

State Moves on TB Up-Grade!

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Martin and Hartmann outlined the 3 major steps necessary to gain an upgrade to Minnesota's TB status. First, Minnesota must provide a detailed application to USDA requesting the upgrade. The application must provide the details on how cattle would be managed in the new upgraded status. The second step is a detailed review of the application by USDA and an on site visit by a team of evaluators to examine exactly what processes and resources are in place to carry out the management procedures should the new status be granted.

Assuming a favorable recommendation from the review team, USDA and Minnesota would update and agree to a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). USDA would also have to publish their decision to upgrade and effective date of the change in the Federal Register. Baring any unforeseen issues, both Joe Martin and Bill Hartmann felt it was realistic to gain the upgraded status by this fall. Their goal is October 1.

The MN Dept. of Ag and Board of Animal Health are working on the application and draft changes to the MOU concurrently, to minimize the time required to implement a change in our TB status. If USDA approves the application the majority of the state would move to TB Free Status and the MA zone in northwest part of the state would move up to MAA status. A map showing the proposed upgraded zone and most recent distribution of cattle herds within the zone is included on this page. If successful, the change would result in the majority of the state no longer having any TB testing requirements under the TB free status level. The old MA zone (305 herds) would see some reduction in TB testing requirements, but would still be governed by most of the regulations in place today. The smaller disease management zone within the new MAA zone (19 herds) would continue under the same regulations that are in effect today.

In addition to the application, on site review and updated MOU, it will be necessary make a slight adjustment to Minnesota's Statutes that provide regulatory authority for the Minnesota Board of Animal Health to manage TB within the state. The current statute refers specifically to regulatory authority in a MA zone, but does not address MAA zones. Correcting this situation will require some minor changes to the wording in MN Statute 35.244, Sections 6 & 7). Those changes need to be done during this legislative session to ensure there would be no delay in reaching the goal of upgraded status by October of this year. See page 6 for more details

The reaction of other states to the upgrade was discussed. Despite the fact that USDA might upgrade Minnesota's status, surrounding states would still be free to impose more stringent restrictions on Minnesota cattle than the standards USDA imposes for TB testing of cattle that originate in a TB free zone or an MAA zone. It is anticipated that states such as Iowa, South Dakota and Nebraska would not impose additional restrictions beyond the standard USDA requirements. Wisconsin and North Dakota are more likely to impose requirements beyond those required by USDA, as both states are currently doing that today.

Regardless of the reaction of other states, upgrading Minnesota's status is a critical step in regaining TB free status for the entire state. The proposed new requirements are provided in the table below.



Dale Lueck, Aitkin, MN

Law Suit to Force Wolf Delisting

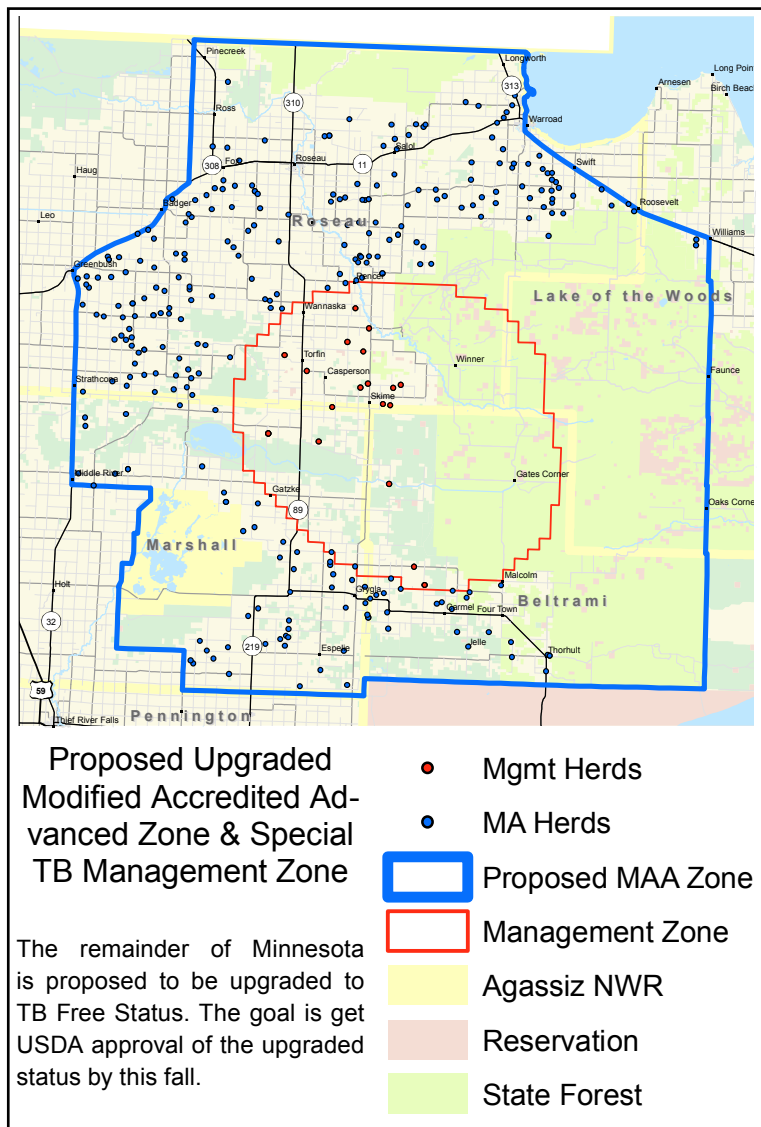
Dale Lueck a cattle rancher in north central Minnesota and Gerald Tyler a retired real estate developer from Ely Minnesota are moving forward with a lawsuit to force the Department of Interior and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to delist the wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

On January 15, 2010, Lueck and Tyler frustrated with the government's inability to comply with the Endangered Species Act filed notice of intent to sue the Secretary of Interior Kenneth Salazar and three USFWS officials. The agencies have 60 days to respond to the complaint. Absent a satisfactory response they will seek relief in federal court.

An active member of the MSCA and NCBA, Lueck was involved in developing Minnesota's Wolf Management Plan and getting it passed by the Minnesota Legislature over 10 years ago. Lueck said, "It deeply troubles me that as a citizen Mr. Tyler and I are forced to go into court to get our federal government to simply obey the law."

Lueck and Tyler's complaint zero's in on the fact that the 1992 Eastern Timber Wolf Recovery Plan and ESA recovery criteria for the wolf in the Midwest have been fully met and thus it's unlawful not to delist.

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2009 USDA TB Review Overall Very Positive

In November, 2009 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) review team visited Minnesota to evaluate Minnesota's bovine tuberculosis (TB) management program. The review was considered overall very positive and recommended only a few administrative adjustments be made to the current management procedures.

The review team recommended that the Board of Animal Health (BAH) consolidate its Animal Movement Certificates (AMC) and use only the most current version. Thus the board will no longer be accepting the older version of the AMC dated May 7, 2008. The correct form version is dated April 3, 2009. The Board is sending copies of the correct form to all producers in the zone.

During 2010 the BAH will be completing herd inventories for all cattle herds in the MA Zone. The 2010 inventories will be reconciled with 2009 herd test data. Reconciling herd inventories will further demonstrate that all animals in the MA Zone can be accounted for and have been tested for TB.

If there are any discrepancies a BAH staff member will contact the producer and review herd inventory records to determine the disposition of any animals in question. Ensuring the accuracy of test data and inventories is crucial to maintaining Split State Status and gaining upgraded status in the future.

The Board is implementing a new procedure to enhance the tracking of cull cattle originating from the MA Zone to ensure

Proposed TB Requirements

The State of Minnesota will soon apply to upgrade its TB status levels. Officials will ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture to change the majority of the state from Modified Accredited Advanced (MAA) to TB-Free and the small part in northwestern Minnesota from Modified Accredited to MAA, effective fall 2010.

Once approved, the majority of the state will not have any TB testing requirements under the TB-Free Status level. Producers living in the proposed MAA area can expect some reductions in requirements, including the elimination of the TB test required within 60 days of moving feeder cattle. In addition, Animal Movement Certificates will not be required when moving animals to and from pasture.

The following details the proposed TB requirements for the proposed MAA Zone and Disease Management Zone in northwestern Minnesota:

	Herds within the proposed MAA Zone (305 herds)	Herds within the Management Zone (19 herds)
General (required for all types of cattle and bison)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official identification before leaving the premises of origin. Animal Movement Certificate for any movement outside of or within the MAA Zone. Annual herd inventory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual wildlife risk assessment. Fencing installed, if determined necessary from risk assessment. Annual herd inventory. Animal Movement Certificate for any movement outside of or within Management Zone.
Feeders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual whole herd test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual whole herd test. TB test within 60 days of movement within or outside the Management Zone.
Breeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual whole herd test. TB test within 60 days of movement within or outside the MAA Zone. Exception for in-herd movements within MAA Zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual whole herd test. TB test within 60 days of movement within or outside the Management Zone.
Slaughter (including cull cows and bulls)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official ID before leaving premises of origin. No test required if animals move directly to slaughter at an approved slaughter facility or sold through a livestock auction market for slaughter. 	

they are being sent to slaughter. The USDA review team recommended that Board staff correlate the ear tags from cattle going to slaughter from the MA Zone to the back tags they are given at sales barns. Board staff at Winger and Bagley sales barns will be identifying all cattle from the MA Zone by the animal's Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag. Then staff will link the RFID numbers to back tag numbers. This will satisfy USDA's recommendation that the BAH enhance the procedures for tracking cull animals from the MA Zone that go to slaughter.

As of March 1, 2010 the TB Hotline will resume normal business hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. The hours were extended in December due to a seasonal increase in call volume.

With strict attention to the current regulations and no further occurrences of TB within the state's cattle herd, Minnesota will likely be in a position to request that the state be upgraded in status to take effect as early as October, 2010.