

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE 399th COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Texas Animal Health Commission**  
**August 22, 2017**

The TAHC Commissioners met in the agency's headquarters in Austin on Tuesday, August 22, 2017. Chairman Coleman Locke began the meeting at 8:37AM.

**Item 1 – Welcome and Call to order by Chairman Locke**

Commissioners present: Michael Vickers, Tommy Oates, Jim Eggleston, Eric White, Coleman Locke, Tommy Kezar, Joe Leathers, Ken Jordan, and Leo Vermedahl.

**Item 2 – Approval of the minutes of the 398<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

The minutes of the 398<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting held on May 9, 2017, were approved by the Commissioners.

**Item 3 – Report of the Executive Director, Field Animal Health Program Activities and Approval of Waiver Requests for the Period 5/10/2017 to 8/22/2017**

Dr. Schwartz presented the following:

- **Agency Business**

- Budget assessment in early January – considerable shortfall predicted in FY17
  - Implemented internal savings measures, including freezing merit raises
- Outcome of 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, January through May, 2017:
  - Supplemental funding request for remainder of FY17
    - \$649,000 approved
  - Exceptional Item Requests for FY18-19 Biennium:
    - \$7.27M approved, with all but \$.1M for Cattle Fever Tick response
- Supplemental funds are being used to address agency's overtime liability related to fever ticks, with the balance paid from TAHC regular funds, for a total of 10,300 hours of overtime
- Merit "thaw": Supervisors were given the opportunity to nominate a limited number of employees for one-time merits. Consideration will be given to opening up regular merits once FY18 is underway and the agency's overall fiscal health can be assessed.
- Governor instituted hiring freeze January 31, 2017
  - As of August 31, 2017, the agency will have 164.2 full time employees out of 185.2 authorized equivalents (21 vacancies)
  - In anticipation of the hiring freeze being lifted, the agency has posted 24 positions with potential start date of September 1, 2017, with more to follow

- **Disease considerations**

- Fever Ticks
  - Fever Tick Progression video: Drs. Lansford and Hasel will have more information in their reports
  - USDA, APHIS, VS deployed resources are greatly appreciated!

- USFWS update:
  - Approval to feed ivermectin treated corn off-refuge received January 30, 2017

Meeting with USFWS, CFTEP, and TAHC on August 8, 2017:

- Approval to feed ivermectin corn on refuge denied; expressed willingness to consider doramectin applied topically
- Approval to graze cattle on refuge declined
- Nilgai population management may resume

- Research needs
  - Working with USDA-ARS Cattle Fever Tick Lab, Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Veterinary School, and Texas A&M Kingsville

- Trichomoniasis

- Rule adoptions for consideration:
  - Chapter 38, Trichomoniasis, Approved Tests
  - Chapter 51, Entry Requirements, Female Cattle/Out of State Bulls to Market Exception, and removal of virgin bull exception
  - Subcommittee formed to explore intrastate requirements for female cattle

- **National Issues**

- Animal Disease Traceability

- USDA hosted 9 public meetings in 2017, one of which was in Fort Worth in July
- Strategy Forum on Livestock Traceability scheduled for September 26-27, 2017, in Denver, CO.

- Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis

- Last month the USDA hosted a forum titled “Modernization of the National TB Program in Cattle”, to better understand current issues and roadblocks to achieving eradication
- Discussed surveillance, traceability, indemnity, and the federal TB-Brucellosis rule proposed in 2015.

- **Waiver Report - May 9, 2017 to August 21, 2017**

- 5 waivers requested:

- Fever Tick – **Approved** – allowed 8 ornamental long horn steers in quarantine zone to forgo spraying and begin treatment by doramectin injection. Horn spread prevented steers from entering the spray box, and posed a hazard to personnel to hand spray.
- Avian Influenza – **Approved** – allowed flock to enter Texas on the condition of AI testing within 5 days of testing and held in isolation until negative results return. Flock owner was previously enrolled in Texas Fowl Registration Program and always compliant in requirements.

- Tuberculosis – **Approved** – allowed dairy heifers to be TB tested upon return to Texas from pasture in New Mexico due to low disease risk, superior facilities on Texas location, and negative TB test prior to departing Texas of entire herd.
- Fever Tick – **NOT Approved** – denied request to turn cattle back onto pasture after treatment for 3-5 days before being shipped to feed yard because the pasture in which they would be held was a potentially infested pasture.
- Fever Tick – **Approved** – allowed cattle to remain on dry lot for 3-5 days after treatment with a spray box while waiting for transport to growing yard.

**Item 4 - Presentation of Epidemiology, and Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Activities**

Dr. Brian Bohl, Field Epidemiologist, presented the following report:

**I. CATTLE**

**A. Tuberculosis:**

**1. Status of the infected Herds in Parmer County and Lamb County, Texas:** Both dairies and the feed yard (~11,000 head) have undergone an assessment test in April 2015 then 8 removal tests in (2015: July, September, December), (2016: March, October), and (2017: Feb, April-June). There have been 66 confirmed MB compatible animals from this group including the original 6 steers that traced to this herd. There were no culture positives on the last test. At this point, the dairy is pursuing the “test out” option and although negotiations have been continuous, the herdsman still has not agreed to a herd plan.

**2. Other TB cases in the 2016:** Seven slaughter trace investigations were initiated in FY2017. Five traces are Mexican origin, including three that had Mexican ID that traced back to Coahuila, Chihuahua, and Baja California. Additionally, two were epidemiologically linked to herds from Mexico including one from Chiapas and one distantly related to a Jalisco dairy cow. One US origin slaughter steer traced to a positive herd in New Mexico. The most recent trace was a roping steer that traced to a producer in Arizona that typically compiles groups steers for slaughter that are no longer used for roping. Additional lineage analysis conducted at NVSL is ongoing on this steer.

**B. Trichomoniasis:** From January to July 2017 there have been 380 positive bulls found in 22,723 tests (1.7% test positive). In 2016 there were 38, 428 bulls tested and 664 positive (1.7% test positive).

**C. Anthrax:** Samples submitted by a veterinarian in Crockett County were positive for anthrax in August. The five head of cattle were found deceased on a large ranch near Ozona.

**D. Cattle Fever Tick:** The Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program is a cooperative activity between TAHC and USDA-VS. The number of newly discovered infested premises in South Texas (in Permanent and Temporary Preventive Quarantine Areas) has increased from 86 in October 2016 to currently 220 total infestations disclosed.

Trace cattle are cattle that were either sold to or sold from the infested premise/producer in the year prior to the identification of the infestation. The number of traces by county since November 2016 are listed below:

County	# of Traces	# Head	# Open (% complete)
Live Oak	488	1186	170 (65% complete)
Zapata	15	85	15 (0% complete)
Starr	146	146	96 (33% complete)
Webb	134	242	90 (33% complete)
Hidalgo	83	210	44 (47% complete)
<b>Total</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>1869</b>	<b>415 (52% complete)</b>

**II. SWINE**

- A. Brucellosis:** One infected herds was disclosed in FY 2017 to date in Montgomery County; The herd was show stock swine exposed to feral swine. Slaughter surveillance testing identified a boar, which traced to this herd. The entire herd has been tested revealing 14 reactors.
- B. Pseudorabies (PRV):** A market PRV positive was traced to a herd in Region 5 and the investigation is ongoing.

**III. EQUINE**

- A. Equine Piroplasmosis (EP):** In 2017, there has been 10 through July 31. Some of the horses moved into Texas illegally from other states and were disclosed due to Texas’ testing requirements for racing facilities.
- B. Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)** In CY 2017, 15 positive equine were disclosed. The number tested as of July 31, is 96,741 equine. The majority of the positives are from 2 premises/trainers in Region 2.

**IV. POULTRY**

- A. Infectious Laryngeal Tracheitis (ILT):** A positive ILT on a back yard chicken was disclosed in Region 3. The investigation is ongoing to determine the origin and further testing is scheduled.

**V. SHEEP AND GOATS**

- A. Scrapie:** The first positive scrapie case in Texas since 2008 was identified in the Panhandle in April 2016 and the flock remains under quarantine until depopulation is complete.

**VI. CERVIDS**

- A. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in white-tailed deer (WTD):** There are 5 positive facilities since the disclosure of a new facility which is fence line adjacent to facility 4. The total number of positive WTD and current status of each facility is listed below:

Facility	Current Status	Number Positive
1	Depopulated in 2015	4
2	Depopulated in early 2016	5
3	Quarantined 1-30-16, completed one ante-mortem testing plan, and pending herd plan	7
4	Quarantined March 2016, completed entire herd ante-mortem testing plan (=>12 mo.), pending herd plan	15
5	Quarantined May 2017, positive on rectal testing, pending herd plan	1

USDA informed TAHC that some end of year CWD indemnity funds were designated to Texas for the current positive herds. USDA requires complete depopulation of the newest facility (Facility #5) based on the smaller size. The current plan is to use additional funds to test and depopulate additional breeding deer and deer in an exposed pen at Facility 4.

In addition to managing the positive herds, there are 3,421 deer that either were traced into the positive herds, traced out of the positive herds, or both in the previous 5 years prior to diagnosis. Of these, 791 (23%) were tested for CWD. The majority of deer, 2,337 (68%) have been liberated into release sites across Texas. The herds that either received the exposed deer or sold deer to the positive facilities are managed by TAHC by providing an individual herd plan to determine the risk of CWD exposure or spread. If a trace

deer died with no CWD testing, then the herd remains on a herd plan until adequate testing occurs to achieve the confidence that CWD does not exist in that herd. The following are the number of trace herds that either received deer or sold deer from the 5 index herds in the last 5 years.

**Number of trace herds from all CWD positive premises in Texas**

<b>TRACE INS</b>	<b>Facility 1</b>	<b>Facility 2</b>	<b>Facility 3a</b>	<b>Facility 3b</b>	<b>Facility 4</b>	<b>Facility 5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
CLOSED FACILITY	4	0	11	4	2	0	21
RELEASED FROM HOLD ORDER	26	0	25	18	4	2	75
HERD PLAN SIGNED	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
PENDING HERD PLAN AGREEMENT	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
							101

<b>TRACE OUTS</b>	<b>Facility 1</b>	<b>Facility 2</b>	<b>Facility 3a</b>	<b>Facility 3b</b>	<b>Facility 4</b>	<b>Facility 5</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
CLOSED FACILITY	14	0	1	0	13	0	28
RELEASED FROM HOLD ORDER	108	8	3	0	46	0	165
HERD PLAN SIGNED	24	0	2	0	16	0	42
PENDING HERD PLAN AGREEMENT	4	0	2	0	4	5	15
							250

**B. CWD in free ranging cervids in Texas:** TAHC is gearing up for hunting season. Regional and central office staff have coordinated with Texas Parks and Wildlife to educate and support hunt stations in the Panhandle Surveillance Zone, the West Texas Surveillance Zone, and the Medina County surveillance zone. In addition, staff has updated informational and testing documents in preparation of the new statewide exotic CWD susceptible species surveillance requirements.

**VII. Zoonotic Diseases**

**A. Human Brucellosis Case:** Recently, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) notified TAHC regarding a case of brucellosis in a woman who drank raw milk from a permitted raw milk dairy in Texas. DSHS regulates the sale of raw milk in Texas; therefore, require pathogen testing of raw milk and require brucellosis surveillance by bulk milk sampling in all dairies twice a year. If a positive result is disclosed on bulk milk tests, then TAHC initiates a brucellosis investigation at the dairy and conducts additional testing including tissue cultures. In most cases, swine brucellosis is isolated on culture since cattle are frequently exposed to feral swine. However, on several occasions, TAHC has cultured RB51 brucellosis in a cow that triggered the test. Since the milk was pasteurized, there was no human risk. RB51 is the current vaccine used on cattle to protect from *B. abortus*. It is a live attenuated vaccine and should only be given in cattle 4-12 months of age.

Upon further investigation on the isolates from the recent human case by both DSHS and CDC, it was determined the strain of brucellosis that infected her is RB51 brucellosis. To our knowledge, this is the first case in the United States of RB51 brucellosis in a human from the consumption of raw milk. TAHC is assisting DSHS by sampling all individual cows in the herd. Samples are at NVSL for further testing and culture. TAHC will continue to work closely with USDA and DSHS as this investigation continues, and we appreciate collaboration with the health commissioner, Dr. Hellerstedt.

## **ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY ACTIVITIES**

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TAHC continues to work with USDA and industry to achieve ADT cooperative program goals and objectives.

### **Item 5 – Presentation of Animal Health Program Activities**

Dr. T.R. Lansford, Assistant Executive Director of Animal Health Programs, provided an update on field activities:

- **Report Items**

- Cattle Fever Ticks
  - Statewide Quarantines
    - 2,786 fever tick quarantines – vast majority in the free area
    - 210 Infested (75 PQZ; 135 non-PQZ)
    - 89 Exposed (48 PQZ; 41 non-PQZ)
    - 2,487 Adjacent/Check (361 PQZ; 2,126 non-PQZ)
    - Acreage
      - 1.7M total quarantined acres
        - 1.5M in the free area
      - 252,000 total infested acres
        - 191,000 in the free area
  - Live Oak county
    - Inspections and treatment
      - 9 infested premises; 7 undergoing systematic treatment
      - Second round of 90 day inspections completed; gearing up for third round
      - Wildlife surveillance preparations underway
    - Traces
      - Traces are reaching end of quarantine period
      - No additional infestations found
    - Live Oak County Vat in operation since January 9; more than 25,000 inspected and treated
    - Wildlife treatment with ivermectin-treated corn ended July 31; 105 feeders in service and approximately 108,000 pounds of corn fed
  - Kleberg county
    - Established control purpose quarantine area remains in place
    - Temporary dipping vat remains active
    - All premises are “check” status since May/June
    - First 90 day check completed with no ticks found
  - Jim Wells county
    - Ivermectin-treated corn feeding complete
    - Process for epidemiological review for release is starting
    - Public dipping vat in service at Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Alice; approximately 4500 head voluntarily inspected and treated
  - Webb, Zapata, and Starr counties
    - Most of the recent infestations are in Webb and Zapata counties
    - Still determining eastern edges in Webb and Zapata counties

- Ongoing deployment of TAHC field staff and EM staff
- Have organized a robust response structure; includes large number of USDA resources
- Hidalgo county
  - Infestation discovered at livestock market
  - 2 infested premises at this point
- Fever tick vaccine
  - Completing first year of vaccine administration
  - Approximately 10,400 doses administered
  - Working with USDA and Zoetis to procure additional doses
- Fever tick response
  - Purchasing process underway
  - Posting and hiring process for positions underway
  - Deployment of staff
  - Outreach efforts ongoing
- Chronic Wasting Disease
  - Moving forward with implementing rule adoptions for exotic CWD susceptible species
  - Working collaboratively with TPWD on upcoming surveillance activities in different CWD zones
- Emergency Management
  - Diligently working in the background – planning, preparing, and responding
  - Preparing for potential weather event in fever tick areas
  - Planning and preparedness
    - Continuing work with the poultry industry to prepare for avian influenza, both high and low path varieties
    - Texas Dairy Disaster Drill in September
    - Involvement in the “Secure Zoo” planning process

#### **Item 6 – Presentation of USDA Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program Update**

Dr. Mike Pruitt presented a USDA-VS and CFTEP Report on behalf of Dr. Hallie Hasel:

Dr. Pruitt detailed USDA support to the Panhandle TB Response, which includes working closely with TAHC Region 1 staff and calling in veterinary medical officers from other District 4 states. Additional funds have become available for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) indemnity for this fiscal year, and there are hopes it will be available in the next year. While TAHC does not have authority over aquaculture, USDA does participate in regulation of that industry and a recent FAD outbreak in farmed shrimp in south Texas has caused some challenges to USDA Texas staff. Additional personnel challenges mentioned in the 398<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting continue for USDA. Not only does VS staff support TAHC in regulatory work, but they are also called to do support work rotations at land, air, and sea ports. In regard to the fever tick program, and Incident Management Team has been called up to do three week rotations supporting the response to the latest tick outbreak. The rotations will continue for several weeks. Additionally, the CFTEP is still hoping to be able to hire temporary workers to fill gaps in staffing.

**Item 7 - Presentation of Laboratory Update**

The Laboratory Update was presented by Dr. Roger Parker, Director of the State and Federal Lab:

- In April, the TAHC-LAB received its renewal certificate as a Level 3 Laboratory within the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN; coordinated by USDA). This relates to a renewed cooperative agreement between TAHC and USDA, effective June 2017, and includes a federal award of \$45,668 for expenditures to support NAHLN testing and reporting. The NAHLN is part of a nationwide strategy to coordinate the work of all organizations providing animal disease surveillance and testing services, which can prepare for and respond to a large-scale animal disease outbreak.
- LAB currently approved as a NAHLN Laboratory for Swine Pseudorabies testing (AutoLex – automated latex agglutination; gB1 ELISA – enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay).
- LAB pending approval by NAHLN as a surge laboratory for Vesicular Stomatitis equine testing (CF – complement fixation; PCR – polymerase chain reaction).
- In September, NAHLN representatives will conduct a periodic on-site audit of the LAB’s procedures.
- Mr. Bryan Krugman, Laboratory Technician, recently completed a week-long training in Ames, IA, on Laboratory Quality Management Systems through the National Animal Health Laboratory Network.
- National proficiency test panels recently submitted:
  - 2017 Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) Complement Fixation (CF) (PASSED)
  - 2017 Vesicular Stomatitis (VSV) rRT-PCR Proficiency Test (PASSED)
  - 2017 Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) (results pending)
  - 2017 Brucellosis Proficiency Test (Standard Plate Test, Standard Tube Test, Buffered Acidified Plate Antigen, Complement Fixation, Rivanol, Card Test, Rapid Automated Presumptive, Fluorescence Polarization Assay) (results pending)
  - 2017 NAHLN Pseudorabies Virus (PRV) Autolex proficiency test (results pending)
  - 2017 NAHLN Pseudorabies Virus (PRV) gI ELISA (results pending)

<b>Sample Volume, January – July 2017</b>	
<b>Sample Type</b>	<b>Sample Numbers</b>
Bovine Brucellosis Slaughter Blood:	490,222
Bovine Brucellosis Market Blood:	30,530
Other Brucellosis Blood:	18,106
Bovine Brucellosis Milk:	1,084
Brucellosis Culture:	28
Bovine Tuberculosis Blood:	139
Swine Brucellosis Blood:	3,989
Swine Pseudorabies Blood:	3,842
Equine Infectious Anemia Blood:	150
Ectoparasite Identification:	1,176



- Concerning sample submissions:
  - Bovine Tuberculosis Blood Samples are down approx. 90% since USDA's decision in May 2017 to temporarily suspend on a national level the Interferon Gamma Blood Test for Bovine TB.
  - Ectoparasite Identification Samples are up approx. 25% because of the on-going additional herd inspections related to the cattle fever tick-related quarantines and traces.

### **Item 8 – Legislative Update**

Mary Luedeker, Legislative Liaison Assistant Legal Counsel gave an update on the legislative session and items that were of interest to the agency.

### **Item 9 – Administration/Budget Status Report**

Mr. Steven Luna, Director of Finance, gave a report on the agency's budget status:

- The TAHC has a total projected expenditures for FY 2017 of \$13,970,342
- FY 2017 Overall Projected Budget is \$14,027,815
- Projected funds available is \$57,473
- Projected FY 2017 Fee Revenue is \$512,000
- Hiring Freeze (FTEs anticipated as of August 31, 2017)
  - 21 Vacancies at close of FY 2017
    - Approximately \$303K in 'Savings'
    - All from Field, except approximately \$1,800
    - Remaining Capital Budget (approximately \$42K) to be used towards this 'Savings'
- Budgetary Transfers
  - Deficit in Lab/Epi Strategy (Estimated additional \$30,000)
    - Not to exceed additional \$15,000 from Animal Emergency Management Strategy
    - Per May 9<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting \$15K moved
  - Not to exceed additional \$15,000 from Field Strategy
    - Per May 9<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting \$30K moved
  - Deficit in Central Administration Strategy (Estimated additional \$15,000)
    - Not to exceed \$15,000 from Support Services Strategy
    - Per May 9<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting \$20K moved (from Support Services Strategy)
    - Per May 9<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting \$10K moved (from Info Resources Strategy)

### **Item 10 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Agency Contracts and Purchases**

Mr. Steven Luna presented contracts and purchases for the consideration of the commissioners for FY 2018.

**Item 11– Consideration of and Possible Action to Change Commission Contract Approval Threshold from \$25,000 to \$50,000**

Mr. Steven Luna presented a request by the Commission to change the contract approval threshold from \$25,000 to \$50, to meet the need to purchase more costly response equipment in a timelier manner.

**Item 12 – Consideration of an Agreed Order in the Matter of a Rule Violation**

Mr. Gene Snelson presented an Agreed Order for the consideration of the Commissioners regarding a TAHC rule violation.

**Item 13 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Rule Review Proposals Regarding:**

Gene Snelson then discussed the following RULE REVIEW PROPOSALS:

Because the items propose to review existing rules, and are not proposed amendments or proposed new rules, the items were discussed and voted on as a group.

- (a) Chapter 31, Anthrax
- (b) Chapter 34, Veterinary Biologics
- (c) Chapter 35, Brucellosis
- (d) Chapter 37, Screwworms
- (e) Chapter 39, Scabies
- (f) Chapter 49, Equine
- (g) Chapter 58, Emergency Response and Management

The motion to propose the rule reviews of Chapters 31, 34, 35, 37, 39, 49, and 58 passed. The notice of this review is to be published in the Texas Register with a 30 day comment period.

Comments regarding the reviewed rules may be submitted to Amanda Bernhard, Texas Animal Health Commission, 2105 Kramer Lane, Austin, Texas 78758, by fax at (512) 719-0719 or by email at "comments@tahc.state.tx.us".

**Item 14 – Consideration of and Possible Action on REGULATION ADOPTIONS**

Gene Snelson then discussed the following REGULATION ADOPTION:

Each Regulation Adoption was reviewed and voted on individually.

- (h) Chapter 38, Trichomoniasis, Official Trichomoniasis Tests
  - (i) Chapter 51, Entry Requirements, Female Cattle/Out of State Bulls to Market Exception
- (a) The Texas Animal Health Commission (commission) proposes amendments to §38.6, concerning Official Trichomoniasis Tests, in Chapter 38, which is entitled "Trichomoniasis". The purpose of the amendments is to approve a new official Trichomoniasis test.

The Bovine Trich Working Group (TWG) met on April 11, 2017, to evaluate the effectiveness of current rules. The TWG discussed the program overview to date, the management of infected herds, entry requirements, and the need for possible revisions to the program.

The TWG recommended that the commission propose rules to authorize an additional official test. Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) is in the process of implementing an enhanced Trichomoniasis testing technology for the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. PCR is currently accepted as an official test or an official confirmatory test for Trichomoniasis. TVMDL's Direct Sample qPCR is an enhanced testing technology using PCR.

Unlike the current PCR, the qPCR test does not require the sample to be incubated or placed in an InPouch. The TWG also recommended that the deadline for submitting samples to an approved laboratory remain at 96 hours, but encouraged submission of samples to be accomplished within 48 hours. Further, the proposal adds the term InPouch to the culture testing requirement.

This proposed addition will ensure the sample is properly collected and submitted for testing.

The motion to approve the regulation amendment passed.

- (b) The Texas Animal Health Commission (commission) proposes amendments to §51.1, concerning Definitions, and §51.8, concerning Cattle, in Chapter 51, which is entitled "Entry Requirements". The purpose of the amendments is to address Bovine Trichomoniasis requirements to enter the state.

Bovine Trichomoniasis (Trich) is a venereal disease of cattle. The Trich organism causes abortion and extended calving seasons. Bulls will remain persistently infected and spread infection from cow to cow.

The Bovine Trich Working Group (TWG) met on April 11, 2017, to evaluate the effectiveness of current Trichomoniasis rules. The TWG discussed the program overview to date, the management of infected herds, entry requirements, and the need for possible revisions to the program.

The TWG recommended a revision to the Commission's current entry requirement regarding the use of a virgin certificate for breeding bulls between 12 months and 18 months of age. Commission rules generally require that bulls 12 months of age or older have a negative Trich test within 60 days prior to entering Texas. However, bulls that are 18 months of age or younger and receive a virgin status certificate are exempt from this testing requirement. The TWG is concerned that this exemption provides an opportunity for unknown status bulls that are infected with Trich to enter the state. As such, the TWG recommended that the virgin status certification exemption be removed from the Commission's rule.

The TWG recommended adding a testing requirement exemption for bulls that are 12 months of age or older, receive a permit from the Commission prior to entry, and are moved directly to a federally approved livestock market. The certificate of veterinary inspection for the bull must include the entry permit number and a statement that the bull must be Trich tested or sold for

slaughter. This recommendations is consistent with intrastate requirements for bulls being sold at markets. As such, the bulls entering under this exemption would be tracked using the existing infrastructure, which minimizes the risk of Trichomoniasis being spread by these bulls. For clarity, the Commission is defining "directly", "federally approved market" and "Trichomoniasis" in the proposed rule.

The TWG also recommended the Commission prohibit the entry of female cattle that originated from a known Trichomoniasis positive herd, or were exposed to known Trichomoniasis positive bull unless the animal is officially identified, obtains a Commission issued permit and is moved directly to an approved

The motion to approve the regulation amendment passed.

**Item 15 – Public Comment/Recognition**

Recognition of two retiring TAHC employees was given by Gene Snelson. A full audio of the comments and the complete discussion that followed is available on the Texas Animal Health Commission website. <http://www.tahc.texas.gov/agency/meetings.html>

**Item 16 and 17 – Closed Executive Sessions and Consideration of Any Needed Action**

A closed executive session to receive legal advice, discuss pending or contemplated litigations, and employment, evaluation, reassignment of specific commission employees as permitted by section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code, was held at this meeting.

**Item 18 – Consideration of Any Action Needed Following Closed Executive Session**

After the closed executive session, the commissioners reconvened to vote on an increase in the Executive Director’s salary, which would be effective on September 1, 2017. The motion passed.

**Item 19 – Set Date for 400<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting**

The date for the 398<sup>th</sup> Commission Meeting was not set at the time of the meeting, but is tentatively scheduled for December 2017. Notice will be posted on the agency’s website when the next Commission meeting date has been set.

**Item 20 – Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:34AM.