



**Office of the State Veterinarian**

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March 16, 2024

To whom it may concern,

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is aware of an animal health situation affecting dairy cattle. TAHC is working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to further monitor and evaluate reported cases.

Clinical signs include decreased herd level milk production; acute sudden drop in production with some severely impacted cows experiencing thicker, concentrated, colostrum like milk; decrease in feed consumption with a simultaneous drop in rumen motility; abnormal tacky or loose feces, and some fever. Impacted herds have reported older cows in mid-lactation may be more likely to be severely impacted than younger cows and fresh cows or heifers. Dry cows and heifers do not appear to be affected. In addition, some herds have reported pneumonia and clinical mastitis cases as secondary sequelae.

The TAHC, USDA, Texas A&M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL), and dairy veterinarians, along with other partners, are working closely to coordinate an efficient plan to monitor and evaluate affected dairy cattle, develop a case definition, and conduct additional diagnostics.

A strong emphasis on enhanced biosecurity measures is encouraged. As monitoring and evaluation is underway, limiting people on and off premises and prioritizing diligent biosecurity practices is critical. When more information is available, additional guidance regarding preventative measures at the dairy level will be shared.

As outlined within the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, normal and best practice dictates that milk appearing to be abnormal should be diverted from the salable milk supply. Additionally, the federal meat inspection act requires an antemortem and postmortem examination of every animal presented for slaughter to ensure safe and wholesome products enter the food chain.

We encourage veterinary practitioners to report affected animals to the TAHC Amarillo region office, 806-354-9335, or TVMDL-Canyon, 806-651-7478. Data driven diagnostics are key to the etiological and epidemiological evaluations, in turn unveiling crucial understandings of prevention methods. Veterinarians may call Dr. Alexis Thompson at TVMDL-Canyon, 806-651-7478, to make case specific diagnostic plans and receive guidance on sample collection. Collection of EDTA whole blood, serum, feces, urine, and milk from

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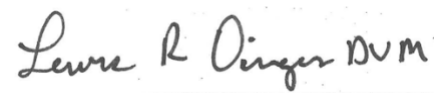
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sick and paired healthy animals from the same herd may be advised. Veterinarians should collect and document detailed production information on the affected dairy cattle.

Updated information regarding the situation and case definition will be provided along with next steps. We encourage checking the TAHC website, <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/>, for situational updates and additional guidance as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lewis R. Dinges DVM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Lewis R. "Bud" Dinges, DVM  
TAHC Executive Director and State Veterinarian