

IBMP Briefing Statement

Agency: MDOL & FWP

Issue: Brucellosis Task Force

Date: October 15-16, 2008

Background:

- The Montana Board of Livestock earlier this year directed the state veterinarian to create a task force to develop realistic, practical approaches to solving the brucellosis problem in the GYA.

Current Status:

- A press release was issued jointly by MDOL and FWP on October 7 to outline the task force's goals and objectives, and to call for applications to serve on the task force.
- The application deadline to serve on the task force is October 15. The task force will begin meeting as quickly as possible once applications have been received and reviewed and members selected.
- The joint MDL/FWP press release, copied below, provides pertinent details.

STATE LOOKING FOR BRUCELLOSIS TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Montana Department of Livestock are looking for ranchers and wildlife enthusiasts to serve on a task force designed to develop solutions to the spread of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA).

The seven-member task force will make science-based recommendations on wildlife and livestock management in the GYA to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease.

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that causes abortions in cattle and wild ungulates like bison and elk, and undulant fever in humans. The livestock industry has spent millions of dollars to eliminate brucellosis in cattle in the United States. The last remaining reservoir of brucellosis in the nation is wild ungulates in the GYA.

Recent outbreaks of brucellosis in two cattle herds in Montana, which most likely came from wild elk, have caused the state to lose its brucellosis class free status. This will have a significant financial impact on livestock producers across the state.

The new taskforce will be co-chaired by State Veterinarian Marty Zaluski and a wildlife professional from FWP. The remaining members will include:

- * A rancher operating within the GYA.
- * A rancher operating outside of the GYA.
- * A wildlife enthusiast, sportsman or conservationist living within the GYA.
- * A wildlife enthusiast, sportsman or conservationist living outside of the GYA.
- * One rancher/outfitter.

For those interested in serving on the task force, applications are available online at the FWP web site at <http://fwp.mt.gov> and MDOL's web site at <http://liv.mt.gov/>. The deadline for applications is October 15. Applications are being accepted at both the FWP and DOL directors' offices.

Contact:

Steve Merritt, Public Information Officer, Montana Department of Livestock, 406/444-9431

(smerritt@mt.gov); Ron Aasheim, Administrator, Conservation Education Division, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 406/444-4038 (raasheim@mt.gov)