UCD VET VIEWS
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NEW CALIFORNIA BRUCELLOSIS REGULATIONS

What has changed?

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (Department) has revised the state's Bovine Brucellosis Regulations. These new regulations became effective June 23, 1999, and were developed to continue to protect California's livestock and human population from the devastating effects of brucellosis. Worldwide, brucellosis is still a public health problem causing undulant fever in man. In cattle, brucellosis causes significant financial losses through abortions, loss of young calves, infertility, decreased milk production, and lameness. California's regulations are designed to detect the presence of brucellosis before entry, prevent its introduction into California, discover the disease if present, eradicate it if found, and to protect cattle through a continuing vaccination program. While retaining the objectives of the old regulations, the new text brings the regulations up to date with the current status of the brucellosis eradication program in the United States, and current California legal requirements.

What about Calfhood Vaccination?
Calfhood vaccination is designed to increase the protection of cattle against brucellosis and is required for all female dairy cattle when four (4) through eight (8) months of age. **Vaccination is also required for all female beef cattle sold for breeding; they must be vaccinated between four (4) and 12 months of age.** The only officially recognized brucellosis vaccines are S-19 and RB-51. RB-51 is the new vaccine that does not stimulate the same type of antibody response as that produced by actual infection. This different response stops any confusion on standard diagnostic tests between vaccination and infection. **Vaccinated calves must be tattooed in the right ear with the official tattoo identifying the brucellosis vaccine used.** The brucellosis vaccine must be given by an accredited veterinarian who is under contract with the Department, and the vaccinations must be reported to the Department within 14 days. Brucellosis vaccines used in California must be bought and distributed by the Department. Vaccination of adult cattle is only allowed as part of a whole herd vaccination plan developed between the Department and the herd owner for herds affected by or exposed to brucellosis infection.

What are the new regulations regarding Brucellosis Tests?
There is no effective way to know if animals are infected by their appearance; detection of the disease requires testing. Blood, milk, and other samples used for official brucellosis tests may only be taken by accredited veterinarians or authorized government representatives. The surveillance program includes blood testing cattle for movement, sales or shows, and all cattle more than two (2) years of age when slaughtered. Milk samples from every commercial dairy herd are also tested four (4) times a year. Positive brucellosis test results must be reported to the Department by the official testing laboratory within 24 hours of their completion. Any suspicious samples are fully investigated, and may include a blood test of the whole herd. Reactors found during testing must be identified, put under "hold" and, because there is no known cure for brucellosis, slaughtered within 30 days after identification. Indemnity payments are still available under most circumstances.

What are the regulations regarding Bison?
Requirements for importing, testing, classifying, and removing reactors have been added to the regulation. Brucellosis vaccination of bison is not required. Bison more than six (6) months of age require a negative brucellosis test to enter California unless they are steers, identified spayed heifers, entering for immediate slaughter, or have been vaccinated against brucellosis and are less than 24 months of age.

What about the movement of cattle within California (intrastate movement)?
Cattle moving within California must meet current brucellosis laws and regulations. Persons transporting cattle within California must present any brucellosis movement documents for inspection upon request of a government official. Animals may be inspected en route or after arrival at their destination. All adult (more than 24 months of age) slaughter cattle are required to have a USDA backtag, or other identification, that correlates with sufficient ownership information to enable the animal to be traced to its origin. Penlot cattle for slaughter are also required to have individual backtags. Animal movement records must be kept available for inspection for two (2) years.

What about Interstate Movement?
Permits: All female cattle, all bison, and all male cattle more than 18 months of age, including those from neighboring states, require a permit from the Department before they can enter California. Currently, entry permits are free, usually issued over the telephone, valid for 15 days, and have a unique number that is recorded on the documents accompanying the animals. Permits may be denied when the possibility of brucellosis infection is suspected. Extra pre-entry testing may also be

required. Each load of animals entering California must have a copy of the documents required for entry to present for inspection upon request. No diversion is allowed from the destination stated on the permit. If cattle enter California but do not meet entry requirements, they may be required to be vaccinated (if at the proper age), have additional blood testing, or either be required to leave California or go to slaughter.

Health Certificates: These are required for dairy females more than four (4) months of age, beef females and all bison more than six (6) months of age, and all cattle bulls more than 18 months of age. Veterinarians issuing Health Certificates for animals entering California must show that each animal in the shipment meets California's requirements. Owners may be required to certify, by signing an appropriate statement on the Health Certificate, that brucellosis vaccinated animals exempt from testing have been vaccinated and have legible tattoos. This statement will be given when calling for a permit.

Vaccination: Dairy breed female cattle more than four (4) months of age and **beef breed female cattle more than 12 months of age must be brucellosis vaccinated before entry into California, unless entering for immediate slaughter, to a registered feedlot for feeding before slaughter, or with a permit as a registered purebred cow for special breeding purposes.** Non-brucellosis vaccinated female calves of vaccination age will be allowed to enter California if they meet the requirements of a special entry permit to be vaccinated against brucellosis on arrival.

Brucellosis blood tests: Cattle that are not native to "Class Free" states require negative brucellosis tests before entering California, including unvaccinated beef calves more than six (6) months of age, vaccinated dairy cattle more than 18 months of age, vaccinated beef cattle more than 24 months of age, and bulls more than 18 months of age. Bison more than six (6) months of age from any state require a test before entry. Retests will not be routinely required after entry into California. Copies of the official brucellosis blood test records can be sent with the Health Certificate instead of copying the animal identification and test information onto the Certificate. All movement testing is at the owner's expense. Blood must be drawn within 30 days before entry and tests must be done by an approved laboratory. Cattle that do not need testing must be individually identified on the Health Certificate or, under certain circumstances, they may be identified with registered brands on a brand certificate.

What about regulations regarding Special Entry Permits?
Several types of "special" permits are allowed. Some of these permits take time to issue; allow adequate lead time before moving cattle on these permits.

1. **Brucellosis vaccinated dairy heifers** returning to the property of the same owner in California after feeding in a Class Free state. These heifers may enter without a blood test and a health certificate, provided the owner certifies on the permit to their vaccination and ownership status, and provides individual identification information.

2. **"Pasture to pasture" permits**, for established, brucellosis vaccinated, beef breeding herds that routinely move between California and a Free State for seasonal pasture. These cattle may move without health certificates, provided the owner completes the certification statements on the permit.

3. Non-brucellosis vaccinated **purebred registered cattle** may enter for bloodline purposes if they test negative and are placed under a permanent hold until slaughtered.

4. **Native female calves of vaccination age may enter and be vaccinated upon arrival**, provided the destination is certified by the Department.

5. **A "Beef Feeder Heifer" permit** allows brucellosis vaccinated feeder heifers less than 24 months of age originating from a Free State to feed in California for up to 8 months. They may enter without a health certificate, provided the owner completes a certification statement on the permit.

6. Non-vaccinated cattle from any state may enter a **registered feedlot** (no pasture) for feeding for up to 6 months before slaughter, provided they test negative, have a health certificate and individual identification.

7. **Slaughter cattle entering California for direct delivery to a slaughter facility** must be identified sufficiently to ensure that a reactor could be traced back to the premises of origin.

What are Restricted Cattle?
Any cattle under brucellosis quarantine by any governmental agency, domestic or foreign, cannot enter California. Breeding cattle from Mexico are now subject to additional testing and confinement requirements. Mexican origin female cattle will be under permanent hold unless they meet certain conditions and are tested negative after calving.

Summary

Complete eradication of brucellosis from the livestock industry in the United States is in sight. There are only seven states—Missouri, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Kansas, South Dakota, Texas and Florida—that are not Class Free. Livestock from infected states are still a risk to California. If you are not sure about the origins of your replacement animals, you can test them when purchased and retest after a 30- to 60-day isolation period during which they are kept separate from your herd. Brucellosis in wildlife (such as free-ranging bison and elk around the greater Yellowstone National park area) can also threaten the brucellosis status of a state and the health of livestock. The brucellosis regulations have been completely rewritten with new section numbers and new definitions. **Many of the changes to the regulations are described above, but if you need more information about how the new brucellosis regulations may affect you, please contact the Animal Health Branch at 916-654-1447 or the Web site at http://www.cdfa.ca.gov.**

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