

# Gain Status for Your herd or flock!



**"Because Animal Health Matters"  
Information from the  
Texas Animal Health Commission  
2105 Kramer Lane  
Box 12966 (mailing address)  
1-800-550-8242**



**Quality...** your reputation relies on it, whether you market cattle, swine, goats, or cervids. With greater awareness and knowledge about livestock health, ranchers want assurance that they are purchasing disease-free animals. By gaining a voluntary health status for your herd, you may add value and marketability, as well as ease of interstate or international movement for your animals.

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's regulatory agency for livestock and poultry health, offers several voluntary herd status programs for cattle, sheep, goats, swine and cervids.

The TAHC maintains the necessary herd records at no charge, but producers are responsible for paying their accredited private veterinary practitioners for inspections or tests to gain the specific herd status. When the required testing or monitoring for a herd has been fulfilled, the TAHC will issue an official certificate and a herd number, which should be recorded on certificates of veterinary inspection or sale documents.

If you purchase a herd that already has a health status, that status may transfer with the ownership of the animals.

Introducing new animals to a herd with a health status: New animals must originate from a herd of equal or higher health status. Provisions must be made for testing/retesting animals of unknown status, prior to adding them to the herd.

Each program is briefly described here. To learn more or to obtain copies of herd program agreements, contact the TAHC's Program Records at 1-800-550-8242.

## Programs offered...

For all programs, the first step is to consult your veterinarian, then request, fill out, and return the herd agreement to the TAHC. Test records are to be submitted to the TAHC.

### **Brucellosis-Free Certification for Cattle**

The cattle brucellosis-free certification program is the longest-running of the TAHC's herd programs, and at its peak, more than 4,000 herds were enrolled. Texas may join the other 48 cattle brucellosis-free states by 2004, and this program remains helpful for registered breeders who sell cattle internationally, or those who show or ship breeding cattle.

**Gaining status:**

Test herd twice for cattle brucellosis.

- Cattle 18 months or older are test-eligible, except steers or spayed heifers.
- The two herd tests must be conducted between 10 and 14 months apart.
- (Dairy owners may opt to have a brucellosis milk test run. At least four consecutive, negative brucellosis milk surveillance tests must be conducted at no less than 90-day intervals. Then, a negative herd blood test is to be conducted within 90 days after the final brucellosis milk surveillance test.)
- Certification is awarded after the final test. Retest the herd every 10 to 14 months to remain certified.

**Tuberculosis (TB)**

In June 2002, Texas lost its U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) TB-free status, after two infected cattle herds were detected during the previous year. California and New Mexico both have detected several infected herds and the USDA is taking action to remove their TB-free status sometime in 2003. Michigan continues to have problems with TB in cattle and free-ranging deer.

Although Texas may undergo a USDA review in 2004 for possible reinstatement of TB-free status, a negative TB skin test is currently required for breeding cattle leaving the state.

**Gaining status:**

Two negative TB skin tests on all cattle in the herd that are over 24 months of age. (Cattle that aren't natural additions to the herd are test-eligible, regardless of age.)

- The two TB skin tests must be conducted 12 months apart.
- To remain accredited, retest the herd every 10 to 14 months. Accreditation is

valid for one year from the anniversary date.

**Brucellosis-Free Certification for Goat Herds****Gaining status:**

Two negative brucellosis herd tests.

- All sexually intact goats that are 12 months of age or older are test-eligible.
- Tests must be conducted 10 to 14 months apart.
- To maintain certification, the herd must be retested within 60 days prior to the anniversary date.

**Accreditation for Goats****Gaining status:**

Two negative TB skin tests on all goats in the herd that are 12 months of age or older.

- The two TB skin tests must be conducted 12 months apart.
- Retest the herd every 10 to 14 months from the initial anniversary date. Accreditation is valid for one year from the anniversary date.

**Certification for Cervids****Gaining status:**

Three negative brucellosis tests of the cervidae (deer or elk) in the herd.

- Cervids are test-eligible if they are sexually intact and 12 months or older.
- The tests must be conducted nine to 15 months apart.
- Certification is valid 24 months. To remain certified, all test-eligible animals must be tested within 90 days prior to the anniversary date.

## **Tuberculosis (TB) Programs for Cervids**

### **Gaining status:**

Four levels of TB health statuses are available, with each requiring more intensive monitoring.

- Surveyed Herd Plan: Harvested cervids over one year of age must be inspected or tested without evidence of TB. TB skin tests may also be used. The number of animals to be inspected or tested depends on herd size. To maintain status, the slaughter/testing surveillance must continue.

- Monitored Herd Plan: Identification records must be maintained on animals over one year that are skin-tested for TB or are slaughtered and inspected at an approved facility or diagnostic laboratory. Adequate herd testing and slaughter surveillance must be conducted for a three-year period to gain status.

- Qualified Herd Plan: TB test the herd once with no evidence of TB. The status remains in effect 12 months, following qualification. Test-eligible cervids are 12 months of age or older.

- Accredited Herd Plan: TB test the herd three times at nine- to 15-month intervals. To maintain status, the herd must undergo a negative test within 21 to 27 months of the anniversary date.

## **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**

### **Gaining status:**

An annual inventory of the cervids in the herd must be verified by the TAHC, USDA or an accredited veterinarian. Animals over one year must have an approved identification device, and animals less than a year are identified at change of ownership. Appropriate samples must be collected and submitted from cervids over 16 months of age that die or are hunter-harvested. Slaughtered animals are exempt, if they are examined by state or federal meat inspectors.

Herd status depends on the total years of participating in the plan.

## **Swine Herds**

### **Gaining status:**

One of two plans may be followed to earn brucellosis-free validation:

- One negative whole-herd test.
- Or, incremental herd testing, in which all breeding swine six months of age or older are tested over a period of one year. Producers may elect to have the herd tested in 25 percent or 10 percent increments.
- The validation is in effect for one year. To maintain validation, a whole herd test must be conducted within 10 to 12 months of the last validation, OR the schedule of incremental herd testing must be continued.

## **Negative Swine Herd**

### **Gaining status:**

- One negative herd test of all adult breeding swine over the age of six months. In addition, a number of progeny equal to 20 percent of the breeding swine population must be tested, with negative results.
- Herd status is maintained by yearly testing of at least 80 percent of swine over six months of age, and a number of progeny equal to 20 percent of the breeding swine population. This can be done through quarterly or incremental monthly testing.

## **Scrapie Flock Certification Program**

Please call the TAHC at 1-800-550-8242 for a brochure regarding the voluntary scrapie certification program for sheep and goats.