OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 428th COMMISSION MEETING
Texas Animal Health Commission
May 12, 2026

Item 1 – Welcome and Call to order by Chairman Locke
The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Commissioners met in person on Tuesday, May 12, 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 8:32AM.

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 9:30AM. No action was needed.

Item 6 – Approval of the minutes of the 427th Meeting
There was no public comment and no discussion concerning the minutes of the 426th Commission meeting. The motion to approve the minutes of the 427th Commission Meeting was made by Commissioner Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Osterkamp. 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
Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP):
VMLRP provides student loan debt relief for veterinarians that serve three years in veterinary shortage areas. The award amount of $40,000 per year of student loan debt for each year a veterinarian commits 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). Due to a pause and review of federal funding in early 2025, the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) 2025 Cycle was put on hold. USDA recently let states know that the 2026 cycle will be funded. Since the rural shortage areas that were designated in 2025 were not used, those shortage areas will be used for the 2026 cycle. Texas nominated and was awarded the maximum number of shortage areas (8 total areas consisting of 45 counties total). TAHC focused on nominating shortage areas along the Texas-Mexico border, West Texas and the Panhandle. Veterinarians submitted applications Jan-March 2026. USDA staff is currently reviewing these applications and awards will be offered in September 2026. No update currently on the FY 2026 cycle. TAHC will begin forming a working group to get input from private and public practitioners, industry stakeholders, veterinary schools, and other university systems late this summer to identify what areas of the state are most underserved with veterinary services. Shortage area nominations for the FY 2027 cycle will be submitted by TAHC in October-November 2026.

Rural Veterinary Incentive Program (RVIP): The RVIP (administered by the Texas Animal Health Commission) 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 counties in need of a veterinarian. A "Rural County" defined in legislation as a county with a population of less than 150,000. Funding was appropriated in the amount of $2.5 Million for fiscal year 2026 and $2.5 Million for fiscal year 2027 by the 89th legislature. The RVIP Committee met on September 3, 2025, and set the application period from September 22nd through November 30th. There were ninety-one applications submitted. Committee members reviewed and scored applications independently, then met on March 16th to discuss and decide on awards. The committee awarded twenty-two applicants with roughly $2.8 million in veterinary student loan debt to be repaid.

- 4 - 2022 graduates
- 2 - 2024 graduates
- 13- 2025 graduates
- 3- current students (class of 2026)

- Primary counties to be served (21 counties):
  - Uvalde, Van Zandt, Callahan, Karnes, San Saba, Gillespie, Deaf Smith, Tom Green, Castro, Fisher, Haskell, Bee, Fayette, Caldwell, Grayson, Dawson, Jones, Terry, Hansford, Jim Wells, Carson

Additional counties will be served by the recipients; these are just the primary counties where the clinic/business is located. Once agreements are made and funds are distributed, we will gather more accurate info on all counties to be served/impacted by the program. The TAHC Legal Department is currently working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on how they intend to set up agreements and distribute funds.

HPAI Commercial Poultry Shelby Co., TX December 2025:

The premises passed the biosecurity compliance audit and was eligible for quarantine release and restocking on March 27, 2026. The premises was restocked on April 27, 2026. They will do post placement testing on May 18, 2026.

(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 seeks 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. The Moore Field project was completed in April 2025. USDA has taken information from this research and continued the exploration of the effectiveness of a single eprinomectin repeat dose regimen starting in April 2025. The last treatment day was January 22 and the researchers are working with the accumulated data from both projects. A research manuscript will incorporate information on the performance of the studied dosing regimens from the start of the research until the conclusion of USDA's second trial at Moore Field. 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 as lightweights in November 2025 and are currently 525 lbs on average. The primary investigator is working on minor revisions to the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) as requested by the University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) upon review. The study can start once IACUC approval is received.

Plans for the final study, currently thought to be at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, will be finalized once the analysis of the combined Moore Field data is complete.

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. I'm waiting for them to release the report from the April 2026 meeting. To date, the ALT has been discovered in 26 states (Kansas -Dog – latest state) 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. To help accomplish this goal, I'm pleased to announce that we have hired Dr. Rene Holmes to serve as the agency's entomologist.

New World Screwworm (NWS)

Mexico Response/Update: As of May 5th, SENASICA reports 23,315 total cases of NWS with 1,702 of those cases considered to be active. To date the northernmost case in Mexico has been found just 62 miles south of the Texas/US border in Nuevo Leon. This case in a one-month-old calf with an umbilical lesion was reported on April 19, 2026. On April 28th, SENASICA also confirmed a fertile NWS fly was captured in a trap in Coahuila, Mx, the first detection in the state. The trap is located approximately 173 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. The following day, SENASICA reported its first New World Screwworm (NWS) myasis detection in

Coahuila. The affected animal, a 36-month-old bovine with a branding scar lesion, was located approximately 119 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border.

The discovery in Coahuila, MX marks the 25th Mexican state with a NWS detection. Sterile NWS Fly dispersal polygons have been adjusted to cover this activity. It appears that 23 states in Mexico have established adult NWS fly populations.

276 human cases have been reported as of May 1st, 2026 (DSHS) – 2 deaths reported

USDA Response/Update:

As of May 6, 2026, USDA reports (in Mexico) 23,091 total animal cases with 1,702 of those considered to be active animal cases.

Due to the discovery of NWS in Tamaulipas (late December 2025) the USDA began to release sterile flies north of the active NWS cases in Mexico in a proactive effort to create a sterile fly reproduction buffer zone between the affected Mexican states and the US. Since February 9th sterile flies have been dispersed over the south Texas counties of Starr, Hidalgo Cameron and Willacy. Dispersal also included parts of Zapata, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Kennedy Counties.

Another adjustment of the aerial dispersal grid due to cases of NWS in Nuevo Leon (62 miles from the border), cases in Coahuila, the use of ground release vehicles (04/17- disperse flies on USFWS land) and the implementation of four ground release (04/28- 8 chambers) sites along the southern border required the NWS surveillance traps not only be reduced in total number, but also be relocated in counties to the north of the dispersal polygons and the other dispersal methods.

The USDA CFTEP/ USDA APHIS VS, and the TAHC managed 101 traps deployed in 8 Texas Counties (Brownville to Del Rio) beginning in July 2025. On February 2nd this number decreased to 82 traps (TAHC managed 43). As of May 4th, there were a total of 72 traps from Kenedy County up to Val Verde County (7 counties total – Kenedy, Brooks, Jim Hogg, Webb, Maverick, Kinney, and Val Verde – TAHC would have managed 39 of the traps)

As of 04/28/2026 – 52,310 individual flies have been submitted to NVSL (since the end of July 2025) from the trapping efforts in Texas (51,614 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 NWS fly surveillance traps deployed along the US/Mexico border in New Mexico (5) and Arizona (7) and California (8) in addition to the Texas traps.

On May 6th, due to the increase in case numbers in Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and resent discoveries in Coahuila, the USDA APHIS VS adjusted the sterile fly dispersal polygon to include the norther parts of the Mexican border states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and Coahuila. The new dispersal grid now included all or

parts of Maverick, Dimmit, Webb, Jim Hogg, Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy and Cameron counties in south Texas. The new dispersal polygon made it necessary to adjust the current NWS surveillance trapping lines. The Texas trap line will be adjusted based off the latest dispersal grid mapping in consultation with the TAHC GIS mapping specialist and the USDA NWS surveillance trapping subject matter experts.

On April 8th, the USDA APHIS VS released the updated New World Screwworm (NWS) Response Playbook, a comprehensive guide designed to support coordinated, science-based action should NWS be detected in the United States. They worked to gather feedback from state animal health officials, Federal partners, livestock and wildlife industry groups, tribal partners, veterinary organizations, and other key stakeholders to prepare the updated version. To ensure continued alignment with state-level plans and industry practices, APHIS will continue to revise the Playbook as preparedness activities advance and evolve.

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 received from COPEG and processed at Moore Air Base were released by truck around the facility beginning on February 10th in order to validate the process and evaluate insect quality under operational conditions. Data collected from ground dispersal will further support dispersal center processes and enable the team to refine procedures as operations scale up. The dispersal center continues to receive about 40 L of pupae from COPEG on a weekly basis.

On April 17th, the USDA began to release flies from a ground release vehicle on USFWS land along the border. Four (4) areas have been designated for Ground Release Chambers (GRC) in Webb and Zapata counties on April 29th. The chambers will be supplied with pupae from the MAB dispersal center.

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. Directorate hopes to reward construction contracts in March. On March 9, 2026, the USDA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) announced a construction contract with Mortenson Construction to build a new sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base in Edinburg, Texas.

Groundbreaking for the domestic sterile fly production facility occurred on April 17, 2026, in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The production facility is tentatively scheduled to begin operation in November 2027

Texas Response/Update:

From April 12th – April 18th, I was able to accompany USDA APHIS Veterinary Services Regionalization Evaluation Services. on an APHIS site visit to Mexico to evaluate New World screwworm (NWS) activities. Specifically, we visited the state of Chihuahua to review animal movement controls and NWS

mitigation activities. While there we visited feed yards, slaughter facilities, state ports of entry, and quarantine stations.

On May 4th, TAHC would have started managing 39 of the 72 NWS surveillance traps located in 4 south Texas counties (Kenedy-9 Brooks-10 Jim Hogg-6 Webb-14). The changes to the dispersal grids on May 6th will alter the trap locations. TAHC will assist in relocation of the trap line. TAHC will assist in identifying new trap locations on the new trap line, help to execute new landowner agreements and will service these traps going forward. TAHC will continue to service old traps until the new traps come online.

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. Dr. Lansford and I continue to correspond with our NASAHO NWS WG.

Emergency Management staff has been busy! They conducted an Animal Movement/Checkpoint Exercise on March 25th. This tested the agency's ability to permit animals and verify livestock were moving with the proper paperwork as they were stopped at checkpoints.

Beginning April 20th, the Emergency Management staff and Secure Food Supply staff have attended 3 to 4 livestock markets each week. By May 8th, they will have visited all livestock markets in the Laredo and Pleasanton Regions (12 total) TAHC staff members set up booths and handed out information packets on NWS to producers and answered any questions they might have.

Since April 1st, the Emergency Management staff has met with our internal NWS Incident Management Team on a weekly basis. They are working on building out the IMT structure, verifying roles/responsibilities and reviewing initial response operations. They have also met with TPWD on ICS structure.

The EM staff have worked with DSHS on training for county/municipal animal control officers. This training is scheduled for May 13th.

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.

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. The Texas New World Screwworm (NWS) Response Team is scheduled to meet next on Friday, May 22nd.

TAHC continues to update and distribute producer guidance documents. Since the reported case in Nuevo Leon, MX, (September 2025) and with the most recent discovery of a case just 62 miles from the southern border (Nuevo Leon, MX) on April 19th, TAHC has bolstered communication efforts with county judges, emergency management personnel and livestock deputies in numerous South Texas counties. We have also increased awareness among South Texas livestock market owners and management.

This is a busy week in NWS response preparation. We provided testimony for the Texas Senate Committee on Water Agriculture and Rural Affairs on NWS to include the agency's response preparation and also included future response needs. On Thursday (05/14) we have a response discussion planned with the USDA APHIS VS – TX / USDA APHIS National Preparedness and Incident Coordination (NPIC), Texas Parks and Wildlife and the USDA Wildlife Services. On Friday May 15th we are scheduled to participate in a virtual tabletop NWS exercise with Arizona. Then on Sunday (05/17), we will participate in a New World Screwworm continuity of business workshop for livestock markets and dealers at Live Oak Livestock Auction.

FDA:

On March 10, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for **F10 Antiseptic Wound Spray with Insecticide** (benzalkonium chloride, polyhexanide, and cypermethrin topical solution) for the prevention and treatment of New World screwworm (NWS) infestations (myiasis).

The FDA has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that F10 Antiseptic Wound Spray with Insecticide may be effective in the prevention and treatment of NWS myiasis in cattle, horses, minor species of hoof stock (e.g., sheep, goats, deer), raptors and other wild birds, pet birds, and captive wild, exotic, and zoo mammals, and the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks. F10 Antiseptic Wound Spray with Insecticide may not be used in domestic dogs and cats.

To date, the FDA has conditionally approved or issued EUAs for drugs to prevent and/or treat NWS in cattle, dogs, and cats.

F10 Antiseptic Wound Spray with Insecticide is the first product authorized by the FDA for NWS indications in additional species.

Important food safety information:

- Cattle, goats, and sheep must not be slaughtered for human consumption within 30 days of treatment.
- For non-domesticated minor species of hoof stock (e.g., deer, elk, antelope and nilgai), use only when there is a reasonable certainty that the treated animal will not be slaughtered or harvested for human consumption within 30 days of treatment.
- Milk taken from cows, goats, or sheep during treatment and for 10 days after treatment must not be used for human consumption.
- A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Treated calves and calves born to treated cows must not be processed for veal.

F10 Antiseptic Wound Spray with Insecticide is available over the counter without a prescription. 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.

On April 24 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for **F10 Antiseptic Barrier Ointment with Insecticide** (benzalkonium chloride, polyhexanide and cypermethrin topical ointment) for the prevention and treatment of New World screwworm (NWS) infestations (myiasis).

The FDA has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that F10 Antiseptic Barrier Ointment with Insecticide may be effective in the prevention and treatment of NWS myiasis in cattle, horses, minor species of hoof stock (e.g., sheep, goats, deer), raptors and other wild birds, pet birds, and captive wild, exotic, and zoo mammals, and the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks. F10 Antiseptic Barrier Ointment with Insecticide may not be used in domestic dogs and cats.
Important food safety information:

- Cattle, goats, and sheep must not be slaughtered for human consumption within 30 days of treatment.
- For non-domesticated minor species of hoof stock (e.g., deer, elk, antelope, and nilgai), use only when there is a reasonable certainty that the treated animal will not be slaughtered or harvested for human consumption within 30 days of treatment.
- Milk taken from cows, goats, or sheep during treatment and for 10 days after treatment must not be used for human consumption.
- A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Treated calves and calves born to treated cows must not be processed for veal.

F10 Antiseptic Barrier Ointment with Insecticide is available over the counter without a prescription. 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.

On April 27, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for **Negasunt Powder** (coumaphos, propoxur, and sulfanilamide topical powder) for the prevention and treatment of New World screwworm (NWS) infestations (myiasis).
The FDA has concluded that based on the scientific evidence available, it is reasonable to believe that Negasunt Powder may be effective for the prevention and treatment of NWS myiasis in cattle, swine, goats, sheep, horses, donkeys, domestic hybrid equids (e.g., mules), and captive wild, exotic, and zoo mammals, and that the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh its known and potential risks.

Currently, Elanco US Inc., the drug sponsor, intends to limit distribution of Negasunt Powder to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for further distribution to authorized users. Prior to an incursion of NWS into the U.S., Negasunt Powder is only available for use by employees of federal, state, local, and federally recognized tribal agencies, and people working under their authority and at their direction. If there is an

incursion of NWS into the U.S., the product may also be used by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian in NWS-infested zones and adjacent surveillance zones as defined by the USDA in the NWS Response Playbook (page 9).

Coumaphos and propoxur, two of the active ingredients in Negasunt Powder, can cause neurotoxicity. The EUA sets specific requirements to address this risk for people, animals, and the environment.
Food safety information:

- Treated animals must not be slaughtered for human consumption within 28 days of the last treatment.
- A milk discard time has not been established for this product; do not use in animals producing milk for human consumption.
- A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves; treated calves and calves born to treat cows must not be processed for veal.

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.

It was reported on April 27, 2026, The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) recently submitted an Emergency Exemption request to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to allow the importation and use of Elanco's product, **Tanidil**, a topical powder used to treat or prevent New World screwworm (NWS). Today, EPA granted USDA's request and issued the Emergency Exemption under Section 18 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.
Tanidil is manufactured in Brazil and is not currently available in the United States, so it must be imported. With the EPA authorization finalized, APHIS will now begin the process of ordering and importing the product. Importation and relabeling are expected to take approximately 90 to 100 days from the time the official order is placed.

Some states also require State-level Tanidil registration. APHIS will notify individual States of the emergency exemption and request registration in those States. As a result, Tanidil may not be available in certain States. Tanidil will be available only through APHIS via the National Veterinary Stockpile and will be distributed in coordination with State animal health officials and federally recognized tribal agencies. If there is an NWS incursion in the United States, the product may be used only by Federal, State, local agencies, and federally recognized tribal agencies, and persons working under their supervision, including:

- personnel at quarantine stations and areas;
- veterinarians;
- certified applicators at livestock and game facilities, zoos, wildlife facilities, animal rehabilitation centers; and
- wildlife professionals.

This differs from typical processes, as the National Veterinary Stockpile does not usually distribute countermeasures directly to private entities.

Tanidil is authorized for use across multiple species, including livestock, captive and temporarily captured wildlife, and some species of zoo animals. It is not for use in domestic pets or birds. State officials or others using it should refer to and follow specific labelled instructions and product factsheet prior to use.

Once the product is imported, APHIS will share additional information about the requirements for use, including tracking and reporting requirements and required safety and personal protective equipment for use.

Tanidil is similar to the product Negasunt—which contains an added antibiotic and is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rather than EPA. The two products have different distribution requirements and regulatory pathways, but both will only be available in the United States through the National Veterinary Stockpile.

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.

C) WAIVERS and VARIANCES (Action Item)

There were five waivers requested and four were approved.

- Tuberculosis – **APPROVED** – request for waiver of whole herd test for cervid herd departing Texas. Herd previously tested negative and allowing testing of one animal reduces stress caused by handling, while allowing them to be cleared for movement to their destination state.
- Tuberculosis – **APPROVED** – request for waiver of type of test required for entry of bison. Alternative test was performed by regulatory veterinarian in origin state and allowed for minimal handling of the animal.
- Leptospirosis – **APPROVED** – allowed entry of specialized exhibitions swine into state for performance. Animals are housed in a trailer and are not co-mingled with Texas animals prior to returning to state of origin.
- Avian Influenza – **APPROVED** – allowed entry of geriatric duck on expired HPAI test. As this is a zoo-to-zoo transfer and the duck will be quarantined upon entry, the duck poses little to no risk to Texas poultry.
- Trichomoniasis – **DENIED** – request for a waiver of Trich testing protocols due to shipping delays was denied due to the test being for a change of ownership.

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

D) Approval of Gifts, Grants, and Donations

Dr. Sandra Leyendecker, our region director of Laredo, has donated a trailer to TAHC to be used as part of the agency's emergency response efforts. The trailer has an appraised value of $2,500.
In accordance with Commission Rule 56.3, because the value of the gift exceeds $500, the Commission is required to vote to accept this gift.
The gift has been reviewed by legal counsel and complies with the requirements of the commission rules and state law.

The motion to approve the gift was made by Commissioner Turner and seconded by Commissioner Oates. The motion 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
        i. PIN and LID assignations have increased over the last quarter
        ii. Requests for RFID tags were slower this quarter compared to last quarter
        iii. TAHC has received the FY25 allotment of tags and all of the additional tags allotted to us
        iv. Have a large supply of tags in inventory
    b. Scrapie flock ID
        i. Increased over last quarter, but still steady
    c. NUES tags
        i. We have received all the NUES tags from both the Kansas City and Austin warehouses in TAHC inventory and will most likely be finished distributing the NUES tags by the end of the fiscal year (August 31s). Most of these tags are going to markets that ID adult cattle staying the intrastate movement channels
        ii. Clarification on OCV NUES tag use
        iii. 9 CFR 78 still identifies NUES tags as official ID for the purposes of in-state OCV
        iv. 9 CFR 86 required any ID used for interstate movement to be both visually and electronically readable – e.g. RFID
        v. We continue to encourage the use of no-cost RFID tags for ID at the time of vaccination
    d. 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 & markets on appropriate use of NUES (metal clip) tags on cattle
    e. Staffing: welcome Kacie Gray from Program Records into the ADT department

2. Emergency Management
    a. Training/Preparedness

i. Preparations related to NWS remain at the forefront of EM activities
    1. Held the NWS ICP/Compliance/Movement Exercise in Gonzales
    2. Continue to coordinate with USDA to refine the screwworm response playbook
    3. Incident Management Team continue meetings to refine and reinforce ICS structure, roles, and plan through phases of response
    a. Including working collaboratively with TPWD
    4. Continue to coordinate, conduct, and participate in monthly calls with state response partners
ii. Conducted a successful Shelby County 01 hot wash/after action review to refine our HPAI response processes
iii. Working to schedule advanced incident command system (ICS) training for our IMT

b. Outreach and Engagement
    i. Also very NWS centric
        1. Set-up informational booths at 12 markets in south Texas and provided both English and Spanish resources

c. Secure Food Supply planning
    i. Fully staffed, welcome Chance Williamson
    ii. Continue to engage with other states on SFS programs
        1. Especially regarding market plans
        2. Completed first SFS market plan using the TAHC template
    iii. Also continue to work on Tri-State Feedyard Preparedness project

d. Upcoming Events Attending and presenting at the Texas Emergency Management Conference at the end of the month

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
  - 1,373 silo inspections for sampling; 800 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 PL 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 – Previously tested for TB 2022
  - Genetic testing–TB strain a new introduction, likely of Mexican origin
  - EPI investigation completed, testing plan signed and assessment in progress
    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: second test performed in April 2026
  - Herd management plan in development
    TX 26-006: FY26 Q3
  - 140 Head traced from affected New Mexico dairy. Dairy is closed
    TX 26-007: FY26 Q3
  - 42 head traced from affected New Mexico dairy. Assessment test completed April 2026
    TX 26-008: FY26 Q3
  - 414 head traced from an affected New Mexico dairy. April 2026 assessment test completed
- Cattle Brucellosis – One suspect in Quarter 2
- Cattle Trichomoniasis – 24 Investigations initiated in Quarter 2
- Cattle Fever Ticks – 43 infested premises, three exposed, 79 adjacent

Equine Disease Information – Second Quarter Positives:

- EIA – 8, Piro – 5, EIA and Piro – 1

Avian – FY 2026

- 8 poultry HPAI cases, 38 infectious laryngotracheitis cases

Swine – FY 2026

- 0 cases Swine Brucellosis, 5 Cases Pseudorabies

Chronic Wasting Disease: as of April 2026

- **Release Facilities:** 155 CWD trace-out premises were released from TAHC Hold Order and transferred to TPWD. Owners were notified via email
- **Positive Breeder Facilities:** 9 CWD positive breeder facilities reviewed and released from TAHC Hold Order/Quarantine. These facilities are under TPWD management for native cervid species.

FAD Investigations for Quarter 2:

- New World Screwworms – 4
- HPAI – 5
- Food and Mouth or Vesicular Disease – 2
- Vesicular Stomatitis (Equine only) – 1

Item 10 – USDA-VS Report

Dr. Patricia Collins presented updates for USDA VS.

Dr. Collins shared upcoming VS staff changes, which include losing two Texas Field Veterinary Medical Officers (VMO) to other operations in other states. One new veterinarian and new Animal Health Technicians (AHT) will begin soon. Approximately 30 AHTs have been allotted for border states to help with NWS preparations and responses in border states. USDA VS has provided $2.4 million in indemnity for tuberculosis affected herds and still has one herd up for consideration due to the prevalence of TB. The Iowa commercial herd affected by pseudorabies was the first herd since 2002. The animals came from a Texas herd that has now been depopulated. Iowa will remain in free status because of their mitigation steps. VS expects Texas to be classified as Scrapie free in the next few years. Texas continues to collect one thousand samples for surveillance which also helps keep Texas Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy free classified. USDA is still addressing HPAI in cattle. There have been no BCAP requests since February report and 43 states are classified as not affected by HPAI in cattle. Approximately $5.5 million has been spent in reimbursement for HPAI in cattle. Finally, VS has dedicated 40 responders in the field to assist with NWS work, this includes making a new position for an NWS coordination who coordinate the response if NWS makes it to the US.

Item 11 – Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE)

The following was presented by Tana Keeling:

SEE Objective

- To focus on key aspects of the agency to engage employees in successfully fulfilling the vision and mission of the organization.
- This survey makes it possible to see results broken down by constructs to determine where the organization's strengths and weaknesses are located, to continue improving agency operations.
- 74% response rate with an over all score of 414 – Highly Engaged (the average of other state agencies is 401) The category of "Highly Engaged" employees are considered willing to go above and beyond in their employment.
- Historically highlights of agency scores include the low score of 359 in 2015. In 2022 the score was 380 and in 2024 it was 396.
- There were no construct scores below 400, with the exception of the "Pay" category.

Item 12 - Budget Status Report

The following was presented by Paula Andrews:

- FY 2026 Budgeted Revenue (for period of September 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026)

Category	**BUDGET**	**AVAILABLE**
Salaries and Wages	$15,265,320	$6,181,092
Other Personnel Costs	$298,551	$56,689
Professional Fees & Services	$141,595	$-1,975
Fuels and Lubricants	$523,491	$215,582
Consumable Supplies	$223,089	$138,247
Utilities	$247,008	$83,255
Travel	$638,679	$234,692
Rent- Building	$817,161	$110,128

Rent- Machine Other	$61,795	$29,041
Other Operating Expense	$2,507,176	$328,244
Totals	$24,148,865	$10,556,507

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

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

There were no contracts, purchases, or leases to consider for action at this meeting.

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 Jordan and seconded by Commissioner Leathers. The motion passed.

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 expands the veterinary care permit exception to include cattle, bison, and camelids. Additionally, it eliminates 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.

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

Item 17 – Awards and Recognition

There were no presentations at the 428th meeting.

Item 18– Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item 19 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:30AM.