



# Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

Animal Industry Division

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Cody James, Director      Dr. Barry Pittman, State Veterinarian

## Animal Industry Division Newsletter

### Fires, Drought Conditions Plague Utah Livestock

A combination of wildfires, drought, and a hot, windy summer has had a dramatic impact on our state's livestock producers. It is never a good sign when the Utah Drought Review and Reporting Committee meets, as it did in September. This rare meeting is triggered by a state statute requiring the committee to convene when drought conditions reach a critical level. The meeting revealed many costly impacts from these conditions, including loss of grazing lands (unusable from fires and dry conditions) that have forced Utah's cattle ranchers to decrease herds through auctions and

other means. The close to a half million acres that burned during wildfires this year will have up to a three year or more impact on grazing lands that potentially may devastate some cattle owners.

For farmers that grow hay, grass and crops to feed cattle, some have decided to sell herds to hold on to their land, while others have decided to wean calves early and suffer profits lost at lower weights at sale. Ranchers with too little grass on ranges to sustain herds have had to resort to feeding supplements, especially to mother cows, at a much greater expense than usual. Surging hay prices have also had an impact on those that

must resort to buying hay to sustain their herds. Even looking for part time or seasonal work to find stop-gap supplemental income is tough in rural communities where jobs can be scarce. Words like diversification, alternative agriculture, and liquidation sales have become more common in ranch home conversations this year.

Two things to hope for as we head into fall and winter, steady rains and a heavy snowpack in our mountains!



### USDA Phasing Out Free Metal Official Identification NUES Tags

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services is in the process of discontinuing free "brite" metal National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) ear tags beginning in January 2019. These tags have been provided free of charge to state animal health officials to provide to accredited veterinarians for use in cattle as official individual identification for interstate movement or when an official tag is needed with the US shield. These tags are formatted with 9 characters, the first

two numeric characters representing a state code. "87" is the code for Utah. Beginning in January, these tags will no longer be free, nor will USDA continue managing their manufacture, storage or distribution. The costs, anticipated remaining supplies, and distribution of the existing tags remains to be determined.

The difficulty in reading these tags and moving livestock at the speed of commerce, added to the changes mentioned above, increases the attractiveness of the move toward official electronic identification tags. With new technological



approaching the speed of commerce, radio frequency identification (RFID) tags are making more sense as an alternative. Whether low or high frequency, these tags are making headway in every day use in livestock applications. Contact the Animal Industry Division for details.



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### Reminders and Tips:

- Consider a Lifetime Travel Permit for your horse!
- Avian influenza is a constant disease threat to poultry. Practice good biosecurity with your backyard flock!
- Official individual identification for your livestock will reap rewards as we move toward electronic tracking of movements.
- Make sure your pets have a current rabies vaccination, rabid bats and pet confrontations have occurred several times again this year!
- Veterinarians, consider electronic certificates of veterinary inspection in your clinics to improve efficiency!



## Featured Program: Meat and Poultry Inspection

The Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (MPIP), within the Animal Industry Division, is instrumental in providing the consuming public with safe and wholesome meat and poultry products within the state and beyond. With a team of 26, this includes a program manager, assistant manager, two custom exempt specialists, three front-line supervisors, inspectors, an enforcement investigations and analysis officer, two veterinarians dedicated to performing dispositions and reviews, and an executive secretary. Utah is one

of nine states that fall under the Talmadge-Aiken Act, utilizing state employees to carry out federal functions under the Federal Meat Inspection Act, as a Federal-State cooperative program. The Program is at least equal to or better than the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service in its day-to-day execution of laws, regulations, compliance efforts and enforcements pertaining to food safety in establishments under inspection. Utah is also one of 27 states that have their own meat and poultry inspection program. There are 15 Talmadge-Aiken establishments that either slaughter, process or



do both; 17 state inspected establishments; 35 farm custom slaughter units; and 46 custom exempt establishments. The MPIP team works hard for your safe food supply!

## Departmental Featured Program: Utah Grazing Improvement Program



others. The Mission of the Grazing Improvement Program as designated by the State Grazing Board is: "To improve the

The Utah Grazing improvement program was founded in 2006. During the 2006 legislative session, the Rangeland Improvement Act (HB 145) was passed by the legislature. It was sponsored by Representative Bradley Johnson and Senator Thomas Hatch, and attracted strong support from the Utah Farm Bureau, Utah Cattlemen's Association, Utah Farmer's Union, Utah Woolgrowers Association, rural county commissioners, the Utah Association of Conservation Districts, and

productivity, health and sustainability of our rangelands and watersheds."

The Program has three major goals.

1. Strengthen Utah's Livestock Industry
2. Improve Rural Economies
3. Enhance the Environment

We work to achieve these goals through our six regional coordinators who also help livestock producers and permit holders apply for the \$2 million in grant dollars that are used for range improvement and

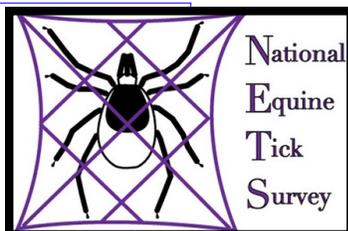
water improvement projects on rangelands throughout the State of Utah each year. These projects compete for funds and are funded at 50% cost share on private lands and 75% cost share on public lands. Projects that provide the most benefit to the above goals rank highest and are most likely to be funded. The coordinators also do extensive work with federal and state agencies to resolve concerns about grazing and to implement better grazing management throughout Utah.

Visit us at:  
<https://ag.utah.gov/conservation-environmental/grazing-improvement-program.html>



## Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine is seeking submissions for a National Equine Tick Survey

The tick-borne disease research team at Kansas State University's College of Veterinary Medicine is launching a new, equine tick surveillance program. The National Equine Tick Survey (NETS) aims to collect ticks from horses from across the United States. While many equine veterinarians and horse owners recognize that ticks and tick-borne diseases pose a major risk to horses, there are no current, comprehensive surveys of the variety of ticks that are found on horses. In addition, there are only small regional studies documenting the tick-borne diseases that horses are exposed to routinely. With the introduction of the Longhorned tick, *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, into the East coast of the U.S., now is a critical time to survey ticks found on horses and the pathogens they carry. If you would like to participate in this survey, email



[eqticks@vet.k-state.edu](mailto:eqticks@vet.k-state.edu). As part of this survey, each requesting veterinarian will be sent tick collection kits. They will have all the supplies to collect ticks, store them, and send them back to the laboratory. In return, the ticks from each horse will be identified and that information as well as information on the pathogens that particular species is known to carry will be provided to the submitter.





## Q&A: National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)

**Q: What is NPIP?** The NPIP was established in the early 1930's to provide a cooperative industry, state, and federal program through which new diagnostic technology could be effectively applied to the improvement of poultry and poultry products throughout the U.S.

**Q: Why was it developed?** The development of the NPIP was initiated to eliminate Pullorum Disease caused by *Salmonella pullorum* which was rampant in poultry and caused upwards of 80% mortality in baby chicks. The prevalence of this disease was so extreme at the time, it threatened to wipe out the poultry industry entirely. The program was later expanded and refined to include testing and monitoring for *Salmonella typhoid*, *Salmonella enteritidis*, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, *Mycoplasma synoviae*, *Mycoplasma meleagridis*, and Avian Influenza.

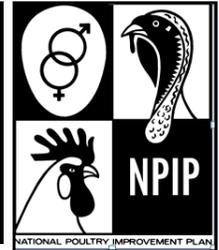
**Q: Why is it important?** Today poultry are shipped all over the U.S. and it is critical that they are free from contagious diseases. Poultry raisers may have avenues to sell their hatching eggs,

chicks or poults in other states, and commercial poultry operations may have international markets. Often, NPIP Certification can be used as proof of health status in lieu of a health certificate issued by a veterinarian.

**Q: What is NPIP certification?** The NPIP contains established standards for the evaluation of poultry with respect to freedom from NPIP diseases. To become certified, tests will be performed on blood and swab samples from the flock and regular testing must be completed at set intervals to maintain certification. Once certified, the operation will be allowed to use a special form to provide evidence of certification along with their shipments.

**Q: Who can be NPIP Certified?** The NPIP currently includes commercial poultry, turkeys, waterfowl, exhibition poultry, backyard poultry, and game birds.

**Q: Who provides the Certification?** The protocols within the NPIP have been developed jointly by industry, state and federal officials. The NPIP is a federal entity



but is managed by the state through an Official State Agent. In Utah, individuals from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, and/or USDA can provide initial testing and training to poultry operations to help them become certified NPIP Testers. After receiving training, they can test their own flocks to maintain certification going forward. Pullorum/Typhoid testing is a blood test performed at the home location annually and all other samples are sent to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory located in Spanish Fork, Utah for completion. Avian Influenza, for example, is a swab test that must be completed every 90 days.

## Food Safety: Pet Food May Be Recalled Too!

If you have a pet, it is important to watch for recalls in pet food as well human food:

- Obviously, pets depend on their owners to feed them and ensure what they eat is a proper and nutrient correct diet for them.
- Just like human food recalls, the pet food industry has similar inspections, sampling, and checks and balances that occasionally results in a recall.
- The latest recall: toxic levels of Vitamin D added to certain brands of dog food.
- To help you stay in the loop and ensure the safety of your pets, we have added links below that you can access for pet recalls.
- <https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/dog-food-recalls/>
- <https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/safetyhealth/recallswithdrawals/default.htm>
- <https://www.avma.org/News/Issues/recalls-alerts/Pages/pet-food-safety-recalls-alerts.aspx>



Pic From Georgia Department of Agriculture



## Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Information

Main Laboratory  
950 East 1400 North  
PO Box 6338  
Logan UT 84341  
Phone: 435-797-1895  
Fax: 435-797-2805  
E-Mail: [uvdl@cc.usu.edu](mailto:uvdl@cc.usu.edu)

Central Utah Branch Laboratory  
514 West 3000 North  
Spanish Fork, UT 84660  
Phone: 801-798-5435  
Fax: 801-798-7009  
Hours:  
Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Necropsies after 3:00 pm on Friday's will be assessed an after-hours/weekend charge.  
Voicemail Messaging: 435-797-1895 (Logan)  
Voicemail Messaging: 801-798-5435 (Spanish Fork)  
After-hours/weekends cell phone: 435-770-7951, \*Enter contact number after tone, then push # key



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## *“Riding for the Brand”*



**We're on the web!**  
<http://ag.utah.gov/animal.html>

### **What We Do**

The Animal Industry Division of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has six main programs:

- 1) Animal Health – Focuses on prevention and control of animal diseases, with special attention to diseases that can be transmitted to humans.
- 2) Meat and Poultry Inspection — Assure wholesome products for consumers.
- 3) Livestock Inspection (brand registration and inspection) — Offer protection to the livestock industry through law enforcement.
- 4) Aquaculture Health — Protecting fish health in the state and addressing concerns of fish food production and processing.
- 5) Elk Farming and Elk Hunting Parks – Regulating this domestic livestock industry with an emphasis on protecting Utah's wild elk population.
- 6) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories - Disease diagnosis and surveillance.

## **Division Highlighted Employee: Dr. Robert “Bob” Erickson—Field Veterinarian Extraordinaire**

This newsletter’s employee in the spotlight is Dr. Bob Erickson, one of our field veterinarians.

### **Q. Where is the farthest you have travelled from home?**

I assisted USDA APHIS Veterinary Services in the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak in South Wales, UK, in 2001.

### **Q. If you could be anyone from any time period, who would it be?**

Jim Bridger, because he was a mountain man, explorer, and well recorded in history in this region of the world.

### **Q. Why/when did you decide to be a veterinarian?**

I decided during undergraduate studies at BYU. I knew I wanted to enter a medical field. My advisor knew my dad was a veterinarian, so he got all excited that one of his students had a chance to go into the veterinary medical field, so we agreed that I would apply.

### **Q. When is the last time you were thrown from a horse?**

It was 4 years ago. I was thrown 3 times that year, 2 in the same day on the same horse! He was a real bugger. I am much more



cautious now and not the cowboy I used to be.

### **Q. Where is your favorite place to visit in Utah?**

There are so many but I would have to say trail riding above Strawberry Reservoir immediately comes to mind.

### **Q. What is your favorite family tradition?**

I really enjoy all of our holiday dinners when most of the family comes for a visit.

### **Q. What is number one on your bucket list when you finally retire?**

I have always wanted to go on an Alaskan cruise, fishing, glaciers, and a quiet and relaxing vacation with just me and my wife, Maurice, of almost 40 years.