

Cattle Fever Tick Situation Report

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Live Oak County Producer Meeting

On Thursday, January 12, 2017, nearly 100 beef cattle producers and industry representatives participated in an educational program and situation update concerning the Cattle Fever Tick Outbreak in Live Oak County. The program was hosted by Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Live Oak County. Dr. Brodie Miller, Regional Veterinarian with TAHC out of Beeville presented to the group. Below are some points of interest presented by Dr. Miller and/or taken from the materials provided at the meeting.

- Cattle Fever Ticks are carriers of the disease known as bovine babesiosis, a disease which affects the red blood cells of cattle.
- Cattle, horses, white tail deer, red deer and nilgai are known host carriers of the cattle fever tick.
- We are currently experiencing a cattle fever tick outbreak, NOT a disease outbreak.
- Since the detection of the first fever ticks in Live Oak County in late November 2016, TAHC has confirmed seven additional infested premises in the county.
- As a result of detecting additional fever tick infested premises, the quarantine area has expanded from approximately 12,587 acres to 57,541 acres.
- The original premise contained approximately 80 head of cattle which were “heavily” infested.
- Currently, there are a total of 265 identified premises in the infested area.
- 140 premises have livestock (cattle and/or horses).
- 70 premises have been inspected to date.
- Approximately 4,000 head of cattle and 300 horses are in the affected area.
- A public vat located at the Live Oak County Auction Barn has been activated and TAHC personnel will be available for dipping cattle out of the quarantined areas.
- The following link will provide you the latest TAHC news release on the situation:
http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/2017/2017-01-12_FeverTickUpdate.pdf

Kleberg and Jim Wells County Quarantine Areas

Approximately three years ago, Kleberg County experienced a tick outbreak in the Ricardo/Riviera area. Two years ago, Jim Wells County experienced a tick outbreak as well between Ben Bolt and Premont. Thru my conversations with Dr. Miller and Bart Stockbridge, TAHC Supervising Inspector in Laredo, I learned that good progress has been made in both counties and if all inspections continue in a positive direction, the area in Jim Wells County may be released sometime this summer and the area in Kleberg County, by the end of the year. The Kleberg County area has taken longer to treat and clean due to the presence of Nilgai and their tendency to travel across premises at their own discretion.

Jim Wells County Dip Vat

Mr. Eddie Garcia, Owner of Gulf Coast Livestock Auction has been in contact with TAHC in an effort to open and activate the dip vat located on the premises of the auction barn in Alice. He has already invested money to repair leak issues with the vat and is committed to preparing the facilities for TAHC to activate this vat as well. This would provide local producers from affected areas with an option instead of traveling to other locations or waiting to schedule on-site treatments with TAHC. Some progress has been made on this issue but additional resources thru TAHC may be required to activate this site.

Resource Needs

Educational Materials: In my conversation with both producers and inspectors, we need to provide producers with visual information on how to inspect their own cattle and what to look for. Veterinary Services produced, in April 2010, a bulletin called *Pest Alert: Cattle Fever Ticks and Cattle Fever*, which is a good publication to begin with. Educational materials should also include do's and don'ts to ensure the success of the eradication program. Bart Stockbridge suggested that maybe Extension could provide an updated version of this publication. Posters which may be displayed at local agricultural businesses would also be helpful. Bart has also agreed to provide me (and I'm sure anyone else who asks) with test tubes for producers to collect their own tick samples and submit to TAHC for identification.