



# NEWS RELEASE

## Texas Animal Health Commission

“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Texas Animal Health Commission Modifies Temporary Preventative Quarantine Area - Releases 278,950 Acres, Between Starr, Jim Hogg and Zapata Counties**

AUSTIN – In the summer of 2007, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) determined that “Fever Ticks” were present in an area of Starr County. As a precautionary measure against the expansion of fever ticks to other areas of Starr County, the TAHC classified that area as being infested with or exposed to fever ticks. On July 3, 2007, that area of Starr County was placed under a Temporary Preventative Quarantine.

In April 2008, fever ticks were discovered on premises in Jim Hogg and Zapata Counties that were located in the free area outside the Temporary Preventative Quarantine Area (TPQA). Due to the discovery of ticks outside the TPQA boundary line, the line was re-established in July 2008, to include the areas with infested and exposed premises in those counties. The boundary of the TPQA begins at the intersection of FM 649 and US Highway 83 in Starr County, then proceeding East and North along US Highway 83 to its intersection with SH 16 in Zapata County, then proceeding East along SH 16 to its intersection with FM 649 South in Jim Hogg County, then proceeding South along FM 649 to its beginning, at the intersection with US Highway 83, near Garceno, in Starr County.

In May of this year, the TAHC released 59,100 acres in a separate TPQA in Starr County and 180,000 acres in the remainder of the TPQA in Maverick and Dimmit Counties.

Following comprehensive eradication and surveillance work in the Starr-Jim Hogg-Zapata County TPQA, the TAHC has determined that areas in Jim Hogg and Zapata Counties have met the requirements for quarantine release. The release of these areas rescinds all movement restrictions placed on the livestock and wildlife within the released area. The modification does not release premises held under individual quarantine, or restricted or quarantined premises in other areas of Zapata and Starr Counties.

“The modification to the Temporary Preventative Quarantine Area (TPQA) in Starr, Jim Hogg and Zapata Counties is good news,” TAHC State Veterinarian and Executive Director, Dee Ellis, said. “This shows that the continual efforts of the cattle industry, USDA, and TAHC to eradicate the cattle fever tick are working. We must continue fighting the battle against this pest so that the tick can be completely eradicated from the “tick free” area of Texas as quickly as possible.”

Therefore, the TAHC is modifying the boundary description of the Temporary Preventative Quarantined area to be the following:

*The area released from the TPQA is south of SH 16 between U.S. Hwy 83 and FM 649 to San Roman Rd. The line of separation for the released premises are the south fence lines on ranches along the Zapata and Starr County line and San Roman Rd.*

“Fever ticks are capable of carrying “babesia,” a blood parasite that can cause “cattle tick fever,” a deadly cattle disease that does not affect humans,” Dr. Ellis stated. “The tick was eradicated from the U.S. in 1943, but is still present in Mexico, and sporadically in the permanent quarantine zone on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande River.”

“For more information regarding the new modification of the Temporary Preventative Quarantine Area in Starr, Jim Hogg and Zapata Counties, individuals may contact the Zapata tick office at 956-765-4911 or the Starr tick office at 956-487-5007,” Dr. Ellis said. A map of the released and currently quarantined area is available on the TAHC website at [www.tahc.state.tx.us](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us).

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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