

Drought May Lead to Importation Issues

North Dakota cattle producers who send their livestock to pasture in another state will have to comply with North Dakota importation regulations when they bring those cattle back into the state.

Some cattle producers transport their cattle to graze in another state when drought conditions limit the forage supply in their state. North Dakota State University livestock experts are concerned drought will cause a severe shortage of forage in the state this year, which means more producers likely will consider sending their cattle elsewhere.

Once cattle cross a state border, they may be considered to be from the state they're in, according to NDSU Extension Service veterinarian Charlie Stoltenow. What the returning importation requirements will be depends on the state from which they are returning.

Stoltenow recommends that since disease risks can change quickly, producers should call the North Dakota State Board of Animal Health at (701) 328-2655 prior to moving cattle out of the state for grazing and also before moving them back into North Dakota.

One of North Dakota's importation regulations is that most cattle brought into the state must be identified officially. Official identification can include brucellosis vaccination tags, U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection metal identification tags, legible breed-registered tattoos, USDA-approved radio frequency identification or International Organization for Standardization-compliant numbers and National Dairy Herd Improvement Association tags.

All official identification must be listed on a certificate of veterinary inspection. Each certificate also may need an importation permit number, which is available to the veterinarian signing the certificate from the State Board of Animal Health.

In addition to those requirements for cattle coming into North Dakota from any other state, the board has adopted specific regulations for cattle coming from Minnesota because of tuberculosis outbreaks there. To bring cattle into North Dakota from Minnesota:

- * All animals must be identified officially and individually and be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection.

- * The veterinarian signing the certificate must obtain an importation permit from the State Board of Animal Health.

- * The animals must originate from a herd that has had a negative whole-herd tuberculosis test within 12 months prior to shipment and a negative individual TB test within 60 days of shipment into North Dakota. If the herd test was within 60 days, no additional individual testing is required.

Cattle that don't meet these testing criteria still may be allowed into North Dakota if they fall into one of the following categories:

- * They originate from an accredited TB-free herd that has had a negative whole-herd TB test within six months.

- * They originate from an accredited TB-free herd that hasn't had a negative whole-herd TB test within six months, but they have had a negative individual TB test within 60 days of shipment.

The State Board of Animal Health considers young animals to be test-eligible at 60 days of age. To be brought into North Dakota, animals less than 60 days old must originate from an accredited TB-free herd that has had a negative whole-herd test within six months of importation. Animals less than 60 days old are exempt from the test requirement if they accompany a dam that has tested negative for TB and the dam is from a herd that has had a negative TB whole-herd test within 12 months.

Bulls coming into North Dakota from any other state also must comply with regulations aimed at preventing the spread of trichomoniasis, a venereal disease in cattle that can cause fetal abortions, pyometra and open cows. Bulls more than 24 months old and nonvirgin bulls more than 12 months old must have:

- * Three consecutive weekly negative trichomoniasis foetus culture tests or one negative polymerase chain reaction test prior to importation

- * A certificate of veterinary inspection declaring that they have had the required tests within 30 days prior to entry and that the bulls have had no contact with females since the first qualifying test

Those regulations don't apply to bulls that are:

- * Virgin bulls 24 months old or younger (A statement signed by the owner or manager that the bulls have had no breeding contact with females must be listed on the certificate of veterinary inspection. They also must have a statement from the veterinarian that trichomoniasis has not been diagnosed in the herd from which the cattle originate.)

- * Imported for slaughter only or consigned directly to a licensed slaughter establishment or livestock market and go directly to a licensed slaughter facility

- * Imported and held in confinement (not including exhibitions or rodeos) as determined by the state veterinarian

- * Imported as part of a state veterinarian-approved seasonal grazing operation without change of ownership and following a risk assessment

For more information about importation regulations, visit the State Board of Animal Health's Web site at www.agdepartment.com/Programs/Livestock/BOAH/AnimalImportation.htm or contact Susan Keller, state veterinarian, at (701) 328-2655.

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