

Healthy Animals for Healthy People and Communities

2022 Legislative Overview

BOARD MEMBERS:

DEAN COMPART
President of the Board
Swine Producer, Nicollet

ERICA SAWATZKE
Vice President of the Board
Poultry Producer, Kensington

VACANT
Livestock Producer
Tribal Member

DR. PEGGY ANNE HAWKINS
Veterinarian
Northfield

JIM VAGTS
Livestock Producer
Harmony

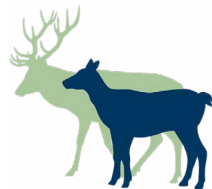
DR. JESSICA KOPPIEN-FOX
Veterinarian
Marshall

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STATE VETERINARIAN: Beth Thompson, JD, DVM

LIVESTOCK AND ANIMALS THE BOARD OVERSEES:



Poultry



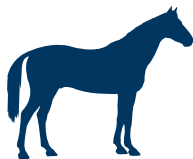
Farmed Deer and Elk



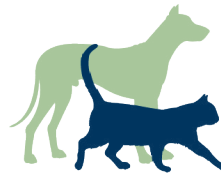
Cattle



Sheep and Goats



Horses



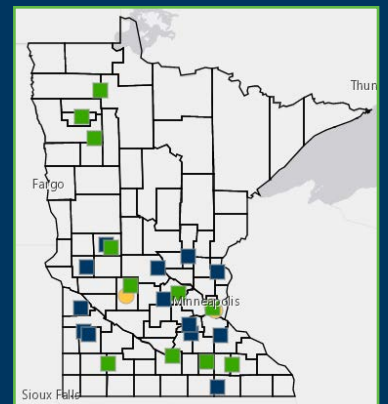
Companion Animals



Swine

EMPLOYEES:

- Headquartered in the Orville Freeman Building in St. Paul. Plus, the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory in Willmar, which is part of the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.
- St. Paul staff worked mostly remotely throughout 2021.
- Staff of 39 people, with one third being animal health technicians and veterinarians working in the field throughout the state.



PROGRAMS WITHIN THE AGENCY:

Emergency Planning: The Board plans for and responds to livestock and companion animal disease emergencies, serving as the lead state agency for these situations.

Disease Investigations: The Board investigates reportable diseases and clinical signs in sick animals that could be foreign animal diseases. A list of reportable diseases is available on the Board's website. <https://www.bah.state.mn.us/reportable-diseases/>.

Rabies: The Board tracks and investigates rabies exposure in domestic animals.

Swine: The Board monitors swine diseases and tracks interstate movement of swine. The Board is also actively involved in Secure Pork Supply and the Emergency Disease Management Committee for Swine. The Board collaborated with USDA officials, National Pork Board, and other State Animal Health Officials to establish the U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) at an inaugural meeting in August 2021. The Board will serve as the Official State Agency administering the newly created U.S. SHIP.

Poultry: The Board oversees industry participation in the National Poultry Improvement Plan, which requires active surveillance, trains individuals to collect and test samples in the field as part of poultry surveillance programs, and permits and inspects poultry hatcheries, dealers and processing plants. It also oversees the Emergency Disease Management Committee for Poultry.

Farmed Cervids (Deer and Elk): The Board regulates farmed cervid herds to track animal movement and monitor herds for chronic wasting disease, and other program diseases. The DNR has concurrent authority with white-tailed deer.

Commercial Dog and Cat Breeders: The Board licenses and inspects commercial breeders.

Kennels: The Board licenses and inspects kennels that obtain impounded, owner surrendered, strayed, or abandoned dogs and cats.

Premises Identification: The Board registers animal premises and maintains records of animal health data.

Carcass Disposal: The Board guides producers in how to correctly, and legally, dispose of livestock carcasses.

Horses: The Board monitors specific diseases of concern in horses and conducts investigations to reduce the spread of a disease when it's identified.

Markets and Sales: The Board permits and inspects livestock auction markets where animals are bought and sold, to ensure the animals are healthy and identified correctly.

Scrapie: The Board is part of a national program to eradicate this disease of sheep and goats.

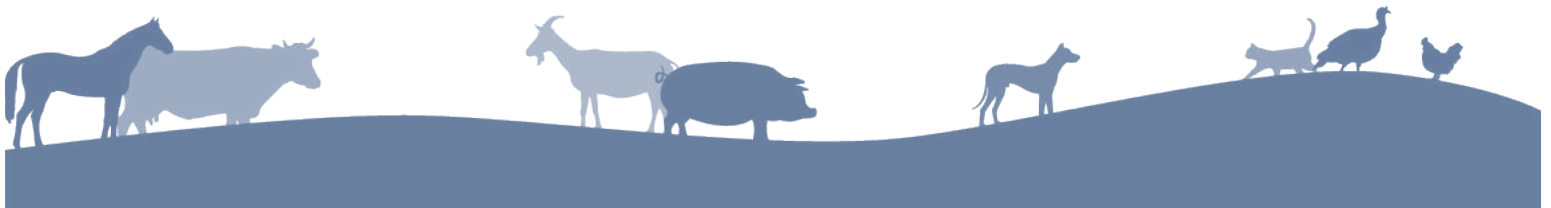
Cattle Health: The Board monitors cattle populations for bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis and tracks cattle imports and exports.

Exhibitions: The Board permits livestock and poultry exhibitions like county fairs and outlines the responsibilities of the fair manager and veterinarian. The Board also works closely with the Department of Health on any zoonotic concerns, which are diseases impacting both people and animals.

Brands: The Board registers and maintains livestock brand records.

Biologics: The Board regulates the sale and distribution of certain vaccines and antigens used in detection and diagnosis of disease in domestic animals.

Animal Disease Traceability: The Board continues advancing electronic certificates of veterinary inspection (eCVIs) and more than 55 percent of CVIs processed last year were eCVIs. The USDA also continues moving toward electronic and has started rulemaking for RFID tags.



DISEASES ON OUR RADAR FOR 2022 AND BEYOND:



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI).

HPAI H5N1 has been confirmed in North America in late 2021 in Canadian backyard flocks and early 2022 in wild birds in the Carolinas. The need for the poultry industry to practice good biosecurity, increase surveillance and report sick birds is crucial during the spring wild bird migratory season. The Board continues to conduct routine surveillance in collaboration with industry to keep these diseases out of Minnesota's poultry flocks.

African Swine Fever (ASF). This is a Foreign Animal Disease currently causing significant mortality and morbidity in Asia, Europe and the Caribbean. The finding of ASF in the Dominican Republic and Haiti is the first time the disease has been diagnosed in the hemisphere since the 1980's.



Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The Board regulates routine testing of all dead or killed farmed cervids in Minnesota and initiates disease investigations on all CWD detections.

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infections in domestic animals and livestock operations. A recent study by the University of Minnesota concluded free ranging white-tailed deer have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 by humans. There is no evidence deer pose a risk of transmitting the virus back to people. The CDC currently considers the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people to be low.



Rabies is a zoonotic disease with dangerous potential to infect people and their pets. The Board works to educate and partner with veterinarians to vaccinate domestic animals.

WE WORK WITH AND SERVE:



Farmers.



County, state and federal agencies.



Private veterinarians.



Universities, diagnostic laboratories and researchers.



Agricultural companies, cooperatives and contractors.



Law enforcement.



Livestock membership organizations.



General public.



Fairs and exhibitions.



U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services division.

BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAM UPDATES:

Staffing: New companion animal focused field veterinarian hired January 2022. Currently looking to hire an assistant director and a program leader to fill open and upcoming vacancies.

The Board is resuming its farmed cervid rulemaking process for all cervids other than white-tailed deer.

Farmed Cervid Program:

- 235 registered farmed cervid herds with 151 herds having at least one white-tailed deer.
- There were delays in CWD testing due to a reagent shortage at diagnostic laboratories. This is impacting labs around the country.
- 2021 continued the trend of fewer farmed cervid herds in the state.
- We received reports last year of slaughter plants not accepting farmed cervids in Minnesota due to limited capacity and limited options for disposal of offal due to CWD precautions.

Concurrent Authority update: Please see separate legislative report produced by the DNR and Board.

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health oversees companion animals.

- In 2020 The Board initiated a program to recognize licensed commercial breeders who demonstrate excellence and exceed the standards and practices of the commercial breeder law. Currently, two licensed dog breeders have met requirements to achieve excellence in one or all of five categories recognizing their achievements in Behavior and Socialization, Canine Brucellosis Screening, Continuing Education, Facility Management and Health Screening.
- Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association appeared before the Board at its December 2021 meeting and

requested the formation of a task force on companion animal health concerns. Specifically the association, on behalf of its concerned practitioners, asked the Board to assemble a diverse group of individuals with companion animal expertise to address health concerns related to the significant number of cats and dogs imported into our state.

LPAI outbreaks in 2021. Any suspect cases of influenza in poultry, based on routine surveillance or testing sick birds, must be reported to the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

- **Between October 2020 – June 2021**, 93 commercial turkey flocks on 70 premises in nine Minnesota counties were identified with an H6N1 low pathogenic avian influenza virus (LPAI). The response to these introductions was managed at the industry level with the Board and USDA providing technical, testing and communications support.
- **In November 2021 – December 2021**, two commercial turkey flocks were identified with an H5N3 low pathogenic avian influenza virus (LPAI). Poultry infected with H5 or H7 influenza viruses require USDA-funded additional regulatory action to eradicate and prevent spread of the virus. The Board worked cooperatively with the affected company and USDA to develop a management plan in accordance with Minnesota’s Initial State Response and Containment Plan. The management plan includes restricting movement of infected poultry, enhanced biosecurity, plus depopulation and disposal of infected poultry and contaminated materials. Possible sources of the infection are investigated, measures are taken to eliminate the virus from the premises and testing to ensure the premises is free of virus before repopulation. Additionally, surveillance testing of surrounding farms was conducted to ensure that the virus did not spread to other farms in the vicinity.

KEY COLLABORATIONS IN 2021:

University of Minnesota researcher Dr. Scott Wells had a new project funded by federal CWD cooperative agreement money, “Development and Evaluation of CWD Biosecurity Practices using a Risk Assessment Approach by Farmed Cervid Producers.” Researchers will be working with a branch of the University to develop online training modules to educate producers on biosecurity. Dr. Wells is looking for farmed cervid producers interested in working with them to do a risk assessment, identify risks and implement biosecurity practices to minimize those risks and then evaluate the impact of the changes.

Research objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Develop on-farm CWD risk assessment tool for cervid producers and their veterinarians to assess risk of CWD introduction to the operation, including both direct and indirect contact transmission exposures.
- **Objective 2:** Develop CWD biosecurity educational resources to support implementation of biosecurity on cervid operations.

- **Objective 3:** Evaluate impact of implementing biosecurity program on cervid operations that implement the biosecurity risk assessment program.

Minnesota detected the state’s first case of a deadly rabbit virus, RHDV2. The Board worked quickly with private veterinarians and rabbit interest groups statewide to inform everyone about this disease and how it is spread. The Board also took into account the encouragement of private veterinarians to approve an emergency use authorization for an experimental vaccine within one week of the initial case announcement.

The Board has a strong relationship with many Minnesota equine owners, industry groups and academia. These relationships proved successful when several seasonal horse diseases were being detected around the country and in Minnesota. The Board teamed up with the University of Minnesota Equine Extension to inform owners of disease risks and Board requirements to keep their animals safe and healthy.