



For Immediate Release
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Cattle Tuberculosis Confirmed in Sutton County Beef Herd

AUSTIN, TX – Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) officials confirmed bovine tuberculosis (TB), caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*, in a beef cattle herd in Sutton County on September 3, 2020.

The affected premises was identified as a result of routine slaughter surveillance. The premises has been quarantined and must meet TAHC's requirements for testing and removal of infected animals. The commission is conducting an epidemiological investigation to determine the possible origin and to prevent potential disease spread.

"TAHC staff are working closely with the herd owner, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Texas beef industry to ensure the disease is quickly contained and the quarantined premises can return to normal business practices as soon as possible," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, State Veterinarian.

Bovine TB is a contagious, chronic disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*. Clinical signs are not visible in the early stages of an infection. However, during later stages of infection, clinical signs may include weight loss, anorexia, weakness, low-grade fever, pneumonia with a chronic, moist cough, and enlarged or lesioned lymph nodes.

A variety of other species are susceptible to bovine tuberculosis, including elk, deer, bison, goats, swine, cats, and though rare, sheep and horses. Humans can also be infected with *M.bovis* TB through ingestion of unpasteurized dairy products like milk and cheese. People working in close proximity with infected cattle can also be at risk of exposure.

Tuberculosis has a long incubation period (months to years) and was once the most prevalent infectious disease of cattle in the United States. Since establishing the cooperative state and federal eradication program in 1917, the prevalence of bovine TB in cattle herds has been significantly reduced with only occasional occurrences.

"Early bovine tuberculosis detection paired with good animal traceability is critical for effective disease response and eradication," said Dr. Susan Rollo, State Epidemiologist. "Due to robust state and federal cooperative slaughter surveillance programs and the diligent work by Texas' accredited and regulatory veterinarians, we are able to detect the disease, mitigate its effects, and protect animal and public health."

To learn more about bovine tuberculosis visit the TAHC website at www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/cattle/-cattletb or www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCFactsheet_CattleTuberculosis.pdf.

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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.