

USDA Finalizes Animal Disease Traceability Rule

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it had [finalized a rule to improve disease traceability](#) of livestock moving interstate.

The final rule, which is expected to be published in the *Federal Register* Dec. 28, 2012, will establish a framework to allow states and tribes to establish animal disease traceability systems that meet their diverse needs. Dr. Bill Brown, Kansas animal health commissioner, said an effective animal disease traceability program will give Kansas the ability to efficiently trace the movement of livestock in the event of a livestock disease situation. He also said an effective program will reduce the number of animals involved in the disease investigation and the necessary response time while minimizing the financial impact on livestock farmers and ranchers.

“We have been preparing for the final animal disease traceability system since February 2010 and we appreciate USDA’s efforts to work with states, tribes and all industry stakeholders to finalize this rule,” said Dr. Brown. “Agriculture is the largest industry in Kansas. As such, we have worked closely with our partners in the livestock sector in Kansas to educate livestock farmers and ranchers about animal disease traceability and develop a statewide plan to implement the program in Kansas.”

Dr. Brown said Kansas has also purchased USAHerds, an in-house, electronic filing cabinet to securely collect confidential traceability data. Kansas is one of approximately 12 states that use USAHerds technology and is leading efforts to educate other states about the capabilities of the program to track the interstate movements of animals entering or leaving the state.

The final rule will go into effect 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*. Under the rule, unless specifically exempted, livestock moving interstate must be officially identified and accompanied by an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection (also known as a health certificate) or other state-approved documentation. The final rule exempts cattle under 18 months of age from traceability requirements, but USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plans to work with industry to promulgate a separate rulemaking for this group at a future, undetermined time.

Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman said while animal disease traceability is important for animal health purposes, it may also have implications on export markets.

“More than 99.96 percent of the world’s population lives outside of Kansas. Our farmers and ranchers have been feeding Kansans since before our statehood, but in the future, we will play an increasingly important role in feeding the world,” said Secretary Rodman. “Cattle traceability could impact market access in the future. This is especially concerning when recognizing that of the world’s eight largest exporters, six have adopted mandatory cattle animal identification and traceability systems. We have worked with USDA on the animal disease traceability framework and will continue working with the agency to implement this rule and on all issues that impact the ability of farmers and ranchers to raise healthy animals and produce safe, wholesome food.”

For more information about ADT and to read the rule, visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/>. For information about animal disease traceability in Kansas, visit www.ksda.gov/animal/content/417.