

Emerging Diseases Committee

Mid-Year Report

August 27, 2004

- BSE and other prion associated diseases continue to be hot topics. The USDA BSE surveillance program is underway. The NIAA emerging disease committee discussed, via email, the USDA's policy of immediately releasing preliminary positive BSE tests to the media. This policy has proven to create market fluctuations and undue public concern over the safety of the beef supply. Thus far, subsequent definitive testing has failed to confirm any further true positive BSE cases in the U.S., and confirmed that the preliminary positive results were false positives. Concerns over this matter were passed onto the NIAA executive director and shared with USDA. Although USDA has made some adjustments in their reporting procedures (they will repeat the test at the initial laboratory), they still intend to report the Biorad ELISA results to the public; while awaiting the more definitive test results to be conducted at NVSL. Therefore, this still is an issue of significant concern to me and others on the Emerging Disease Committee.
- The AAVLD annual meeting will feature a joint plenary program with USAHA focusing on BSE – October 23rd in Greensboro North Carolina.
- Another *Brucella* positive cattle herd has been identified in Wyoming, bringing the number to 4 herds in the last two years.
- Potential emerging diseases to be watched in the months ahead include Avian Influenza, Exotic Newcastle Disease, and Vesicular Stomatitis.

Those on the emerging disease committee that are attending the annual USAHA/AAVLD meeting in October will meet to discuss topics and speakers for the annual NIAA meeting.