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**Division Overview**

- **Pending matters of significance**
  - The Nevada Department of Agriculture’s (NDA) rebuilding of the Livestock Inspection Program, in accordance with the Livestock Inspection Program Business Plan, continues to progress. Program fee structure revisions were implemented May 1, 2022. The 2023 brand renewal process was initiated on November 1, 2022. Thirty state-employed intermittent Brand Inspectors have been hired. Twenty contracted Brand Inspector positions were retained for hiring and program inspection needs. The full-time Brand Inspector III position has been filled and interviews completed for the two full-time Brand Inspector II positions. Thirty-three Surface Pro tablets were secured to replace aging iPads and distribution to inspectors has begun. Replacement brand inspector printers have been ordered. NDA staff continue to investigate possible electronic programs to replace outdated paper processes at the public livestock auctions.
  - Revisions to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC 571) continue. One public workshop was held virtually on March 27, 2022, and three in person/virtual workshops were held in November 2022 in Winnemucca, Elko, and Fallon. With input received during these workshops, staff are revising and editing the current proposed language for a future in person/virtual workshop and later hearing.
  - Dr. J.J. Goicoechea has continued to serve as the interim State Veterinarian during the recruitment process for a permanent candidate.
  - The NDA Livestock Enforcement program successfully filled the long time Agricultural Police Officer vacant position in May. This staff member will be based out of Eureka and cover the surrounding district.
- **Partnership activities**
  - USDA-APHIS
    - NDA staff continue working in conjunction with USDA-APHIS in performing and furthering Nevada’s Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) plan.
    - The NDA continues to utilize 2023 grant funding from USDA-APHIS for ADT and Umbrella cooperative agreements.
  - Wild Horse Connection (WHC)
    - The NDA renewed the WHC non-exclusive cooperative agreement in August 2022 for the management of Virginia Range feral/stray (VRE) horses. FY23 calls to date: 762
    - To prevent horses straying from outside the boundaries of the Virginia Range area in Fernley, WHC worked with city, county, and state agencies on future fencing projects.
    - WHC continues to perform diversionary feeding in only NDA approved locations to draw horses away from highways and urban

areas.

- WHC reports 42 horses versus vehicle crashes to date for 2023. There were 27 for 2021 and 46 reported in 2020.
- Relocations: 52 horses have been relocated from various urban areas and locations outside of the Virginia Range where the horses have strayed. These horses were relocated to less urban/populated areas of the Virginia Range.
- American Wild Horse Campaign (AWHC)
  - The NDA and AWHC entered into a fifth-year non-exclusive cooperative agreement with a begin date of April 28, 2023. The 2022-2023 agreement was valid from May 1, 2022, to April 30, 2023. The NDA continues to receive monthly reports from AWHC covering the VRE horse fertility program. Monthly reports for FY23 indicate that AWHC has administered fertility control vaccine to a total of 1,520 individual mares with 1,530 doses (280 doses given as a primer and 1,250 doses as a booster). The AWHC database has been updated to include 3,546 living and individually identified horses located in the Virginia Range.
- The NDA performed an arial survey of horse abundance in the Virginia Range area in coordination with BLM in March 2022. The statistical analysis completed with data obtained during the arial survey indicated an estimated population of 3,567 horses.

## **Program Updates**

- **Commercial Feed**
  - This program has 301 registered and active accounts for FY23.
- **Livestock Enforcement**
  - The NDA's four Agricultural Police Officers have dedicated their time toward the following duties during FY23: 64 livestock investigations resulting in the dedication of 139 staff hours and 81.5 hours for follow up investigations; 11 animal health investigations resulting in the dedication of 30.5 staff hours; 262 animals quarantined requiring 45 staff hours; 82 traffic stops; 3 check sites totaling 8 staff hours; 29 warnings issued (21 livestock/brand and 8 animal health); 2 misdemeanor citations issued (2 livestock/brand); 888 phone calls; 35 individual contacts; 226 administrative hours; 12 strays; 8 estrays; 130 brand inspections resulting in the dedication of 135 staff hours; 10 transit inspections; 157.5 training hours (6 instructed, 178.5 received); 6 VRE responses requiring 10.5 staff hours; 5 livestock in roadway responses; 2 livestock railroad fatalities; 24 agency assists; 1 vehicle crash versus livestock; 2 vehicle crashes (traffic); 1 animal highway fatality; and 18 hours of equipment maintenance.
- **Livestock Identification**
  - Staff have completed more than 11,542 brand inspection clearance certificates for a total of 393,704 animals, including the public livestock auctions.
  - Brand inspectors have worked 10,252 hours and traveled 212,459 miles performing brand inspections.
  - Division staff renewed 3,539 brands, approved 95 new brand

applications, and transferred 74 brands. Currently 84 pending brand applications.

- 4,257 brand renewal notices were delivered to registered brand owners via email and hard copy in the beginning of November 2022. Currently, registered brand owners have renewed 4,158 active Nevada brands and 386 expired brands.
- Received 2,645 livestock assessment filings for 2022.
- Issued 2,181 livestock movement permits.
- 41 agricultural licenses for FY23 issued.
- 2023 Livestock Assessment notices will be delivered to livestock owners the first week of June.
- The Sparks office and program staff have received more than 134 phone calls or emails relating to the VRE horses since July 1, 2022.
- **Predatory Animal and Rodent Control (PARC)**
  - PARC staff have provided technical assistance, non-lethal predator recommendations, and removal of predators where required across the state throughout FY23. The primary species of predatory animals addressed during the year includes coyotes 18%, ravens 81%, and 1% mountain lions and striped skunks.
  - Staff provided public outreach to 1,082 individuals or businesses since July 1, 2022. No samples for testing were taken of predatory animals during this time.
  - Agricultural product losses verified by staff consisted of 181 goats; 83 lambs; 70 adult sheep, 4 cows, 192 calves, 1 llama, and 194 chickens that were killed during the reporting period. Additionally, 51 tons of livestock feed were consumed/contaminated.
  - Recruitment for 1 Field Assistant II position in Fallon is in the recruitment process. The 2 previously vacant Elko positions have been filled.
- **Veterinary Medical Service**
  - The NDA continues to submit samples for sheep and goats to meet the requirements of the National Scrapie Eradication Program. NDA staff have obtained an additional 80 samples for scrapie testing.
  - Investigations involving Trichomoniasis infected and exposed herds continue. As of May 2023, 2 Nevada premises that were under quarantine have been released and there was no exposure to any contact herds.
  - Swine scrap feeding inspections continue as required for Nevada's two licensed facilities.
  - Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV2) investigations are ongoing, with a total of 8 counties with 2 recent investigations occurring during the past 2 months in Churchill and Clark counties. The RHDV2 vaccine, manufactured in the United States, continues to be available on Emergency Use Authorization, to Nevada veterinarians.
  - In March 2023, the NDA was awarded Cooperative Agreement funding through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). This agreement supports Animal Health National Surveillance and response activities for the division. The agreement includes two categories including the Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Agreement that

covers all activities identified for traceability and the Umbrella Cooperative Agreement that covers all other animal disease activities.

- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) 840 and Official Calfhood Vaccination (OCV) tags continue to be issued by the NDA, in coordination with USDA-APHIS to support Animal Disease Traceability. This fiscal year, 18,883 tags have been distributed. An additional allocation of tags has been approved for Nevada, and tags will be issued at no charge to veterinarians (OCV and 840) and producers (840) upon request, while supplies last.
- Nevada had a detection of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Nye County in a large backyard layer flock in October of 2022. Samples were sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory for confirmation and a quarantine was issued on October 17. NDA staff continue to work in coordination with USDA-APHIS-VS following the detection, including subsequent surveillance in the control zone. This facility has elected to remain populated, and a longer-term quarantine and control zone will be maintained in this area, until a flock management plan is submitted by the owner and approved. This is the second detection in Nevada. A third detection was made in Douglas County in March 2023.
- Staff continue to respond to any reported sick birds and coordinate with USDA-APHIS-VS on testing. NDA staff continue to communicate with the Nevada Department of Wildlife regarding impacts and disease spread in the wild bird population related to HPAI.
- FY23, 2,243 sheep and 4,413 goats were inspected at the two Fallon public livestock auctions for scrapie ID compliance. The Veterinarian Diagnostician and Livestock Inspector performed scrapie livestock inspections in Fallon and Winnemucca during this period.
- During the last 2 months, NDA veterinarians, including Director Goicoechea, have assisted the Clark County Fair and Nevada Junior Livestock Show organizations during check-in procedures by performing general wellness checks and monitoring scrapie tag compliance.
- The Veterinarian Diagnostician supported the USDA by providing comparative cervical test (CCT) testing at a dairy in Nevada. Only the USDA veterinarians or certified veterinarians can perform this test.
- Staff continue to work in conjunction with NDA law enforcement, local law enforcement and animal control authorities on animal investigations, including disease/cruelty investigations involving livestock and/or public health.
- Investigations into illegal animal imports are ongoing, including multi-state investigations.
- Staff continue to communicate with Centers for Disease Control, and OneHealth partners, regarding current and emerging zoonotic diseases.
- FY23, the Animal Disease Laboratory (ADL) has performed 8,600 procedures accounting for 26,709 tests and/or services to date. This total number includes 9,328 Equine Infection Anemia (EIA) tests, which was a significant increase for the laboratory.
- The ADL has performed West Nile Virus surveillance testing on 929 pools

consisting of 17,619 mosquitos in pools and 3 avian specimens submitted by partnering vector and public health agencies. The ADL provided capacity support to the Southern Nevada Health Department (SNHD) during the end of the season. To date, one positive WNV case has been reported in an avian species. The ADL is anticipating larger volumes of testing this upcoming 2023 season.

- The ADL continues to provide non-human rabies surveillance for the state of Nevada. To date, there have been 257 cases, and 6 positive bats, found in Clark, Douglas, and Washoe counties. Most recently, the ADL reported the first positive bat in 2023 which was submitted by Clark County in May.
- The NDA continues to support the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (NDPBH) on a recently awarded grant from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE). This grant funds the Influenza and Zoonoses Education among Youth in Agriculture and will support ongoing efforts to improve education on zoonotic diseases specifically among youth who are actively involved or around livestock such as sheep, beef, chickens, or pigs.
- In January 2023, the ADL successfully passed a Brucellosis Serological Proficiency Testing (PT) issued by the USDA – National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).
- In May, ADL technical staff members successfully completed PT in rabies testing through the Wisconsin State of Laboratory Hygiene Proficiency Testing.
- In April, the Veterinary Laboratory Association™ Quality Assurance Program awarded a certificate in recognition of participation in Terrestrial Bacteriology and Parasitology PT in 2022. All PT results were successfully completed.
- The NDA is currently working on a comprehensive build for a new laboratory information management system (LIMS). The vendor is currently working with the NDA laboratories and their subject matter experts to ensure a smooth transition.
- Currently, the ADL is working on a new verification study for Applied Biosystems™ *T. foetus* Reagents (originally developed by Texas A&M or TAMUC) which targets the ribosomal RNA rather than just DNA, generating early cycle threshold (Ct) values due to higher copy numbers of the target template. During this validation, phosphate buffer saline (PBS) and saline will be validated since smegma enrichment is not required using these customized reagents.
- ADL hosted the Nevada Vector Control Association Meeting on April 4, 2023. This annual meeting is attended by 11 partnering agencies across the state of Nevada. The meeting included presentations utilizing future drone technology, vendor presentation, training resource and planning for the new year. The Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-borne Diseases (PacVec) also attended and presented on training, research, and collaboration.
- The ADL Supervisor attended the 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases (PacVec) held April 6-7, 2023. The conference focused on reports from public health partners, vector control updates, research, and training.

- **Dairy/Processing/Auditing**

- Dairy laboratory staff are required to participate in Milk Proficiency Testing (PT) conducted by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In October 2022, the FDA released preliminary data showing successful completion in the 2022 Milk Microbiology and Pasteurization Efficiency PT.
- The Dairy Microbiologist IV was granted conditional certification by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to perform milk phosphatase testing following training and PT participation.
- The Dairy Operations Manager and Microbiologist IV attended a virtual 2022 Eastern Milk Seminar session. The session was primarily for Laboratory Evaluation Officers (LEO), LEO candidates, and State Rating Officers (SRO) with a focus on the National conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS), laboratory evaluation and SRO updates.
- The Dairy Operations Manager and Microbiologist IV attended the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Dairy Practices Council Meeting located in Nashville, Tennessee in November 2022. The conference was an annual gathering of dairy industry, academic, and regulatory professionals focused on dairy industry predictions for 2024, training, education, networking, and task force sessions centered around the dairy industry. The trip was funded by a subaward grant issued by the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) in support of National Grade “A” Milk Safety and National Shellfish Sanitation Programs, funded by the FDA.
- Inspection staff conducted 39 food manufacturing/processing facility inspections, 8 re-inspections, 88 dairy farm inspections, and 39 re-inspections.
- Of the 14 milk pasteurizers in Nevada, 43 total equipment tests were conducted.
- 55 warning and compliance notifications were issued.
- 9 complaints received and investigated.
- Inspectors conducted 13 single service facility inspections.
- Inspection staff have collected 692 milk samples.
- Inspection staff evaluated 28 milk plant samplers and 41 bulk milk hauler sampler/weighers.
- Inspection staff conducted 9 plant/farm ratings, and 2 lab evaluations.
- Inspection staff completed 25 milk tank truck inspections.
- 400 brucellosis samples drawn.
- 296 staff training hours.
- 56 consumer inquiries were investigated.
- Staff completed 10 store checks for illegal products.
- Inspection staff completed 12 Food Safety Plan reviews and 32 label reviews.
- 4 staff members have completed FDA Pasteurization training.
- 3 new custom-exempt meat facilities permitted.
- Auditors conducted retail price surveys and general store check investigations for 77 locations in the southern and northern marketing areas.
- Audit staff have completed 446 investigative, remittance and close out audits to date for FY23.
- Audit reviews have yielded \$44,358.76 in remittances due and late fees of \$8,554.68 collected.



- 4 new applicants registered as distributors due to the field investigations completed through the dairy product auditing program.
- The Dairy Distribution Program currently has 246 licensee accounts.
- 4 staff members participated in the FDA Laboratory Proficiency Testing for raw milk quality.
- 3 staff members attended the Dairy Practices Council Conference in Bloomington, NM.
- 1 staff member attended the National Association of Dairy Regulatory Officials Conference.
- The dairy laboratory staff conducted proficiency testing for inhibitory substances for all dairy laboratories in the state.
- Renewals for Dairy Distributor Licenses initiated.
- The Dairy Outreach Program has participated in 8 educational events with Moolissa the Cow.

### **Industry Impact**

- **NDA State Meat Inspection Program Overview and Update**
  - Shayda Sanjideh, Meat & Poultry Inspection Project Manager.
    - A grant through UNR will provide funding in the amount of \$1.3 million for the State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Program through calendar year 2028.