

# Bovine TB leads USDA to destroy cattle herds

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Six cattle herds that were infected with or exposed to bovine tuberculosis have been destroyed after the disease was found by U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians.

John K. Atwell, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and

Plant Health Inspection Service, said three herds were in Alabama, two in Puerto Rico and one in Hawaii.

"Three Montgomery County, Alabama herds were slaughtered after infection was confirmed in one," he said. "The other two herds were considered exposed

because their cattle had intermingled with the first herd.

"The largest herd, about 700 cattle, was located when a meat inspector reported lesions in the carcass of a cow that had been sent to slaughter. The USDA followed up by testing the herd, making post mortem examination of seven

reactors, and culturing tissues at APHIS's National Veterinary Services Laboratories, Ames, Iowa."

In this and other cases, slaughter of the entire herd is authorized when the laboratory isolates the causative bacterium, *Mycobacterium bovis*. Federal and state indemnities are paid to the owners to help compensate for the loss.

"The second Alabama herd, with 400 animals, had formerly been part of the first when the two owners were partners," Atwell said. "The third herd, with 200 head, was linked to the first because of a common border, intermingled grazing and breeding by a bull from the larger herd."

"In Puerto Rico, we found infection in one herd at Coamo after a meat inspector reported lesions resembling tuberculosis in a slaughtered cow. By tracing the ownership of the cow back to the herd of origin, USDA veterinarians located the herd and tuberculin tested its 57 animals. Twelve animals showed positive reactions and were destroyed. On post mortem examination, seven of the

twelve had lesions, and we confirmed bovine tuberculosis at our lab in Iowa," Atwell said.

A second Puerto Rican herd, at Naguabo, was found through surveillance testing by USDA veterinarians. This 255-head herd had previously been released from quarantine, and was being tested as a precaution. Two animals showed positive reactions to tuberculin tests and were destroyed; infection was confirmed through post mortem examination and laboratory culturing of tissues from these animals.

In Hawaii, a 27-head herd was slaughtered on the island of Molokai when USDA veterinarians tested herds adjacent to an earlier bovine tuberculosis outbreak and found two reactors, one with lesions on post mortem examination. Culturing at Ames, Iowa, confirmed the infection.

After cattle are destroyed and removed from a premises because of tuberculosis, the premises are cleaned, disinfected, and must remain free of livestock for at least 30 days, Atwell said.

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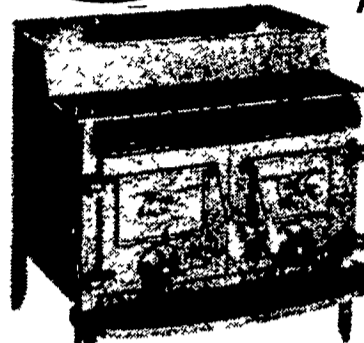
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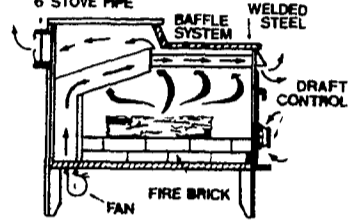


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