

## **News Release**

### **Texas Animal Health Commission**

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For immediately release:

### **Cattle Brucellosis Tests Still Required for Change of Ownership in Texas**

Selling or buying cattle? A cattle brucellosis, or “Bang’s” test is still required for changing ownership of adult cattle in Texas, says Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas’ state veterinarian. For many years, Texas ranchers and livestock health officials worked to eradicate cattle brucellosis, a bacterial disease that can cause cows to abort, deliver weak calves, or produce less milk.

“We have enjoyed Class ‘Free’ status for cattle brucellosis since February 2008, but testing is still required at livestock markets, special sales and private treaty sales, for at least two years,” said Dr. Hillman. “This testing requirement is part of the national brucellosis program standard, and it assures that a state is clearly free of the disease and that we can quickly identify and deal with reintroduced or yet undetected infection.” Slaughter testing surveillance will continue across the country for an indefinite period, to ensure that the disease is completely eradicated from cattle herds in Texas and other states.

Dr. Hillman noted that cattle which are sexually intact and 18 months of age or older must be tested prior to sale. The test requires a small blood sample from the animal, collected by an accredited veterinarian, or TAHC or USDA personnel. A chute-side test is conducted at livestock markets on sale days, with laboratory confirmation by the State-Federal laboratory.

For private treaty or special sales, an accredited, private veterinary practitioner can draw the blood sample and submit the blood sample to the State-Federal laboratory, where the test will be run. Cattle owners should allow at least four days for private testing, to allow for shipping the blood sample to the laboratory, testing of the samples and receiving the test results that will be recorded on the document that will accompany the animal to the sale.

“Texas was the last state to achieve cattle brucellosis free status, but there is no guarantee we can maintain this status, if we aren’t vigilant,” said Dr. Hillman. He stressed that the continued testing will identify potential cases of cattle brucellosis that weren’t detected during the eradication effort. Brucellosis status can be lost, if two infected herds are detected within a two-year period. It is essential that we continue to follow the national standards for the brucellosis program. Montana recently lost its brucellosis-free status, due to exposure to infected wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone Area, and widespread testing must be conducted to regain the ranking.

“Eradicating a disease is a livestock health victory, and that makes vigilance even more important now,” said Dr. Hillman. “Don’t risk buying infection. Ensure that the breeding cattle you buy have been tested.”

Dr. Hillman reminded cattle owners that heifers should be vaccinated against cattle brucellosis, particularly if they will be used as breeding animals. Accredited veterinarians can administer the RB-51 vaccine to heifers between the ages of four and 12 months to provide lifelong protecting against the disease.