

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE 427th COMMISSION MEETING
Texas Animal Health Commission
February 24, 2025

Item 1 – Welcome and Call to order by Chairman Locke

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Commissioners met in person on Tuesday, February 24, 2026. Chairman Coleman Locke began the meeting at 8:30AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Item 2 – Roll Call for Commission Members

The Chairman called the roll for the commission members. No Commissioners were absent.

Item 3 - Closed Executive Session to Receive Legal Advice, Discuss Pending or Contemplated Litigation, and Settlement Offers as Permitted by Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code.

The closed executive session was called at 8:34AM.

Item 4 – Closed Executive Session to Deliberate the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of Specific Commission Employees as Permitted by Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code

Item 5 – Reconvene to Consider Any Action Needed Following Closed Executive Session

The regular session was reconvened at 9:03AM. No action was needed.

Item 6 – Approval of the minutes of the 426th Meeting

There was no public comment and no discussion concerning the minutes of the 426th Commission meeting. The motion carried.

Item 7 – Report of the Executive Director and Approval of Waiver and Variance Requests

Dr. Dinges presented the following:

(A) AGENCY OPERATIONS & AFFAIRS

Employee Survey: TAHC has partnered with the University of Texas Institute for Organizational Excellence to launch the Survey of Employee Engagement for 2026. This was distributed to employees on February 23rd and will close on March 13th. This survey is to assist leadership for strategic planning and provide information regarding the organization's effectiveness and employee satisfaction. The survey framework includes areas such as communication, supervision, quality, team, pay, training, diversity, ethics, management, engagement, and technology.

Rural Veterinary Incentive Program (RVIP) & the Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP): Rex Wyatt, Authorized Personnel Program Supervisor, will give a detailed report.

Texas Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1)/Equine Myeloencephalopathy Outbreak November 2025

Equine herpesviruses (also known as alphaherpesviruses) are very common DNA viruses in horse populations worldwide. The two most significant are EHV-1, which causes respiratory disease, abortion, and neurologic disease; and EHV-4, which primarily causes respiratory disease and only rarely causes abortion or neurologic disease. Asymptomatic infection is common and facilitates transmission within groups of horses.

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EHV-1 myeloencephalopathy (EHM) occurs when cell-associated viremia leads to vasculitis, thrombosis, and focal infarction within CNS vasculature, ultimately resulting in focal spinal cord malacia and neurologic disease. Occurrences of EHM may or may not be preceded by a febrile episode or signs of vasculitis or respiratory disease.

TAHC Stephenville Region management began to receive reports from equine practitioners about horses showing clinical signs of EHM in the early morning hours of November 18th. The Stephenville Region management and Epidemiology staff continued to gather information while our commission meeting was in progress. We met with region staff at the conclusion of the commission meeting to discuss the situation (reports of up to 15 horses showing clinical signs to include some deaths) and begin the disease response. We received a report from Dr. Rod Hall, Oklahoma State Veterinarian, that a horse that had competed at a large barrel racing event in Guthrie, OK was now showing clinical signs of EHM and in isolation. (The event was ultimately cancelled).

We worked with horse owners and veterinarians to identify what turned out to be considered the index event. We contacted the event sponsor to gather information including a list of contestants and enquired about biosecurity protocols. We began disease confirmation investigations and epidemiological tracing. We quickly began to contact contestants and state veterinarians with potential animal movements. I notified Dr. Collins, USDA TX AVIC, and the Office of the Governor to apprise them of the situation. Given the time of year, I also reached out to the state veterinarians in both Nevada and Arizona. We also consulted with the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo to offer suggestions of either postponing or canceling their PRCA rodeo qualifying event. We held a call with the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials on November 19th to update them on the situation.

The index event was determined to be the WPRA World Finals and Elite Barrel Race Event held in Waco, TX - November 5th -November 9th. The event had 670 contestants with 497 being from Texas and 173 from 30 states and/or 4 Canadian Provinces. No index case was presented at the event.

TAHC team members began to contact contestants to place known positive horses under quarantine (and gather epi information), exposed horses under hold orders and provide enhanced biosecurity practices for the premises. Outreach included: Exposed equine- awareness letter, hold order, biosecurity guidance; Event sponsors- recommendation letter, guidance document; Public facing- press release, EDCC updates, social media outreach, media outreach; Authorized veterinarians- veterinary information and guidance.

Dr. Lansford and Dr. Monday will share more details about the outbreak later in today's meeting.

HPAI Commercial Poultry Shelby Co., TX December 2025:

On December 11, 2025, TAHC responded to a HPAI positive broiler flock in Shelby County (the 3rd commercial flock since the current outbreak started in February 2022). The index premises contained 12 houses with just over 265,000 birds. This response was at the opposite end of the spectrum from our infected commercial laying hen premises in Parmer County in April 2024. This was based off the density of commercial and

backyard poultry premises present in the Control Area (CA) and the Surveillance Zone (SZ). The Control Area (10Km) and the Surveillance Zone (10Km from CA borders) contained 6 different commercial poultry companies, 56 commercial premises, 30 backyard flocks identified and contacted, and 92 commercial premises were identified in the SZ. The disease mitigation process was completed on February 2, 2026, when the environmental sampling was done. The grower is working through the USDA's Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program (BCAP) to make required changes prior to restocking. Dr. Lansford will go into greater detail on response efforts during his presentation.

Bovine Tuberculosis in Texas:

Bovine Tuberculosis continues to be an issue in Texas. We currently have two dairies and one beef herd undergoing various stages of annual assurance testing. In fiscal year 2025, we had two slaughter traces trace back to one Texas dairy and one Texas beef herd. The dairy was confirmed TB infected in May 2025 and is currently undergoing herd testing and removal. The beef herd has now undergone two whole herd tests, and no TB infection was identified in the herd. In fiscal year 2026, a TB positive dairy cow was found at slaughter (October 25) and was traced back to a large Texas dairy. The dairy recently signed the testing agreement and will begin herd assessment testing on February 27th. A second TB positive dairy cow was detected at slaughter (December 2025) and traced back to a Texas dairy. Two more TB positive cows were discovered at slaughter from this same dairy, and the USDA classified the dairy as TB affected. The dairy has just completed its first whole herd assessment test, tissue samples have been collected/submitted on responders, and results are pending at NVSL. Dr. Monday will provide more details in her report.

(B) National Update

Cattle Fever Ticks

Cattle Fever Tick Treatment (Eprinomectin) Field Trials: (appropriated \$316,000 by the 88th legislature with an additional \$30,000 added to the base TAHC budget for this biennium):

This series of research projects seek to evaluate whether repeated dose regimens of injectable eprinomectin can be used to effectively control cattle fever tick infestations in areas with high tick pressure due to infested wildlife exposure. The first study, initiated in October 2023 at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, was concluded in January 2024. The second study was designed with information learned from the first study incorporated into an upgraded study design utilizing increased support from our USDA collaborators and benefits at the USDA ARS Research Facility (Moore Field-Edinburg, TX). This location offered a controlled and consistent environment, allowed for the use of less cattle over fewer study days, and enabled the researchers to challenge the effectiveness of eprinomectin with an applied infestation of 2500 larval ticks every other week, with increased plasma sampling frequency for diagnostics. This project was completed in April 2025. The same month, USDA took this information and continued the exploration of the effectiveness of a single eprinomectin repeat dose regimen. That USDA project is winding down and the last treatment day was January 22. The researchers need to finish collecting data over the relevant time period. A research manuscript will incorporate information from all three studies. This manuscript will not be completed until after analysis of all the data, especially the tick count data from the most recent study. Progress continues to be slowed by necessary NWS preparation activities assigned to the subject matter expert at USDA ARS. While the research into the effectiveness of proposed repeat dosing regimens continues, work to evaluate the residue levels

created by this use has begun. The eprinomectin residue study is designed to determine eprinomectin B1a residue levels in multiple tissues following multiple doses of injectable eprinomectin. This study is being done by the Texas A&M Animal Science Department and collaborators who will incorporate the findings into FARAD models to determine withdrawal recommendations associated with repeated dosing of eprinomectin. This contracted study will run for a minimum of 280 days and will be done in College Station by the Texas A&M University researchers. The 25 study animals were purchased in November 2025 and have finished a period of acclimation to the research environment while growing to the target body weight of 500-600 lbs. The primary investigator has submitted the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) to the University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for consideration. Preparations have been made so the study can start once IACUC approval is received. The targeted conclusion of the data collection is December 2026. The planning and preparation for the final research trial in the series has begun. Researchers intend to use conditions at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge to further evaluate the indicated multi-dose eprinomectin treatment protocol in a population of cattle managed to mimic common practices in south Texas. Plans, collaboration agreements, and study protocols will be finalized once the analysis of the combined Moore Field data is complete.

Rio Bravo Buffer Zone: USDA APHIS, SADER/SENASICA and the Mexican States of Tamaulipas and Coahuila worked cooperatively to establish a cattle fever tick buffer zone with focused pilot project areas along the Rio Grande mirroring the permanent quarantine zone in Texas. The USDA allocated approximately \$150,000 USD to contribute to the project in 2025. The second phase ran from October 2024 – September 2025. The USDA asked that there be an increase in wildlife surveillance. In Coahuila, the USDA pledged \$48,548.68 USD, and Mexico is providing \$49,381.38 USD for this phase of the project. At the conclusion of the project for 2025, Coahuila had inspected/treated 9,451 head on 109 production units with low tick infestations being reported (many inspections reported no infestations). No wildlife was inspected/treated in Coahuila during this period. In Tamaulipas, the USDA pledged \$99,541.56, and Mexico is providing \$54,715.77 USD for use in this project. At the conclusion of the project for 2025, Tamaulipas reported that 12,450 head of cattle were inspected and treated on 21 production units. Tamaulipas reported that no ticks were noted on the cattle inspections and that no tick infestations were found on white tailed deer that had been harvested.

Asian Longhorn Tick (ALT)

The monthly update responsibilities have transitioned from the USDA-APHIS to the Medical and Veterinary Entomology Team at the University of Tennessee. To date, the ALT has been discovered in 25 states (the latest state is Kansas, in a dog, July 2025) and Washington, DC. The tick has been found in Northeast Oklahoma and Northwest Arkansas. Affected states continue to use producer education and outreach to mitigate the risk of introductions. The 89th legislature funded the TAHC's exceptional Item request for the next biennium to procure additional equipment and personnel to increase foreign pest (i.e. cattle fever tick, Asian Longhorn Tick, and New World screwworm) surveillance more broadly throughout Texas by establishing a TAHC ectoparasite field identification laboratory. The application / interview process for an entomologist is underway. Interviews are to be held March 3rd and 4th. We hope to have the position filled by April 1st.

New World Screwworm (NWS)

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Mexico: As of February 19th, SENASICA reports 15,887 total cases of NWS with 737 of those cases considered to be active. To date the northern most case has been found just 70 miles south of the Texas/US border in Sabinas Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon. This case was reported on September 21, 2025 (via USDA Press Release at 10:00 PM).

On December 26, 2025, SENASICA reported a New World Screwworm infestation in a six-day old calf (198 miles from the southern border) in Tamaulipas, MX. Prior to that, from the last commission meeting in November to the discovery of the calf in Tamaulipas approximately 40 cases were reported in the state of Veracruz. As the cases associated with animal movements continue to be discovered in northern Mexico, spread of the adult NWS fly continues to the northwest, with cases now being found in the states of Estado de Mexico and San Luis Potosi in the last few months. Since the first case in December 2025, Tamaulipas now has 25 total cases being reported (four cases total for the month of February). Sterile NWS Fly dispersal polygons have been adjusted to cover this activity. In all, NWS cases have been reported in 19 Mexican states. It appears that 13 states in southern Mexico have established adult NWS fly populations.

USDA Response:

On November 13, 2025, USDA announced the opening of a sterile fly dispersal facility in Tampico, Mexico. The Tampico facility will allow USDA to disperse sterile flies aerially across northeastern Mexico, including in Nuevo Leon. Due to the discovery of NWS in Tamaulipas in late December, the USDA began to release sterile flies north of the current active NWS cases in Mexico in a proactive effort to create a sterile reproduction buffer zone. If the fly moves north from Mexico, releasing sterile flies just outside of affected areas helps ensure flies traveling to new areas will only encounter sterile males and will not be able to reproduce. On the evening January 30th, Undersecretary Hoskins reached out to inform me that they were again adjusting the dispersal polygon to include operations about 50 miles into Texas, along the U.S. border with the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. Flights began on February 9th. Dispersal flights will originate from Tampico MX for now. There will be 8 flights per week. Pupae/Flies will be dyed orange. (Day – Glo Signal Green will be reserved for flies release from Moore Air Base). Flies will be dispersed over Starr, Hidalgo Cameron and Willacy Counties. The distribution will also include parts of Zapata, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Kennedy Counties.

This adjustment will require that 57 (Traps in Zapata, Starr, Hidalgo and Cameron Counties) of the 101 NWS surveillance traps be relocated in counties to the north of the dispersal polygon.

Up until February 2nd, the USDA CFTEP/ USDA APHIS VS, and the TAHC managed 101 traps deployed in 8 Texas Counties (Brownville to Del Rio) as of 02/17/2026 – 40,656 individual flies have been submitted to NVSL (since the end of July 2025) from the trapping efforts in Texas (40,393 flies have been confirmed to be negative – Not NWS flies by NVSL). The remaining balance is in the process of being identified at NVSL.

The USDA APHIS VS has surveillance fly traps deployed along the US/Mexico border in New Mexico (5) and Arizona (7) and California (8) in addition to the Texas traps.

USDA NWS Response Playbook was distributed on Friday October 17th. From October 27th through October 29th, the USDA conducted listening sessions for NASDA / NASAHO, as well as the livestock and wildlife industries. The NWS response playbook is a draft document, and comments can be submitted to the USDA via email. There are multiple guidance documents associated with the USDA's NWS response playbook with several of those still being drafted. The USDA NPIC team has also held listening sessions with different industry groups over the last few months to address any comments or concerns that were submitted in response to the NWS playbook. The USDA is planning to release a revised version of the playbook in early spring of this year.

DOMESTIC DISPERSAL FACILITY: Construction for the \$8.5 million domestic dispersal facility at Moore Air Base has been completed. Secretary Rollins and Governor Abbott hosted a ribbon cutting on February 9th. This facility will be capable of processing up to 100 million sterile NWS flies per week (from COPEG)—representing a significant expansion of our dispersal capacity and geographic range. The facility received 40 L of pupae from COPEG for training and demonstration purposes. The pupae processed at Moore Air Base were released by truck around the facility on February 10th to validate the process and evaluate insect quality under operational conditions. Data collected from the ground dispersal will further support dispersal center processes and enable the team to refine procedures as operations scale up.

DOMESTIC PRODUCTION FACILITY: The newly formed USDA APHIS NWS Directorate continues to work closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on planning for the domestic production facility. The domestic facility, with a projected production capacity of 300 million sterile flies per week, will work in tandem with facilities in Panama and Mexico. The Directorate hopes to award construction contracts in March.

On November 21, the USDA launched the new unified New World screwworm website. Screwworm.gov has targeted resources for a wide range of stakeholders including livestock producers, veterinarians, animal health officials, wildlife professionals, healthcare providers, pet owners, researchers, drug manufacturers, and the general public. It also has the latest USDA-verified information on cases and response activities in Mexico and U.S. preparedness efforts.

USDA is leading an aggressive, whole-of-government response to protect the Nation's livestock, wildlife, and public health from NWS. The U.S. One Health Coordination Unit for NWS, co-led by USDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of the Interior, is actively working to ensure the United States is prepared, should NWS be detected here.

Screwworm.gov includes information from these partner agencies as well as the following collaborating agencies: the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of State.

Texas Response:

On January 29th, Governor Greg Abbott issued a statewide disaster declaration to better equip the Texas New World Screwworm (NWS) Response Team to prevent the potential spread of the NWS fly into Texas and to

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better protect livestock and wildlife. The declaration authorizes the use of all available resources of state government and of all political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with this disaster, and temporarily reassign any such resources that have been, or could be, allocated to address the spread of NWS to the Texas New World Screwworm Response Team, headed by TAHC and TPWD.

With the northern movement of the aerial NWS Sterile fly dispersal polygon, the northern trap line will be set at 15 Km north of the dispersal grid. The TAHC will manage 18 (10 new) NWS fly surveillance traps in Webb County, 6 in Jim Hogg County, 10 in Brooks County, and 9 in Kenedy County.

TAHC continues our NWS planning and preparedness activities. Our weekly and bi-weekly communication coordination and collaboration calls are ongoing. Internal and external working groups continue to work on response plans focusing on animal movement control, treatment and surveillance.

The TAHC Emergency Management Team held a one-day NWS field response training for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and TPWD personnel on December 15th in San Antonio, TX. The Incident management team has been working on details of command structure and staffing of roles for all levels of response. They are also working closely with TPWD to do the same on their end. They are in the process of planning a compliance/checkpoint exercise for NWS response. They are keeping the emergency management council updated on current status and planning efforts. Emergency management staff is also working with DSHS on training for county animal control officers.

Education and outreach efforts to raise awareness continue to be conducted. We continue to participate in NWS producer / veterinary education meetings both in the state and around the nation. We also accept every opportunity to present on NWS at county government and county emergency management meetings.

TAHC staff continues to meet with smaller industry groups to discuss the USDA's NWS Response Playbook and go over what response efforts will look like and address each group's comments/concerns with the response playbook and TAHC's response (we are holding these meetings in conjunction with some of the USDA NPIC staff). We hope to complete these meetings by early March.

Work with TPWD both individually via weekly coordination calls and through the Texas Screwworm Response Team is ongoing. The TAHC / TPWD New World Screwworm Response Team with the mission to amplify NWS preparedness in Texas and serve as a central hub for coordinating information, aligning strategies and delivering resources to support prevention, detection, control and eradication efforts. The response team held its first meeting in September 2025. We hope to schedule a second meeting in March or April shortly after the USDA releases the NWS Playbook revisions.

TAHC continues to update and distribute producer guidance documents. Since the reported case in Nuevo Leon, MX, (September 2025), TAHC has increased communication efforts with both emergency management personnel and livestock deputies in numerous South Texas counties. We have also increased awareness among South Texas livestock market owners and management.

Dr. Lansford and I continue to correspond with our NASAHO NWS WG as well as the Great Plains Regional NWS Working Group (TX, OK, KS, NE, MO, CO, NM & AZ) – to address continuity of business and to better harmonize the region’s livestock movements during an NWS infestation.

FDA:

On August 18th, The Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Issued a declaration of emergency pursuant to the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act for New World Screwworm. This declaration, the first step under this statute, authorizes the Food and Drug Administration to issue Emergency Use Authorizations for animal drugs for prevention or treatment of New World Screwworm Myiasis.

The FDA is continuing to work at full steam to bring additional products to market as part of a coordinated US response.

On December 4th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration conditionally approved Exzolt Cattle-CA1 (fluralaner) topical solution for the prevention and treatment of New World screwworm (NWS) larval infestations, and the treatment and control of cattle fever tick in beef cattle 2 months of age and older and replacement dairy heifers less than 20 months of age.

This conditional approval means the FDA has determined Exzolt Cattle-CA1 is safe and has a reasonable expectation of effectiveness for its intended use. The sponsor has up to five years to generate the additional effectiveness data needed to support full FDA approval.

Exzolt Cattle-CA1 is eligible for conditional approval because it is intended to prevent and treat serious or life-threatening diseases in cattle, it addresses unmet animal health needs, and demonstrating effectiveness of the drug requires complex or particularly difficult studies. Exzolt Cattle-CA1 received expedited review through a [priority zoonotic animal drug \(PZAD\) designation](#), an authority provided to the FDA under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

To prevent unsafe drug residues in meat from treating cattle and ensure human food safety, the slaughter withdrawal period for Exzolt Cattle-CA1 is 98 days. If cattle are continuously exposed to temperatures at or above 60°F after product administration, then cattle may be slaughtered for human consumption 44 days after treatment. Violative residues may result if cattle are exposed to temperatures below 60° F after administration and are slaughtered at 44 days. This product is not for use in lactating dairy cattle, dairy calves, veal calves, or bulls at least 1 year old that are intended for breeding.

On December 17th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration conditionally approved Credelio Quattro-CA1 (lotilaner, moxidectin, praziquantel, pyrantel) chewable tablets for the treatment of infestations caused by New World screwworm (NWS) larvae (myiasis) in dogs and puppies at least eight weeks of age and weighing at least 3.3 pounds.

Most dogs in the United States are at low risk of NWS exposure due to their geographic location; however, dogs near the U.S.-Mexico border and dogs that have traveled to countries with active NWS infestations are more likely to be exposed to NWS.

Credelio Quattro is already fully approved by FDA for various flea, tick, and worm-related indications in dogs and puppies.

On February 5th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Ivomec (ivermectin) injectable solution against New World screwworm (NWS). The agency has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that Ivomec may be effective for the prevention of infestations caused by NWS larvae (myiasis) in cattle when administered within 24 hours of birth, at the time of castration, or when a wound appears, and the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks.

Ivomec is not for use in female dairy cattle producing milk for human consumption and calves that will be processed for veal. The slaughter withdrawal period for cattle is 35 days.

This EUA will be effective until it is revoked or the HHS Secretary terminates the declaration that the potential public health emergency presented by NWS justifies the emergency use authorization of animal drugs for NWS. To reduce the risk of antiparasitic resistance and preserve drug effectiveness against both NWS and other parasites, producers are encouraged to use antiparasitic drugs only when medically necessary and as part of a comprehensive parasite management strategy.

On February 18th, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued two Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) – one for NexGard (afoxolaner) chewable tablets for the treatment of New World screwworm (NWS) infestations (myiasis) in dogs, and the second for NexGard COMBO (esafoxolaner, eprinomectin, and praziquantel topical solution) for the treatment of NWS myiasis in cats.

For NexGard and NexGard COMBO, the agency has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that NexGard and NexGard COMBO may be effective in the treatment of NWS myiasis in dogs/puppies and cats and kittens respectively and the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks.

These EUAs will be effective until they are revoked or the HHS Secretary terminates the declaration that the potential public health emergency presented by NWS justifies the emergency use authorization of animal drugs for NWS.

As of February 18, 2026, NWS has not been detected in the United States. Most dogs and cats in America are at low risk of NWS due to their geographic location; however, pets near the U.S.-Mexico border and pets that have traveled to countries with active NWS cases are more likely to be exposed to NWS.

Afoxolaner, the active ingredient in NexGard, and esafoxolaner, one of the active ingredients in NexGard Combo, belong to a class of antiparasitic drugs called isoxazolines. Although isoxazoline products are commonly used and safe for most pets, the products have been associated with neurologic adverse reactions,

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including muscle tremors, ataxia, and seizures. Pet owners should consult with a veterinarian to determine whether NexGard or NexGard Combo may be appropriate for their pet.

In addition to the EUA, NexGard chewable tablets are FDA-approved for flea and tick-related indications in dogs and puppies. NexGard COMBO topical solution is FDA-approved for flea, tick, and worm-related indications in cats and kittens.

TAHC continues to correspond with the FDA on a regular basis concerning NWS prevention, control and treatment. We have a monthly recurring meeting with the FDA (to include TAMU's- Dr. Kaufman and Dr. Ellis) every third Thursday of the month.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Poultry: National - February 8, 2022

- Over 190 million birds have been affected (February 2026)
- 2,088 premises in 50 states/Puerto Rico (1,271 WOAHPoultry/ 817 WOAHP Non- Poultry) (02/13/2026)
- Texas: 20 total HPAI positive premises since February 2022 to include 3 commercial flocks, totaling just over 2.155 million birds
 - Latest being WOAHP Non-poultry: Carson Co, January 2026

Dairy/Livestock: National - March 25, 2024

- Influenza A, H5, Clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype *B3.13*
- 20 states – 1,090 Confirmed Premises (02/20/2026)
- Texas: 30 premises – Panhandle and Stephenville Milk Sheds (2/20/2026). Have not discovered an epi link associated with cattle movements between milk sheds. The last known test positive premises showing clinical signs was disclosed on December 13, 2024, and located in the Panhandle Milk Shed. There were 2 premises that tested positive on May 12, 2025, and 1 premises that tested positive on September 2, 2025. The samples tested were banked samples from March 2024. The premises involved were applying for the USDA's Livestock Assistance Program payments and needed to prove that the premises had positive cattle at one time during the program dates.

USDA National Mandatory Milk Surveillance Program (Mandatory testing of unpasteurized milk intended for interstate movement) – Animal Health Protection Act Federal Order – December 6, 2024

USDA APHIS National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) – Facilitates comprehensive H5N1 surveillance of the Nation's milk supply and dairy herds.

- Increase USDA's and public health partners' understanding of where the virus is present in the United States,
- Support the rapid implementation of enhanced biosecurity measures to decrease the risk of transmission to other livestock, and
- Inform critical efforts to protect farm workers to help lower their risk of exposure.
- National Milk Testing Strategy 5 Stages:
 - Stage One: State/Regional Snapshot

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- Stage Two: Determining State Status
- Stage Three: Detecting, responding to, and eliminating the Virus
- Stage Four: Demonstrating H5N1 Disease Freedom within a State
- Stage Five: Demonstrating H5N1 Disease Freedom in U.S. Dairy Cattle

Texas began the National Milk Testing Strategy on April 7, 2025, by conducting plant silo monitoring. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) administers the pasteurized milk ordinance established by the FDA and is conducting silo sampling. Samples are collected every 4 to 5 weeks. There are on average 168 enrolled silos in Texas on each testing round (Through 02/09/2026). On average there are 81-102 silos qualified for sampling/testing each round. (This data has been compiled at the conclusion of week 45 of testing – February 9-15). Silos may be exempt from testing for various reasons such as the silo was empty, silo doesn't meet sampling minimums, does not contain grade A fluid milk or it was skipped (rare - weather, inspector schedules). We are currently on the 11th round of testing (round 2 for USDA testing statement of work Yr 2), 918 samples submitted to date, TAHC has not been made aware of a positive silo. If a positive silo is detected, TAHC will be responsible for coordinating the collection of bulk milk tank samples from each dairy in the positive silo to detect the positive dairy. TAHC will work with the positive dairy to mitigate spread and ultimately eliminate the virus from the premises.

(C) WAIVERS and VARIANCES (Action Item)

There were six waivers requested and six were approved.

- HPAI – APPROVED – request for extension of HPAI test for poultry entering from an affected state. Origin flock is tested weekly and have consistently tested negative and is part of the National Poultry Improvement Program.
- Brucellosis – APPROVED – requested waiver of entry requirements for an exotic cervid due to adverse reactions to anesthesia. Animal was raised in a zoo environment and its cohorts tested negative.
- HPAI – APPROVED – request for entry of turkeys intended for TPWD restocking program prior to receiving test results. Birds were held in quarantine until negative test results were received.
- HPAI – APPROVED – owner of a geriatric pet parrot requested waiver of entry requirements to move bird to Texas. Parrot was and will be an indoor only pet, and field staff checked on animal after arrival.
- HPAI – APPROVED – second request for entry of turkeys intended for TPWD restocking program prior to receiving test results. Birds were held in quarantine until negative test results were received.
- HPAI – APPROVED – request to allow entry of quail from HPAI affected state on an expired test due to shipping delays. Birds were quarantined after being tested and originated from over 100 miles from detected HPAI case.

The motion to approve the waivers and variances passed.

Item 8 – Presentation of Animal Health Programs and Disease Traceability Activities

Dr. T.R. Lansford presented:

1. Animal Disease Traceability (ADT)
 - a. No-cost provided RFID tag distribution

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- i. Requests for RFID tags were up again this quarter compared to last quarter (see slide) and we have surpassed 2 million tags distributed
 - ii. TAHC has received the FY25 allotment of tags and all of the additional tags allotted to us
 - iii. Have a large supply of tags in inventory
- b. Scrapie flock ID
 - i. Down from last quarter, but still steady
- c. NUES tags
 - i. We have received all the NUES tags known to be in the USDA warehouse in Kansas City. We will continue to distribute these tags, primarily to markets, for identification of adult cattle for intrastate movement use
- d. No cost swine EIDs and readers
 - i. The website for producers to use to order EID tags directly from Merck (Allflex) through the USDA grant to distribute no cost EID tags to swine producers is operational
 - ii. Additional USDA grant through National Pork Board to distribute EID readers to exhibitions – we have had some discussion with National Pork Board and are awaiting clarification on numbers we can order
 - 1. Plan is to get readers for all the major pig exhibitions and to try to get one reader to assign to every county through either an AgriLife Extension agent or Ag Science Teacher
- e. Stakeholder outreach
 - i. Electronic reader distribution
 - 1. The effort to provide accredited, authorized veterinarians with no-cost electronic ID reading/scanning devices continues. Currently, TAHC staff have put 343 readers into the hands of accredited veterinarians for their use in program disease and livestock movement efforts. (see slide with map depicting reader distribution).
 - ii. ADT staff continue to participate in industry events to provide information to producers on ADT and official ID requirements and to distribute RFID tags.
 - iii. TAPP and Communications continue to assist with messaging
 - iv. Continuing to work with veterinarians and markets on appropriate use of NUES (metal clip) tags on cattle
 - 1. We have received all the NUES tags from both Kansas City and Austin warehouses and have approx. 80K in inventory

2. Emergency Management

- a. Response – Shelby County 01 HPAI Response
 - i. Shelby 01 reported 12/11/2025 to TAHC from TVMDL Center
 - 1. Commercial broiler operation
 - 2. WOAHPoultry
 - ii. Incident Command Post (ICP) established 12/12 at Shelby County AgriLife
 - 1. 20 personnel (16 TAHC, 2 USDA, 2 TVMDL) assigned to work on site at ICP; Virtual personnel also supported response (4 TAHC, 4 USDA)
 - iii. Control Area (10km around Infest Premises (IP)) established 12/12/2025
 - 1. 6 companies operating in Control Area (CA)/Surveillance Zone (SZ)
 - 2. 56 commercial premises identified in CA

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3. 30 backyard flocks identified and contacted in CA (4 Field Surveillance Teams)
 - iv. Testing began 12/13 in CA (eligible flocks to be tested at minimum once per week for the time CA is operational depending on premises type)
 1. 92 commercial premises identified in the SZ (10km from CA borders), tested 21 premises prior to CA Release according to USDA guidance
 - v. 2,932 PCR samples were tested at the TVMDL Center Lab for the duration of the outbreak
 - vi. Operational milestones
 1. Virus elimination – depopulation, disposal, cleaning
 - a. Depop – started 12/12, complete 12/13
 - b. Disposal – completed 12/26
 - c. Cleaning – completed 12/30
 2. Release of control area 1/14
 3. Environmental testing conducted 2/2 and not detected results received 2/12
 - vii. Summary
 1. Tremendous effort by all
 - a. Dawna, Holli, SS Region
 - b. Thank you to LOGS (staff services & IT) for going up on a weekend to establish ICP
 - c. Thank you to the livestock inspectors that went up and quickly completed CA surveillance
 - d. Thank you to Sydney, Dr. Dimitrov, and TVMDL staff for their support as this all occurred over the Christmas/New Year holidays
 - e. And of course, thank you to the Texas Poultry Industry for leaning forward in this response by being prepared to implement enhanced biosecurity and testing protocols
 2. 61 days from notification to completion of environmental sampling
- b. Training/Preparedness
 - i. Preparations related to NWS remain at the forefront of EM activities
 1. Participated in the Department of Homeland Security NWS Tabletop Exercise in El Paso
 2. Training for 150+ AgriLife Extension and Research personnel
 3. Continue to coordinate with USDA to develop the screwworm response playbook
 4. Incident Management Team continue meetings to refine and reinforce ICS structure, roles, and plan through phases of response, including working collaboratively with TPWD
 - c. Outreach and Engagement
 - i. Also very NWS centric
 1. Updated Emergency Management Council on NWS at quarterly meeting
 2. Continue to participate in industry meetings to present on NWS
 3. Presented to Texas Association of Regional Councils
 4. Continue meeting with industry groups to review and refine playbook
 - d. Secure Food Supply planning
 - i. Continue to engage with other states on SFS programs
 1. Hired two SFS specialists: Bruce Chandler started Feb. 9, Rebecca Kemp in April

- e. Upcoming Events: NWS Compliance Branch animal movement exercise
3. Animal Health Programs
- a. Region office updates
 - i. Lease finalized through Texas Facilities Commission to establish a more permanent sub-office in Willacy County; November 1 is the tentative move-in due to construction
 - ii. On track to have the official transition from Beeville Office to the Pleasanton Office on April 1
 - b. Staffing updates
 - i. Region Directors
 - 1. We have filled the Beeville/Pleasanton region director position
 - 2. Amarillo Region Director position remains vacant, but we have an interview scheduled for March
 - 3. Dr. Hank Hayes retired at the end of January and will be missed.
 - ii. Field Staff (Inspectors and Region Administrative Assistants) - Applicant interest remains high
 - iii. Agency wide, we have 204.5 out of 228.2 FTE positions filled
 - 1. Currently we have 33 vacancies
 - a. 6 positions are pending hiring in March or April
 - b. 11 positions in the selection process
 - c. 13 positions posted
 - d. 3 vacancies under review
 - 2. Exceptional item positions – 23 total positions from legislative session
 - a. 13 - Hired
 - b. 2 - pending hire in March/April (Epi Program Spec & Secure Food Supply)
 - c. 3 - screening and interview process (Branding Data Analyst, Training Specialist, Entomologist)
 - d. 4 - posted (Veterinarians - AM, SS, PL/BV, Laredo)
 - e. 1 - in development (Admin for Entomology)
 - 3. Other positions
 - a. Field training manager –
 - 1. Bradley Martin started January 5th
 - 2. Additional training specialist position posted
 - b. Related to NWS response, we have 6 positions posted
 - 1. Assistant Region Manager in LR Region
 - 2. 5 livestock inspector positions
 - 4. Thank you to our great agency management teams and HR Specialists for their work in keeping positions filled and the hiring processes moving forward
 - c. Equine herpes myeloencephalitis outbreak
 - i. Started receiving reports on the morning of 11/18
 - ii. Trace work and Region staff making contact with owners of exposed horses went through the Thanksgiving holiday and weekend
 - 1. Tremendous effort by Regional and EPI staff across state
 - 2. Even though SV, SS, and GS were most impacted, AM, BV, and LR gladly took on the management of event contact traces for other regions
 - iii. Dr. Monday will have more detail in her report on the numbers of horses involved

- d. Animal health programs Field Activities
 - i. Please see slide for a summary of activities for the last quarter of calendar year 2025
- 4. Program Records and Quality Assurance
 - a. Transition to electronic certificates of veterinary medicine
 - i. January 1 – put out notice to all other states that we no longer accept paper CVIs for imports into TX
 - ii. February 1 – no longer providing online ordering of Texas CVI books
 - iii. We'll provide some updates at the next meeting regarding compliance and transition progress
 - b. Program Records team continues to develop
 - i. Jenn Daniel hired as the Team Lead and is helping Rebecca Galvan manage some of the myriad tasks placed on her plate

Item 9 – Presentation of Disease Information and Epidemiology Activities

Dr. Jessica Monday, State Epidemiologist, presented:

Cattle

- HPAI in Livestock – Texas has had 30 confirmed cases in Amarillo and Stephenville Regions with zero confirmed cases to date in since 12/2/2024
- National Milk Testing Silo Monitoring Program – Texas leveraged the existing DSHS milk sampling program.
 - Texas leveraged the existing (DSHS) milk sampling program
 - Round: cohort of enrolled silos inspected, and qualifying silos sampled every 4-5 weeks
 - Reasons a silo may not be sampled: empty/minimum, storage product, skip
 - TAHC prepared to respond and investigate any NVSL positive silo samples at the origin dairies
 - 1,229 silo inspections for sampling; 716 samples to NVSL
- Cattle Tuberculosis: Texas TB Trace Investigations
 - **TX 25-002:** FY25 Q3
 - **March 2025:** Positive dairy cow identified at harvest
 - Traced to a dairy complex AM region comprised of over 25,000 Jersey and Holstein cows and a small Angus beef herd
 - April 2025: Assessment test completed, TB Affected
 - September 2025: Herd plan signed
 - March 2026: Fourth removal test scheduled
 - Genetic testing–TB strain was new introduction of Mexico origin
 - **TX 25-003:** FY25 Q4
 - **June 2025:** Positive beef cow identified at harvest
 - Traced to a beef herd in BV region comprised of about 250 head
 - November 2025: Assessment test completed
 - February 2026: Confirmation test completed
 - February 2026: Quarantine released
 - Genetic testing–TB strain new introduction to US from Mexico
 - Retest herd in a year
 - **TX 26-002:** FY26 Q1
 - Adult dairy cow identified at harvest – Oct 2025
 - Traced to a very large dairy

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- Previously tested for TB 2022
- Genetic testing–TB strain a new introduction, likely of Mexican origin
- EPI investigation completed, testing plan signed and assessment testing scheduled
TX 26-003: FY26 Q2
- Adult dairy cow identified at harvest – Dec 2025
- Traced to Texas dairy <5,000
- Isolate a new introduction, likely of Mexican origin
- Additional lesioned animals – **TB affected** status
- Assessment testing, modeling by USDA CEAH for TAR recommendations, herd management plan in development
- Cattle Brucellosis – No suspects in Quarter 1
- Cattle Trichomoniasis – 15 Investigations initiated in Quarter 1

Equine – EHM Outbreak 2025

- Traces from TX impacted 34 states and 4 Canadian Provinces
- EDCC reported 8 states with cases linked to outbreak
- 2,953 epi-linked cases in TX
 - confirmed positives, contact traces
- 42 NAHLN lab diagnostically confirmed positive TX horses
 - 6 confirmed dead - of the 42 confirmed positive cases
- 27 Confirmed epi-linked events in TX
 - Events:
 - No index horse at index event identified
 - Reports of sick horses before Waco event during interviews of positive horse owners/riders/trainers
 - 17 events – Hold orders and trace outs
 - 2 out of state events
 - 5 events during Oct 17-28 had horses that were later positive
 - 5 events confirmed exposed to positive after effective hold order period

Other Equine Disease Information – First Quarter Positives:

- EIA – 6
- Piro – 1
- EIA and Piro – 1

Avian

- Avian Influenza – One case of HPAI in November of 2026
 - 3 Investigations where H5N1 was not detected
- ILT – seven cases

Swine

- Swine Brucellosis – 0 cases in FY 2026
- Pseudorabies – 1 case in FY 2026

Chronic Wasting Disease:

- 77 herds formally notified of CWD HCP repeal - via email on 9/16/2025
- 55 trace breeder facilities released from TAHC Hold Order and transferred to Texas Parks and Wildlife
- 7 CWD positive breeder facilities reviewed and released from TAHC Hold Order/Quarantine, now under TPWD management for native cervid species

- Approximately 170 facilities pending transfer to TWPD following their effective rules changes

Item 10 – Presentation of Authorized Personnel Program Activities

Mr. Rex Wyatt presented the following:

- In 2025:
 - 135 Authorized Veterinarians in Texas
 - 277 Trich Certified Veterinarians
 - 68 CWD Antemortem Veterinarians
 - 142 CWD Postmortem Collectors
- 3rd Year Veterinary Regulatory Medicine Course
 - Joint effort by USDA-APHIS, TAHC, and DSHS to prepare veterinary students to work with state and federal animal health officials on large animal disease programs
 - Trained in animal disease traceability, livestock movement requirements, emergency management, completing regulatory documents, and more
- 2025 Veterinary Trainings and Continuing Education
 - Bovine Trichomoniasis Testing Certification
 - 13 meetings; 227 veterinarians attended
 - CWD Antemortem Testing Certification
 - 6 meetings; 68 veterinarians attended
 - USDA/TAHC/DSHS Core Orientation Course
 - 2 meetings; 101 veterinarians attended
- Rural Veterinary Shortage and Loan Repayment Programs
- Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)
 - Program authorized by USDA NIFA and administered by each state
 - Student loan debt relief for vets who serve three years in veterinary shortage area
 - Texas successfully awarded maximum of eight veterinary shortage areas
 - FY25 focus
 - Texas-Mexico border
 - West Texas
 - Panhandle
- Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program (RVIP)
 - 89th Texas Legislature allocated \$5 million to fund RVIP
 - \$2.5 million in FY26 and FY27
 - Program administered by the TAHC
 - Legislation establishes designated rural counties, program requirements, eligibility, and committee members
 - Educational loan repayment or payment of tuition and fees in return for commitment to full-time work in designated rural counties
 - Up to \$180,000 (\$45,000/year over four years)
 - Open to currently enrolled students or graduates from a Texas veterinary school
 - Must have graduated within four years of application date
 - Application Cycle
 - FY 2025: 18 Applicants, 3 Awarded, \$135,00 funds distributed
 - FY 2026: 92 Applicants, \$2.5 million in funds to be distributed
- TAPP Key Objectives 2025
 - Texas Tech SVM first class
 - Recruitment and retention of food animal veterinarians

- Continued improvements to veterinary compliance
- 2026 Key Objectives
 - Continued focus on education and outreach
 - Successful RVIP and VMLRP CVIs
 - Continued integration with Epidemiology and Program Records Department

Item 11 – USDA-VS Report

Dr. Brian Lalande presented updates for USDA VS.

Veterinary Services has 28 full time staff in Texas. This includes 14 field veterinary medical officers (VMO) and 13 animal health technicians (AHT), which includes newly hired VMO who has poultry and parasitic experience and will be located in the Northeast part of Texas. Dr. Lalande added that getting qualified applicants has been a struggle. VS will release new job postings for multiple districts, including 18 area veterinarians in charge. The positions are internal and close in late May. The NWS dispersal facility at Moore Airbase has seven total VS staff on detail there. Currently staff are all from Texas VS personnel. The current USDA goal is to bring on 40 staff to manage the facility, including the transition to a production facility in 2027-2028. PPQ is doing indirect surveillance with fruit fly traps on the border for NWS. All suspicious submissions go to NAHLN for identification.

Item 12 - Budget Status Report

The following was presented by Jeanine Coggeshall:

- FY 2026 Budgeted Revenue (for period of September 1, 2025, to January 31, 2026)

Category	BUDGET	AVAILABLE
Salaries and Wages	\$15,265,320	\$9,709,812
Other Personnel Costs	\$298,551	\$218,885
Professional Fees & Services	\$141,595	\$56,982
Fuels and Lubricants	\$523,491	\$310,172
Consumable Supplies	\$223,089	\$177,209
Utilities	\$247,008	\$147,899
Travel	\$638,679	\$451,794
Rent- Building	\$817,161	\$340,311
Rent- Machine Other	\$61,795	\$43,852
Other Operating Expense	\$2,507,176	\$1,083,832
Totals	\$24,148,865	\$19,482,205

The motion to approve the report passed.

Item 13 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Agency Contracts and Purchases

Jeanine Coggeshall presented contracts and purchases for the consideration of the Commissioners.

The motion to approve the contacts, purchases, and leases passed.

Item 14 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Orders Related to Commission Rule Violations

Mr. Jabbar Fahim presented orders related to Commission rule violations for consideration of the commission. The orders were approved.

Item 15 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Adoption of Proposed Rules

Ms. Penny Maley presented the following:

- a) 4 Tex. Admin. Code Ch. 51, Entry Requirements

The purpose of the amendments to Chapter 51, Entry Requirements is to add a definition of “dairy cattle” to TAHC rules that matches USDA’s definition clarify requirements for dairy cattle and dairy crosses entering Texas.

The motion to ADOPT amendments to Chapter 51, Entry Requirements passed.

Item 16 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Adoption of Proposed Rules

Ms. Penny Maley presented the following:

- a) 4 Tex. Admin. Code Ch. 51, Entry Requirements

The purpose of the amendments proposed to Chapter 51, Entry Requirements is to expand the veterinary care permit exception to include cattle, bison, and camelids. Additionally, the amendments eliminate a duplicative exception for equine entering for sale at a livestock market to first be consigned to a veterinary clinic for issuance of a CVI. All animals entering Texas must be accompanied by a CVI unless a specific exception applies. The proposed amendment would allow and encourage expanded access to skilled Texas veterinarians while maintaining disease traceability.

The motion to PROPOSE amendments to Chapter 51 Entry Requirements passed.

The notice of the proposed amendments will be published in the Texas Register with a 30-day comment period. Comments regarding the proposals may be submitted to Amanda Bernhard, Texas Animal Health Commission, 2105 Kramer Lane, Austin, Texas 78758, by fax at (512) 719-0719 or by email at "comments@tahc.state.tx.us".

Item 17 – Awards and Recognition

Training Inspector Dawna Michalke was recognized for 30 years of services to the agency.

Item 18- Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item 19 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:41AM.