

USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services
Wildlife Disease Activities Report
for the
Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

EXHIBIT G

Dr. Tom Gidlewski joined Wildlife Services (WS) National Wildlife Disease Program as an Assistant Wildlife Disease Coordinator in May and will be responsible for coordination of the Program's chronic wasting disease, bovine tuberculosis, plague, and tularemia projects. Tom is a pathologist and most recently served as a senior staff veterinarian with the Chronic Wasting Disease Program in Veterinary Services (VS). He received his veterinary degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1983, holds two M.S. degrees – one in Poultry Nutrition from Virginia Polytechnic (1981) and one in Veterinary Pathology from Iowa State University (1996). Tom's experience in domestic animals and wildlife includes brucellosis, foot-and-mouth disease, heartwater, tuberculosis and chronic wasting disease. He has worked with bears, bison, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and pronghorn antelope as well as many other species of wildlife. Tom can be reached at (970) 266-6350 or at thomas.gidlewski@aphis.usda.gov.

WS National Wildlife Disease Program participated in the MAFWA Health Committee meeting which was held in May in Ft Collins, CO. Dr. Tom DeLiberto provided a presentation on international activities regarding avian influenza and Seth Swafford provided a presentation on feral swine management issues. Several other topics were discussed and the details of WS activities can be found in the Committee minutes which were provided by Dr. Steve Schmitt.

WS partnered with VS to conduct comprehensive feral swine disease surveillance on approximately 2,500 feral swine in 30 states in FY2008. Diseases of most interest and concern were swine brucellosis (SB), pseudorabies (PRV), and classical swine fever (CSF). In states represented by MAFWA, WS collected feral swine samples in 9 (CO, IA, KS, KY, MI, MO, NE, ND, and WI) of the 14 Midwestern states. WS, working cooperatively with state wildlife agencies and hunters, collected 409 SB, 491 PRV, and 486 CSF samples. Most SB and PRV samples were submitted to local laboratories for diagnostic testing, whereas all CSF samples were submitted to the VS Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. Kentucky and Michigan were the only states that had samples that tested positive for PRV. All CSF and SB samples were negative for the MAFWA states in FY2008.

Eleven Midwestern states actively participated in collecting samples for plague, tularemia, or both during calendar year 2008. A total of 1357 animals were sampled (2 samples/animal) using the Nobuto strip blood collection technique within states represented by MAFWA. All of the collected samples (total = 2714) were sent to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for diagnostic testing. While not all samples were tested by CDC, remaining samples were immediately archived for later processing. Colorado lead the monitoring effort for the Midwestern U.S. by collecting samples from 352 animals which were taken while conducting wildlife damage management. Over

70% of the states in the MAFWA submitted samples from more than 50 animals, with an overall average of about 100 samples per state.

Surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues as another area of emphasis for WS. Biological year 2008 (BY08) represented the third year of surveillance coordinated at a national and flyway level. During BY08, WS collected 64,741 wild bird samples and 25,976 environmental samples for the early detection of HPAI. MAFWA includes states in the Central and Mississippi Flyways. In BY08, states represented by MAFWA produced 18,163 wild bird and 8,302 environmental samples. All samples were sent to approved National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories for testing. From the 18,163 wild bird samples submitted, 2,549 were positive via rRT-PCR for type A influenza virus. These samples were further evaluated at the NAHLN laboratory for H5 and H7 subtypes of avian influenza. All samples testing presumptive positive for H5 and H7 subtypes were forwarded to NVSL for confirmation testing. Two-hundred and seventy wild bird samples were confirmed positive via rRT-PCR for H5 avian influenza, and twenty were positive for H7. All samples testing positive for H5 and H7 subtypes were confirmed as low pathogenic. The national surveillance effort has not detected any HPAI in the United States during the 3 years of surveillance.

Due to significant budget cuts, WS had to discontinue active surveillance for HPAI in all level 3 states (14). The discontinuation includes the sampling of all apparently healthy waterfowl and shorebirds, eliminates environmental sampling, and discontinues cooperative agreement funding for the level 3 states. WS also had to reduce the target number of samples per state (level 1 and 2) as well as the cooperative agreement funding. Level 1 state wildlife agencies are being offered \$70,000 to collect 600 samples, and level 2 state wildlife agencies are being offered \$50,000 to collect 400 samples. States experiencing wild bird die-offs can still collect and submit samples and WS will cover HPAI diagnostic expenses. State wildlife agencies should try to finalize their billing for the current agreements and submit the new work and financial plans as soon as possible. These plans should be submitted to WS State Directors.

Level 1 states in the Midwest include Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Level 2 states include Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Ohio, and level 3 states are Colorado, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) issues have become increasingly more important in the Midwest. WS and the MN Department of Natural Resources cooperated to shoot deer in March and April to enhance surveillance for bTB. In Nebraska, WS is working with VS and the NE Game and Parks Commission regarding the recent discovery of bTB in a captive elk herd. WS involvement will likely consist of providing assistance with surveillance both inside the captive herd and in wild, white-tailed deer and carnivore populations surrounding the captive herd. WS continued to assist the MI Department of Natural Resources with hunter-harvested deer surveillance by collecting tissue samples for diagnostic analysis. Also, WS is conducting surveillance in raccoons and opossums on bTB positive farms as directed by Michigan Dept. of Agriculture. In February, the

ND Game and Fish Department requested WS assistance with bTB surveillance in coyotes in an effort to augment bTB surveillance in wildlife. WS has also been working with VS and the IN Board of Animal Health regarding the recent discovery of bTB in a captive red deer herd. WS role will likely consist of assisting with surveillance in local wildlife populations around the captive herd and the testing/depopulation of the captive herd.

