



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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DATE: March 13, 2008  
TO: Large Animal Practitioners  
FROM: Leonard E. Eldridge, DVM  
Washington State Veterinarian  
RE: UNVACCINATED CATTLE PASSING THROUGH WASHINGTON

In 1998, Washington State initiated a limited mature vaccination program for cattle to enter Washington State and be Brucellosis mature vaccinated upon arrival.

Recently, it has come to the attention of the Department that unvaccinated out-of-state and out-of-country cattle are entering Washington to receive Brucellosis mature vaccination and then are being shipped to out-of-state destinations. The cattle receive Washington ear tags during the vaccination process in addition to their original identification. Unfortunately, some of these cattle are arriving at out-of-state destination without the original identification and only have the Washington brucellosis ear tags. This results in these out-of-state and out-of-country cattle being designated as Washington origin if the branded hide is no longer paired with the carcass. Washington State could then be held responsible for any disease trace back issues on these cattle. WSDA is also having difficulty maintaining the necessary oversight required making sure the original brand or other identification is legible and that the testing and vaccination is performed according to Washington rule.

It is a violation of Washington rule to import cattle into Washington State without meeting the brucellosis vaccination and testing requirements in WAC 16-54-083 prior to entry into Washington State. Cattle may not be imported into Washington with the intent of later meeting import requirements. Exceptions for entry to a restricted holding facility must receive approval prior to import or will be in violation of state law. It is a violation of Washington law to remove official identification. RCW 16.36.050, states that "it is unlawful for any person to intentionally falsely apply, alter, or remove an official animal health or official animal identification tag, permanent mark, or other device...".

Effective March 17, 2008, all official mature brucellosis vaccinations performed in Washington must be pre-approved by the State Veterinarian. Under WAC 16-86-005, official Washington mature vaccination for brucellosis is available to female cattle over the age of twelve months that are native to Washington State. Prior to vaccination, proof of Washington origin must be presented to the State Veterinarian's office and a



permit will be issued. In addition, WAC 16-86-005 provides that official mature brucellosis vaccinations may be performed on cattle that originate from other class free states or countries only as approved by the State Veterinarian on a case-by-case investigation. Prior to import to Washington State and prior to vaccination, proof of origin of the cattle must be presented to the State Veterinarian's office and a permit may be issued after investigation. Approval is on a case-by-case basis where the out-of-state and out-of-country cattle are quarantined in an approved restricted holding facility at owner's expense for 90 days, tested for brucellosis and then mature vaccinated. The owner is responsible for all costs including but not limited to those associated with pre-approval, import, quarantine, testing and vaccination. Vaccinations not performed in compliance with this procedure will not be considered official by the State of Washington.

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All cattle that change ownership or leave the state will also need a brand inspection performed and have a current Certificate of Veterinary Inspection issued showing the state of destination.

If you have any questions, call the office at 360-902-1878 for more information.