

## Brucellosis payment rules revised by USDA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced it will pay indemnity for cattle and swine destroyed because of brucellosis only if the animals are destroyed as part of a total herd depopulation or as part of an approved action plan to rid known infected herds of the disease.

"This rule is necessary to help ensure that herd owners do not abuse the indemnity system by not taking adequate measures to eradicate the disease from their infected herds," said Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

As part of its cooperative national program to eradicate brucellosis, USDA requires owners

of infected herds to develop herd action plans—a written agreement between the owner, a state or federal animal health official and, if requested, the owner's veterinarian—specifying procedures to rid the herds of the disease. Infected herds are quarantined and tested periodically to identify and remove animals that show signs of the disease. Hawkins said it is usually desirable to retest known infected herds at about 30-day intervals, but some flexibility is permitted under individual herd plans.

Hawkins said herd action plans work to the owner's advantage by assuring quicker, more effective results in eliminating disease from a herd and by shortening the quarantine period.

"Requiring a herd plan is only fair to the great majority of livestock owners who want to rid their communities of this disease," Hawkins said.

Brucellosis is an infectious bacterial disease of cattle, swine and other animals. Owners of infected cattle herds can suffer serious economic losses from

reduced calf crops and lower milk yields. The disease is only rarely transmitted from animals to humans. In humans, the disease is debilitating but treatable.

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