



RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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2010 Division of Agriculture Animal Testing Policy

The Division of Agriculture/Animal Health Section wishes to announce the animal testing policy for 2010. The testing that is conducted by the Animal Health staff is to ensure the health of the livestock in the state and to ensure public health when consuming animal products. Budget and staffing constraints do not allow Animal Health staff to perform testing to meet the requests of those producers who wish to have their animals tested for the purpose of interstate movement for sale or show. A federally accredited veterinarian must perform official testing for interstate movement for sale, or for show. The Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association (www.RIVMA.org) may offer assistance in finding a federally accredited veterinarian.

Commercial Dairy Cattle and Dairy Goats

Dairy cattle will be tested for tuberculosis and brucellosis on a voluntary basis. This testing will be performed by Animal Health technicians and therefore will be done for disease surveillance purposes only. Unless a federally accredited veterinarian performs the testing it is not considered an official test and cannot be used to meet interstate transportation requirements. All currently milking cows and all dry cows will be part of the test although it is desirable to test all age eligible animals (all cattle over 3 months of age for tuberculosis and brucellosis testing.) The USDA classifies RI as free from cattle brucellosis and tuberculosis. As such, RI meets disease surveillance quotas to maintain free status through slaughter surveillance. Therefore, any live animal testing that is performed is considered supplemental to the slaughter surveillance.

All age eligible goats on commercial goat dairies will be tested for tuberculosis and brucellosis annually.

Commercial Beef Cattle

Beef cattle are tested for the same diseases at the same ages as dairy cattle are. All intact breeding animals will be tested for tuberculosis and brucellosis on a voluntary basis. As with dairy cattle, the testing will be done by Animal Health technicians for disease surveillance purposes. Unless a federally accredited veterinarian performs the testing it is not considered an official test and cannot be used to meet interstate transportation requirements. Steers are only subject to tuberculosis testing. Beef cattle will only be tested on an entire herd basis of all age eligible animals. Herds may be tested annually. The USDA classifies RI as free from cattle brucellosis and tuberculosis. As such, RI meets disease surveillance quotas to maintain free status through slaughter surveillance. Therefore, any live animal testing that is performed is considered supplemental to the slaughter surveillance.

Commercial Hogs

Hogs may be tested for swine brucellosis. The USDA has determined that since swine brucellosis and pseudorabies have been eradicated from USA commercial swine herds, the state of Rhode Island can meet surveillance requirements to maintain free status by submitting 30 samples per year from RI origin hogs for brucellosis testing. Therefore, the USDA does not provide financial support to test any RI hogs for pseudorabies surveillance, and will only provide financial support to test 30 hogs statewide for brucellosis per year.

Poultry

The Division of Agriculture/Animal Health encourages all flock owners, regardless of size of flock, to have surveillance testing of their birds performed for avian influenza. Testing for this disease is considered a high priority of the division. A representative sample of large flocks will be screened for the disease and all birds in flocks under 15 birds will be tested individually. Animal health staff will also assess risk of exposure to that disease while at the farm. Additionally, testing of birds for ***S. pullorum*** may be performed if the producer desires to enroll or maintain enrollment in the NPIP. ***S. pullorum*** testing is considered of a lesser priority than avian influenza testing, but often the two can be tested for at the same time.

Other Animals

Other animals not in one of the above categories will be considered low priority. Examples of these animals will include pet livestock or recreational use livestock. Owners of these animals should hire a private veterinary practice to test them since limited human and financial resources are available through the Division of Agriculture/Animal Health section.

Health Certificates

The State Veterinarian may assist producers by issuing health certificates for interstate movement of animals. Producers will need to have all necessary test and vaccination records available for review and the animals must be eligible to meet the importation requirements of the state of destination. Appointments for health certificates will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis and will be subject to availability by the State Veterinarian. You may call (401) 222-2781 to schedule an appointment. There will be no charge to the producer for this service.

Important Note

The mission of the Division of Agriculture/Animal Health section is to ensure the health of RI animals and to ensure public health. In the event of any emergency that could threaten that mission the above policy may change. This policy may change suddenly and without notice.