



For Immediate Release
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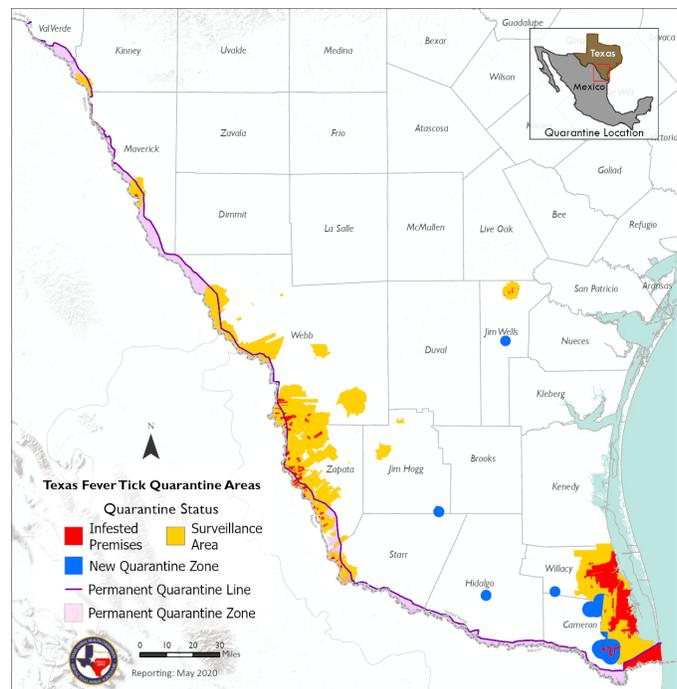
Notice to Livestock Owners: Cattle Fever Ticks Spreading in South Texas

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program (USDA-CFTEP) have seen an increase of fever tick confirmations outside of established quarantined areas in South Texas.

"Fever ticks have been found on cattle outside of the established quarantine areas in Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Wells, Jim Hogg, and Willacy counties," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director. "Many of these counties had preexisting fever tick quarantine areas, but these newly identified premises are outside of those."

All of the infested premises have been quarantined, and TAHC staff are working alongside USDA-CFTEP to systematically inspect the premises and the surrounding areas to identify the potential span of the infestation.

"When we find new premises infested with fever ticks, we always conduct an investigation to determine the source of the ticks and if there has been additional spread," said Dr. Susan Rollo, State Epidemiologist. "We are still in the beginning stages of the investigation process; however, initial indications suggest the investigation will be extensive."



When fever ticks are discovered on a premise, the location is quarantined. Once quarantined, the cattle and other susceptible livestock are prescribed a treatment program until fever ticks are eradicated from the land. Livestock on the infested premises can still be sold and moved off the premises as long as they are inspected and treated before movement.

"We ask that livestock producers help us in protecting the nation from fever ticks by being proactive when purchasing cattle from counties with known fever tick infestations," said Dr. Schwartz. "The TAHC and USDA-CFTEP operate public dipping vats along the Texas-Mexico border and in a few South Texas counties where producers can voluntarily take their cattle to be treated before returning home."

Voluntary treatment and inspection of cattle purchased in South Texas will both increase surveillance for cattle fever ticks and eliminate the need for tracing exposed animals. A map of Texas public vat locations is available at https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/feverticks-pests/TXDippingVatMap.pdf.

At present, there are approximately 1 million acres under various types of fever tick quarantine outside of the Permanent Quarantine Zone. To learn more about the quarantine areas, visit http://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/cattle/#ticks.



“When producers observe ticks on their livestock, it is imperative that they contact their local TAHC Livestock Inspector or region office, USDA Inspector, private veterinarian, or local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office to arrange for collection and submission of tick samples to the TAHC laboratory in Austin,” said Dr. Schwartz. “This extra surveillance protects the Texas cattle industry.”

Cattle fever ticks, known scientifically as *Rhipicephalus annulatus* and *R. microplus*, are a significant threat to the United States cattle industry. These ticks are capable of carrying the protozoa, or microscopic parasites, *Babesia bovis* or *B. bigemina*, which cause the disease commonly known as cattle fever. The Babesia organism attacks and destroys red blood cells, causing acute anemia, high fever, and enlargement of the spleen and liver, ultimately resulting in death for up to 90 percent of susceptible naive cattle.

For more information about cattle fever ticks, visit http://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/cattle/#ticks or http://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_FeverTickFAQ.pdf for a list of frequently asked questions.

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The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.