



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893

Dee Ellis, DVM, MPA • Executive Director

P.O. Box 12966 • Austin, Texas 78711 • (800) 550-8242 <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>

Public Information Office: 1-800-550-8242 Ext. 710 or at bonnie.ramirez@tahc.state.tx.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attention Cattlemen: Changes Announced for Adult Cattle being Sold at Texas Markets

AUSTIN - Effective August 1, 2011 the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) will no longer require brucellosis testing of adult cattle for change of ownership. TAHC will also cease to pay the \$2 per head supplement to markets for the testing. Approximately half of the markets have indicated however, that they intend to continue testing all or some of the adult cattle sold through their markets. For markets wishing to test, they will still be able to receive all the supplies currently being provided at no charge, including the brucellosis card test kits. TAHC inspectors will also be able to run the supplemental testing as usual if a card positive animal is disclosed. TAHC officials strongly encourage voluntary testing of Texas cattle to remain vigilant in keeping Texas Brucellosis free.

It is imperative to remember that Brucellosis was found in two cattle herds in Texas earlier this year. Approximately 25 card positive (usually false positive) animals per month are detected throughout Texas markets. The secondary test run by TAHC inspectors at markets will usually clear those consignments for sale unrestricted, and only require the card positive animal to be held up.

“Even though TAHC is undergoing drastic budget reductions, the agency will continue to provide a market inspector wherever cattle are sold to support all of the cattle programs underway,” Dr. Dee Ellis, State Veterinarian, said.

A separate issue regarding the identification of cattle is also under discussion. Historically all Texas cattle leaving a market have had a USDA eartag in place because they were brucellosis tested there. The official identification of cattle (usually with a metal eartag) is not completely linked to brucellosis testing however. TAHC and USDA rules require official identification on all cattle tested, but they also require the market to record existing official Id's on any adult cattle presented for sale, all dairy cattle prior to movement, any bulls involved with the Trichomoniasis program (including virgins) and Mexican origin event cattle.

It is anticipated that the TAHC will consider a rule proposal in September that may require permanent official identification of adult cattle sold at Texas markets. It is further anticipated that USDA will release in the near future a rule for comment that will eventually require cattle moving interstate to have permanent official identification.

“I am asking all markets for voluntary compliance to continue eartagging adult cattle (or reading existing tags) sold through their markets for the next few months, while the rule making process is in progress,” Dr. Ellis stated. Local TAHC regional offices and inspectors will work with individual markets on possible exceptions for extremely weak or old cattle presented for sale in the meantime.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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