

## **New Tablet PCs Being Field Tested**

The Motion Computing M1300 Tablet PC is a new portable device designed to facilitate field data collection. Currently, the M1300s are being tested in 15 field offices around the country in an effort to make BSE data collection and sample reporting easier, faster, and more efficient.

The Tablet weighs only 3.3 pounds and has a 12-inch screen. The keyboard is optional; instead, a plastic writing stylus can be used to write directly on the screen. The unit can operate without Internet or network connections to collect data that can be uploaded at a later time.

Client forms are loaded into the tablet using the Windows XP Tablet PC operating system. Individuals filling-out forms write directly on the screen into form fields and the system automatically translates written symbols into a typed letter or number. Many form fields are also represented by pull-down lists and radio buttons to help decrease the amount of time required to complete entries. Client forms can be completed on-site and in a clear and legible manner. The finished form is then saved, and a new form can be opened. Once all information is gathered, the Tablet can be connected to a LAN, wireless connection, or modem and completed forms submitted. In some cases, a GPRS Wireless card can be used in the field for immediate access to the Internet. This card acts as a cell network, offering online access in any location where a cell phone connection can be made. USDA has elected to use *Verizon Wireless* cards because *Verizon* has the broadest reach, either through their own network or through third-party access. The quality and integrity of the data entered are theoretically increased with the use of on-site data entry, which allows more time for data analysis.

To date, all responses regarding the M1300s have been positive. Although many State offices have requested the Tablets, they are currently issued only to individuals who require sample collection a significant distance from area offices. However, Oregon is the first State to become completely "live" by using only the Tablet PCs to file their forms. By the end of September, the Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health hopes to have over 100 Tablet PCs working in the field.

Questions about the new M1300 Tablet PCs? Contact Hyong Ngo at Fort Collins at 970-494-7220.