

Healthy Animals for healthy people and communities

2026 Legislative Overview

Board Membership:

- **Erica Sawatzke**, Board President, Poultry Producer, Kensington
- **Peggy Anne Hawkins, DVM**, Board Vice President, Veterinarian, Northfield
- **Jessica Koppien-Fox, DVM**, Veterinarian, Marshall
- **Brandon Schafer**, Livestock Producer, Goodhue
- **Alex Stade**, Cattle Producer, Member of a Federally Recognized Tribe Located in Minnesota who is Experienced in Animal Husbandry, Prior Lake
- **Steve Neil**, Livestock Producer, Northfield
- **Abigail Maynard, DVM**, Veterinarian Specializing in Companion Animals, St. Paul Park

Board Staff:

- **Dr. Brian Hoeft, DVM**, Executive Director and State Veterinarian
- 45 Employees

Board Programs:

Cervidae:

- **Total Premises:** 52 non-WTD farmed cervid herds.
- **Compliance Actions:** 52 for non-WTD herds and 7 for mixed herds.
- **Diseases:** 15 investigations (6 CWD, 9 Tuberculosis) (all negative).
- **Movements:**
 - 567 cervids exported
 - 5 cervids imported (reindeer). Only two states qualify to import into Minnesota.
 - 2 reindeer imported from Alaska.
 - 3 cervids (1 muntjac, 2 tufted deer) imported between AZA zoos.

Companion Animals:

- **Total Premises:**
 - 79 Breeders
 - 99 Kennels
 - 1 Breeder of excellence
- **Compliance Actions:**
 - Commercial Breeders:
 - 17 NOV/COs
 - 8 Civil Penalties
 - 7 Educational Warnings
 - Kennels:
 - 8 NOV/COs
 - 3 Civil Penalties
 - 28 Educational Warnings
- **Diseases:**
 - Canine brucellosis
 - 29 locations quarantined
 - 33 canine brucellosis quarantine follow-ups
 - 9 new canine brucellosis investigations
 - Canine influenza
 - 0 cases
 - Other diseases
 - Tularemia 33 cases
- **Movements:**
 - 15,219 canines imported
 - 3,836 felines imported

Poultry

- **Total Premises:**
 - 59 Chicken Breeder facilities
 - 78 Turkey Breeder facilities
 - 31 Table-Egg Layer facilities
 - 215 Meat-bird chicken facilities
 - 449 Meat-bird turkey facilities
 - 93 registered backyard poultry premises
 - 238 poultry dealers
 - 9 commercial chicken/turkey hatcheries
 - 6 commercial chicken/turkey slaughter plants
- **Diseases:**
 - HPAI
 - 30 confirmed infected sites in 2025
 - 1,181,184 birds
 - Avian Metapnuemovirus (aMPV)
 - 2,481 positive tests
- **Movements:**
 - 63,460,148 birds exported
 - 88,187,705 birds imported
 - Total import/export papers processed: 6,274

Swine

- **Movements:**
 - 4,799,696 swine exported
 - 9,878,732 swine imported

Horses

- **Diseases:**
 - West Nile virus: 9 cases
 - Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy: 3 cases
 - Equine Infectious Anemia: 0 cases

Cattle

- **Diseases:**
 - 1 case of H5N1 in cattle
- **Movements:**
 - 386,222 cattle exported (224 bison)
 - 613,065 cattle imported (390 bison)

Livestock Concentration Points and Market Inspections

- 114 inspections at sales, markets, fairs, etc.

Rabies

- 189 total cases
- 41 positive cases (36 bats, 3 skunks, 2 cats)

Emergency Response

- 74 Foreign Animal Disease Investigations handled by 8 of our 11 trained diagnosticians on staff.
 - 65 poultry
 - 8 swine
 - 0 bovine
 - 1 equine
 - 0 caprine/goat

Funding

- General state funds to accomplish the aforementioned inspections, compliance, investigations, disease response, and day-to-day operation of the Board = \$6,812,199 (calendar year).
- Federal funds for administering portions of specific programs = \$662,337 (calendar year).

Top animal health concerns:

All diseases and threats to animal health concern our veterinarians, staff, and Minnesota's domestic animal owners, here's what we're focusing on in 2026:

- Avian influenza in poultry.
- New World Screwworm.
- Tularemia in cats and rabbits.
- Canine brucellosis in imported dogs.
- Avian Metapneumovirus.
- African Swine Fever (ASF).

2025 reflections:

Tularemia and brucellosis in companion animals

The Board oversees kennels and commercial dog breeders in the state, which doesn't include hobby breeders, foster based rescues, and many other types of entities that don't operate out of a central location. As part of the Board's oversight we track highly contagious diseases of major consequence like Tularemia and Canine Brucellosis. These two diseases have a large impact on Minnesota pets and people.

HPAI marathon response

The current HPAI wave started in Minnesota on March 26, 2022. The response has gone through several evolutions with additional focus placed on preventative measures and biosecurity to blunt the virus from entering barns. Despite shifting federal support and oversight, state resources have worked in sync with local USDA staff and state agencies to keep Minnesota's response robust.

Electronic requirements for animal movements

Minnesota only accepts electronic health certificates (eCVIs) for all animal exports. Beginning July 1, 2026, we will require all animal imports to also be electronic. Going digital increases our speed and accuracy in processing animal health papers and allows producers and veterinarians to move animals more efficiently. Minnesota is leading several other states in adopting an all-electronic requirement for animal health certificates (CVIs).

Focusing on the future:

The Board of Animal Health cannot afford to operate in a silo and has strong partnerships with many state and federal agencies. A federal shutdown in autumn of 2025, as well as cuts and freezes to federal funding has been challenging as we rely on these funds to accomplish our work. State partnerships in both government and the animal industry are paramount to our resilience to combat all the animal diseases we encounter.