



## Quality Watch

By Gary Trimmer

Director of Member Services/Quality Control

### Avian Influenza Quarantine Protocol for Dairy Farms

Michigan's protocol for marketing milk in a quarantine area due to a confirmed avian influenza outbreak is nearly complete. For over a year, a team consisting of Michigan Department of Agriculture Food and Dairy Division, MDA Animal Industry Division, MMPA, DFA and Ecolab have been working to develop an avian influenza initial protocol to market milk from a quarantine area resulting from confirmed outbreak in poultry. The quarantine process for poultry farms, established after the first outbreak of avian influenza in Asia, dealt only with farms that housed poultry and did not address movement of milk from a quarantine area.

The process for movement of milk in a quarantine area calls for the following. Once USDA confirms avian influenza on a farm in Michigan, USDA will quarantine that farm and establish a disease control zone and surveillance area, which will be considered the quarantined area. That zone is currently set at a radius of 18.6 miles from the quarantined farm. The protocol allows milk to be marketed from a quarantined farm and all other dairy farms in the quarantine area as long as special provisions are met. Strict washing and sanitizing protocol will be necessary at the quarantine farm and on all farms in the quarantine area that have poultry. Dairy farms that do not have poultry will not be subject to special cleaning and

sanitizing provisions and will be allowed to market milk through the normal channels. The cleaning and sanitizing protocol on quarantine farms and dairy farms that have poultry in the quarantine area will be applied to milk trucks and any other vehicles entering or leaving the facility. Depending on the magnitude of the outbreak, a designated hauler may be used in the quarantine area.

To help establish and determine the potential impact of this type of problem in any given area, MMPA Member Representatives have surveyed dairy farm members to determine the presence of poultry or fowl including chickens, ducks, geese, etc. present on dairy farms. We have determined that approximately 25 percent of MMPA member farms have some type of poultry present on their farms.

If a confirmed outbreak occurs, we anticipate that milk processors will be hesitant to receive milk from a quarantine area due to consumer concerns. It is important to note that pasteurization of the milk kills the virus, therefore, there is no threat for humans to contract the disease through milk. The strict sanitizing of milk trucks is solely to prevent the spread of disease to other farms with poultry.

A companion fact sheet has been developed that will be available to producers in the future detailing key facts of avian influenza and the

program. We will distribute these fact sheets to all our dairy farms once we receive the documents. In addition, USDA has developed a brochure on avian influenza, which is available through USDA.

If an outbreak is confirmed on a dairy farm, the response from USDA will be immediate. USDA will establish the quarantine zone and notify MDA. Officials from MDA will then notify all buyers of milk in the quarantine area such as MMPA, DFA and others. MDA Dairy Division will work with MDA Animal Industry Division to call an immediate meeting of field staff and dairy inspectors who work in the quarantine area. We will immediately call on all dairy farms in the quarantine area to determine and confirm which farms have poultry. If the farm has no poultry, their milk can be marketed through normal channels. If the farm has poultry, the member representative will immediately set up a sanitizing station on the farm and train the producer on proper sanitizing procedures. That sanitizing process will be in effect for all dairy farms in the

**If an outbreak of avian influenza is confirmed in poultry on a dairy farm, the response from USDA will be immediate.**

quarantine zone with poultry until USDA determines that there is no longer a need to sanitize vehicles on that farm. Dairy farms with poultry in the quarantine zone will be asked to immediately dispose of any poultry or fowl on the farm, however, that process will be determined and controlled by USDA. The poultry will likely need to be tested prior to disposal. Once USDA determines there is no longer a need to sanitize vehicles, the milk can be marketed as usual from the farm. Due to the additional requirements on farms in the quarantine zone, we believe dairy farm members should seriously consider whether or not to retain poultry on the dairy farm.

Emergency farm sanitizing kits are assembled and being housed at the St. Louis warehouse. The kits can immediately be moved from the warehouse to quarantine farm(s) in the event of an outbreak. Producers will need to provide a power washer.

Since we are nearly complete with the protocol for Michigan, we will have a protocol to be used as a template in other states i.e. Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio. We have scheduled a joint meeting with the Indiana State Board of Animal Health in October to begin developing a protocol for Indiana. Ohio and Wisconsin will follow. Having

a protocol in place to market milk during quarantines prior to an outbreak is critical. Similar protocols are in place for potential foot and mouth disease outbreaks. We will be reviewing and updating Michigan's protocol for foot and mouth disease later this year, and will update members as progress is made.

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