



USAHA News Release

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Russian Brucellosis Vaccine Studies Could Benefit Greater Yellowstone Area

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ST. JOSEPH, Mo. – As a follow-up to a 2005 Brucellosis Vaccine Workshop held by the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA), two USAHA committee chairmen attended a brucellosis conference in Serpukhov, Russia last week. Glenn Plumb, Chief of the Branch of Natural Resources at Yellowstone National Park and chair of the USAHA Committee on Brucellosis, and Rick Willer, Arizona State Veterinarian and chair of the Committee on International Standards participated in the international workshop titled, “Brucellosis as a Trans-Boundary Infection of Animals and Humans that Needs to be Managed by Cooperative Efforts of Different Countries.”

Although the conference focused on human and animal brucellosis problems in that part of the globe, Plumb and Willer had the opportunity to discuss testing the Russian brucellosis Strain 82 vaccine in the U.S. for possible use in free ranging elk and bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Exploring the use of this vaccine in the U.S. was one of the recommendations from the USAHA Brucellosis Vaccine Workshop held at the University of Wyoming in August 2005. That conference was attended by scientists and brucellosis experts from the U.S. as well as several foreign countries, including Russia.

“It was during the 2005 USAHA Workshop that we became aware of the Russian Strain 82 vaccine,” says Willer.

Supported by grants from the U.S. State Department and Yellowstone National Park to the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) obtained by Plumb in 2007, a USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) representative accompanied CRDF’s Deputy Program Director Jim Wolfram to Russia to review the research results on 30 years use of the Strain 82 vaccine in Russia. Those research results are expected to be published soon in a peer reviewed journal. Because the Russian research results supported further study, discussions were held during the recent Serpukhov conference on how to obtain the Strain 82 vaccine for comparison studies in a bio-secure USDA-ARS facility against currently available Strain 19 and RB51 brucellosis vaccines. A scientific study is now being designed.

“Although it is too early to tell whether the Russian vaccine would be of use in combating brucellosis in free ranging elk and bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area, it is worthy of further study,” says Plumb.

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The conference was hosted by the Russian Regional Center for Toxicology and Hygienic Regulation of Biopreparations with support from the CRDF. The conference was attended by individuals from the veterinary and public health fields representing the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union) as well as six individuals from the U.S. and Mexico, including Plumb and Willer.

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that causes abortions and related reproductive problems in many species of mammals, including cattle, sheep, goats, swine, bison, elk, dogs and occasionally horses. *Brucella abortus*, one strain of the bacteria, causes brucellosis in cattle. The last remaining focus of *Brucella abortus* in the U.S. is the free-ranging elk and bison in the Greater Yellowstone Area. While no longer a major human health issue in the United States, in much of the world, brucellosis in people (undulant fever), presents a very important public health concern.

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USAHA, this nation's animal health forum for over a century, is a science-based, dues-supported, voluntary organization whose membership includes state, federal and international animal and public health agencies, allied industry and professional organizations, as well as individual members representing academia, animal owners and animal health professionals. USAHA primarily serves as a forum for communication and coordination among animal health constituents on issues of animal health and disease control, animal welfare, food safety and public health. USAHA operates with 32 species- and subject-oriented committees, and hosts an annual meeting each year with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians.