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minnesota board of animal health annual report 2009



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The Annual Report of the MN Board of Animal Health is published in accordance with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes.

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The last year has been monumental for the Minnesota Board of Animal Health. We celebrated a milestone in the state's TB eradication efforts and were also faced with unique diseases that we have never before dealt with. In a year of nationwide financial uncertainty, we focused on streamlining our activities while upholding our commitment of protecting animal health and agriculture in Minnesota. I consider this year a success.

The highlight of the year was the approval of Minnesota's Split State Status in October. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) granted a majority of the state an upgrade in its bovine tuberculosis (TB) classification, decreasing many testing and movement requirements that burdened Minnesota's producers. Our comprehensive TB eradication plan allowed us to get Split State Status more quickly than any other state in history and Minnesota's strategies are now being implemented by states across the nation.

While we made great strides in our TB program, we found there was no time for complacency. In January, a farmed elk in Olmstead County tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). This animal was found through the state's rigorous CWD surveillance program. The Board was also faced with an uncommon disease this year when horses in Minnesota were connected to a Contagious Equine Metritis investigation- a venereal disease of horses that is considered a Foreign Animal Disease because of its rarity. This summer, the Board and swine industry collaborated in a statewide effort to educate producers and the public about H1N1 influenza. On a national level, I have worked closely with the USDA, the Centers for Disease Control and industry members across the country to develop a standard protocol to deal with any swine herds that become infected with H1N1.

While navigating through such a variety of disease investigations, Minnesota's producers, industry groups and veterinarians were an invaluable source of support for the Board. Without you, we would not have been able to accomplish all that we have this year. However, our partnerships do not end there. The USDA has been a vital partner and resource for the Board- providing about 12 percent of our annual budget and 27 staff members who all work hand-in-hand with the Board to protect the health of animals in Minnesota.

We have our work cut out for us in the next year with continued investigations, surveillance testing and statewide farm visits; we will continue to safeguard animal health in Minnesota. I am confident that we will be able tackle any challenge with the support of the agricultural community.

Sincerely,
Bill Hartmann



Board Members

Paul FitzSimmons,
Board Member
Good Thunder

Steven Brake,
Board Member
Wilmont

Mahesh Kumar,
Board Member
St. Cloud

Dr. John Whitten,
President
Alexandria

Dr. Holly Neaton,
Vice President
Watertown



Board Meetings

December 17, 2008
February 11, 2009
April 15, 2009
September 2, 2009

The Board minutes are recorded in the Official Minute Book of the Board of Animal Health and are kept on file at the Board's office.





cattle health



Minnesota's livestock producers are going above and beyond to keep their cattle healthy, increasing biosecurity to prevent the spread of diseases like Johne's and bovine Tuberculosis.

It has been the goal of the Board to rid Minnesota of bovine tuberculosis (TB) and regain a TB-Free Status since the discovery of the disease in the state in 2005. That goal became even more pressing when Minnesota's status for bovine tuberculosis (TB) dropped to Modified Accredited (MA) in April 2008, resulting in stricter testing requirements for cattle moving out of state.

The State made the decision to apply to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Split State Status for bovine TB in order to alleviate some burden for most of Minnesota's livestock producers. Under Split State Status, the majority of the state would be upgraded to Modified Accredited Advanced (MAA) status while the area of Minnesota where the TB infection was found would remain MA. After submitting the application in June 2008 to obtain Split State Status, the Board went to work alongside Minnesota veterinarians, livestock producers, and other state agencies proving the state's ability to design and carry out a complex disease eradication plan.

One of the most important elements of the application for Split State Status was having a plan in place to prevent the spread of TB from the small area of northwestern Minnesota where the disease was known to exist. In order to prevent the spread of TB, new movement and testing requirements were placed on cattle, bison, goats, and farmed cervidae located in the proposed MA Zone. The new guidelines include Animal Movement Certificates (AMC), official identification, and TB testing for livestock in the MA Zone moving to any other premises in the state.

Livestock located in the Management Zone, or the core area where the TB-positive deer have been found, are subject to the same movement restrictions along with additional fencing requirements.

The State's buyout program was developed to limit the number of cattle in the Management Zone which in turn minimizes the risk of interaction with wild deer. Forty-six Management Zone producers agreed

to remove their cattle from the zone by January 31, 2009 and to stay out of livestock until the entire state regains its TB-Free Status. By the end of January, about 6,200 head of cattle were removed from the zone through the buyout program. The program has already proven to be effective as one additional infected herd was found as a result.

Producers in the Management Zone who did not accept the herd buyout agreed to install deer-exclusionary fencing to minimize cattle and deer interaction. Twenty-eight producers installed a total of over 71,000 feet of fence as part of the State's cost-share fencing program.

On October 10, 2008, Minnesota was granted Split State Status. Making the announcement to producers, veterinarians, and stakeholders across the state was a refreshing change, and the news brought encouragement to Minnesota's cattle industry.

Achieving this status was a tremendous victory, but much work remains. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA and Minnesota outlines the conditions that must be met in order to maintain Split State Status. Throughout 2009, hundreds of cattle herds statewide will be TB tested to confirm the absence of the disease in greater Minnesota. Producers in the MAA Zone must pay a one dollar per head assessment for sales of Minnesota-raised cattle. Funds collected through the assessment will be used for TB eradication and will only be collected through the end of the calendar year. The assessment provided over \$400,000 during fiscal year 2009.

Board field staff began risk assessments on all MA Zone premises to provide producers with insight on protecting livestock and feed from wildlife that could carry disease. Each herd in the MA Zone is TB tested

annually, a task shared by BAH, USDA, and private practicing veterinarians. Movement requirements are enforced by local staff who inspect sale barns and verify AMCs. The Roseau County Sheriff Department and State Patrol have agreed to assist in monitoring livestock movement by stopping trailers that appear to be hauling livestock in the Zone.

Livestock producers statewide have shown great cooperation in eradicating TB.

The work doesn't stop with bovine TB. In 1997, the State of Minnesota began offering funding to support a voluntary Johne's Disease (JD) surveillance program. Funding for the program has since peaked and ended, but the importance of monitoring the disease remains. With symptoms such as diarrhea, weight loss, and death, producers have actively participated in testing cattle for JD, and have taken steps to reduce the prevalence in their herds.

Over 1,800 Minnesota dairy and beef producers are enrolled in the state's JD control program. Enrollment in the program includes testing and periodic herd risk assessments, performed by veterinarians who evaluate management practices to determine the herd's risk for contracting and spreading JD. Approximately 60,400 cows that were tested for JD in the last year, showing that Minnesota producers are committed to eliminating this disease.

The JD negative herd status program takes disease surveillance a step further, with participating producers agreeing to test 30 cows yearly and only purchasing new animals from herds enrolled in the test negative status program.

There are 267 cattle herds in the state that have been tested. The Board's website offers a one-stop shop for producers wishing to obtain animals from a test negative status herd.

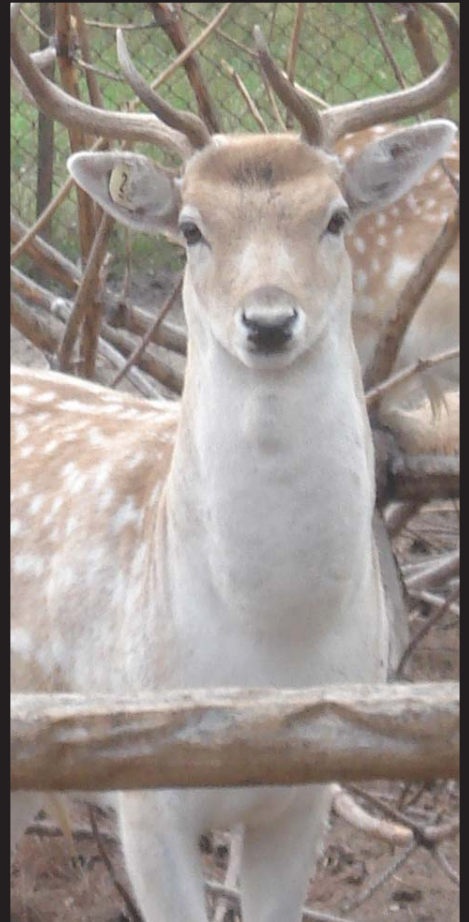
Producers are continuing to move cattle into and out of the state. In the past 12 months, more than 367,000 cattle were imported into the state. During the same time, almost 129,000 cattle were exported.







cervidae health horse health



Minnesota has one of the nation's largest cervidae industries and the number of horses continue to rise as well. Both industries have a long standing tradition of working with the Board to ensure the health of their animals.

Over 16,000 elk, deer, and other species make up Minnesota's farmed cervidae herd. Located on over 600 different cervidae farms throughout the state, it is important to Minnesota's livestock industry that these animals remain healthy.

Minnesota cervidae producers monitor the health of their animals by registering with the Board, participating in the state's CWD surveillance program, and testing for brucellosis and tuberculosis (TB) before moving across state lines.

Herds in Minnesota must register with the Board, and that includes maintaining an eight foot high fence around farmed herds. This helps keep wild deer out of the enclosure while preventing farmed animals from escaping. Registered cervids must also have official identification, and producers must report animal movements and file a herd inventory each year. Following these guidelines makes it easier for animal health officials to identify animals and also provides documentation needed during a disease investigation.

Brucellosis and TB are diseases that affect cervidae. Most states require testing for these diseases before importation. However, testing requirements may be less strict for cervids that come from a brucellosis-certified or TB-accredited herd. Producers work with the Board to achieve these statuses and must adhere to testing and herd management guidelines. In Minnesota, 67 cervidae herds are brucellosis-certified, and 207 herds are TB-accredited.

The Board also has a program that monitors farmed cervidae herds for CWD. Throughout the last year, 2,926 animals were tested for the disease. In January 2009, a case of CWD was confirmed in an elk herd in southeast Minnesota. A seven-year old elk cow was tested as part of the program's routine slaughter surveillance and was found to be positive. The herd was immediately quarantined and the Board is working alongside the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the owners to develop a plan for the future of the herd.

Horses are a tremendous source of agriculture and recreation in the state, with more than 6,600 Minnesotans owning horses. Owners continued to go above and beyond to keep their animals healthy and protect them from disease.

This year, horse owners were faced with a rare disease called Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM). CEM is a venereal disease that is considered a Foreign Animal Disease in the U.S. Stallions can carry the disease but have no symptoms. Mares are infected through natural breeding or artificial insemination, and may experience infertility or abortion.

In December 2008, a stallion in Kentucky tested positive for CEM. An investigation was launched and animal health officials identified almost 1,000 horses in 47 states that had been exposed to the disease. Thirty-two of the trace horses were found in Minnesota. Three stallions and 29 mares in Minnesota were quarantined after being exposed. Owners of exposed horses have been proactive in preventing the potential spread of the disease, as 17 of the 32 horses have already completed testing and treatment for CEM and have been released from quarantine.

For the first time since West Nile Virus (WNV) was detected in Minnesota in 2002, no horses were reported positive with the disease. This shows a great commitment on the part of producers and veterinarians who are taking steps such as vaccinating their animals and implementing mosquito mitigation techniques to prevent infection in their animals. WNV is spread by mosquitoes and causes animals to become lethargic and can induce convulsions and paralysis.

Equine infectious anemia (EIA) is a viral disease that affects a horse's immune system in the same way as HIV/AIDS affects humans. Once a horse is infected with EIA, it is infected for life and must be permanently isolated. In Minnesota, more than 44,637 horses were tested for EIA this year and none were found positive, though six previously infected horses remain quarantined in the state.



poultry health



The Minnesota poultry industry leads the nation in turkey production and is ranked among the top states for egg and meat production, making it vital to protect the health of these birds.

For the last fifteen years, turkey flocks in Minnesota have been at risk for becoming infected with Avian Pneumovirus (APV), a viral respiratory disease. The virus was endemic in 2000, when the Board and poultry industry worked hand-in-hand to establish a surveillance program to identify positive flocks, vaccinate turkey flocks against the virus and increase flock biosecurity.

This year, APV is nearly eradicated, with the number of positive flocks nearing zero, with nearly 22,500 samples tested.

A virus that is of ongoing concern for Minnesota poultry producers is Avian Influenza (AI). Every year, the Board identifies cases of low pathogenic AI (LPAI) because of the state's location as a major brooding area for wild waterfowl and a major staging area for fall migration south. This year, more than 60,790 samples were tested and 42 flocks tested positive. Commercial turkey flocks on four premises were identified as being exposed to H7N9 LPAI. Birds at each operation showed limited clinical signs and low mortality. This specific form of LPAI is of concern to the Board as it is more likely to change into a severe form of AI, known as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and results in high mortality.

As a result of these findings, the Board and USDA staff implemented the Minnesota H5/H7 LPAI Response Plan, quarantining affected premises and depopulating the flocks using controlled marketing or mass depopulation. Surveillance testing was conducted to ensure there was no spread of the virus. A USDA epidemiologist has been enlisted to conduct an investigation.

With help from the Board and its partner laboratories, Minnesota poultry producers imported about 11 million birds and exported more than 55 million birds from Minnesota this year, supplying the world with a safe, wholesome food source. Prior to being marketed, birds must be tested for an array of diseases. The Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) tested more than a quarter of a million samples to ensure the health of the birds and safety of poultry products. The details of this year's testing can be found below. For more information on the MPTL, please see page 19 of this report.

Minnesota Testing Statistics		
	Tested	Positive
Avian Influenza	60,790	41
Avian Pneumovirus	22,473	65
Mycoplasma Program - MG	22,749	1
Mycoplasma Program - MM	38,690	0
Mycoplasma Program - MS	53,674	0
Salmonella Enteritidis	2,385	0
Salmonella Pullorum-Typhoid	16,476	0
Salmonella Sanitation Monitored - Hatchery Debris & Environment	4,791	416
Salmonella Sanitation Monitored -WEGBY	365	12
Salmonella Typhimurium	37,915	0

Minnesota's pork producers have excelled in biosecurity, while maintaining their third place national ranking for production.

Over the years, swine producers have faced and eradicated diseases that have threatened the livelihood of the industry. Today, surveillance for diseases such as pseudorabies and brucellosis continue by the Minnesota Board of Animal Health in an effort to prevent a reoccurrence in the state.

With support from the swine industry, the Board has created a comprehensive pseudorabies surveillance program and is prepared to eradicate the disease if found in the state. Pseudorabies is a disease caused by the herpes virus, affecting pigs' nervous and respiratory systems. It is still prevalent in feral swine in other parts of the country.

In 2002, pseudorabies was eradicated from Minnesota and is no longer found in domestic swine in the U.S. Almost 62,800 pseudorabies tests were conducted on Minnesota swine this year. Four tests came back as

positive but were found to be false positives.

Brucellosis is a bacterial infection in swine that causes sows to abort and infertility in boars. While the disease is not fatal, it causes great profit loss for producers. Since 1975, brucellosis has been eradicated from Minnesota. The state continues disease surveillance, testing more than 61,900 pigs last year. Four animals tested positive for brucellosis but were found to be false positives.

In the past 12 months, producers imported approximately 5.5 million pigs into Minnesota and exported nearly 2.1 million.

Producers in Minnesota own more than 160,000 sheep and 20,000 goats. With their continued support, the Board and USDA have been able to reduce Scrapie infections statewide.

Sheep and goats make up part of Minnesota's diverse agricultural economy. Over 6,000 farms in the state raise sheep or goats, and the number continues to grow each year. Along with other livestock, the Board strives to safeguard sheep flocks and goat herds by monitoring animals for disease.

Approximately 300 new sheep or goat premises have been identified in the last year and have since registered with the Board of Animal Health as part of the Scrapie Eradication Program.

Scrapie is a fatal degenerative disease found in sheep and goats. The disease's unusual name comes from an infected animal's tendency to scrape off fleece or hair due to intense itching.

The Board, in cooperation with the USDA, has facilitated the Scrapie Eradication Program in

Minnesota since 2001. The program works to identify and eliminate the disease through slaughter surveillance and genetic testing or genotyping, which determines the risk of scrapie in an animal. By identifying animals that are genetically prone to the disease, producers can avoid breeding high-risk animals, thus greatly reducing the risk of getting the disease.

Out of 24 scrapie investigations completed by state and USDA staff, only two infected sheep flocks were identified in Minnesota last year.

In the past year, almost 1,900 goats were imported and 1,700 exported. Sheep producers imported nearly 20,000 head and exported 8,300 during the same time.



sheep and goat health



swine health





emergency
planning



The Board needs to be prepared to handle emergencies of all kinds- from natural disasters to disease outbreaks. By preparing for such events in advance, the Board hopes to prevent catastrophic events from affecting the state's animal agriculture industry.

A large part of disease response preparedness is training and participating in exercises to get ready to respond to an emergency situation. The Board took steps to prepare for an Avian Influenza event in the state by participating in both High Pathogenic (HPAI) and Low Pathogenic (LPAI) Avian Influenza table-top exercises. Such exercises help federal, state and industry representatives identify areas of state response plans that need improvement.

Exercise participants identified flock depopulation as a unique challenge for the commercial poultry industry. To prepare for a mass flock depopulation, the Board worked with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to arrange a depopulation exercise in March using a commercial poultry foamer. Prior to this field exercise, the foamer was only tested in non-agricultural settings, making it difficult to gauge its effectiveness in a real world situation. The exercise was designed to prove the machine could be operated successfully and the mortalities could be composted effectively, and to evaluate state, industry and contractor cooperation. The demonstration was a success and attendees met afterward to evaluate what could be done to make the process more seamless in the future.

The Board put Minnesota's LPAI response plan in action this year after turkey flocks on four commercial turkey premises tested positive for H7N9 LPAI. The Emergency Management Committee, comprised of industry stakeholders and agency representatives, was convened to provide input on the Board's response, as outlined in the Minnesota Response Plan. An Incident Command Post was set-up during the initial disease response efforts as Board and USDA field staff were integrated into the response. Per the plan, all poultry within specified surveillance zones were identified and tested to ensure there was no spread of the virus. Infected flocks were quarantined, and producers advised on flock management strategies.

This year, Minnesota and the rest of the nation kept watch as the influenza virus known as Novel H1N1 made headlines worldwide. H1N1 was initially

labeled as 'swine flu' in the media because the virus was thought to have originated from swine. Later it was found to have components of swine, avian and human influenza viruses. The Board and stakeholder groups recognized the potential impact the virus could have on the state's swine producers and collaborated to educate the public about Novel H1N1 and the safety of pork products.

Typical swine influenza is an infection found in swine that peaks in the spring and fall. Forms of swine influenza have been present in Minnesota; however, Novel H1N1 specifically has not been found in swine in the state or the country. Pigs infected with typical influenza show signs of illness such as a runny nose, cough, lack of energy, nasal discharge and fever and are treated with aspirin to make them more comfortable. Most animals recover within a few days and the virus is not spread through pork or pork products.

The Board recommended producers strengthen their on-farm biosecurity and herd veterinarians were asked to watch for any suspicious influenza-like symptoms in swine.

Fortunately, no incidence of Novel H1N1 has been identified in a swine herd in the U.S. The Board together with the swine industry remain vigilant and are prepared to tackle an occurrence of the virus so it is not spread.

With the rapid spread of Novel H1N1 in people, the Board was advised to prepare a pandemic plan addressing personnel issues. A plan was created to be used in the event that a large percentage of staff members were ill with the virus and unable to work. The Board is now prepared to continue its priority programs with a smaller staff in the event of an Novel H1N1 pandemic.



Communications

This year, Board communications staff was given the important task of announcing that Minnesota achieved Split State Status for bovine tuberculosis (TB). Getting the message out to the state's livestock producers quickly was a top priority, as knowing the news would mean an ease of interstate movement requirements for the majority of Minnesota.

On October 9, 2008, the Board communications team set the plan into action by notifying over 35,000 cattle, goat, and bison producers.

Through an automated phone message pre-recorded by Dr. Bill Hartmann, delivery of the message to producers was virtually seamless and was completed within hours.

Minnesota markets, veterinarians, and TB stakeholders also received the message, as well as the state veterinarians from all 50 states. In addition to producers receiving a personal phone message from Minnesota's State Veterinarian, a total of over 3,000 emails and 800 faxes went out to media, stakeholders, and veterinary clinics announcing the good news. Board communications staff also hosted media and stakeholder conference calls, and both the Board and State TB Response website were immediately updated to reflect Minnesota's new status. The State's TB Hotline received over 300 phone calls in October and numerous Minnesota producers and stakeholders expressed gratitude over the quick and efficient manner that the Board announced Split State Status.

Though communications staff kept busy with bovine TB, regular activities continued. In addition to the monthly TB newsletter, the Board continued to publish its monthly electronic animal health newsletter, Animal Bytes. In the last year, the Board issued seven news releases and exhibited at nine livestock-related events. Office and field staff were invited to present at numerous meetings throughout the year. Board communications staff was responsible for preparing materials and making sure speakers had the most up to date presentations. Board staff conducted 50 media interviews as well, providing valuable information to Minnesota livestock producers and stakeholders.

Information Technology

During the past year, the Information Technology (IT) division implemented a new software program developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture called Tuberculosis Mobile Information Management. Every herd in the Modified Accredited Zone must have a whole herd test each year, and the TB MIM application along with the radio frequency identification (RFID) tags enables Board staff to accurately and effectively test more livestock in a shorter time for less cost.

This software application utilizes RFID to identify cattle. Each RFID tag has a U.S. Department of Agriculture identification number that can be read quickly and accurately with a wand-style RFID reader. Veterinarians testing livestock for TB can identify the animal and record its information into a hand held computer called a Personal Digital Assistant. Once the data is put into the Personal Digital Assistant, it

board programs



is uploaded to the Board's database where it is used to record test results, generate test charts, record herd inventories and track animal movement. Movements of cattle originating in the Modified Accredited Zone are tracked through markets and slaughter using this RFID technology.

Thus far, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have tested over 300 herds using the Tuberculosis Mobile Information Management system and applied RFID tags to more than 25,000 cattle.

Garbage Feeding

In addition to disease surveillance testing, the Board inspects and permits livestock premises that use food waste or garbage to feed animals. Feeding garbage to livestock, particularly swine, is a practice that has been in place for many years around the globe because it allows unused food waste to be recycled in the form of animal feed. However, precautions must be taken to ensure it is done correctly. Garbage must be cooked to 212 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes, a process that kills potentially dangerous bacteria and viruses. Nine producers hold permits to feed garbage to livestock.

Food waste that does not contain meat such as bread, cereal, candy, and pasta may also be fed to livestock. Known as "exempt materials", non-meat food waste does not require cooking prior to feeding. Premises are inspected twice a year to ensure no garbage is being fed illegally. Twenty-three Minnesota producers are currently permitted to feed exempt materials to livestock.

By complying with Board rules to feed garbage and exempt materials to livestock, producers help safeguard Minnesota agriculture against devastating diseases such as foot and mouth and hog cholera.

Rabies

Each year, the Board of Animal Health receives dozens of calls regarding animals that have potentially been exposed to rabies. Rabies is fatal, so it's important to reduce the likelihood of people or animals being exposed to the disease.

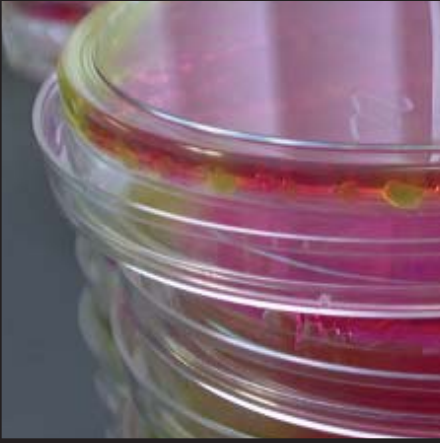
Board staff works in conjunction with the Department of Health to investigate potential rabies cases.

Domestic animals that are bitten by a potentially rabid animal are either quarantined or euthanized and tested for rabies to avoid the potential spread of the disease.

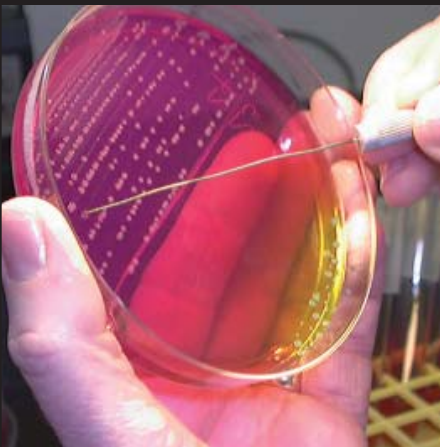
Skunks and bats are the top wild animal rabies reseviors in Minnesota.

In the last year, 73 animals tested positive for rabies. Test-positive animals were found throughout the state with the highest concentration in Hennepin County, where six animals tested positive.

Rabies specimens are submitted to the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). The tissues are prepared by VDL staff and sent to the Public Health Laboratory at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) where testing is conducted. More than 3,000 animals were tested for rabies in the last year, and MDH staff recommended rabies prophylaxis for 143 people after a potential exposure to the disease was identified.



official
laboratories



The Board of Animal Health's goal of safeguarding animal health would not be possible without the partnership established between two Minnesota laboratories.

Poultry Testing Laboratory

The Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory (MPTL) is the Board's official poultry disease testing laboratory, serving the Minnesota poultry industry for nearly 50 years.

A cooperative venture of the Board, the poultry industry and the University of Minnesota, the MPTL tested more than 260,000 poultry samples for diseases ranging from AI to APV, from Salmonella to Mycoplasma.

This year, the MPTL renovation project increased the lab's technology and disease reporting capabilities. As with the VDL, electronic test result reporting is also now available for poultry producers through the MPTL. Producers can securely access results and download data thanks to the streamlining of electronic data systems between the MPTL and VDL.

The U of M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory System, which includes both the MPTL and the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL), was recently granted full accreditation for five years by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. Both labs were visited by an official accreditation team that reviewed the lab and their standard operating procedures. This is an important achievement as full accreditation must be maintained in order to conduct official testing. Without an accredited laboratory system in Minnesota all official tests would have to be sent out of state, resulting in increased testing costs and a delay in obtaining test results.

The MPTL conducts testing under the provisions of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), a USDA program created through a state-federal-industry partnership agreement. NPIP established testing and operation standards ensure that poultry flocks, eggs, processing plants and related poultry products are classified disease free or monitored.

The MPTL is an authorized laboratory of the NPIP, meaning the lab tests samples using standards established by the NPIP and reports those results to the official state agency. There are 130 NPIP laboratories in the country.

The MPTL trains Authorized Testing Agents to collect samples from flocks in the state. There are 570 Authorized Testing Agents in Minnesota and more than 80 of those received their authorization in 2008. The MPTL also issued 190 poultry dealer permits and 114 permits for hatcheries and flock owners.

With such a significant poultry industry, Minnesota poultry producers depend greatly on the accurate, timely testing and reporting from the MPTL.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

The University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) conducts official testing for the Board and is a vital part of monitoring animal health in Minnesota. The VDL is an accredited lab and undergoes site visits by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians to maintain accreditation.

In August, 2008 a site visit was conducted and the VDL was again granted full accreditation. This was an important achievement as full accreditation must be maintained in order to conduct official testing.

In the past year, the VDL conducted over 1.4 million testing procedures, including official tests for reportable diseases such as rabies, avian influenza, and chronic wasting disease (CWD).

More than 2,500 samples were tested for CWD, and in January 2009 the lab identified the disease in an elk herd in southeast Minnesota. The Board works closely with the VDL to ensure timely reporting of test results that have an impact on animal health in Minnesota.



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*In accordance with the Americans with Disability Act,
an alternative form of communication is available upon request.*

