

## **Cattle on Feed Sentinel Feedlot Monitoring Program**

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The Sentinel Feedlot program was initiated in 1993 to monitor the death loss of cattle on feed. The program relies on information reported by consulting veterinarians that work with multiple feedlots throughout the United States. Currently, there are about 10 veterinary consultants reporting each month. Inventories total approximately 1.5 to 2 million cattle monitored monthly.

Veterinarians provide death loss information to USDA/APHIS/Veterinary Services on a monthly basis. Deaths are attributed to one of three categories: respiratory, digestive, or other. Current inventories, number of cattle shipped, and number of cattle received are also reported monthly. Veterinary consultants can also opt to provide subcategory death loss information that identifies type of cattle (beef or dairy), sex of cattle, and risk category (high or low).

The information provided by the veterinarians is confidential and submitted and reported using a code number identifier. Aggregated information is reported back to the consultants, along with their individual feedlot results for comparison. Results are provided in a written and graphical report. The reports also provide previous year and month data for comparisons. Occasionally, summary information is included in general reports of U.S. animal health. Individual feedlot information is only reported to the participating veterinarian.

An Internet based reporting tool is currently being developed. This Web-based reporting form will allow participating veterinary consultants to provide data directly to the database for analysis. In addition, the data will be checked for calculation errors prior to submission, which will allow the consultant to make corrections immediately. This tool will create a more seamless program and produce more accurate reports.

The Sentinel Feedlot Program will likely expand over time to include more participating veterinary consultants and an increase in the number of feedlot cattle monitored. Other possible future enhancements include: secure online reporting capability, an expanded scope of parameters being monitored, and expansion of trend monitoring and reporting capabilities.

Please contact Randy Pritchard at [Randy.W.Pritchard@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Randy.W.Pritchard@aphis.usda.gov) or (970) 494-7241 with any questions or comments pertaining to the Sentinel Feedlot Monitoring Program.