

**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 425<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Texas Animal Health Commission**  
**August 26, 2025**

**Item 1 – Welcome and Call to order by Chairman Locke**

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Commissioners met in person on Tuesday, August 26, 2025. 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. Commissioner Jordan was absent. The absence was excused.

**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 8:31AM.

**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 9:45AM. No action was needed.

**Item 6 – Approval of the minutes of the 424<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

There was no public comment and no discussion concerning the minutes of the 424<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. The motion to approve the minutes of the 424<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting was made by Commissioner B. Klein and seconded by Commissioner Evans. 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**

**Agency:** at 201.5 FTEs (out of 224.5) filled positions for current FY25 count as of August 18, 2025.

**Rural Veterinary Incentive Program (RVIP):** The RVIP provides educational loan repayment assistance or payment of tuition and fees of up to \$180,000 to eligible veterinarians and veterinary medical students who demonstrate a commitment to working in designated rural Texas counties. The program offers up to \$45,000 for each year of full-time veterinary service in rural communities in need of a veterinarian. Funding was appropriated in the amount of \$2.5 Million for fiscal year 2026 and \$2.5 Million for fiscal year 2027 by the 89<sup>th</sup> legislature. The RVIP Committee is scheduled to meet on September 3<sup>rd</sup> to begin another cycle.

**Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP):** The VMLRP provides student loan debt relief for veterinarians that serve three years in veterinary shortage areas. General VMLRP updates include the award amount has been increased from \$25,000 to \$40,000 per year of student loan debt for veterinarians that commit to working in a designated veterinary shortage area. An additional payment of \$15,600 per year to cover tax liability is now included, for a total maximum award of \$166,800 for three years (\$120,000 for loan repayment and \$46,800 for tax liability). The current cycle for FY 2025, TAHC submitted applications for the maximum amount of eight (8) shortage areas. In determining what areas to nominate for designated shortage

areas, TAHC worked closely with authorized veterinarians around the state to understand where veterinary services are most needed and which clinics are having trouble recruiting/retaining new, younger veterinarians. All eight (8) shortage areas were awarded (45 counties total). Seven (7) shortage areas that will help private, rural clinics to recruit new vets. Webb, Starr, Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Duval Counties, located on the Texas-Mexico border, were designated as a shortage area. TAHC also focused on nominating areas in West Texas and the Panhandle, where we know recruitment and retention has become difficult. There are 30 counties in these areas designated. One (1) shortage area for a public service position at Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM). This designated area is in Potter County. Currently, all USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture funding opportunities are under review.

**Cattle Fever Tick Treatment (Eprinomectin) Field Trial:** (appropriated \$316,000 by the 88<sup>th</sup> legislature): This is a two-year trial. Initiated at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge (LANWR) in Cameron County and abandoned day 112. The study was moved to USDA ARS Research Facility (Moore Field-Edinburg, TX) for a more controlled environment where cattle can be penned for inspection and treatment as required. The Moore Field project was completed on April 17<sup>th</sup>. The data analysis has been completed, and the first draft of the research manuscript has been completed and is being reviewed by co-authors for edits. Preliminary findings were presented at the 67<sup>th</sup> Livestock Insect Workers Conference in Cody, WY in early July 2025. The principal investigators have confidence in 56-day protocol findings, but 84-day protocol needed additional (infestation-treatment-tick counts over time with controlled reinfestations) information to meet original objectives of research. The USDA ARS will continue to look at the 84-day treatment trial. The residue project planning with the Texas A&M Animal Science Department has been completed and approved by all investigators. It is projected to begin once the contract is approved by the commission. The second trial at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge is projected to begin in the Spring of 2026. The LBB has added \$30,000 (exceptional item ask) to the TAHC base budget for the next biennium to complete all stages of the research trial.

## **(B) National Update**

### **Cattle Fever Ticks**

**Nematode Use:** New Categorical Exclusion for nematode use that would expand the use of nematodes to the CFTEP program counties and would include application to wildlife and some cattle has been submitted to the FDA. The company has communicated that no nematodes will be available in the fall. This is due to Florida Citrus not demanding them, so the company has no incentive to make them for us to use in experiments.

**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 will run from October 2024 – September 2025. The USDA has 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 to be utilized on the seventy (70) production units that have been identified (6,024 hd). In the first quarter of FY 25, 1,733 head of cattle have been inspected and treated with low tick infestations so far. In Tamaulipas, the USDA pledged \$99,541.56, and Mexico is providing \$54,715.77 USD for use in 23 production units identified along the border. Treatments to be used include tick vaccine and macrocyclic lactones in the cattle and Ivermectin treated corn will be provided to the deer. No work has been reported in Tamaulipas to date. The work had been paused due to the federal government's

stop on payments for international agreements back in February of this year. The funding has been reinstated, and work has resumed as of June 1, 2025.

### **Asian Longhorn Tick (ALT)**

To date, the ALT has been discovered in 23 states and Washington, DC. The latest discoveries include June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, discovery in a beef cattle herd in Van Buren County, IA and June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, discovery by university researchers in Grand Mere State Park in Berrien Co., MI. Prior to the 2025 discoveries, the most recent ALT discoveries had been in two NE Oklahoma counties (Mayes Co 08/2024 and Craig Co). Affected states have been using producer education and outreach to mitigate the risk of introductions. The 89<sup>th</sup> 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 search for the above-mentioned personnel is underway.

### **New World Screwworm (NWS)**

**Mexico:** As of August 16<sup>th</sup> 2025, SENASICA reports 5,119 accumulated cases of NWS. The 6.2% increase in total cases since the August 9<sup>th</sup> update marks a slight uptick in case growth. (5.8%-08/09; 8.1%, 08/02, 12.0% 07/23). The northernmost detection remains the Vera Cruz case reported on July 7<sup>th</sup>. SENASICA confirmed as inactive on July 19<sup>th</sup>. The most northwestern active cases are within the current sterile insect dispersal polygon. SENASICA has nearly 700 NWS-specific traps/lures deployed with 80% of the traps in high-risk areas, including feedlots, livestock holding areas and slaughterhouses. The remaining traps are in southern Mexico, north of the current sterile insect dispersal area.

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec was to serve as a new buffer zone receiving all the Sterile NWS flies produced at the Panamanian facility each week (110 million flies - production capacity each week). It may take 6 months to a year to establish and verify the effectiveness of this buffer zone / barrier.

### **USDA Response:**

**On May 11<sup>th</sup>,** U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Rollins announced the suspension of live cattle, horse, and bison imports through U.S. ports of entry along the southern border due to the continued and rapid northward spread of New World Screwworm (NWS) in Mexico, effective immediately. NWS has been recently detected in remote farms with minimal cattle movement as far north as Oaxaca and Veracruz, about 700 miles away from the U.S. border. The import suspension will persist on a month-by-month basis, until a significant window of containment is achieved.

**On May 28<sup>th</sup>,** USDA is working daily with Mexico to make sure the resources, tactics, and tools are in place to effectively eradicate NWS. Additionally, Secretary Rollins announced that the USDA is investing \$21 million to renovate an existing fruit fly production facility in Metapa, Mexico to further the long-term goal of eradicating this insect. When operational, this facility will produce 60-100 million additional sterile NWS flies weekly to push the population further south in Mexico.

**On June 18<sup>th</sup>,** U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Rollins launched an \$8.5 million sterile New World screwworm (NWS) fly dispersal facility in South Texas and announced a sweeping five-pronged plan to enhance USDA's already robust ability to detect, control, and eliminate this pest.

**On June 30<sup>th</sup>,** U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Rollins announced a risk-based port re-openings for cattle, bison, and equines from Mexico beginning as early as July 7, 2025. This comes after an extensive collaboration between USDA APHIS experts and their counterparts in Mexico to increase New World Screwworm (NWS)

surveillance, detection, and eradication efforts in Mexico. Then phased reopening of the southern ports was scheduled to begin with Douglas, Arizona.

**On July 9<sup>th</sup>**, Secretary Rollins ordered the closure of livestock trade through southern ports of entry effective immediately. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, SENASICA reported a new case of New World Screwworm (NWS) in Ixhuatlan de Madero, Veracruz, which is approximately 160 miles northward of the current sterile fly dispersal grid, on the eastern side of the country and 370 miles south of the U.S./Mexico border. This new northward detection comes approximately two months after northern detections were reported in Oaxaca and Veracruz, less than 700 miles away from the U.S. border, which triggered the closure of our ports to Mexican cattle, bison, and horses on May 11, 2025

**On July 23<sup>rd</sup>**, USDA and TAHC began conducting NWS fly surveillance along the southern Texas border and place 101 screwworm fly traps in eight counties (Val Verde, Kinney, Maverick, Webb, Zapata, Starr, Hidalgo, and Cameron). The surveillance will continue until the threat of screwworm in Mexico decreases.

**On August 15<sup>th</sup>**, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Rollins announced the largest initiative yet in the USDA's plan to combat the New World Screwworm (NWS). This announcement builds upon USDA's five-pronged plan issued in June to combat the northward spread of NWS from Mexico into the United States. As part of this comprehensive approach, USDA is taking the following immediate actions:

- 1.) Protect the United States Border – \$750 Million has been allocated for the construction of a domestic sterile screwworm production facility - USDA will construct a sterile fly production facility in Edinburg, TX, at Moore Air Force Base, an ideal location due to the existing infrastructure and proximity to the United States-Mexico border. Built with the Army Corps of Engineers, the facility will produce up to 300 million sterile flies per week to combat NWS. This will be the only United States-based sterile fly facility and will work in tandem with facilities in Panama and Mexico to help eradicate the pest and protect American agriculture.

- 2.) Innovate Our Way to Eradication - While sterile flies are currently the most effective way to prevent the spread of NWS, technology continues to evolve and as such USDA will provide up to \$100 million to invest in viable innovations which could show rapid advancement of promising technologies that will augment the United States facility and accelerate the pace of sterile fly production if proven successful. USDA will support proven concepts that only require funding to scale and implement as well as a number of longer-term research projects focused on: new sterile NWS production techniques, novel NWS traps and lures, NWS therapeutics that could be stockpiled and used should NWS reach the United States, and any other tools to bolster preparedness or response to NWS.

- 3.) Stop the Pest from Spreading in Mexico and Ensure We Are Full Partners in Eradication - USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is working in collaboration with the National Service of Agri-Food Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) in Mexico to help them contain the pest south of the United States border by enhancing United States oversight, surveillance, improving case reporting, locking down animal movement to prevent further spread, providing traps, lures, training, and verification of Mexican NWS activities. Successful implementation will inform any future trade decisions impacting cattle movements on the southern border including the potential reopening of border areas.

**On August 18<sup>th</sup>**, 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.

**Texas Response:**

Since May 2025, the TAHC Emergency Management Team has held 3 – 2-day NWS field response trainings for TAHC staff and other response agencies. 76 of our 110 livestock inspectors and 8 - Region Managers, Directors and Field Veterinarians - completed the training. Other TAHC staff have rotated through as their schedule's permit. To date, 12 TPWD biologists and game wardens have completed the training. Our next training is scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

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. TAHC and USDA APHIS VS staff have conducted one on one planning sessions to go over the outline for the USDA's NWS Response Playbook. Additionally, TAHC hosted a two-day NWS plan development workshop with the USDA APHIS VS, USDA APHIS Agriculture Research Service, USDA Wildlife Services, FDA-CVM, CDC, US Customs and Border Patrol, and state agencies to include TPWD, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, TDA, and DSHS. We continue to work twice a week with the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO) NWS Working group members (15 state veterinarians) and the USDA National Preparedness and Incident Coordination (NPIC) staff, as well as the USDA Ruminant Health staff to finalize the USDA's NWS Response Playbook and ultimately the TAHC NWS plan. The NASAHO NWS Working Group was formed to harmonize interstate movement plans/protocols.

Education and outreach efforts to raise awareness continue to be conducted. TAHC continues to meet with industry groups to keep them apprised of the NWS situation in Mexico and discuss the latest information involving response, treatment, control and eradication efforts.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Governor Abbott announced the TAHC / TPWD New World Screwworm Response Team with the mission to amplify NWS preparedness in Texas. Weekly meetings between multiple levels of staff are held to coordinate response plan development and enhancement. Weekly meetings between both agencies' communication departments coordinating existing and future outreach initiatives and activities are ongoing. The first meeting of this multidisciplinary response team will take place on September 4, 2025. Ultimately, this team will serve as a central hub for coordinating information, aligning strategies and delivering resources to support prevention, detection, control and eradication efforts.

**Other Disease Information**

**Bovine Trichomoniasis:** The Trich Working Group met on July 10<sup>th</sup> with 10 participants both in person and remote (plus TAHC staff). Dr. Monday, State Epidemiologist presented data on the TAHC Trich program. Dr. Brandon Dominguez, TVMDL, gave a report on 5 years of Trich testing trends done by the TVMDL. Dr. Tom Hairgrove gave a report on the Study to Estimate Geographical Distribution and Prevalence of Bovine Trichomoniasis (Slaughter Bulls) where preliminary results placed the prevalence of Trich in bulls (782 hd sampled to date) at 4.35%. Two action items were generated by the working group for the commission to address under Agenda Item 16.

**Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA):** To date in 2025, we have detected 45 EIA positive horses. Iatrogenic transmission involving the use of contaminated injectable products and/or blood doping as well as contaminated IV sets, syringes and needles are a concern. Concerning the North Texas Equine Practice, there have been a total of 23 EIA Positive horses in 4 states (TX, CA, CO, OK). This joint investigation continues with the TBVME, USDA, TAHC.

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**

**Poultry: National - February 8, 2022**

- 174.83 million birds affected
  - 1,710 premises in 50 states/Puerto Rico (1,030 WOAHPoultry/ 680 WOAHP Non- Poultry) (08/22/2025)
- **Texas:** 14 total HPAI positive premises since February 2022 to include 2 commercial flocks, totaling 1,895,800 birds
  - Latest being WOAHP Non-poultry: Brazoria Co, January 2025 & Burnet Co, January 2025

**Dairy/Livestock: - National - March 25, 2024**

- Influenza A, H5, Clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13
- 18 states - 1080 Confirmed Premises (08/22/2025)
- **Texas:** 29 premises – Panhandle and Stephenville Milk Sheds (08/22/2025). 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<sup>th</sup>, 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.

Spillover events of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype D1.1 have occurred in both Nevada dairy cattle (January 2025) and Arizona dairy cattle (February 2025). The confirmations were a result of both states' tracing and investigation efforts, following an initial detection on silo testing under the USDA's National Milk Testing Strategy. Genotype D1.1 represents the predominant genotype in the North American flyways this past fall and winter and has been identified in wild birds, mammals, and spillovers into domestic poultry.

**USDA National Surveillance Mandatory 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
  - **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<sup>th</sup> 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 172 enrolled silos in Texas each testing round. On average there are 86-104 silos qualified for sampling/testing each round. At the conclusion of week 19 (August 15) of testing. 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 5<sup>th</sup> round of testing, 412 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 four waivers requested, all of which were approved.

- Pullorum Typhoid – **Approved** – allowed entry of zoo birds without PT test. Birds were from a zoo environment and were quarantined upon arrival.
- Trichomoniasis – **Approved** – allowed waiver of Trichomoniasis test protocols for a herd management test.
- Tuberculosis – **Approved** – requested waiver of type of TB test administered to exotic Bovidae. The test was administered and read by California regulatory personnel.
- Brucellosis – **Approved** – allowed shipping of exotic Bovidae on expired Brucellosis test due to shipping delays. Animal has a history of negative tests and was quarantined prior to being shipped.

The motion to approve the waivers and variances was made by Commissioner Leathers and seconded by Commissioner Osterkamp. The motion passed.

#### **Item 8 – Legislative Update**

Juan Alfaro provided the following legislative update:

- As of meeting date, there were 3,943 Senate bills filed and 7,560 House bills in the regular session
- SB 1 – General Appropriations Bill- Appropriations of \$40.8 million for the biennium (FY 2026 & FY 2027) and \$37.3 million in General Revenue Funds; and \$3.5 million in Federal Funds
- Approved for 226.2 FTEs for the biennium (FY 2026 & FY 2027)
- Bill Pattern also shows a total of 10 Riders, including:
  - Information Technology (IT) Reporting Requirement (Rider 7). TAHC shall report annually the agency's efforts to improve IT capabilities and recommendations. The report shall be submitted to the LBB and the Governor's Office no later than November 1<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year.
  - Agricultural and Livestock Entry Point Stations (Rider 8). TAHC will continue to work with TDA in operating and conducting livestock inspections at entry point stations (e.g., Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Arkansas).

- Cattle Fever Tick Mitigation Clinical Trials (Rider 9). TAHC will receive an additional \$30,000 for FY 2026 for completing the cattle fever tick mitigation clinical trials, which began in 2024-2025.
  - Report on Livestock Threats Over Ten Years (Rider 10). TAHC will receive \$100,000 in General Revenue funds in FY 2026 to draft and submit a report on threats to livestock over the next ten years. The report will be submitted no later than September 1, 2026, to the Senate Finance Committee; the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee; the House Appropriations Committee; the House Agriculture and Livestock Committee; and the Legislative Budget Board.
- HB 500 – Supplemental Appropriations Bill: TAHC will receive \$1.3 million for the purchase of motor vehicles during FY 2026 and FY 2027.
- Exceptional Items (EIs): Approved for \$2.1 million and 10 FTEs, which includes:
  - \$272,550 for operating and start-up costs to establish an ectoparasite field identification laboratory, including procuring equipment; and
  - \$1.0 million to add 4 (FTEs) Veterinarian positions, and \$144,550 to increase salaries for one Veterinarian III position and five Veterinarian V positions.
- The Higher Education Coordinating Board is scheduled to receive \$5.0 million dollars in General Revenue Funds for the Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program (RVIP) for the biennium (FY 26 & FY 27).
- **SB 503 by Sen. Perry** – Relating to the establishment of an electronic registry of livestock marks and brands. These include processes for persons to record marks or brands with county clerks and for county clerks to deliver a record of marks or brands recorded by county clerks to TAHC electronically within deadlines required by the bill. Contingency rider of \$3.1 million and an increase in capital budget authority of \$2.6 million for the biennium (FY 2026 and FY 2027).
- **HB 43 by Rep. Kitzman** – Relating to the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority and certain programs administered by the authority. The bill would require the Authority to provide financial assistance to the TAHC to implement programs to control agriculture-related diseases, pests, or predators. TAHC would need to submit an application to receive financial assistance from the Texas Agricultural Fund.
- **HB 1592 by Rep. Plesa** – Relating to an alert system for dangerous plant and wildlife pests and diseases administered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Requires the Extension Service to enter into an MOU with the TAHC to develop and implement a statewide Internet-based alert system for notifications related to wildlife and plant pests, diseases, and quarantines.
- **SB 14 by Sen. King, et al.** – Relating to reforming the procedure by which state agencies adopt rules and impose regulatory requirements and the deference given to the interpretation of laws and rules by state agencies in certain judicial proceedings. Establishes a Regulatory Efficiency Division within the Governor's Office to support state agencies in their review of rules and in developing cost benefit analyses of these rules. The bill also would create a new, user-friendly portal to give individuals and business owners the ability to search for rules and requirements applicable to their specific business activities and plans.
- NWS is currently not on the list of agenda items for the 1<sup>st</sup> called special session – 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session (2025).
  - Rep. Guillen and 92 other House members have submitted a letter to the Governor's Office requesting that NWS be added to the governor's list of agenda items for the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session – 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session (2025).



## Summary Minutes of the 425<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting – 8/26/2025

- Sen. Perry and 19 other Senate members have submitted a letter to the Governor's Office requesting that NWS be added to the governor's list of agenda items for the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session – 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session (2025).
- Several meetings and committee hearings have been held to update the House Agriculture & Livestock committee on the current NWS threat.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Called Special Session – 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session (2025)**
  - There were 170 Senate bills filed and 422 House bills
  - There were 18 agenda items from the 1<sup>st</sup> Called Special Session including:
    - Legislation to impose penalties or punishments for legislators who willfully absent themselves during a session.
    - Legislation to authorize a person to purchase Ivermectin at a pharmacy.
    - Legislation relating to a groundwater study of East Texas aquifers by the Texas Water Development Board prior to the issuance of permits or permit amendments by certain groundwater conservation districts.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Called Special Session – 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session (2025) – As of August 21, 2025**
  - There were 65 Senate bills filed and 386 House bills

### **Item 9 – Presentation of Animal Health Programs and Disease Traceability Activities**

Dr. T.R. Lansford presented:

1. Animal Disease Traceability (ADT)
  - a. January to June 2025 totals:
    1. Pins: 46,040
    2. LIDS: 108,462
    3. Scrapie Flock IDs: 27,569
    4. RFIDs: 1,840,886
  - b. Completed an agreement with AgriLife Extension Service and Texas FFA to administer the validation program in compliance with ADT requirements
2. Program Records Update:
  - a. Program Records team working diligently to ensure all CVIs reach destination state within seven days
  - b. As of April 1, the queue remains current
3. Emergency Management Activities
  - a. Continue internal NWS workshops for tactical level plan development
    - Plan is nearing completion
    - NWS Field Training: 3 classes completed to total 111 TAHC staff, 12 TPWD staff, 3 TSCRA field staff and additional sessions are planned
  - b. Weekly NWS meetings with state/federal agency and industry response partners
  - c. Tri-state Feedlot Exercise (IIAD) meeting in Colorado
  - d. 26 staff completed in-person ICS 300 class
  - e. Responded locally to several severe weather events-particularly floods
  - f. Participated in Tri-National African Swine Fever Tabletop Exercise in Maryland
  - g. Continue to engage with multiple national and state level agriculture preparedness groups
4. Field Activities (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Inspections)

- i. Event inspections: 50
- ii. Feedyard inspections: 547
- iii. Calf Ranch Inspections: 76
- iv. Livestock Market Inspections: 1317
- v. Fowl Inspections: 967
- vi. Swine Surveys: 0 new producers; 121 total surveys
- vii. Swine first point testing: 4304 swine sold, 444 sows and boars sold and 407 tested
- viii. Slaughter Plant Inspections: 233
- ix. Certified Trich Facilities: 263
- x. Waste Feeders: 112

#### **Item 10 – Presentation Of Disease Information and Epidemiology Activities**

Dr. Jessica Monday, State Epidemiologist, presented:

##### **Cattle**

- HPAI in Livestock – Texas has had 27 confirmed cases, to date, in Amarillo and Stephenville Regions with zero confirmed cases to date in the past 30 days
- Cattle Tuberculosis: Six herds under assurance testing, 21 ongoing trace investigations
- Cattle Brucellosis – in the 3rd quarter of 2025, 10,810 tests were performed with 4 suspects
- Cattle Trichomoniasis – 5,349 PCR tests, and 0 positive cultures
- Cattle Fever Ticks: 215 fever ticks collected
- Texas National Silo Monitoring:
  - Texas leveraged the existing (DSHS) milk sampling program
  - Round: cohort of enrolled silos inspected, and qualifying silos sampled every month (4-5 weeks)
  - Reasons a silo may not be sampled: empty/minimum, storage product, skip
  - Skipped silos - due to weather, inspector schedules, etc.
  - TAHC prepared to respond and investigate any NVSL positive silo samples at the origin dairies
  - 45 States Enrolled in NMTS, 26 states are unaffected, 16 provisionally unaffected

##### **Equine**

- Equine Infection Anemia – There were 16,543 tests run and 24 total positive results
- Equine Piroplasmiasis – 2,011 *T. Equi* tests run with four positive cases. There were 960 *B. Caballi* tests run with no positive cases

##### **Avian**

- Avian Influenza – Texas had zero cases of HPAI in the first quarter of 2025 with 1,655 tests conducted
- Pullorum Typhoid – 293 flocks tested, which totaled 12,041 birds with zero positives

##### **Swine**

- Swine Brucellosis – there were 2,404 tests run in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with six cases in 2025
- Pseudorabies – there 9,672 tests run in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with four cases in 2025

##### **Chronic Wasting Disease:**

- Two positives found in Kaufman County in Calendar Year 2025,
- There were 253 traces closed from 2021, 28 for 2022, 221 for 2023, and 64 for 2024, 42 for 2025

#### **Item 11 – USDA-VS Report**

Dr. Louisa Collins presented updates for USDA VS and the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program.

Dr. Collins reported on staff updates in the Federal workforce: there are nine permanent Animal Health Technicians (AHT) and four term AHTs, two support assistants, and four veterinary medical officers (VMO). There is one VMO retiring in September, and under the hiring freeze, it may not be possible to refill his position. In the fall of 2025, APHIS will allow no-cost RFID tags for show swine and sows over the next five years, purchasable directly from suppliers. The last detection of HPAI was August 15<sup>th</sup>, in California. USDA is still providing biosecurity assessments to facilities. There have been 1,710 premises affected by HPAI to date, and only three in Texas have enrolled in the assessment program. USDA APHIS has undertaken preparedness activities including the training of Southwest and Southeast Region strike teams and ordering sampling kits. Trapping was started on the border in June, with 5,600 samples sent for identification. Additionally, staff have been working on an NWS playbook which includes coordinating between agencies, movement controls, elimination, wildlife issues, surveillance, continuity of business, information flow, and communication and outreach. Don Herriot has been named as the acting director of the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program (CFTEP). Staff in CFTEP have been involved in NWS work, up to 20% of their time.

### Item 12 - Budget Status Report

The following was presented by Paula Andrews:

- FY 2025 Budgeted Revenue - \$21,036,355
  - General Revenue - \$16,162,652
  - AHP Fee Revenue – \$860,000
  - Federal Funds - \$1,766,722
  - UB General Revenue – 2,046,981
  - UB Capital Equipment – 200,000
- Federal Funds as of July 31, 2025

Strategy	Prior Year (as of 8/31/2023)	Current Year (as of 7/31/2024)	Total by Strategy
Field	\$97,980	\$3,651,635	\$3,749,615
Animal Health Emergency Mngmt			
Pass Through High Fence			
		Total Spendable Funds	\$3,749,615

- Fiscal Year 2025 Expenditures (Agency Level)

Category	BUDGET	YTD EXPENSE (as of March 31, 2025)	AVAILABLE
Salaries and Wages	\$12,931,017	\$12,217,982	\$713,035
Other Personnel Costs	\$634,771	\$217,174	\$417,597
Professional Fees & Services	\$110,410	\$95,953	\$14,457
Fuels and Lubricants	\$102,940	\$391,822	-\$288,882
Consumable Supplies	\$167,704	\$84,563	\$83,141
Utilities	\$289,092	\$256,294	\$32,798
Travel	\$746,794	\$468,846	\$277,948
Rent- Building	\$626,630	\$900,035	-\$273,405
Rent- Machine Other	\$75,607	\$26,916	\$48,691
Other Operating Expense	\$3,104,409	\$2,942,555	\$161,854
Totals	\$21,036,355	\$18,204,770	\$2,831,585

The motion to approve the Budget Status report was made by Commissioner Leathers and seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion passed.

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

Paula Andrews presented contracts and purchases for the consideration of the Commissioners, which included contracts, purchases, and leases for AY 2025 and AY 2026.

The motion to approve the contracts, purchases, and leases was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Trotter. The motion 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 motion to ADOPT the orders was made by Commissioner B. Klein and seconded by Commissioner Leathers. The motion passed.

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

Ms. Jeanine Coggeshall presented the following:

- a) 4 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 32, Hearing and Appeal Procedure, Chapter 40, Chronic Wasting Disease
- The CWD HCP is a voluntary federal program administered by USDA for both native and exotic CWD-susceptible herds with guidelines issued under Program Standards. The Program Standards, which includes two components, Part A (Standards for the HCP) and Part B (Standards for State Response), were last updated in May 2019. Requires participants to conduct regular physical and annual inspections, identify animals with two forms of ID, mandatory testing of animals, meet facility requirements, and testing requirements. The Program Standards Part B applies to all herds in Texas, not just HCP herds and requires 5-year traces on CWD positives as well as a 5-year post-exposure facility quarantine. Herd plan options are limited and must be approved by USDA to ensure they are compliant with Program Standards. Pairing the repeal of the Herd Certification Program with amendments of CWD rules will provide sensible regulations that work for Texas by reducing the regulatory burden on producers in instances of CWD-positive cases, make CWD hold orders and quarantines optional rather than mandatory by changing language in rule from “shall” to “may,” and removing the requirement that herd plans and traces be set at a minimum of 5 years. It will also allow for individual herd plans, rather than only USDA-approved templates and will repeal CWD surveillance and containment zones entirely. This will reduce regulations on CWD-Susceptible Exotic Cervids by changing surveillance testing from 100% of mortalities to 3 valid tests each year, clarify that surveillance is focused on captive exotic cervids, and allow testing through ELISA testing.

The motion to ADOPT amendments to Chapter 32, Hearing and Appeal Procedures, and Chapter 40, Chronic Wasting Disease, was proposed by Commissioner Oates and seconded by Commissioner Leathers. The motion passed.

Ms. Penny Maley presented the following:

- b) 4 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 51, Entry Requirements

The proposed amendments clarify that one of three forms of accepted identification is needed for ratites entering Texas and provide simplified entry requirements for exotic fowl, excluding ratites, moving between AZA facilities by allowing entry without PT and AI testing and without entry permitting.

The motion to ADOPT amendments to Chapter 51, Entry Requirements, was made by Commissioner Leathers and seconded by Commissioner B. Klein. The motion passed.

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

Ms. Penny Maley presented the following:

a) 4 Tex. Admin. Code Ch. 38, Trichomoniasis

The Trichomoniasis Working Group met on July 10, 2025, to review the effectiveness of the current Trich program. The group made two recommendations to update program rules to more accurately reflect testing science and to update testing requirements. The proposed amendments update test result language, changing “negative” result to “not detected” and eliminate testing requirements for bulls that are part of a herd one year after the date the hold order or quarantine on the herd was released.

The motion to PROPOSE amendments to Chapter 40, Trichomoniasis, was made by Commissioner Leathers and seconded by Commissioner Turner. The motion 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".

b) 4 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 45 Reportable & Actionable Diseases, Chapter 51 Entry Requirements and Chapter 57 Poultry

Egg Drop Syndrome (EDS) Virus is an infectious disease caused by an atadenovirus which can affect many species of poultry and birds. Clinical signs include thin-shelled, soft-shelled, or shell-less eggs, and rapid extended loss in egg production. Currently, there is no treatment for EDS and vaccine use is limited and poses its own risk to Texas poultry. Amendments to Chapter 41 would allow for early detection and reporting, which are critical to prevention by adding EDS to the TAHC list of reportable and actionable diseases. Amendments to Chapter 51 add new entry requirements for poultry affected by EDS by requiring birds from affected states or birds that have been vaccinated against EDS to submit a written request prior to entry and obtain authorization for entry. Additionally, for clarity of rules, there are consolidations of entry requirements across chapters 51 and 57 as well as reorganize existing entry requirements into easier to follow lists rather than bulky paragraphs. Chapter 57 amendments remove the interstate movement requirements which will be consolidated in Chapter 51, renumbers paragraphs, and clarifies proven available methods of carcass disposal to ensure dead poultry is disposed of in a manner that facilitates decomposition and limits spread/exposure of disease.

The motion to PROPOSE amendments to Chapter 45 Reportable & Actionable Diseases, Chapter 51 Entry Requirements and Chapter 57 Poultry, was made by Commissioner T. Klein and seconded by Commissioner Turner. The motion 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**

There were no presentations during the 425<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Item 18– Public Comment**

Public comment for regulation proposals was made at the time of the rule discussion and during the public comment agenda item.

**Item 19 – Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:21PM.