

**16 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**TEAM CHAIRMAN:**

---

Francis D. Galey, Dean, University of Wyoming College of Agriculture

**TEAM MEMBERS:**

---

Joel Bousman, Rancher, Sublette County Commissioner  
Walt Cook, University of Wyoming Brucellosis Coordinator  
Steve K. Ferrell, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Director)  
Rob Hendry, Rancher, Natrona County Commissioner  
John Hines, Wyoming Legislator (Senator)  
John Keck, National Park Service  
Terry Kreeger, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Chief Wildlife Veterinarian)  
Ryan Lance, Wyoming Governors Office  
Fred Lindzey, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission  
Jim Logan, Wyoming Livestock Board (State Veterinarian)  
Michael McDole, United States Department of Agriculture/Animal Plant Health Inspection Service  
(WY Area Veterinarian In Charge)  
Karl Musgrave, Wyoming Department of Health  
Eric M. Peterson, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service  
Terry Pollard, Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association  
Cathy Purves, Trout Unlimited  
Jim Roscoe, Wyoming Legislator (Representative)  
Scott Werbelow, Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Bill Williams, DVM, Veterinarian and Former Wyoming Game & Fish Department Commissioner

## **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Members and guests introduced themselves. Jim Logan introduced Michael McDole Wyoming's new Area Veterinarian in Charge and Bob Meyer, the new Assistant State Veterinarian.

## **II. RB51 Vaccine Field Trial**

Jim Logan (JL) discussed the Adult Vaccination Field Trial. United States Dept. of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) states want to take known pregnant cattle and vaccinate them with RB51 (others will serve as non-vaccinated controls) to evaluate the efficacy and risk of vaccine-induced abortion. The ranchers will be compensated for all documented abortions and fetuses will be sent to a diagnostic lab for evaluation. They hope to begin in the fall of 2011 and the goal is to have 60 herds (10,000 head) enrolled; they recognize that this may be unrealistic. Herds must be in the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA), and they want herds under a variety of conditions and management. Please contact Dr. Logan if you would like to participate.

## **III. APHIS Brucellosis (B) program.**

There has been little progress since the April meeting. We still expect the opportunity to comment "soon"... (See the April Minutes). There is some concern about the availability of federal indemnity funds. JL discussed the case in Idaho- ultimately, when depopulation occurred, the State of Idaho paid half the indemnity and APHIS paid the other half.

Ryan Lance: Traceability needs to be addressed for disease tracing only. We should discuss this at a future meeting.

JL agreed; he believes that identification (ID) will be mandatory on sexually intact cattle if they are moved across state lines within 2 years.

Hendry emphasized that Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) needs to get computerized to increase the efficiency of traces.

JB: Need to fix the existing system instead of creating a new one.

Someone asked under the new proposed B program, if we had a case in the DSA how other states would react.

JL: The other states are satisfied with the program the 3 states have and with the Proposed APHIS program. That does not mean they won't put restrictions on cattle if we got a case in the DSA, but they seem impressed with WY's program.

## **IV. United States Animal Health Association (USAHA)**

JL discussed the USAHA Brucellosis Committee agenda and will email it out.

## **V. Consortium for the Advancement of Brucellosis Science (CABS), Research and Lab update.**

The research focus is on Vaccine development, vaccine delivery and improved diagnostics. CABS is coordinated out of UW and the WY Legislature provided some seed funds. However, the purpose is to raise significant funds researchers across the country would be eligible for. Only the best proposals will be funded regardless of where they originate.

Walt Cook (WC): We have put together a proposal review protocol and started a draft application for funds. We have garnered support from John Clifford (Chief Veterinarian from APHIS) and the USAHA. Have also requested financial support from Ted Turner (Turner has had diagnostic issues with his bison).

FG: Gerry Andrews at UW has a prototype lateral flow device that can be used chute-side to give a tentative diagnosis within 30 seconds.

Last year when USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) program was accepting applications for CAP grants, Brucellosis was excluded. We are trying to get them to consider brucellosis this year.

That does not mean CABS would get funding, but at least it would be eligible to compete. We are also seeking direct funding for CABS through the 2012 Farm Bill. Rep Frank Lucas of OK (Ranking member) is supportive of this effort. FG has met with several US legislators to garner support for CABS and changes in the Select Agent Rule. The Ag Econ Graduate students then discussed their projects. (See Mandy Kaufman's Poster)

Trent Roberts is doing a Cost-Benefit analysis of Range Management options that could reduce the risk of transmission from wildlife to cattle.

Brian Wilson is looking at the economic impact of brucellosis when cattle are free vs. when there is an outbreak.

Wyoming State Vet Lab (WSVL) Biosecurity Lab 3 (BSL3) Lab update: Phase I is complete and they are moving into the new part of the building. They are now retrofitting the old part of the building. They are on time and close to the projected budget. Center for Disease Control (CDC) does require some equipment that they don't yet have; they are asking the legislature for funding to get this. Also, the current lab manager is on soft money, they are looking for grants etc. to get permanent funding for this job.

## **VI. Select Agent Rule**

This rule limits the ability to perform "Challenge studies" i.e. researchers cannot achieve statistical sample sizes needed with the current facilities where brucellosis challenge can occur. FG submitted a comment to the biennial review on the rule (attached); WLSB and USAHA and National Association of State Animal Health Officers did as well. Instead of requesting elimination of *B. abortus* from the list, we are hoping for a more realistic tiered approach in which *B. abortus* is not grouped with more virulent agents.

## **VII. Pilot Project update**

Brandon Scurlock passed out the summary report for the test and slaughter project. Albert Sommers emailed a comment that was read to the group (attached). Joel Bousman (JB) agrees and feels that Muddy Creek area has the highest risk for transmission; he is concerned that if it is discontinued ranchers may lose interest in doing their own risk mitigation projects. Need to have a goal of maintaining prevalence at or below some level.

Terry Kreeger (TK): That was not the goal; this was a Pilot Project and we learned a lot: We learned that it is difficult to catch all the elk, we now have cost estimates (it costs \$6,000 per seropositive elk removed; \$12,000 per culture positive elk), our new estimate to conduct test and slaughter state-wide is \$50 million. Wyoming Game and Fish Dept

(WGFD) is planning on continuing surveillance of the pilot project elk (this is part of the project).

RH: In the scheme of things there are only a few ranchers near Muddy Creek feedground, but what happens to them can affect the whole state. The project was successful since this is the last reservoir, it may be worth continuing.

Cathy Purves (CP): Do the surrounding ranches have herd plans? JL: Yes

JB: If the prevalence goes above a threshold, we need to do something to keep it down.

WGFD will continue their Brucellosis Management Action Plans (BMAPs).

Terry Pollard (TP): Agrees with ranchers; this problem is bigger than livestock production; Hunters have a big part of the problem. Elk numbers have decreased and there are fewer cow licenses. The project should continue in some way. We could reduce the cost by using volunteers. There are still lots of cow elk that have not been tested. It would be a huge mistake to put this on the shelf. He also believes the BCT should continue and we might want to expand it to include ID and MT.

RL: There are options 1. We could establish threshold prevalence. 2. We could eliminate and close the feedground. 3. We could spend the money elsewhere. How does the WGF Commission view it?

Fred Lindsey (FL): It always was a research project. Before deploying this tool we'd want to know what the chances of success are. Monitoring is very important and that will continue. We need to determine: What is the objective?

Bill Williams (BW): We've got to let it lie fallow for a few years now. WGFD total budget is \$50 million.

Steve Ferrell (SF): WGFD has never said we're walking away from brucellosis; part of the objective is to monitor over the long term. If the BCT recommends the project continue, the Commission needs a role and the funding must be addressed.

TK: Brucellosis does not impact elk herd numbers directly. WGFD only does brucellosis management for livestock interests.

JL: Would like to see it continue in some way but recognizes the costs and other issues. Remember, the purpose of the BCT is to maintain marketability. Other states are interested in the project and they control our marketability regardless of what APHIS does. Also, there is a relationship between the viability of ranches and wildlife habitat. We need to recommend that through monitoring if prevalence increases by 5% test and slaughter will resume.

John Hines (JH): Offered a break-down of funding: \$1.2 Million was from the general fund; tens of thousands were from WGFD and \$100,000 from the Commission.

In answering a question, Brandon Scurlock stated that WGFD plans to capture enough elk this winter to have an estimate of prevalence with 90% confidence in order to evaluate the final year of the pilot project. This requires that 60-70 elk be tested.

WC: Mentioned that with 3 feedgrounds in the pilot project WGFD could pursue different options on the different feedgrounds.

SW: in the big picture the Pinedale elk herd is a small part of the brucellosis problem. This is just a band aid on the overall issue.

JB: Need to review the UMR in light of human disease risk. We still need research especially on better vaccines (for cattle). If APHIS went away, the producers could deal with the disease.

FG plan to meet with the serious candidates for governor to bring them up to speed on the BCT and the brucellosis issue.

RH: The raw milk fad could lead to serious human health concerns.

SF: We still have brucellosis in free-ranging elk. Even if we did eradicate it from feedgrounds we still have a problem. Vaccine research is probably a better investment.

JL: APHIS is not going away, but even if it did, other states still have an interest and do not want to import brucellosis from the GYA. Dr. Valarie Ragan relayed the situation in Ireland when they nearly eradicated brucellosis (they got the prevalence down very low) then walked away and it rebounded. We still have cases in the USA and lots of other countries.

Todd Stevens (State Parks) gave an update on the bison quarantine project. Nothing new has happened. State Parks is still interested in getting some YNP brucellosis-free bison if they become available again.

JL: original bison went to Ted Turner, he doesn't know if there will be any additional opportunities.

### **VIII. WGFD Research**

Doug McWhirter gave a presentation on elk movements around the GYA. Doug offered a link to his presentation.

RH: asked about correlating migration and elk numbers and if calf survival had a major impact on migratory herds (Proffitt's work- elk bunch up more since wolves are back).

DMcW: Adult female survival is very high even in migratory herds, but calf survival is the major issue and predation is responsible for 2/3 of the calf loss.

B Scurlock gave an update on BMAPS and other pilot projects. This winter 14 feedgrounds (FGs) will be surveyed; 6 within enough intensity for 85-90% confidence intervals (this includes Fall and Muddy FG). Hunter surveillance will also continue in Park County, South Pass, and Laramie Peak (TK has a map). After this year the entire state will have been sampled.

The target feedground project uses low density feeding to reduce contact between elk and has been expanded to 13 FGs (all FGs that are big enough to do it).

CP: is it used on Muddy? No

Early End Dates (stopping feeding earlier in the spring) has been very successful on those FGs without adjacent ranches. On 2 FGs elk were not fed at all last year. They have also identified high risk areas using GPS collars and VIT (vaginal implant transmitters) which are shed during an abortion or calving) studies have delineated calving areas. There is very high calving fidelity. WGFD is also collecting data on native winter range interchange with FGs. Summer hoof samples can tell if the elk ate alfalfa or native grass the previous winter. Another analysis is correlating herd size with prevalence.

BMAPs; 5 years is up on the Pinedale elk herd (so it is time to review it); they may roll all 7 BMAPs into one big one. The tentative schedule is to have a rough draft of each plan completed by the end of November (basically updating document with new data, etc.). Then, they plan to schedule producer meetings (one per elk herd unit) during

December. They will take the input and incorporate into the documents. Finally, WGFD will conduct two to three public meetings in March (Jackson, Pinedale, Afton?). Brandon will let the BCT know when they schedule the meetings (producer and public).

Will the public be involved? Yes via public meetings and direct outreach. Town- hall approach. BS to let WC know so he can tell the BCT when meetings occur.

TP: Put this information on the website. Do you monitor snow depths, storms etc. so you can resume feeding if bad weather sets in? Yes.

Eric K. discussed communication plans: most have been accomplished; much is on the brucellosis website. He asked for some direction. Reports will be put on the website and the brucellosis video as well, and a link to what research is ongoing.

### **IX. Review BCT Recommendations**

FG gave a review of the recommendations and how they were followed (See Attached).

JB asked if there are tests for exposure to RB51. There are research tests (Steve Olson developed), but none commercially available.

SF: WGFD is not looking to close any FG but in the next 3 years several FGs come up for renewal and there may be lawsuits challenging any continuation of them.

### **X. Recommendations of if/how BCT should continue**

Someone asked about the Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee (GYIBC). It is essentially dead; if we brought MT and ID into BCT we would basically recreate it.

TK: Problem with GYIBC- can't make recommendations.

Consensus to keep BCT a WY team. But we need to encourage USFS to attend.

RH: But if the APHIS program draws a circle around the GYA, the 3 states need to get together.

MT and ID had teams similar to BCT- they are done and disbanded.

JL: no circle being drawn. WY has our own DSA that satisfies other states.

We could invite State Vet and WL Directors of MT and ID to come discuss what they are doing.

RL: need to find joint funding opportunities. Please craft a letter for the Governor encouraging this. (Share the letter with the BCT).

Consensus that BCT should continue at least once/year.

RL: Have funding for the rest of the biennium

JL: Need to continue BCT and need a meeting in the spring. Need to educate new Governor and staff ASAP and ask J. Fearneyhough (Wyoming Dept of Ag) to get it in his budget.

RH: If we have an interim without a meeting we need a mechanism to bring the group back ASAP if we get a case.

SF: Agrees, the issue has not changed; BCT needs to continue.

BW: Agrees. For the near future until APHIS new direction comes out; we also need to follow-up on pilot project. We could probably meet twice/year until the new rule comes out, and once/year after that unless an issue arises.

## **XI. Legislative Initiatives**

JH: Very important for BCT to continue. The summary on Test and Slaughter is too long for most legislators; it should be 1-2 pages long (3 at an absolute maximum). He is willing to work with BS to condense it.

Jim Roscoe (JR): BCT is well received in the House. There may be a large turnover in the House and we may have a big educational effort needed.

JL: Introduced the Brucellosis video. Intended for other state vets and AVICs to show what WY is doing. It will be posted on the website.

## **XII. Public Comment**

**Lloyd Dorsey** (GY Coalition): Encouraged by the public accessibility to this meeting and that BMAPs will be open to the public. The focus on solutions is very important. Phasing out FGs needs to be a tool considered. The best time would have been 5 years ago-alongside Test and Slaughter. Some research has been done that will assist phase-out. The Deseret Ranch in UT and ID Fish and Game both did it. He hopes BCT continues and that it recommends a pilot project phase-out. He appreciates the dedication and efforts of the BCT.

**Dwayne Oldham**: Applauds Brandon's efforts; we need the National Elk Refuge (NER) to do some of the same things.

Test and Slaughter was a pilot project, but the intent was to continue it if it was successful. He does not understand stopping a successful program.

Understands that the cost is high, but the largest cost (the trap) is already paid for.

Furthermore, employee salaries are a fixed cost. We also need to consider the cost of discontinuing the project. If we get another outbreak, the costs will be greater than continuing the project. No ranch would stop after such success. The problem is that people are becoming complacent once again; this means that we will have to address the brucellosis issue again.

## **XIII Announcements**

JH: Vote to continue BCT: None opposed.

RL: Thanked everyone for serving.

## **Items to consider for next Agenda and Action Items for next meeting:**

Traceability

AV in Cody

Write letter for Governor on CABS

Dave Hunter

Grad Student Abstracts (Laura Linn and Mandy Kaufmann etc)  
Send out Select Agent Rule Letter to BCT  
Bob Budd to discuss Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Endowment  
Date/time for BMAP meetings  
Invite SV/WL D of MT ID to next meeting  
WDA to request WBCT in next budget

**Appendix 1**  
**Guest Attendees**

Name	Affiliation	Address the Team?
John Lund	WGFD	No
Eric Keszler	WGFD	No
Deb Dufficy	USDA/APHIS	No
Bob Meyer	WLSB (ASV)	No
Todd Stevenson	Wyo. State Parks and Cultural Resources	No
Pam Buline	Senator Barraso's Office	No
Trent Roberts	UW	No
Bryan Wilson	UW	No
John Duncan	USDA/APHIS	No
Lloyd Dorsey	Greater Yellowstone Coalition	Yes
Lewis Graves	Retired	No
Scott Talbott	WGFD	No
Brian Nesvik	WGFD	No
Brandon Scurlock	Game & Fish	No
Jim Magagna	WSGA	No
Dwayne Oldham	Veterinarian	Yes
Dan Dockstador	Senate District 16	No
Eli Bebout	Senate District 26	No
Dannele Peck	University of Wyoming	No