



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2010-2011 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Bovine Tuberculosis Monitoring & Management \$600,000 FY 2010 / \$600,000 FY 2011

It is needed because

Since its initial discovery in cattle and wild deer in 2005, bovine tuberculosis (TB) has been confirmed in 24 deer, all located within a relatively small core area near Skime, MN. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been monitoring deer for bovine TB, reducing deer numbers through hunting and landowner shooting, and intensively removing deer from the core area by sharp-shooting. Concurrently, the Board of Animal Health (BAH) has been testing cattle, depopulating affected herds, buying out cattle herds from willing sellers, and assisting cattle producers with fencing to separate deer from cattle feed. All of the responsible agencies are working cooperatively with the Governor's Office to achieve the goal of restoring Minnesota's USDA TB-free status as soon as possible.

Major program elements

DNR's primary responsibilities are to conduct surveillance for bovine TB in wild deer to determine the spatial distribution and infection rates, reduce deer numbers in affected areas, aggressively cull and test deer in the core bovine TB area, and restrict the feeding of wild deer and elk.

Following the discovery of additional infected deer in the fall of 2006, DNR decided to take more aggressive action to minimize the disease in wild deer. As a preventative measure to minimize disease transmission, recreational feeding of wild deer and elk was banned within a 4,000 square mile area in northwestern Minnesota. Also, a Bovine TB Management Zone was created to focus management efforts based on current knowledge of prevalence and geographic location of the disease in wild deer.

In the winters of 2007 and 2008, DNR contracted with USDA-Wildlife Services for assistance with deer removal within the Bovine TB Management Zone, focusing within a 164 square mile core area that encompassed all the locations where infected

deer had been found. The primary method of deer removal by USDA in these critical areas was sharp-shooting, with aerial gunning also used in 2008. The goal with this deer removal effort was to reduce the opportunity for deer-to-deer or deer-to-livestock transmission of bovine TB by removing potentially TB-positive deer and through a reduction of deer densities in critical areas. BAH, the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA), and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA) all support this method of deer removal and believed it was immediately necessary to accomplish our goal. Over 1,500 deer were removed from the core area over both winters, including 12 deer that were infected with the disease.

In the fall of 2007, DNR created a new deer permit area, DPA 101, which encompassed the Bovine TB Management Zone to assist with management of the disease. To increase the harvest of deer in DPA 101, DNR created both an October early antlerless season and a special January 16-day hunt, in addition to the tradition 16-day November firearm season. These additional hunting opportunities were made available to hunters in fall 2008 as well. Thus far, over 1,250 hunter-harvested deer have been sampled for bovine TB in fall of 2008 with no obvious cases of the disease detected. Final testing results are expected by March 2009.

DNR plans to continue putting pressure on this deer herd by removing potentially positive animals by sharp-shooting and aerial deer removal in winter of 2009 as well as continued liberal hunting seasons for the upcoming fall. Additionally, enforcement of the recreational feeding ban will continue. DNR will continue monitoring for the disease through sampling of hunter-harvested deer every fall until we have achieved five consecutive years of no positive testing. At that time, DNR may suspend surveillance efforts as the disease will have either been eradicated or present at undetectable levels.

This proposal will allow DNR to:

- ◆ Assign DNR staff to design, conduct, and administer bovine TB sampling programs, deer reduction programs, and provide liaison with BAH, USDA, and other collaborators;
- ◆ Contract with students and deploy staff to collect tissue samples at deer registration stations and process them for submission to the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab;
- ◆ Purchase sampling and other supplies, and incur travel and miscellaneous expenses required to collect tissue samples;
- ◆ Contract with the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory (VDL) to conduct initial histopathological examination of collected tissue samples, and prepare and ship samples to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) for bacterial culture and final diagnosis;
- ◆ Contract with USDA Wildlife Services assistance in deer removal by sharpshooting;
- ◆ Contract with aviation services for removal of deer by aerial gunning;
- ◆ Promulgate and enforce rules prohibiting deer and elk feeding, including aerial surveillance for compliance; and
- ◆ Promulgate special hunting seasons and limits, and provide permits/rules authorizing landowner deer shooting in affected areas.

Priority-setting

Project priorities are developed based on agency professional expertise and interagency consultation with the MN Board of Animal Health and USDA Veterinary Services. Work tasks are selected by USDA approval of the DNR/BAH Bovine Tuberculosis Management Plan, and additional MOU agreements between the agencies.

Project locations

The location of the projects is primarily the Bovine TB Modified Accredited Zone, as determined by USDA, which includes portions of five counties in northwestern Minnesota. Additional project work is conducted by DNR staff in various locations in Minnesota, by the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories in St. Paul, and federal laboratories located in Ames, Iowa.

Key measures and outcomes

Key measures of performance will be:

- ◆ Collecting sufficient samples from wild deer to meet statistical goals of sample size and distribution;

- ◆ Completing diagnostics on all samples collected;
- ◆ Obtaining USDA and BAH approval of results; and
- ◆ Reducing bovine TB in wild deer within the biennium with the goal of total eradication of the disease.

Financial implications

This request of \$600,000 each year from the General Fund is a one-time appropriation for FY2010 and FY2011.

Contact

Michael DonCarlos, Wildlife Research and Policy Manager

Division of Fish and Wildlife

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155

651-259-5202

Michael.Doncarlos@dnr.state.mn.us