



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS ON BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will hold a series of public meetings on its national bovine tuberculosis (TB) program. The meetings will take place next month in Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, California and Washington, D.C.

“We want to hear directly from producers and stakeholders on our TB program and are looking for innovative, realistic approaches to effectively addressing this disease in the United States,” said APHIS administrator Cindy Smith. “We can improve the TB program so that it can meet current challenges, but public participation is vital to reach that goal.”

APHIS will gather information and feedback from producers and stakeholders, and through these public meetings there will be an opportunity for group discussions. These discussions will explore approaches to reducing the risk of disease transmission from affected herds, disease mitigation measures for wildlife and whether the program’s objective should be eradication or control of TB in domestic livestock. Other topics include budget concerns, import issues and indemnities. Meeting participants have the opportunity to pose questions and offer written and oral comments.

The public meetings will be held from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time, with registration one hour prior to each meeting. The meetings will be held in the following locations:

Monday, December 8: Holiday Inn South/Convention Center, 6820 South Cedar Street, Lansing, Mich. 48911.

Wednesday, December 10: Hilton Minneapolis, 1001 Marquette Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55403.

Thursday, December 11: Hilton Garden Inn Austin Downtown, 500 North IH 35, Austin, Texas 78701.

Friday, December 12: Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel, 1230 J Street, Sacramento, Calif. 95814.

Tuesday, December 16: Renaissance M Street Hotel, 1143 New Hampshire Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037

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Additional information on the meetings can be found at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/bovine_tuberculosis/bovine_tb.shtml.

Bovine TB is a contagious and infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*. It affects cattle, bison, deer, elk, goats and other warm-blooded species and can be fatal. While USDA and the states have robust surveillance and control measures in place for TB, outbreaks of the disease are costly to both producers and the government. Since 2002, USDA has spent approximately \$90 million on TB control activities and owner indemnification.

This action was published in the Nov. 20 *Federal Register*.

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Note to Reporters: USDA news releases, program announcements and media advisories are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS news release page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom>. Also, anyone with an e-mail address can sign up to receive APHIS press releases automatically. Send an e-mail message to lyris@mdrdlyriss10.aphis.usda.gov and leave the subject blank. In the message, type `subscribe press_releases`.