. Implementation of the NBEZ will also require a concurrent planning effort with the many wildlife agencies and agricultural entities in the GYA.

VS will continue to assess funding needs and maximize limited resources appropriately to maintain the integrity of our eradication accomplishments. We must use the funding we have available for brucellosis surveillance and eradication activities in the most effective, science-based, fiscally responsible manner possible.