

New Year: New TB Program

Bovine TB Zone reduced to smaller area in Northeast Michigan

The start of the new year will mark the first significant changes to Michigan's TB program in several years. The recently agreed upon Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Michigan Department of Agriculture and the USDA brings Michigan one step closer to obtaining TB-free status.

"This MOU is making steps toward Michigan obtaining TB-free status for a good chunk of the Modified Accredited Advanced Zone (MAAZ)," says Michigan's new TB Eradication Program Coordinator James Averill, DVM, PhD. "We are working toward elevating the majority of the Lower Peninsula to TB-free status."

The basis for much of the changes stem from the adaption of wildlife risk mitigation plans (WRM) on farms. The use of a more risk-based approach to TB —looking at risk levels and incorporating management options to reduce the risk of infection — is replacing the "one-size-fits-all approach from the past.

Wildlife Risk Mitigation plans help producers identify high risks areas on their farms where cattle and wildlife co-mingle. By preventing the interaction between cattle and wildlife, producers can reduce the risk of infection. Farmers, who complete WRM plans and receive verification from the state, can reduce the amount of testing done on their herd.

The changes made in the recent MOU, which takes affect January 4, 2010, shrinks the TB-affected area to five counties: Alpena, Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, Presque Isle and the parts of Iosco and Ogemaw counties that are north of the "southernmost boundaries of the Huron National Forest and the Au sable State Forest."

The areas buffering the new Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) are broken into three subzones that have been elevated to Modified Accredited Advance Zones taking Michigan one-step closer to obtaining TB free status.

For the majority of the state — those in subzone 3 and the Upper Peninsula — the most significant change is the elimination of "lottery" or random TB testing

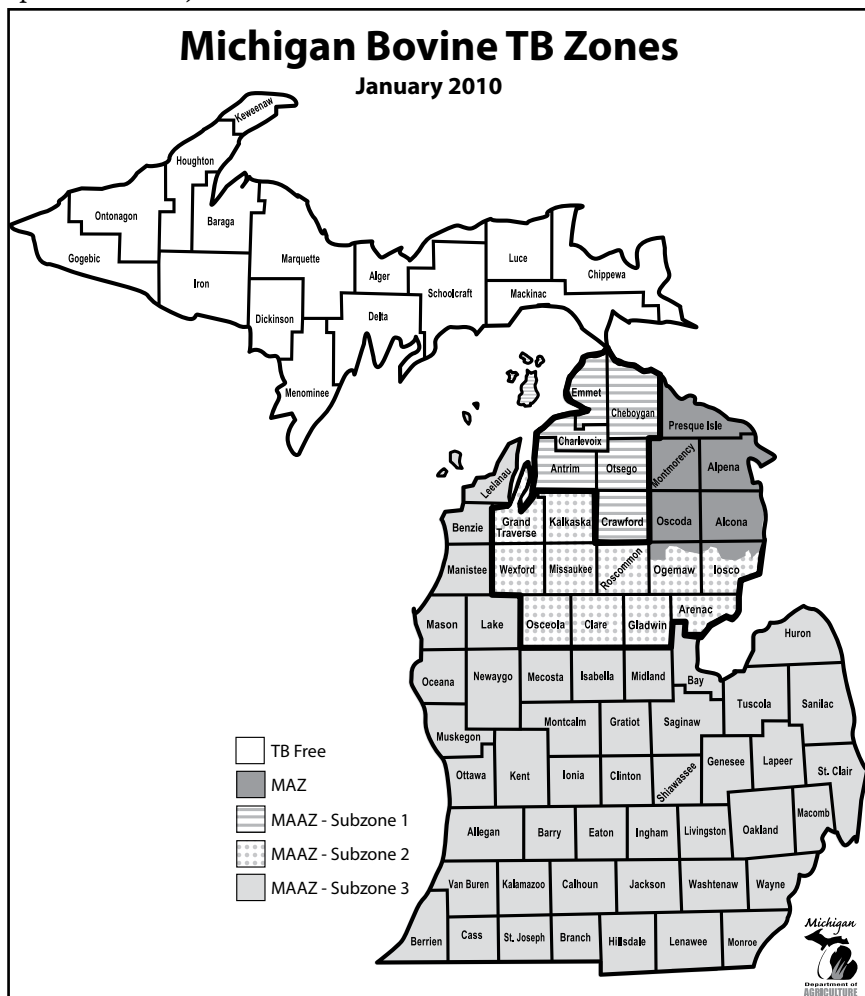
Cattle in the MAZ will still undergo annual whole-herd testing and farm owners must complete a Wildlife Risk Mitigation Plan (WRM).

Testing on cattle in subzone 1 (primarily the area pulled from the previous MAZ) will be determined

on the nature of the cattle operation. Breeding cattle will still be subject to required annual whole-herd testing. Feeder cattle will be tested every two years and feedlot cattle will be tested on a three-year rotation.

Farmers in subzone 1 and 2 who complete a WRM plan and are certified by MDA will not be required to conduct movement testing. If a WRM plan is not in place the current rules apply and the buyer of the cattle must complete – and pay for – testing of all breeding animals between 60 and 120 days of purchase.

"The restructuring of our TB program allows us to move forward," Averill says. "We hope



to put in another application with USDA later this year requesting more areas of the state to be classified TB-free. The national TB program is in need of a complete overhaul. Michigan has been very influential in driving changes in this program.”

Changes are also taking place in the financing of the TB program. Neither the state or federal government will be paying for movement testing of cattle in Subzone 1 of MAAZ come June 1, 2010; farmers will have to work with their local veterinarians to secure the test. Farmers can avoid those costs by completing a WRM plan.

There is some limited funding available to help producers make changes in fencing or facilities necessary for their WRM plans. “We have some money to help with mitigation plans but not enough,” Averill says. “We are hoping to work with the NRCS to obtain more funding for some of these items.”

Farmers moving cattle to other states will still need to check the rules of those states. Since individual states can determine the testing and certification required to enter their state, these changes only apply in Michigan.

Go to the MDA and Emerging Diseases Web sites for additional information including a booklet explaining the Split State Status and Zoning Rule changes at www.michigan.gov/mda or www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases

The Split State Status rule is posted in the Federal Register under: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-30128.htm>.

New TB Program Leader in Michigan

Creating more transparency between the Department of Agriculture and the industry is the goal of the newly hired TB program director Dr. James Averill. Dr. Averill took over the reins of the program last August and hit the road running to complete the recently accepted MOU between the MDA and the USDA. Completing the MOU, according to Averill is just the first step.

“I want to improve the transparency between the department and the industry,” Averill says. “We need to communicate better internally with our own staff, so they understand the program and can take it to the veterinarians and the producers.”

Averill, a “farm boy” from Maine completed both his DVM and PhD programs at Michigan State University. Previously, he worked with Michigan Department of Community Health.

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