

OCA Weekly Update – December 22, 2006

Auction Markets? Holiday Sale Schedules

Brussels Livestock

Dec. 25 & 26 - Closed

Dec. 28 & 29 - Regular sales

Jan. 1/07 - Receiving Cattle

Jan. 2/07 - Regular Sale

D. H. Hickson Ltd.

Dec. 25 - Jan 1/07 - Closed

Jan. 2/07 - Regular Sale

Denfield Livestock Sales Ltd.

Dec. 25 - Jan. 1/07- Closed

Jan. 2/07 - Regular Sale.

Galetta Livestock Sales

Dec. 23 - Closed

Dec. 30 - Regular Sale

Kawartha Lakes Cooperative Auction Market

Dec. 23 - Closed

Dec. 30 - Regular Sale

Keady Livestock Market Ltd.

Dec. 25 & 26 - Closed

Jan. 1 & 2/07- Closed

Jan. 9/07 - Regular Sale

Ontario Livestock Exchange Inc.

Dec. 18-23 - Regular Schedule

Dec. 25 & 26 - Closed

Dec. 27 - Veal, Horses, Sheep & Lambs plus Feeders at 1:00 pm

Dec. 28 - Regular Sale

Jan. 2/07 - Regular Sale

Ontario Stockyards Inc.

Dec. 18-24 - Regular Schedule

Dec. 25 & 26 - Closed

Dec. 27 & 28 - Regular Sales

Jan. 1/07 - Closed

Jan. 2-07 - Sheep, Lambs Goats & Veal.

Ottawa Livestock Exchange/Embrun

Dec. 25 & Jan1/07- Closed

Dec. 28 - Regular Sale. 10:30 am

Selby Livestock Sales

Dec. 25 & Jan 1/07 - Closed

Jan. 8/07 - Regular Sale

Talbotville Livestock Exchange

Dec. 23 - Closed

Dec. 30 - Regular Sale

Temiskaming Livestock Exchange

Dec. 25 - Closed

Jan. 1/07 - Closed

Jan. 8/07 - Regular Sale

Tri-County Cattle Co. Ltd.

Dec. 21 - Regular Sale

Dec. 28 & Jan. 4/07 - Closed

Vankleek Hill Livestock Exchange

Dec 22 - Jan. 1/07 - Closed

Jan 2/07 - Open 5:00 pm

BIC Bits...

Clever Casseroles

Many consumers will have nutrition and health top of mind in early January with their New Year's resolutions. The Beef Information Centre (BIC) has worked with the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check? program in targeting consumers with positive nutrition messages about beef, and in developing the new consumer resource ?Clever Casseroles - One-dish dinners the heart-healthy way.?

Most consumers have their favourite recipes that they like to swap with family and friends. Unfortunately, many are high in fat, or sodium. What consumers need for today's healthy living is a nutrition make over of their favourite meals, particularly casseroles. That's the premise behind BIC's latest resource.

?We asked our loyal beef fans to send in their favourite one-pan ground beef dinners, and lots of casseroles, soups and skillet meal ideas came our way,? says Joyce Parslow, consumer culinary services manager with BIC. ?Then, we worked in our kitchens with the help of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada dietitians, to give these recipes a makeover for heart-healthy living, with convenience options to fit busy lives.?

The booklet encourages frequent ground beef use with every-day, convenient one-pot/pan preparation, family meal ideas that have a heart-healthy focus. Consumer research data indicates that one-dish dinners are a growing category with consumers. The booklet contains old-but-new recipe ideas using Health Check? qualified lean and extra lean ground beef, plus helpful tips for heart-healthy cooking and Health Check? information about lean ground beef.

Clever retailers are recognizing the power of the Health Check? logo and are displaying it right on pack: A&P in Ontario, Coleman's in Newfoundland, Federated Co-op & Calgary Co-op, HY Louie, and Canada Safeway are just some of the retailers participating.

The resource will be supplemented by a public relations campaign, as well as a point-of-purchase kit featuring lean beef nutrition messages with case cards, danglers, and rail strips. Grocery cart ads will also be in selected stores.

Supplemental Beef Imports Permanently Constrained

For Immediate Release: December 19, 2006

CALGARY, AB ? The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) commends Members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture for their efforts to permanently constrain the use of supplemental import permits for beef and veal from non-NAFTA countries.

All federal political parties worked together to recommend a policy requiring beef importers to demonstrate their efforts to purchase Canadian beef and veal before seeking a permit to import ?supplemental? quantities from countries such as Australia, New Zealand or South America.

"This is a wonderful example of how politicians of all parties can come together to develop a policy that makes such clear sense," stated CCA President Hugh Lynch-Staunton.

Imports of beef or veal over and above Canada's duty-free quota of 76,409 tonnes are referred to as "supplemental imports". In previous years, the unconstrained use of supplemental imports from low-cost countries forced many Canadian cattle producers to seek higher prices by sending their older cattle to be processed in the United States.

"Prior to BSE, sending our older cattle to the United States seemed fine, but we learned how sharply prices for older cattle collapsed when BSE prevented us from accessing U.S. slaughter facilities. We need this policy to prevent us from sliding back to the old way when trade with the United States is fully restored," noted Lynch-Staunton.

Canada didn't have the slaughter capacity to process all the cattle that needed to go to market when the border closed. That situation has changed dramatically in the past three and a half years. Canada can now process approximately 105,000 head of cattle every week compared to 72,000 in 2003. For older cattle, Canada can now process as many as 18,000 head per week compared to about 8,000 in 2003. Combined with the industry's Commercial Beef Utilization Strategy, the channels have been established to utilize the ample supply of beef from older Canadian cattle.

The Agriculture Committee Chairman, Gerry Ritz, tabled the attached report to the House of Commons on December 14 before Parliament recessed for the holidays. The resolution, sponsored by James Bezan, a Conservative MP and cattle producer from Manitoba, establishes that supplemental imports are only to be authorized by the government in exceptional circumstances and should not exceed 1,500 tonnes in any year. Ken Boshcoff, MP from Thunder Bay, Ontario is also to be commended for his efforts in coordinating the Liberal party support for the policy.

For further information:

Theresa Keddy

Communications Manager

Canadian Cattlemen's Association

403-275-8558

Market Access Program

Remember to Age Verify your 2006 calf crop and submit your MAP Application form. MAP Credits are going out this week to qualified producers. Tag orders have been placed don't miss your opportunity to receive \$3.00 per head credit to go toward your MAP tag purchase." Contact 1-877-283-7434 for more information or www.biobeef.com or www.cattle.guelph.on.ca click on the orange tag.

Calling All Outstanding Young Farmers

It's that time of year again, when we in Ontario, start looking for Outstanding Young Farmers to participate in the OYF Regional Competition. The deadline for this year's nominations is December 31st, 2006. The OYF program begins each year with the nomination of farmers at a local level. Anyone can nominate a young farmer/farm couple for the regional recognition award and title of Ontario's Outstanding Young Farmer- even the farmers themselves- as long as they meet the following program eligibility requirements:

- must be between the ages of 18 and 39
- be farm operators
- derive a minimum of 2/3 of their income from farming

(If you have any questions about the eligibility or the process, please feel free to contact us at any time.)

The first step is if you know of someone who meets the above eligibility requirements, you or your organization is encouraged to contact the Ontario OYF nomination committee (contact info below) by the deadline date in order to be eligible for review. Judges will select the top candidates based on the following criteria:

- progress in agricultural career
- extent of soil, water, and energy conservation practices
- financial and management practices
- contribution to the well-being of the community, province, and nation

The top candidates will be asked to participate in an interview and presentation process at this year's regional event taking place in March in Ottawa. Further judging will take place at this time and a regional winner will be selected. The winner will compete in the National competition which is designed to recognize young farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession.

If you know an outstanding young farmer-nominate them!! It is time to recognize their outstanding contribution to the agricultural industry.

Luanne Lynn

Ontario OYF

Nominating Committee Contact Info:

Eadie Steele

Email: john.steele@sympatico.ca

Phone/Fax: (705) 696-1491

Tax Deferral to Benefit Farmers in Northwestern Ontario

OTTAWA, Ontario, December 12, 2006 ? The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, today announced federal tax deferrals for livestock producers in northwestern Ontario.

Owners of breeding livestock in the Rainy River and Algoma areas of northwestern Ontario who were forced to sell all or part of their herd this year due to drought conditions will be eligible for a one-year federal tax deferral on 2006 income from these sales.

The deferral was made after reviewing precipitation levels, soil moisture and available forage yield for the 2006 growing season, and provides a management option to breeding livestock owners who were forced to sell all or part of their herd due to drought conditions affecting feed or water supplies.

?Through this deferral, Canada?s New Government is offering producers who choose to sell their cattle an important tax saving on the income received, allowing them to use these savings when restocking their herds in the spring,? said Minister Strahl. ?As such, it?s a very valuable tool for producers recovering from the impacts of drought.?

To defer income, the breeding herd must have been reduced by at least 15 per cent. Thirty per cent of income from net sales can be deferred if the breeding herd has been reduced by at least 15 per cent, but less than 30 per cent. Where the herd has been reduced by 30 per cent or more, 90 per cent of income from net sales can be deferred.

Eligibility for deferral was made on the advice of Minister Strahl to Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty.

The deferral allows eligible producers in designated areas to defer income tax on the sale of breeding livestock for one year to help replenish breeding stock in the following year. In the case of consecutive years of drought designation, producers may defer sales income to the first year in which the area is no longer designated.

Eligible producers will be able to request this deferral when filing their 2006 income tax returns. Livestock producers are advised to contact their local Canada Revenue Agency Tax Services Office for details on the income tax provisions.

For more information, media may contact:

Media Relations

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Ottawa, Ontario

613-759-7972

1-866-345-7972

Jeff Howard

Press Secretary

Minister Strahl's office

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Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Regina, Saskatchewan

306-780-8405

9th Annual Beef Industry Convention

Jan. 11-13, 2007
London Convention Centre

This year's convention will host the

- ? Ontario Cattle Feeders Association Annual General Meeting
- ? Ontario Corn Fed Beef Program Meeting
- ? Ontario Limousin Association Annual General Meeting
- ? Beef Improvement Ontario (BIO) Annual General Meeting
- ? Ontario Hereford Association Winter Board Meeting

An expanded Trade Show provides a venue to learn about the latest in animal health, equipment, nutrition, and rural issues. Our speaker presentations offer information on agricultural issues, economics and political insights. Free Convention Centre Parking.

We look forward to seeing you in London on January 11-13, 2007!

Wellington County Cattlemen's AGM

Tuesday January 23, 2007

Aboyne Hall, Wellington Place, Cty Rd 18 between Elora and Fergus

6:45 pm - Roast Beef Dinner

7:45 pm ? Guest Speaker Dr. Brian Evans, Chief Veterinary Officer, CFIA: ?The Lighter Side of Food Inspection?

AGM to follow

Dinner tickets must be ordered by Jan. 17th .

\$16/dinner

Call (519) 846-9557

Searching for the Perfect Gift? Visit the OCA Online Store!!

In plenty of time for the holiday season, OCA is pleased to launch its online store ? full of beef SWAG. From rain gauges, coffee mugs, sweaters, bolo ties and recipe books to hats, CD cases, briefcases and posters, our shop is bound to have the gift you're looking for.

From the OCA homepage, click on ?Shop OCA's Online store? (order forms are printable and must be faxed or mailed to OCA).

Or simply click on <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/programs/promotional.asp>

**Please note, prices are in Canadian funds and shipping and handling is extra.

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This report prepared with the assistance of Dr. Doug Powell's team at the University of Guelph. This service does not allow emails to be sent by responding to this email directly. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lianne Appleby at lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca

A) Meaty seizures yielded at Pearson

21.dec.06

The Toronto Sun

Tom Godfrey

Dried monkeys, wild meat from Poland and a head of a pig from Grenada are among the animal and meat goods intercepted at Pearson airport this year.

Customs officers using detector dogs even seized beef hidden in fish from Vietnam, lamb legs from Afghanistan, and chicken and goose from China.

Police and Customs officers said they are more vigilant this week with the onslaught of travellers arriving for the Christmas holidays.

Officers suspect many of the seized foods are delicacies destined for members of the city's many ethnic groups. Patrizia Giolti of the Canada Border Services Agency said there have been 4,000 seizures of meat and food products at Pearson so far this year

Determining the prevalence of Escherichia coli O157 in cattle and beef from the feedlot to the cooler

December 2006

Journal of Food Protection Volume 69, Number 12 pp. 2824-2827(4)

Woerner, D.R.; Ransom, J.R.; Sofos, J.N.; Dewell, G.A.; Smith, G.C.; Salman, M.D.; Belk, K.E.

Abstract:

Prevalence of Escherichia coli O157 on cattle entering the slaughter floor may range from 10 to 70%. This study was conducted to determine the effect of E. coli O157 prevalence in fecal pats collected from feedlot pen floors on subsequent E. coli O157 prevalence on carcasses at various points in the slaughter process. Fecal pats from the feedlot pen floor were collected within 3 days before slaughter. During cattle processing at the slaughter facility, additional samples were collected from the hide, from the colon, and from the carcasses before and after evisceration and after final decontamination. Of 15 lots (a group of cattle from the same pen from a feedlot) sampled, 87% had at least one positive fecal pat from the feedlot floor, 47% had a positive hide sample, 73% had a positive colon/fecal sample, and 47% had a positive carcass sample preevisceration; however, only 8% of lots had a positive carcass sample postevisceration or after final intervention. Of the total samples tested (n = 1,328), 24.7, 14.7, 27.6, 10.1, 1.4, and 0.3% of fecal pats from the feedlot floor, hide, colon, preevisceration, postevisceration, and final intervention samples, respectively, were positive for E. coli O157. Pens with greater than 20% positive fecal pats from the feedlot floor had 25.5% hide, 51.4% colon, and 14.3, 2.9, and 0.7% carcass samples positive at preevisceration, at postevisceration, and after final intervention, respectively. However, fecal pats from feedlot floor samples that contained less than 20% positive fecal samples showed lower pathogen prevalence, with 5.0% hide, 7.5% colon, and 6.3, 0, and 0% carcass positive samples at preevisceration, postevisceration, and post-final intervention, respectively. Data from this study can be used as part of risk assessment processes in order to identify mitigation strategies to minimize prevalence of E. coli O157 on fresh beef carcasses.

B) Importance of airborne contamination during dressing of beef and lamb carcasses

December 2006

Journal of Food Protection Volume 69, Number 12 pp. 2828-2836(9)

Burfoot, Dean; Whyte, Robin; Tinker, David; Howell, Mary; Hall, Karen; Holah, John; Smith, Debra; White, Rodger; Baker, David; McIntosh, Jane

Abstract:

Carcasses along slaughter lines were exposed to normal slaughterhouse air or ultraclean air provided from a unit fitted with a HEPA filter. In cattle slaughterhouses, aerobic viable counts were measured by sponging the brisket at the end of the line to determine whether the slaughterhouse air had led to contamination of the carcasses. Furthermore, a replica cattle carcass with settle plates attached was exposed to similar conditions. The greatest contamination of the plates occurred at the hide puller ($P < 0.01$). The use of ultraclean air reduced the deposition of organisms onto settle plates ($P < 0.01$). The airborne route contributed to contamination in cattle slaughterhouses, but other vectors were more important. Further study of contamination of the brisket, at the time that it was first exposed, showed that knives transfer contamination from the hide. The use of ultraclean air at this position showed that the airborne route was a contributor to contamination ($P < 0.1$), but it was not the greatest vector. In lamb slaughterhouses, the highest counts on settle plates were found at the fleece puller ($P < 0.05$). The highest counts on the lamb carcasses were found on the brisket exposed from the start of the line to just after the fleece puller ($P < 0.05$). There was no clear relationship between the measured counts and the concentration of organisms in the air, indicating that the airborne route in lamb slaughterhouses contributes less to carcass contamination than do the surface contacts.

C) Setting control limits for *Escherichia coli* counts in samples collected routinely from pig or beef carcasses

December 2006

Journal of Food Protection Volume 69, Number 12 pp. 2837-2842(6)

Gill, C.O.; Jones, T. H.

Abstract:

Records of *Escherichia coli* counts in samples routinely collected from carcasses were obtained from one pork and three beef packing plants. The data obtained from each plant were divided into sets from consecutive 6-month periods. For each set of counts, log total counts were calculated for subsets of various sizes. For each set of log total counts, the mean (\bar{x}), the standard deviation (SD), and an action limit of $\bar{x} + 3$ SD were calculated, and the set was tested for a normal distribution. With the data from samples collected at the pork packing plant during 6 years, the proportion of samples with counts of zero in the 12 sets ranged from 15 to 45%. For that plant, appropriate action limits could be derived from log total counts for subsets of nine unit values. With the data from samples collected during 8 years at one beef packing plant, the proportion of samples with counts of zero in the 16 sets ranged from 88 to 99%. For that plant, appropriate action limits could be derived from log total counts for subsets of 15 unit values. With the data from samples collected during 2 or 2.5 years at each of the other beef packing plants, the proportion of samples with counts of zero in all sets was 99%. For those data, action limits could not be derived from values for subsets of log total counts.

D) Screening of bacteria from the cattle gastrointestinal tract for inhibitory activity against enterohemorrhagic *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, O111:H-, and O26:H11

December 2006

Journal of Food Protection Volume 69, Number 12 pp. 2843-2850(8)

Gough, J.M.; Conlan, L.L.; Denman, S.E.; Krause, D.O.; Smith, W.J.M.; Williamson, M.A.; McSweeney, C.S.

Abstract:

A quick and reproducible microgel plate assay was adapted to screen bacteria from cattle gastrointestinal tracts for production of compounds inhibitory to the growth of three enterohemorrhagic *Escherichia coli* (EHEC) serotypes: O157:H7, O111:H-, and O26:H11. The inhibitory activity of 309 bacteria, isolated on several agar media, was assessed by a microgel assay performed in 96-well microtiter plates. Fifty-three isolates secreted inhibitory compounds with a molecular weight of less than 1,000. In 12 isolates, the inhibitory activity was attributable to compounds other than lactic or acetic acid. These compounds were highly heat tolerant, with varying sensitivity to digestion by proteolytic enzymes. The inhibitory isolates were identified as lactic acid-producing bacteria on the basis of a combination of analyses, including 16S-rDNA restriction fragment length polymorphisms, 16S-rDNA gene sequences, and fermentation end products. The lactic acid bacteria of ruminants may contain antibacterial compounds not yet described. Naturally occurring populations of lactic acid bacteria may have potential as probiotics, to reduce the carriage of EHEC in the gastrointestinal tract of ruminants.

E) Survival of *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 in bovine feces over time under various temperature conditions

December 2006

Journal of Food Protection Volume 69, Number 12 pp. 2851-2855(5)

Echeverry, A.; Loneragan, G.H.; Brashears, M.M.

Abstract:

Although *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 prevalence estimates in cattle have increased over time due to improvements in detection methods, fecal sample transport conditions from farm to microbiological laboratories for further analysis may be a factor for prevalence underestimation. The objective of this study was to compare and determine the survival characteristics of *E. coli* O157:H7 in bovine feces under various storage conditions that could be encountered during transport. Fecal pats were inoculated with a four-strain cocktail of antibiotic-resistant *E. coli* O157:H7 to contain 1×10^5 CFU/g. Inoculated and control samples were taken after 0, 24, 48, 120, and 168 h at each storage temperature and examined for presence and numbers of *E. coli* O157:H7. Each sample was subdivided and placed at each of the four following temperatures: 37, 23, 4.4°C, and in a plastic cooler with refrigerant packs (0, 4, 4, 21, and 23°C at five sampling times, respectively) to simulate transportation conditions. A statistically significant decrease in the population of the pathogen was observed after 48 h in samples held at 37°C ($P < 0.01$) and after 168 h at 4.4°C ($P = 0.02$). At 37°C, *E. coli* O157:H7 was not detected after 48 h, either by direct plating ($P < 0.01$) or by immunomagnetic separation. Overall, the results of this study showed that *E. coli* O157:H7 survived without significant detriment in bovine fecal material inside the cooler for up to 168 h. These results indicate that shipment and storage under these conditions before microbiological analysis would be acceptable and should not affect pathogen detection.

F) Evaluation of an immunomagnetic separation-real-time PCR assay for the rapid detection of *Salmonella* in meat

December 2006

Journal of Food Protection Volume 69, Number 12 pp. 2896-2901(6)

Notzon, Angelika; Helmuth, Reiner; Bauer, Johann

Abstract:

The aim of this study was the comparison of an immunomagnetic separation (IMS)-real-time PCR assay for the detection of Salmonella with the cultural reference method according to §35 of the German Law on Food and Commodities (LMBG, L 00.00.20:1998). The IMS-real-time PCR assay includes a nonselective preenrichment step, an IMS, DNA extraction, as well as DNA purification followed by hybridization probe-based real-time PCR analysis. An accurate comparability was achieved, because both methods analyzed the same preenrichment. The evaluation was carried out using both artificially and naturally contaminated meat samples. The IMS-real-time PCR assay provides a result after 12 to 13 h. Compared with the reference method and regarding artificially contaminated meat samples, the IMS-real-time PCR assay achieved a specificity of 80% (false-positive rate of 20%) and a sensitivity of 100% (false-negative rate of 0%). The relative accuracy was 94%. The detection limit of both methods was 10 CFU/25 g. The concordance index κ , which defines the statistical accordance, was 0.85 and indicated the agreement of both methods on statistical criteria. Compared to the reference method and analyzing naturally contaminated meat samples (n = 491), the IMS-real-time PCR assay showed a specificity of 99.3% (false-positive rate of 0.7%) and a sensitivity of 83.7% (false-negative rate of 16.3%). The relative accuracy was 98%. The concordance index κ had a value of 0.87 and highlighted the statistical agreement of both methods. In conclusion, the IMS-real-time PCR assay is suitable as specific, sensitive, and rapid screening method for the detection of Salmonella from meat.

G) Progress aside, beef biz still faces threats

15.dec.06

Hutchinson News (KS)

Chris Green, Harris News Service

<http://www.hutchnews.com/news/regional/stories/beef121506.shtml>

A \$6 billion economic behemoth, the Kansas beef industry flourishes as part of what boosters call the safest and most efficient food supply in the world.

But despite recent progress in making the beef production chain even safer, one of the state's key economic livelihoods continues to face potential threats, most notably fears of bioterrorism.

In a series of stories over the past five days, Harris Group newspapers have examined issues and potential problems surrounding beef safety from field to fork.

Before it can feed millions around the nation and world, cattle and then beef travel a journey of at least five different stages.

Kansas Agriculture Secretary Adrian Polansky was quoted as saying, "There's a lot of complexity there that maybe is beyond some of the other segments of agriculture, although I don't think it's totally unique."

Cattle raised and sold by the state's ranchers join other animals traveling on trucks to Kansas feedlots or Flint Hills pastures, where they are fattened before hitting the kill floor of one of the state's meatpacking plants.

Most consumers eventually buy the final beef products in supermarkets or restaurants.

The story says that the long journey is creating challenges in light of the potential for animal disease outbreak. A voluntary program designed to keep track of where beef cattle originate and travel is just getting off the ground, facing skepticism from long-independent cattle ranchers.

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, a former Kansas agriculture secretary, was quoted as saying, "If you look at the importance of that industry and the devilishness of the terrorists to really try to probe for weaknesses in our security, impact our economy and terrorize us, this is one route they might try."

Jim Stack, director of the Kansas State University's new \$54 million Biosecurity Research Institute, was cited as saying that many states' agricultural sectors rely upon each other to prosper.

To deal with food security concerns, the state is now home to Kansas State University's National Agriculture Biosecurity Center, which includes the new Biosecurity Research Institute.

Ron Trewyn, vice provost for research and dean of K-State's graduate school, was cited as saying the program covers all angles - both for naturally occurring and intentionally introduced threats, adding, "We're trying to come at this from multiple directions to deal with anything that might occur."

Jerry Jaax, K-State veterinarian and associate vice provost for research compliance, was cited as saying the re-introduction of foot-and-mouth disease here could spread quickly and easily, adding, "The threat is a significant one that would not require rocket science to perpetrate."

To combat such an attack is, over the long term, to develop effective countermeasures such as a vaccine, Jaax said.

However, it also would be beneficial to trace where a disease outbreak originated in the supply chain.

Curtis Kastner, director of K-State's Food Science Institute, was cited as saying the old stand-by approach among meat processors is to "keep it clean, keep it cold and keep it moving."

That, when combined with thermal or organic carcass treatments and safe handling when restaurants or consumers prepare beef for eating, "does a lot to make the product safe," he said.

But the human factor also plays a part in maintaining the safety of meat. Some question whether a transient meatpacker workforce, occasionally found to carry fake IDs, poses a security risk.

H) DNA analysis new thing in livestock production

15.dec.06

The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)

DNA analysis for livestock is nearing the commercial stage for beef cattle and, in a few years, can be used for other meat and dairy animals if farmers want to pay for the information.

Traditional breeding requires a mix of visual observations of an animal's characteristics, the breeder's experience and intuition.

Among the qualities cattle breeders want are fat marbling in muscle, tenderness, top grades like prime and choice and high average daily weight gain in feedlots.

DNA analysis, using blood samples from beef cattle, will allow producers to understand how quickly an animal will gain weight or develop tenderness in its meat before it is killed.

A price per animal for DNA analysis is not yet set.

I) Regulations amending the health of animals regulations and the regulations amending certain regulations administered and enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

16.dec.06

Canada Gazette (Vol. 140, No. 50)

Health of Animals Act

Government of Canada

<http://Canadagazette.gc.ca/part1/2006/20061216/html/regle1-e.html>

Description

The purposes of the Health of Animals Act and Regulations are to prevent the introduction of animal diseases into Canada; to control and eliminate diseases in animals that either affect human health or could have a significant effect on the Canadian livestock industry; and to provide for the humane treatment of animals during transport.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or "mad cow disease," is a progressive, fatal neurological disease in cattle. It is part of a group of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) which also includes scrapie in sheep, chronic wasting disease in deer and elk and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans. Research into BSE is ongoing, but this disease has been associated with the presence of an abnormal prion protein and, to date, there is no effective treatment or vaccine.

In response to the discovery of BSE in North America, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has moved to strengthen Canada's BSE-related control measures, including removal of specified risk material (SRM) from cattle at slaughter and enhancing the animal feed ban. As well, over the last two and a half years, the CFIA conducted a comprehensive analysis and consultation, including World Trade Organization notification, leading to the development of a revised BSE import policy for bovine animals and their products, which fully considers current science-based international standards for animal and public health protection and safe trade. This policy was published in December 2005 and can be found at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/policy/ie-2005-9e.shtml.

While publication of the policy signifies the future direction, and a mechanism already exists to allow implementation for countries other than the United States, regulatory amendment is required to initiate implementation for U.S. animals and related products because specific import conditions for the United States are currently prescribed in regulations. As an interim measure, an emergency regulation prohibiting the importation of higher risk animals and products from the United States has been in place, and amended, since January 2004.

For countries other than the United States, and for some U.S. animals (e.g. cervids, camelids and restricted feeder cattle), a permitting system is used and import conditions are specified on the import permit, according to established risk management policies. For other animals from the United States, the permitting system is available but is not the only means of importing animals. Where specific conditions are prescribed in an "import reference document," that is incorporated by reference into these Regulations, shipments from the United States may enter Canada according to those conditions rather than by permit. By removing this alternative and focusing the administration of the regulatory requirements for ruminant animals from the United States on the use of permits (as is already the case for imports from other countries), a more consistent application of the new BSE

import policy for bovine animals and their products will be more readily achieved. Furthermore, the use of permits for ruminants from the United States would enhance traceability in the event of a disease outbreak and would allow for flexibility and a more timely response to changes in international requirements, disease outbreaks, and evolving science.

The purpose of this amendment is to bring the import requirements related to the control of BSE for animals and products originating in the United States in line with those from other countries and thereby eliminate the need for an importation prohibition regulation for bovines and their products. In order to accomplish this, it is proposed to rely on the existing permitting system for bovine animals and products imported from the United States. The permit conditions could then reflect the criteria set out in the BSE import policy for bovine animals and their products.

Currently, the regulatory disease control measures for imports are based on section 7 of the Health of Animals Regulations which allows the Minister to designate countries or parts of countries that he considers to be free of an animal disease. However, in the case of BSE, international standards as well as the new Canadian policy no longer refer to country freedom for this disease but instead refer to categories of risk, with negligible risk being the category from which importation with minimal certification would also be acceptable. The proposed regulatory change would amend section 7 of the Health of Animals Regulations to add the possibility to designate a country or part of a country as posing only a negligible risk to better harmonize with international standards.

The Import Reference Document referred to above is a subset of the Health of Animals Regulations which sets out conditions under which live animals can be imported into Canada without a permit. Currently, it contains conditions for importing live bovines from the United States, as well as conditions for other U.S. animals and for dogs and cats from all countries. Since the Import Reference Document is incorporated into the Regulations by reference in a static manner, any time this document is amended the definition for "import reference document" must be amended in the Health of Animals Regulations to reflect the new version. The regulatory amendment covered under this impact analysis statement includes changes to the Import Reference Document.

Most significantly, the new version of the Import Reference Document no longer contains prescriptive requirements for most bovines, which means that an import permit becomes mandatory for these animals. At the same time, the Import Reference Document will be updated to reflect current science in the areas of disease control and understanding of how various species are affected by long transportation times and lack of access to food and water.

Specifically, the current version of the Import Reference Document, published on June 20, 2003, is changed as follows:

The criteria for importing ruminants, other than cattle for immediate slaughter, have been removed. It is proposed that these animals may now only be imported into Canada under an import permit. It is felt that the controls in place for slaughter cattle are sufficient without the added requirements of an import permit.

In addition, a number of additional minor changes have been made to the Import Reference Document for species other than bovines. These changes had previously been pre-published in the Canada Gazette, Part I, and no objections were received. However, due to the discovery of BSE in Canada, they never proceeded to the Canada Gazette, Part II, due to other regulatory priorities.

These changes include changes for dogs, cats, and ferrets as follows:

People wishing to bring pet dogs or cats into Canada now have the option of having a blood test performed to show that previous rabies vaccinations are still active rather than re-vaccinating animals;

The rabies vaccination requirements for pet cats and ferrets are now brought in line with the requirements for dogs in that an inspector may now order that an unvaccinated animal be vaccinated rather than refusing to allow it to enter Canada;

The trade name and serial number of rabies vaccines must now be included in the rabies certificate for dogs; and

The time between inspection and importation of unaccompanied puppies has been extended from 36 to 72 hours to allow for weekend travel.

Permits will also be required for the importation of elephants and of non-human primates due to the human health risks posed by these animals. The importation of pet monkeys from the United States will no longer be allowed. Their importation from any other country was already prohibited. Non-human primates are known to pose a risk for disease transmission to the human population. The proposed permitting requirements are consistent with the standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly known as the OIE). Commercial shipments for research, educational and zoo purposes remain eligible.

There is evidence that there is a risk of tuberculosis with elephants imported into Canada from the United States. According to an internal memo from the U.S. Department of Agriculture dated August 28, 1996, four Hawthorn elephants tested positive for tuberculosis. On September 16, 1997, the U.S. Department of Labor ? Occupational Safety and Health Administration informed Hawthorn that an inspection "disclosed the following potential hazard: Employees were exposed to the Mycobacterium tuberculosis when they worked around elephants infected with tuberculosis. This letter serves as notification of the likelihood of transmission of tuberculosis from elephants to employees." Hawthorn leases animals to facilities and circuses around the world.

Additional minor changes are as follows:

Testing requirements for equines are updated to reflect the latest testing technology.

Additional wording has been added to indicate which animals may only be imported into Canada with an import permit to ensure that people reading the Import Reference Document in isolation do not assume that there are no requirements for commodities not specifically mentioned therein.

A new section has been added to clarify what actions may be taken in the case of non-compliance with the provisions of the Import Reference Document. This section does not create new sanctions but rather outlines the sanction possibilities under the existing enforcement regime.

Extra wording and headings are added to help clarify what animals are covered and how the requirements apply. As well, some terminology has been updated for the sake of consistency and ease of understanding.

Finally, it is proposed to amend the definition of "regulated animal" in the Health of Animals Regulations to include those animals (prairie dogs and other rodents) currently covered by the Prairie Dog and Certain Other Rodents Importation Prohibition Regulations so that these emergency prohibitions, put in place following the outbreak of monkeypox in the United States, may now be repealed. This will allow the CFIA to regulate the importation of these animals by permit. It is proposed to delay the coming into force of this provision until the prohibition regulation is either repealed or allowed to lapse when it expires on January 31, 2008.

Alternatives

Option 1. Maintain current regulations without changes

This option was rejected since it would not allow implementation of the BSE import policy for bovines and their products with respect to imports from the United States. This would necessitate maintaining import prohibitions against higher risk animals and products from the United States, and it will prevent the CFIA from implementing the most current import requirements. Failure to implement the new permitting requirements for elephants and non-human primates would mean not addressing a risk to human health.

Option 2. Remove prescriptive requirements in the Health of Animals Regulations and manage risks through import permits

This option will allow the CFIA to implement BSE import controls for animals and products from the United States that are in line with WOAHA standards and that reflect the import policy that has been implemented for other countries.

Use of import permits would also allow for a more rapid response to changes in policy, following an appropriate consultation process and would enable the CFIA to respond to changing global patterns of disease and increasing requests for regionalization and compartmentalization in accordance with the WOAHA guidelines.

This option does not result in the creation of new fees, nor does it increase the existing fee for import permits set out in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Fees Notice (CFIA Fees Notice), nor expand the application of that fee.

Option 3. Amend the Health of Animals Regulations to prescribe BSE-specific import requirements

This option would involve a major regulatory amendment to include all of the risk mitigation measures and import conditions related to BSE that are set out in the import policy. Changes to the requirements would necessitate amendments to the regulations themselves, which would be complex and prolong the time required before the import policy can be applied to imports from the United States. This option would not allow the CFIA to react quickly to new scientific developments, changes in domestic or international disease risk management policy or to changing animal health risk status in exporting countries.

Benefits and costs

Permit requirements for imports from the United States

There are a number of significant benefits to relying primarily on the use of permits for virtually all ruminants and certain of their products, which include

Increased flexibility: the use of import permits allows a more rapid response to changes in policy, following an appropriate consultation process, and enables the CFIA to respond to changing global patterns of disease and increasing requests for regionalization and compartmentalization in accordance with the WOAHA guidelines.

Greater control: the use of permits facilitates tracking and follow-up in the event of a disease outbreak.

Greater consistency: the use of permits brings treatment of ruminant commodities from the United States into line with requirements for other countries and puts U.S. ruminants on the same system. This will provide a greater assurance of applying Canada's new BSE import policy for bovines and their products in a consistent manner.

Comparability with other countries: other key trading partners (e.g. Australia and New Zealand) also require permits for importation. The United States, however, has confirmed that it is not able to move to a permitting system at this time.

Facilitation of compliance verification: the use of permits enhances the Canada Border Services Agency's awareness of the importance of an importation.

Importing with the use of a permit is already either required or available as an option under the regulations today for ruminant animals and certain of their products. The anticipated increase in the volume of imports entering the country via this permit system will occur subject to existing fees (reference CFIA Fees Notice) and the five-day service standard. Access to multiple-use permits (valid for one year) minimizes the potential administrative burden and the cost of the permits themselves, the total average cost of which is estimated to be less than 1% of the value of shipments of ruminant breeding animals (or approximately \$50,000). Specifically, for the first two years, the fees are \$65 for a single-use permit and \$115 for a multiple-use permit in addition to the application fees (\$35 and \$60 respectively). After that, the fees are \$35 for a single-use permit and \$60 for a multiple-use permit. This compares to \$180 charged by Australia and \$130 charged by New Zealand for single-shipment permit issuance.

It should be noted that permits will not be needed for meat shipments, as all requirements can be included on the export certificate. Similarly, cattle imported directly for slaughter will also not require a permit.

Proposed permit requirements for elephants and non-human primates

The changes to the permit requirements for elephants and non-human primates are being considered in order to protect the animal base industry, worth billions of dollars in Canada, and also to protect valuable human lives. Although the risk of tuberculosis is relatively low, based on the number of animals presented for import and the lack of evidence of transmission of tuberculosis from those animals, elephants are known to be susceptible to a form of tuberculosis that can be spread to the human population.

Based on the expected number of applications for permits to import elephants and non-human primates per year, it is expected that the annual revenue would be \$3,885. The costs to the Agency of processing these extra permit requests is expected to be \$4,015.

Net benefit

Overall, this option is expected to result in net positive benefits to consumers, to Canada's multi-billion animal-based industries and to our trading partners. This option provides the most opportunities for an efficient and responsive system in the complex and dynamic global environment in which Canada manages animal disease transmission and related human health risks.

Consultation

A "Draft BSE import policy for bovine animals and their products" was released for comment by Canadians and by Canada's trading partners in May 2005. During the 60-day comment period, 20 comments were received, 14 from organizations/industries, 4 from trading partners and 2 from private individuals. The comments were generally very supportive and did not raise substantive issues.

With respect to the issuance of permits, the United States has been informed of the proposal and has not raised any objections. The provinces were also consulted and were supportive. Informal consultation of industry associations indicated that they would support this approach.

Health Canada (HC) was consulted on the current requirements for the import of non-human primates and elephants as these species can carry zoonoses (diseases transmissible to humans). HC and the CFIA jointly identified the problems with the current requirements, and this amendment addresses these problems. Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Wildlife have also expressed concerns with our current requirements for non-human primates in that they are not in accordance with international standards.

Other problems with the criteria in the Import Reference Document were identified over the course of time. As people used the Import Reference Document it became evident that there were areas where clarification was required. This was communicated both orally and in writing by field staff and industry members.

Compliance and enforcement

The proposed changes to the Import Reference Document do not affect the CFIA's compliance and enforcement policies. Regulatory infractions, including those related to the need to obtain a permit and to comply with the conditions on that permit, will continue to be identified by field staff and addressed in accordance with their regulatory inspection authorities or forwarded to Enforcement and Investigation Services for consideration and enforcement action.

Environmental impact

As the changes proposed for the Regulations do not significantly change the patterns of importation of live animals and germplasm into Canada, there is no effect on the environment from this regulatory amendment.

Contact

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The complete document is available at: <http://Canadagazette.gc.ca/part1/2006/20061216/html/regle1-e.html>

J) Beef

18.dec.06

Associated Press

TOKYO -- The Japanese government was cited as saying Monday it will not allow a box of U.S. beef to enter the domestic market as the beef was found to have been processed in a U.S. meat-packing plant the day before the plant was certified as a supplier of Japan-bound beef.

The 13 kilograms of short plates are among the 910 tons of frozen American beef that had already arrived in Japan when Tokyo imposed a ban on U.S. beef due to fears of mad cow disease in January and have since remained at Japanese harbors and other areas.

K) ID for animals? Farmers say no

18.dec.06

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/18/opinion/118farmers.html>

Marjorie Smith, Shoemakersville, Pa., writes regarding, Plan for Tracking Animals Meets Farmers? Resistance? (news article, Dec. 13) to say that she lives in rural Pennsylvania and has one older riding horse and occasionally some laying hens. All these would have to be tagged if the National Animal Identification System becomes mandatory, and for no purpose, because none of her animals will be sold overseas for food.

Smith says she would have to make a report to the United States Department of Agriculture any time a hen gets out and runs onto the neighbor?s property, or pay a \$1,000 fine. This program will create havoc on America?s small farms.

Smith says she buys pasture-raised meat, milk and eggs from local farmers who she knows personally, because the animals are healthier than industrially raised animals, and she finds that the quality is better.

L) USDA discovers anti-E. coli feed additive

19.dec.06

Wisconsin Ag Connection

<http://www.wisconsinagconnection.com/story-national.php?id=2655&yr=2006>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service has patented a new chlorate-based compound that when added in small amounts to cattle feed two days before slaughter significantly reduces levels of Salmonella and E. coli O157:H7 in the animals' digestive tract.

In some tests, levels fell from 100,000 E. coli cells per gram of fecal material to 100. The agency obtained similar results with Salmonella in swine, sheep and poultry.

The compound is added to feed at levels ranging from 0.5 percent to 5 percent of an animal's diet two days before slaughter.

The compound will be submitted to regulatory agencies soon for approval as a feed additive.

M) Variable sorghum test weight has little impact on cattle rate of gain

20.dec.06

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

Mary Lou Peter-Blecha

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/news/>

COLBY, Kan. - Growing conditions this year resulted in grain sorghum with low test weights in parts of the High Plains, but studies conducted by Kansas State University Research and Extension indicate the grain is still suitable for cattle feed.

Sorghum less than 55 pounds per bushel is docked an increasing amount as test weight decreases, said Sandy Johnson, northwest area livestock specialist with K-State Research and Extension. One northwest Kansas elevator recently docked sorghum from 50.9 to 50 pounds by 12 cents and for each pound less than that, another five cents. "Given that level of dockage at the elevator, a natural question is, what is the feeding value of low test weight grain sorghum?" said Johnson, who is based in Colby. This question was addressed in growing and finishing steers at K-State's Southwest Research and Extension Center in Garden City, Kan. In the growing trial, 35, 45, and 55 pounds-per-bushel grain sorghum was used in either a limit-fed high concentrate or full-fed high roughage diet, Johnson explained. Within a feeding level, average daily gain was not affected by sorghum test weight. Gain tended to decrease, however, with increasing test weight. Feed conversion in high concentrate steers was increased 11.4 percent compared to high roughage steers.

In the finishing trial, 35, 45, and 55 pound-per-bushel grain sorghum was processed by either dry-rolling or steam-flaking. After 124 days on feed, the average daily gain was similar for all test weights, Johnson said. Feed conversion was improved when the sorghum was steam-flaked, compared with dry-rolled sorghum. Cumulative feed conversion was similar for the dry-rolled treatments at all test weights. However, steers fed steam-flaked, 55 pounds-per-bushel sorghum had a 10.8 percent improvement in conversion compared to the average of all other treatments.

Carcass characteristics were not affected by sorghum test-weight differences, she said.

Another study at the K-State Agriculture Research Center in Hays

compared 48 and 56 pounds-per-bushel grain sorghum in finishing

steers. Feed consumption of steers fed the low-test sorghum was less

and gain was slower than those fed normal sorghum. There was no difference in the net energy content of the two grains.

In light test weight sorghum, protein and fiber levels are increased, but starch content decreases as test weight declines, Johnson said.

The higher protein content can be an advantage in ration formulation,

especially for growing rations. Because of the smaller and variable seed size, fine processing is critical.

"These studies indicate the relative feeding value of 40- to 55-pound

grain sorghum is similar," the animal scientist noted. Lower bulk density, however, increases transportation, handling and processing time and cost and requires more storage space per ton."These costs should be considered when determining the value of low test weight sorghum," Johnson said.

N) Cattle watering issues

20.dec.06

Yorkton This Week

Cattle producers are being urged to keep an eye on their water resources this winter.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Livestock Development Specialist Bob Klemmer said weather conditions over the course of the spring and summer have impacted the quality of surface water sources.

The cause can be broken down into two main factors: too much water, and not enough. Klemmer said, while both situations can result in poor water quality and reduced cattle productivity, the prognosis for improvement is much better for the former.

"Flooding and run-off has led to increased nutrient loading in dugouts, dams, sloughs and lakes in some parts of Saskatchewan last summer. Combined with our hot summer weather, this situation resulted in rapid and recurrent algae blooms," said Klemmer.

Treatment during the summer takes care of this growth, but leaves behind the dead organic material, which ends up decaying on the bottom over the winter months as the water becomes anaerobic.

This nutrient loading also encourages the growth of water weeds, which adds to the build-up of organic matter on the bottom. Left unchecked, this scenario leads to brackish/odorous water in mid-winter due to the anaerobic break-down of the accumulated organic matter. If bad enough, cattle may not drink as much, which will result in a reduction of feed intake and lower productivity (lower gains, weight loss, lower milk production). Fortunately, this situation can be remedied by the installation of a properly sized aeration system.

On the other hand, Klemmer said a lack of surface water can impact water quality as well.

"There are parts of Saskatchewan that experienced very little snow and zero run-off, and therefore no recharge to surface watering sites. Adding insult to injury, the hot, dry and windy weather last summer increased the amount of water cattle required, and caused a much higher evaporation rate, which has led to very low surface water reserves in some areas," said Klemmer.

The resulting issues range from uncertainty of water supply/quality, to bringing old wells with questionable water quality back on-stream. In some cases, this has forced producers to haul water to the cattle. Hauling water is expensive, time consuming and unsustainable; however, because the quality of the water may actually be higher, the cattle may be better off than drinking water from a depleted slough, dugout or dam.

As water evaporates off the surface of these water bodies, minerals dissolved in the water remain, and, over time, may accumulate to levels of significance to cattle productivity and health. Even in a year of normal rainfall, one study demonstrated that mineral concentration in a dugout can double. This should be a "red flag" to those in this situation to make sure they test for water quality, especially when water levels fluctuate.

Klemmer said knowing your water quality is the first step in ensuring your herd remains productive and healthy.

"The main minerals of concern are iron (Fe), sodium (Na), magnesium (Mg) and sulphur (S) in the form of sulphates. While iron levels are a nuisance for household use, and can cause problems inside your water distribution system, it is only when iron becomes excessive that it can affect the amount of water cattle will drink and, thereby, reduce productivity," explained Klemmer.

Sodium and magnesium are most often of concern when they are associated with high levels of sulphates. High levels of magnesium sulphate have been shown to reduce water intake by cattle. If the water your cattle are fed contains high levels of sulphates, many problems can show up over time.

Cattle on high sulphate water tend to have loose stools, due to its laxative effect. While this, in itself, is not a production problem, it may be an early sign that something is up "so check that water. Concerns with sulphates and productivity and health relate to interference in the absorption of trace minerals from the diet (primarily copper, zinc, and manganese) and, in extreme cases, cattle death due to polioencephalomalacia (thiamine deficiency).

Solutions to these water quality problems range from installing costly water treatment systems, to initiating a special mineral supplementation program, to re-development of your water source over time.

The levels of minerals in surface water can fluctuate widely over time, depending on precipitation, recharge, cattle use and evaporation, and the concerns/solutions can also be long-term, depending on these same environmental factors. Consequently, Klemmer said, a good first step to ensuring your cattle remain healthy and productive is testing the quality of water from all of your water sources.

"Testing and then monitoring quality over time is very important. Solutions to water quality problems, such as aeration, can be simple and inexpensive or costly and complex, such as treatment systems. Resources for determining your needs are available through your local PFRA office. When treatment is not practical and specialized nutritional supplementation is necessary, resources for determining your needs are available through Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food," said Klemmer.

O) Fighting E. coli in slaughter operations

20.dec.06

Meat Processing

Meat News

<http://www.meatnews.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article&artNum=13373>

UNITED STATES: Some of the biggest U.S. companies participated in a seminar earlier this month about reducing E. coli in slaughter operations.

The National Meat Association (NMA) sponsored a seminar earlier this month in Denver, Colorado, on ways to reduce E. coli in slaughter operations. The session featured company officials from some of the biggest meat processing companies in the United States.

Scott Goltry, from Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Cargill Meat Solutions, discussed Sanitary Dressing Procedures Cargill utilizes on their kill floors. He discussed the hide-on carcass wash system, as well as the knife ?pattern? to use for opening the hide and exposing the carcass. He discussed the importance of trimmers, pre and post evisceration washes, proper air flow, physical separation of carcasses, sanitary equipment such as 180 degree water for frequent sterilization of knives, and the importance of employee training. He also discussed chain speed

and its relationship to food safety. He spoke of testing methods to detect contaminants on carcasses, including the use of iodine, shaving cream, and red ink.

Warren Mirtsching, from Greeley, Colorado-based Swift & Co, discussed interventions utilized by Swift at their slaughter operations. Like Cargill, Swift places high priority on employee training, and considers people as the most important microbial intervention step. Swift's other microbial interventions include fundamental sanitation, hide-on wash cabinets, pre- and post-evisceration acid rinses, steam vacuums, carcass washes, and chilling and cold chain management. Warren stressed the need for multiple hurdle pathogen intervention steps with a log reduction capability sufficient to handle the incoming pathogen load, including seasonal spikes caused by elements such as rain.

Dr. Dean Danilson, VP of Springdale, Arkansas-based Tyson Foods, then discussed Sampling and Testing protocol. His challenging and enlightening presentation discussed the wide variation in abilities of different lab technologies to successfully and consistently detect the presence of pathogens. He discussed various methods to collect samples, as well as number of product samples to collect per test. Tyson's studies have concluded that Total N-60 Trim testing is four to five times more sensitive than finished ground beef testing.

Wendy Warren, Director of Laboratory Technical Services at Food Safety Net Services and Dr. Daniel Engeljohn, Deputy Assistant Administrator in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development (OPPED) also spoke. They addressed laboratory analysis and regulatory consequences, respectively.

Warren gave technical information on different lab methods, protein-based methods, generic-based methods, lab sensitivities, confirmation methods, and decisions plants must make when considering various lab options. She also challenged those present to consider disposition of products classified as presumptive whether or not it yields a confirmed positive result.

Dr. Engeljohn said the FSIS collects about 11,000 tests of raw ground beef annually and that trim tested positive for E.coli three times more often than ground beef. Dr. Engeljohn said because of that, FSIS has decided to begin focusing its testing at all slaughter plants on trim.

P) Researchers overcome vaccination block

20.dec.06

Meat Processing

Meat News

<http://www.meatnews.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Article&artNum=13364>

UNITED STATES: USDA researchers find that a common virus thwarts livestock's natural defenses against vaccines.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service scientists are using a virus linked to the common cold in humans to bypass maternal defenses that thwart vaccination of very young cattle, pigs, and sheep.

Maternal antibodies are crucial to the offspring of animals such as cattle and swine, which are born with no protective antibodies of their own. These young get their immunity to disease from suckling colostrum, a protective substance in their mother's milk, during the first 24 to 36 hours after birth. However, these maternal antibodies also fight off virus strains that are placed in vaccines to initiate immunity against disease.

In one study, veterinary medical officers Ronald Wesley and Kelly Lager of the ARS National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa, immunized ? against swine influenza ? recently born pigs that had suckled maternal influenza-fighting antibodies. They did this by getting the flu strain past the antibodies piggybacked aboard a genetically engineered virus made with weakened adenoviruses.

The ability of adenoviruses to infect cells makes them good conduits for carrying genetic material into animals. And since adenoviruses originate from humans?they can cause respiratory ailments such as the common cold, pneumonia and bronchitis in people?livestock have no maternal antibody resistance to them.

This is a potentially major breakthrough that may close a window of vulnerability during which the maternal antibodies' waning powers still repel vaccines but leave young animals open to contracting diseases.

Q) Agency can't track mad cow case

20.dec.06

The Calgary Herald

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has not been able to trace Canada's eighth case of mad cow disease back to its birth farm.

The Charolais crossbred cow died on a northern Alberta farm in early August. It was estimated to be between eight and 10 years old.

The herd at the Alberta farm was assembled in 2001, but the farmer didn't have specific records about the cow's purchase.

R) Toxic dioxin found in U.S. beef imported to S. Korea: report

21.dec.06

Kyodo News

South Korea's national quarantine service said Thursday that it has found traces of toxic dioxin in a beef shipment from the United States, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Citing the National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service, the report said the toxin was discovered in a package belonging to a 10.2-ton shipment that arrived on Dec. 1.

The Agriculture and Forestry Ministry has informed the U.S. Embassy in Seoul of the discovery and asked for clarification, the report said.

S) Mad-cow disease: Experimental filter tackles risk from blood transfusion

21.dec.06

Agence France Presse

PARIS - Scientists have, according to this story, developed an experimental device that can filter out rogue prion proteins from the blood, in what they say is a major step towards ensuring the safety of blood donations from mad-cow disease.

Earlier this month, doctors stepped up warnings that the human form of mad-cow disease -- one of a family of prion diseases -- could be transmitted by blood transfusion after a third British individual became infected this way.

But one of the problems for protecting blood banks is that, so far, there is no way of removing or even testing for prions in donations because these pathogens are present only in tiny concentrations.

Scientists led by Robert Rohwer at the University of Maryland's Veterans Affairs Medical Center screened millions of molecules to find one, L13, that bound specifically to the prion involved in scrapie, a prion disease that affects sheep.

To test its binding ability, they passed scrapie-infected hamster blood through a filter that removes white blood cells.

T) Second Draft: Framework of the FDA Animal Feed Safety System

20.dec.06

FDA, Center for Veterinary Medicine

<http://www.fda.gov/cvm/AFSS2ndDraftFramework.html>

Purpose and Scope: The Animal Feed Safety System (AFSS) is the FDA's program for animal feed aimed at protecting human and animal health by ensuring safe feeds. (In this document, we define feed as mixed feed as well as feed ingredients, as stated in Appendix I.) It covers the entire spectrum of Agency activities from pre-approval of food additives and drugs for use in feed, to establishing limits on feed contaminants, providing education and training to and conducting inspections and taking enforcement for ensuring compliance with Agency regulations. The AFSS includes oversight of labeling, production, distribution, and administration of all feed ingredients and mixed feeds at all stages of manufacture, distribution, and use, whether at commercial or non-commercial establishments.

Complete document available at <http://www.fda.gov/cvm/AFSS2ndDraftFramework.html>

U) Spanish minister proposes live exit for bulls

21.dec.06

Reuters

MADRID -- Cristina Narbona, Spain's environment minister, has opened a campaign to stop matadors giving the traditional gory death blow to bulls in the ring and instead, the badly wounded animals should be taken away and swiftly killed more humanely, as is the practice in neighboring Portugal, stating, "We have to at least try and avoid the bull's bloody end."

The story notes that bullfighting is a Spanish tradition that is fiercely defended by many, and the minister acknowledged that change could only come gradually -- "perhaps in the next parliament" -- and that she was only expressing a personal view.

In Portugal, the bull is fought as in Spain, being passed with capes, wounded by lances and having long darts stuck into its back, but is then led out to be slaughtered in private.

Got News?

If you would like to post your cattle industry news or event, send your information by Thursday at 4pm to lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca. OCA will accommodate all requests within reason to the In Brief section of our update. NO PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS WILL BE ENDORSED.

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