



TAD News

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“Be prepared” is Texas agriculture’s motto

Is Texas’ agriculture industry prepared for a bioterrorism incident?
In early August, the Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD) participated in a Texas Panhandle bio-terrorism mock exercise with the National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center, Texas Extension & Engineering Service, Texas Animal Health Commission, West Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University.

Manager’s Update

John Cowan

I, along with representatives from cattle feeders, pork producers and Texas sheep and goat raisers, met in Amarillo to work through a “mock exercise” of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The exercise brought together emergency services such as fire, police, hospital, emergency responders and a team from the National Guard’s “civilian support team” to evaluate how prepared we would be in a real life situation.

As the mock exercise unfolded with five separate disaster outbreaks, agricultural representatives focused on the outbreak of foot and mouth disease affecting a dairy farm, some hogs at the dairy farm and a large Panhandle feed yard. Immediately we were faced with a 48-hour stop movement order from the State of Texas, which closed down all movement of animals, animal byproducts and shipment of live animals across the state.

Shortly following that order, four other simultaneous disasters were introduced stretching the physical assets of the emergency response system. Our exercise led the group to set goals to identify and mitigate the disease, isolate the affected animals, set up a one- mile containment zone and a 10-mile surveillance zone at each infected site.

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Dairywoman reappointed to TAHC

Reta Dyess of Jacksonville, co-owner and operator of Rocking F Dairy, has been reappointed to the Texas Animal Health Commission by Gov. Rick Perry.

Her appointment, which must be approved during the next legislative session by the Texas Senate, will expire Sept. 6, 2011.

Dyess serves as director of the Southeast Council of Dairy Farmers of America and as director of the Texas Beef Council. She is a committee member of the National Milk Producers and the U.S. Animal Health Association. She is also the federation director of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

Dyess graduated from the Baptist Theological Seminary in Jacksonville. ■



TAD Board Action

The Texas Association of Dairymen Board of Directors took the following action during its August meeting in Grapevine:

- Requested that TAD Executive Director John Cowan prepare a letter that dairymen can use to write their elected federal representatives regarding CERCLA legislation.
- Heard a report from Cowan about proposed changes by the Environmental Protection Agency to CAFO rules. TAD has submitted written comments to the EPA.
- Received a progress report on TAD’s development of a producer environmental training program, which TAD plans to present to dairy producers across the state.

The next TAD Board meeting will be held at TAD’s Grapevine headquarters at 1 p.m. Sept. 19. ■

TAD hosts Central Texas dairyman meeting on EQUIP, CAFOs

About 56 people attended a TAD-sponsored dairymen meeting held July 20 in Stephenville at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center.

State Rep. Sid Miller (R-Stephenville) addressed the group and pledged his support for the area dairy industry encouraging producers to remain proactive with new technologies and management practices.

Tony Huffman with the Stephenville NRCS office presented a comprehensive report on the status of federal EQUIP programs. His report gave a good outline of the requirements a farmer working with an active EQUIP contract must meet.

John Foster with the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board of Temple recapped how the state board reviews and certifies comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs).

Two lawyers with the Jackson Walker law firm also were present. Jim Bradbury from Fort Worth spoke on the recent lawsuit settlement between the City of Waco and 14 dairymen. His message was to learn from the lawsuit the things a dairyman can do to minimize getting sued.

Next, Leonard Dougal from Austin presented a detailed overview of the CAFO permitting process and pointed out due dates and timelines.

Dougal also advised dairymen present to take a hands-on approach to the permitting process and ensure they are satisfied with the work their technical service providers are doing for them. ▪

Note to Central Texas Dairy Producers

— from David DeJong, TAD first vice president

Dairy families in the Bosque watershed – now is the time to get your permit applications into the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The technical packages are overdue, and you are responsible for getting them in on time. You must get with your technical service provider/engineer and check on the status of your application. You can lose your permit entirely due to inactivity on your part.

You own your farm, and you are responsible for getting it permitted. Only 10 out of 51 technical services packages have been submitted to TCEQ as of this date. If yours is not one of them, you need to know why and when it will be ready to submit.

Please work with your TSP to expedite the process.

Once submitted, expect many delays and complications. These are all individual permits, and each and every one will be evaluated to a level never experienced before. Do not expect the process to be simple even if your application is a renewal. Every aspect of your application will be reviewed individually, so do your best to communicate to your TSP your individual management practices.

Your pending permit needs your constant attention – do not let your permit fall through the cracks or you will lose it. ▪

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The magnitude of depopulating a 5,000 head dairy and 75,000 head feed yard was a huge task. As we worked through each segment of the exercise, it became very apparent that we must continue to remain vigilant, work with our producers and emergency response teams to protect our nation’s food supply if such an event should occur.

The exercise used both the premise that a disease such as FMD could be a naturally occurring event as well as the result of a terrorist plot. How the problem occurs doesn’t matter; we must be ready if it ever happens.

Time ran out before we got through all the practical components of the exercise, such as working through mortality management plans, getting movement of commerce back up and running, and decontaminating the affected sites.

However, I came away from the exercise proud that the dairy industry has been proactive with its disaster planning. TAD will continue to work with groups such as the Panhandle bioterrorism working group to preparing for an event we hope will never happen. ▪



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