

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE 423rd COMMISSION MEETING
Texas Animal Health Commission
February 25, 2025

Item 1 – Welcome and Call to order by Chairman Locke

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Commissioners met in person on Tuesday, February 25, 2025. Chairman Coleman Locke began the meeting at 8:31AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Item 2 – Roll Call for Commission Members

The Chairman called the roll for the commission members. Commissioners Jordan and Payne were absent. The absences were excused.

Item 3 - Closed Executive Session to Receive Legal Advice, Discuss Pending or Contemplated Litigation, and Settlement Offers as Permitted by Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code.

The closed executive session was called at 8:34AM.

Item 4 – Closed Executive Session to Deliberate the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of Specific Commission Employees as Permitted by Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code

Item 5 – Reconvene to Consider Any Action Needed Following Closed Executive Session

The regular session was reconvened at 9:32AM. No action was needed.

Item 6 – Approval of the minutes of the 422nd Meeting

There was no public comment and no discussion concerning the minutes of the 422nd Commission meeting. The motion to approve the minutes of the 422nd Commission Meeting was made by Commissioner Leathers and seconded by Commissioner Trotter. The motion carried.

Item 7 – Report of the Executive Director and Approval of Waiver and Variance Requests

Dr. Dinges presented the following:

(A) AGENCY OPERATIONS & AFFAIRS

Agency: We are at 201.5 FTEs (out of 224.5) filled positions for our current FY25 count as of February 1, 2025.

Rural Veterinary Incentive Program (RVIP): The RVIP provides educational loan repayment assistance or payment of tuition and fees of up to \$180,000 to eligible veterinarians and veterinary medical students who demonstrate a commitment to working in designated rural Texas counties. The program offers up to \$45,000 for each year of full-time veterinary service in rural communities in need of a veterinarian. For 2024, there were seventeen (17) applications received. Three (3) applicants were awarded about \$134,000. The awarded applicants are practicing in Erath, Washington and Fayette counties.

Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP): Rex Wyatt TAHC's Authorized Personnel Supervisor will provide an update on the VMLRP in his presentation.

Cattle Fever Tick Treatment (Eprinomectin) Field Trial: (appropriated \$316,000): This is a two-year trial. Initiated at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge (LANWR) in Cameron County and abandoned day 112. The study was moved to USDA ARS Research Facility (Moore Field-Edinburg, TX) for a more controlled environment where cattle can be penned for inspection and treatment as required. The Moore Field project is proceeding as planned with data and sample collection ongoing. The trial has been completed through sampling day 257 of 308 and is on schedule to complete the project in mid-April 2025. Should have preliminary

findings by the summer of 2025. Planning continues for the residue project that will be done in conjunction with the Texas A&M Animal Science Department and is projected to begin in early summer 2025. The second trial at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge is projected to begin in the Spring of 2026. Due to the need to abandon the study at the LANWR site, TAHC has asked for an additional \$ 30,000 as an exceptional item in the next biennium to complete all stages of the research trial. The LBB has added this dollar amount to the TAHC base budget for the next biennium.

(B) National Update

Cattle Fever Ticks

Nematode Use: A new Categorical Exclusion for nematode use that would expand the use of nematodes to the CFTEP program counties and would include application to wildlife and some cattle has been submitted to the FDA. USDA CFTEP is working out the Material Transfer Agreement with BASF and is hoping to receive a small shipment of the product to begin the project with several cooperating ranches in Cameron and Willacy counties this spring.

Rio Bravo Buffer Zone: USDA APHIS, SADER/SENASICA and the Mexican States of Tamaulipas and Coahuila worked cooperatively to establish a cattle fever tick buffer zone with focused pilot project areas along the Rio Grande mirroring the permanent quarantine zone in Texas. The USDA allocated approximately \$150,000 USD to contribute to the project in 2025. The second phase will run from October 2024 – September 2025. The USDA has asked that there be an increase in wildlife surveillance. In Coahuila, the USDA pledged \$48,548.68 USD, and Mexico is providing \$49,381.38 USD to be utilized on the seventy (70) production units that have been identified (6,024 hd). In the first quarter of FY 25, 1,733 head of cattle have been inspected and treated with low tick infestations so far. In Tamaulipas, the USDA pledged \$99,541.56, and Mexico is providing \$54,715.77 USD for use in 23 production units identified along the border. Treatments to be used include tick vaccine and macrocyclic lactones in the cattle and Ivermectin treated corn will be provided to the deer. No work has been reported in Tamaulipas to date.

Asian Longhorn Tick (ALT)

Monthly stakeholder calls to discuss surveillance efforts for the ALT are to resume on March 10th. The latest discovery of the tick was in Mayes Co. Oklahoma on August 8, 2024. To date 21 states and Washington DC have been affected. Research done by the USDA ARS found that the ALT does not transmit Babesia bovis, a causative agent of cattle fever. Affected states have been using producer education and outreach to mitigate the risk of introductions. Since the 2021 closure of the TAHC state-federal laboratory, largescale statewide ectoparasite surveillance has greatly decreased to the point that the agency only has the limited capacity to identify potential cattle fever ticks and other tick species in and around current cattle fever tick quarantine areas in south Texas and along the Texas-Mexico border. The TAHC is requesting additional funding in the form of an exceptional Item for the next biennium to procure additional equipment and personnel to increase foreign pest (i.e. cattle fever tick, Asian Longhorn Tick, and New World screwworm) surveillance more broadly throughout Texas by establishing a TAHC ectoparasite field identification laboratory.

New World Screwworm (NWS)

On November 22, 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) temporarily suspended the importation of live animals originating from or transiting Mexico based on the confirmation of New World screwworm (NWS) in cattle in the Mexican state of Chiapas near the Guatemala border. The southern border was shut down for 70 days while USDA APHIS and SENICIA developed a pre-clearance inspection and treatment protocol for New World screwworm.

Effective January 31, 2025, APHIS reduced restrictions on the importation of live cattle and bison from Mexico. In addition to meeting all previously established import requirements, imported animals must successfully

complete pre-clearance inspection and treatment for screwworm and import through APHIS-approved facilities associated with specific ports of entry. Ports of Entry were opened first in New Mexico with the first cattle being crossed on February 5th. Horses originating from or that have resided in Mexico within the 60 days immediately preceding export to the United States must complete the established equine import screwworm protocol. This includes pre-export treatment and examination, as well as treatment, examinations, and a 7- day quarantine in an APHIS-approved permanent import quarantine facility upon arrival. Horses transiting Mexico will be required to complete screwworm mitigations upon arrival.

Mexico: As of February 21, 67 cases have been reported in cattle, horses, pigs and sheep. These cases have been detected in the southern states of Chiapas, Campeche and Tabasco. Mexico has not reported surveillance efforts concerning wildlife or pets. Their efforts seem to be focused on farms and check points. They have recently established two more check points in southern Mexico. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec will serve as a new buffer zone receiving most of the Sterile NWS flies produced at the Panamanian facility each week (110 million flies - production capacity each week). It may take 6 months to a year to establish and verify the effectiveness of this buffer zone / barrier. Two NWS fly distribution centers are nearing completion in southern Mexico. Mexico is said to be retrofitting a production facility for Sterile NWS flies (60 million flies / week) which should be up and running in 9 months to a year.

Texas Response: The TAHC staff-initiated preparedness activities in response to the rise in NWS detections in Central America beginning in March 2024. Efforts to train on, maintain, and establish components of response plans are underway and will continue to evolve with the situation. Preparation, education, and discussion with federal and state government partners including USDA Veterinary Services (TX AVIC), Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program -management and inspectors, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) / Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) and the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL), and industry partners, including cattle, swine, sheep, and goat representatives, continue as the situation continues to evolve. In November 2024, educational and outreach materials were provided to Texas authorized and accredited veterinarians (2,400). TAHC and USDA personnel across Texas have been trained to conduct inspections, take and submit samples (sample collection kits have been distributed to field personnel), and perform treatments in the event of a NWS response.

Education and outreach efforts to raise awareness continue to be conducted. Reports of maggots or suspicious wounds can be made to the TAHC Region offices, the TAHC Central office or the TAHC Vet on Call after hours. Potential wildlife detections can be reported to TPWD. If suspected in humans, reports can be made to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or the CDC.

USDA Response: The USDA has developed two, 20 member NWS strike teams, one for the southeast U. S. and one for the southwest U.S. The teams will assist with NWS response efforts and be trained to do area surveillance and to release Sterile NWS flies. The CFTEP has developed NWS treatment protocols for Mexican stray cattle and horses gathered along the Rio Grande.

Other Disease Information

Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA):

For the calendar year 2024, we confirmed EIA in 78 horses. To date in 2025, we have detected 8 positive horses. The detections have been mainly in bush track racing Quarter Horses with the occasional detections in horses that have made their way into team roping or barrel racing. In 2024, a cluster of positive horses was found at a sanctioned/regulated north Texas racetrack. Iatrogenic transmission involving the use of contaminated injectable products and/or blood doping are likely the cause associated with the above-

mentioned cases. Contaminated IV sets, syringes and needles are also of concern with iatrogenic spread of disease.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Poultry: National - February 8, 2022

- 163 million birds affected
 - 1,594 premises in 50 states/Puerto Rico (962 WOAHPoultry/ 632 WOAHP Non- Poultry) (02/21/2025)
- **Texas:** 14 total HPAI positive premises since February 2022 to include 2 commercial flocks, totaling 1,895,800 birds
 - Latest being WOAHP Non-poultry: Brazoria Co, January 2025 & Burnet Co, January 2025

Dairy/Livestock: - National - March 25, 2024

- Influenza A, H5, Clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype *B3.13*
- 18 states - 975 Confirmed Premises (02/21/2025)
- **Texas:** 27 premises – Panhandle and Stephenville Milk Sheds (02/21/2025). Have not discovered an epi link associated with cattle movements between milk sheds. The last known test positive premises showing clinical signs was disclosed on December 13, 2024, and located in the Panhandle Milk Shed.

On January 31, 2025, the USDA APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed by whole genome sequence the first detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype D1.1 in Nevada dairy cattle. This confirmation was a result of State tracing and investigation, following an initial detection on silo testing under the [USDA's National Milk Testing Strategy](#) (NMTS) in Nevada.

USDA APHIS continues to work with the Nevada Department of Agriculture by conducting additional on-farm investigations, testing, and gathering of additional epidemiological information to better understand this detection and limit further disease spread.

This is the first detection of this virus genotype in dairy cattle (all previous detections in dairy cattle have been HPAI H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13) and appears to be a single spillover event from migratory birds into dairy cattle. Genotype D1.1 represents the predominant genotype in the North American flyways this past fall and winter and has been identified in wild birds, mammals, and spillovers into domestic poultry.

On February 13, 2025, the USDA APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed by whole genome sequence a detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype D1.1 in dairy cattle in Arizona. This confirmation was a result of State tracing and investigation, following an initial detection on silo testing under the USDA's National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS).

USDA APHIS continues to work with the Arizona Department of Agriculture by conducting additional on-farm investigations, testing, and gathering of additional epidemiological information.

USDA National Surveillance Mandatory Program (Mandatory testing of unpasteurized milk intended for interstate movement) – Animal Health Protection Act Federal Order – December 6, 2024

USDA APHIS National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) – Facilitates comprehensive H5N1 surveillance of the Nation's milk supply and dairy herds.

- Increase USDA's and public health partners' understanding of where the virus is present in the United States,
- Support the rapid implementation of enhanced biosecurity measures to decrease the risk of transmission to other livestock, and
- Inform critical efforts to protect farm workers to help lower their risk of exposure.
- **National Milk Testing Strategy 5 Stages:**
 - **Stage One:** State/Regional Snapshot
 - **Stage Two:** Determining State Status
 - **Stage Three:** Detecting, Responding to, and Eliminating the Virus

- **Stage Four:** Demonstrating H5N1 Disease Freedom within a State
- **Stage Five:** Demonstrating H5N1 Disease Freedom in U.S. Dairy Cattle

Texas will begin the National Milk Testing Strategy by conducting plant silo monitoring. TAHC is working on the sampling protocol with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). DSHS administers the pasteurized milk ordinance established by the FDA and will conduct silo testing. If a positive silo is detected, TAHC will be responsible for coordinating the collection of bulk milk tank samples from each dairy in the positive silo to detect the positive dairy. TAHC will work with the positive dairy to mitigate spread and ultimately eliminate the virus from the premises.

Avian metapneumovirus (aMPV)

Avian metapneumovirus (aMPV) is an RNA virus which causes a highly contagious respiratory viral disease in wild birds and domestic poultry including turkeys, ducks, and chickens (broilers, layers, and breeders). The virus was initially detected in turkeys in South Africa in 1978 and eventually spread to the U. S. in 1996. Beginning in 2024, aMPV began spreading rapidly through much of the U. S. and has now been diagnosed in 26 states including Texas. Common symptoms include mild to severe respiratory signs (snicking/sneezing, nasal discharge), ocular discharge, swollen sinuses, mild to severe drops in egg production, and decreased eggshell quality. There is no specific treatment and general supportive care is administered. Diagnosing aMVP can be challenging because the symptoms somewhat mimic highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and other avian diseases. Also, like HPAI, migratory wild birds serve as natural hosts of the virus.

Preventing aMVP is limited to enhanced biosecurity and management practices. Presently, there are no licensed vaccines available in the US although the USDA Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB) has recently approved emergency import permits for a few killed aMPV vaccines and 3 live-virus vaccine products. In response to the detection of aMPV in Texas, the TAHC has approved the use of a live attenuated Metapneumovirus vaccine. The TAHC staff will continue to monitor aMVP and will update the Commission on future developments.

(C) Waivers and Variances

There were eight waivers requested, six of which were approved.

- Pullorum Typhoid – **Approved** – allowed entry of terminal channel birds with expired but negative PT test. The birds were confined until they entered market channels.
- Avian Influenza – **Approved** – allowed entry of zoo birds with an expired test. The birds were monitored upon arrival and posed little risk to Texas poultry.
- Equine Infectious Anemia – **Denied** – owner requested to comingle EIA negative and positive equine. The waiver was denied due to the risk of spreading the disease.
- Avian Influenza – **Denied** – request to waive HPAI testing for comingled exhibition poultry was denied due to the persistence of the disease in multiple states.
- Trichomoniasis – **Approved** – allowed waiver of Trichomoniasis test protocols for a herd management test. Tests were delayed in shipment due to weather.
- Tuberculosis – **Approved** – Allowed extension of validity of TB test for bulls transferring between related stud facilities. Bulls were traceable and moved with other bulls with valid negative tests.
- Trichomoniasis – **Approved** – allowed waiver of Trichomoniasis test protocols for a herd management test. Tests were delayed in shipment due to weather.

- Avian Influenza – **Approved** – allowed entry of zoo birds without an HPAI test. The birds were monitored after arrival and posed little risk to Texas poultry.

The motion to approve the waivers and variances was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Leathers. The motion passed.

Item 8 – Legislative Update

Juan Alfaro provided the following legislative update:

- As of February 19th, there were 1,597 Senate bills filed and 3,383 House bills
- The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) requested fiscal notes on the following items:
 - SB 97 by Sen. Hall – Relating to the assessment, destruction, and release of certain deer
 - SB 503 by Sen. Perry – Relating to the establishment of an electronic registry of livestock marks and brands
 - HB 1436 by Rep. Mary Gonzalez – Relating to an animal cruelty public awareness campaign by the TAHC
 - HB 1592 by Rep. Plesa – Relating to an alert system for dangerous plant and wildlife pests and diseases administered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
 - HB 2439 by Rep. Curry – Relating to the abolishment of the TAHC and the transfer of its functions to the Department of Agriculture
 - HB 2482 by Rep. Curry – Relating to a prohibition on CWD containment zones and surveillance zones established by the Parks and Wildlife Commission or the Parks and Wildlife Department
 - HB 2992 by Rep. Tepper – Relating to the name and function of the rural veterinarian incentive program
- Dates of Interest
 - February 10th – TAHC leadership presented an overview of the agency to the Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee
 - February 11th – TAHC leadership presented the agency’s Exceptional Items request before the Senate Finance Committee
 - February 27th – TAHC leadership to present the agency’s Exceptional Items request before the House Appropriations Committee
 - March 14th – Deadline for the unrestricted filing of bills and joint resolutions other than local bills, emergency appropriations, and emergency matters submitted by the Governor

Item 9 – Presentation of Animal Health Programs and Disease Traceability Activities

Dr. T.R. Lansford presented:

1. Animal Disease Traceability (ADT)
 - a. Federal (Interstate) ADT Rule Update
 - i. Final Rule went into effect November 5, 2024
 - ii. Updated Tagging Site Agreements are being put in place
 - iii. No significant issues to report
 - iv. REFERENCE ONLY Official Identification for Cattle and Bison (§ 86.4) Section 86.4 § 86.4(a)(1)(i) adds the requirement that, beginning November 5, 2024, all official

eartags sold for or applied to cattle and bison must be readable both visually and electronically.

- b. Sheep and Goat Scrapie Identification
 - i. The number of calls from sheep and goat producers continues to be strong, in large part due to the ongoing cooperation of the sheep and goat markets distributing informational letters and participation at sheep and goat industry events.
- c. No-cost provided RFID tag distribution (see slide)
 - i. Requests for RFID tags have increased again this quarter compared to last quarter (see slide) to bring out total distributed tag number to just shy of 1.7 million
 - ii. TAHC continues to receive our USDA tag allotment, and the inventory is good
- d. Stakeholder outreach
 - i. Electronic reader distribution
 - 1. The effort to provide accredited, authorized veterinarians with no-cost electronic ID reading/scanning devices continues. Currently, TAHC staff have put 214 readers into the hands of accredited veterinarians for their use in program disease and livestock movement efforts. (see slide with map depicting reader distribution).
 - 2. We are waiting on delivery of another round of these readers for distribution
Interest and demand in and for these devices remains steady
 - ii. ADT staff continue to participate in industry events to provide information to producers on the updated rule, official ID requirements, and to distribute RFID tags.
 - iii. TAPP and Communications continue to assist with messaging
 - 1. Blast to accredited veterinarians
 - 2. Updated ADT website and materials
 - 3. Social media
 - iv. Continue to work with veterinarians and markets on appropriate use of NUES (metal clip) tags on cattle
 - v. Working with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension to formalize show animal validation tagging agreements and protocols
- e. Other activities
 - i. Matt Kubala, Dr. Dinges, and I, along with Commissioner Leathers, participated in the US CattleTrace meeting and exercise
 - ii. Continue to standardize information collection forms and processes

2. Animal Health Programs

- a. Staffing updates
 - i. Region Directors
 - 1. Amarillo and Beeville Region Director positions remain open
 - ii. Field Staff (Inspectors and Region Administrative Assistants)
 - 1. Applicant pools have been deep and interest is high
 - 2. No significant hiring issues to report at this time
 - iii. Agency wide, we have 201.5 out of 224.5 FTE positions filled
 - 1. Agency turnover has decreased from 34% in 2021 to 18.4% in FY2024 and continues to trend downward (less than 5% in the first quarter of FY2025)
 - iv. Recognition of all the great effort shown by all Agency staff involved in hiring, Tana and Latoya in the HR department, and all the region management for their efforts in restoring and expanding our field staff.

3. Program Records
 - a. (see slides) I asked Program Records staff to pull the head counts for livestock imports and exports over the last two years.
 - b. These represent an average of 12,000 movement documents per month that require input into databases
 - i. Challenges with hand-written CVIs
4. Emergency Management (see slides)
 - a. Training/Preparedness
 - i. Attended Kansas Department of Agriculture's annual functional FMD exercise
 - ii. Tri-state Feedlot Exercise (IIAD) Planning Meetings
 - iii. Several staff participated in USDA Site Manager and Case Manager Trainings
 - iv. Development of AIC Matrix in GIS mapping tool that includes dashboard capabilities
 - v. Continued work on prototype for CO₂ trailer and foaming capabilities
 - vi. Completed TAHC Homeland Security Strategic Implementation Plan (HSSIP) and met with Office of Homeland Security regarding the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan
 - vii. Weekly NWS meetings with USDA
 - b. Response
 - i. Incident Management Team members responded to HPAI in backyard flock in Brazoria County
 - ii. Two SOC activations for winter weather in January
 - c. Outreach and Engagement
 - i. Attended NASAAEP (National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs) Conference in Maryland (Dec)
 - ii. Participated in a commercial poultry company's HPAI planning meeting
 - iii. Participated in TVMDL's HPAI tabletop exercise (TTX)
 - iv. Engaged with three counties on AIC plans
 - v. Continue to engage with multiple national and state level agriculture preparedness groups
 - d. Secure Food Supply Program Updates
 - i. Engaging with other states via the SFS Workgroup (best practices, new ideas, etc.)
 - ii. Engaging with Livestock Marketing Association about SFS in sale barns (ties in with livestock market series workgroup)
 - e. Upcoming Events
 - i. Attend Oklahoma's pilot Secure Sale Barn tabletop exercise (Feb. 28)
 - ii. Follow up on internal NWS workshop and expand to partners to discuss response details
 - iii. Train field and management staff on NWS response
 - f. Update on ESF 11
 - i. TAHC's role in ESF 11 is changing to be a support agency

Item 13 – Audit Subcommittee Report

Due to schedules, Item 13 had to be taken out of order. Commissioner Joe Leathers gave a summary of the audit subcommittee meeting. The committee reviewed the internal audit report of the Department of Information Technology (IT). The report found that TAHC has complied with all controls but does need a security contact separate from the Director of IT. The committee also approved a new internal audit charter.

The motion to approve the audit subcommittee report audit subcommittee report was made by Commissioner Turner and seconded by Commissioner Trotter. The motion passed.

Item 10 – Presentation of Texas Authorized Personnel Program (TAPP) Activities

Mr. Rex Wyatt presented the following update:

- Authorized Veterinarians – 2,418
- Trich Certified Vets – 921
- CWD Antemortem Certified Vets – 245
- CWD Postmortem Collectors – 782
- The department conducts the following Veterinary Trainings:
 - Bovine Trichomoniasis – Monthly trainings available for a five-year certification
 - CWD Antemortem – Bi-monthly trainings for a three-year certification
 - Cervid TB
- Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)
 - Student loan debt relief for vets who serve three years in veterinary shortage area
 - Texas successfully awarded the maximum of eight veterinary shortage areas
 - FY25 Focus: Texas-Mexico border, West Texas, panhandle
 - Strengthened focus this year to best help rural veterinary clinics and new graduates
- TAPP 2024 Key Objectives: Maintain veterinary outreach, initiate spring regulatory course at Texas Tech SVM, and enhance compliance tasks
- TAPP 2025 Key Objectives: TT SVM first class, recruitment and retention of food animal veterinarians, continue improvements to veterinary compliance

Item 11 – Presentation Of Disease Information and Epidemiology Activities

Dr. Jessica Monday, State Epidemiologist, presented:

Cattle

- HPAI in Livestock – Texas has had 27 confirmed cases to date in Amarillo and Stephenville Regions
- Zero confirmed cases to date in the past 30 days
- Cattle Tuberculosis: Seven herds under assurance testing, 16 ongoing trace investigations
- Cattle Brucellosis – in the first quarter of 2025, 14,415 test were performed with 2 suspects
- Cattle Trichomoniasis – 5,624 PCR tests, and 1 positive result
- Cattle Fever Ticks: Zero open traces, 67 fever ticks collected

Equine

- Equine Infection Anemia – There were 37,738 tests run and 40 total positive results
- Equine Piroplasmiasis – 2,138 *T. Equi* test run with one positive case. There were 795 *B. Caballi* tests run with no positive cases

Avian

- Avian Influenza – Texas had zero cases of HPAI in the first quarter of 2025
 - 2000 surveillance tests were conducted
- Infectious Laryngotracheitis – Texas has had 2 cases of ILT
- Pullorum Typhoid – 160 flocks tested, which totaled 9,765 birds with zero positives

Swine

- Swine Brucellosis – there were no cases in the first quarter of 2025
- Pseudorabies – there was one case in the first quarter of 2025

Chronic Wasting Disease:

- Positive found in Kerr County in October 2024, with connection to 2021 and 2024 positive herd. The herd visit has been completed, seeking depopulation.
- There were 248 traces closed from 2021, 26 for 2022, 213 for 2023, and 61 for 2024

Item 12 – USDA-VS Report

Dr. Louisa Collins presented updates for USDA VS and the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program. Dr. Collins reported that there have been some changes in the Federal workforce with one field veterinarian and one animal health technician taking the offered deferred resignation. The agency is also under a hiring freeze and will only be able to fill one of four vacancies. USDA VS did support a Tuberculosis training course in Amarillo in mid-February, as well as conducting an accreditation training which trained 35 veterinarians. Ports were closed due to New World Screwworms (NWS) but opened January 31st. New protocols include a ten-day quarantine and three-to-five-day use of ivermectin. Additionally, cattle are visually inspected and treated. The reopening of the ports was phased, and no ports are open in Texas. VS is also training two incident management teams to respond to the threat of NWS, as Mexico continues to have infestations. CFTEP staff have been involved in the preparedness process and have implemented protocols to address stray cattle from Mexico. There have been 1594 premises affected by HPAI since 2022 and Texas USDA VS staff are still deploying to the responses. A new program to combat HPAI in the planning stages, which will audit the biosecurity of infected premises. The goal of the program will be to prevent re-infected premises and will include both state and federal staff. National Milk Test has been kicked off and the goal is to declare the US dairy herd free of HPAI. Silos of milk will be tested and if an infection is found, the state would work to find the source.

Item 14 - Budget Status Report

The following was presented by Paula Andrews:

- FY 2025 Budgeted Revenue - \$20,739,022
 - General Revenue - \$16,162,652
 - AHP Fee Revenue – \$860,000
 - Federal Funds - \$1,766,722
 - UB General Revenue – 1,749,648
 - UB Capital Equipment – 200,000
- Federal Funds as of January 31, 2025

Strategy	Prior Year (as of 8/31/2023)	Current Year (as of 3/31/2024)	Total by Strategy
Field	\$97,980	\$3,005,883	\$3,103,863
Animal Health Emergency Mngmt			
Pass Through High Fence			
		Total Spendable Funds	\$3,103,863

- Fiscal Year 2025 Expenditures (Agency Level)

Category	BUDGET	YTD EXPENSE (as of January 31, 2025)	AVAILABLE
Salaries and Wages	\$12,931,017	\$5,464,144	\$7,466,873
Other Personnel Costs	\$634,771	\$75,628	\$559,143
Professional Fees & Services	\$110,410	\$37,147	\$73,263

Fuels and Lubricants	\$102,940	\$165,365	-\$62,425
Consumable Supplies	\$167,704	\$36,517	\$128,187
Utilities	\$289,092	\$102,038	\$187,054
Travel	\$746,794	\$143,434	\$603,360
Rent- Building	\$626,630	\$459,005	\$167,625
Rent- Machine Other	\$75,607	\$14,837	\$60,770
Other Operating Expense	\$3,104,409	\$1,200,495	\$1,903,914
Totals	\$20,739,022	\$7,701,610	\$13,037,413

The motion to approve the Budget Status report was made by Commissioner B. Klein and seconded by Commissioner Turner. The motion passed.

Item 15 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Agency Contracts and Purchases

Paula Andrews presented contracts and purchases for the consideration of the Commissioners, which included contracts, purchases, and leases for AY 2025.

The motion to approve the contracts, purchases, and leases was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner TJ Klein. The motion passed.

Item 16 – Presentation of Compliance Activities

The following was presented by Mr. Clint Sturrock:

<p>2023 Compliance Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total across all regions: 1396 cases • 64 Cases were closed with criminal cases filings • 179 Complaints were filed • \$60,320 in penalties were assessed with \$13,820 received 	<p>2024 Compliance Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total across all regions: 1045 cases • 106 Cases were closed with criminal cases filings • 473 Complaints were filed • \$72,320 in penalties were assessed with \$8,620 received
---	---

Total Road Stops:

- 2023: 33 stops with 9 being non-compliant
- 2024: 5,373 stops with 474 being non-compliant

Training and Outreach

- HPAI training in conjunction with Emergency Management staff
- Social media road stop campaign: what to expect, how to prepare, education to meet compliance
- Media interview educating the public on the importance of road stops

Item 17 - Consideration and Possible Action on Proposals for Decision

Mr. Jabbar Fahim presented the Final Order for Commission Decision. The motion to ADOPT the order was made by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Turner. The motion was passed.

Item 18 – Consideration of and Possible Action on Orders Related to Commission Rule Violations and Proposals for Decision

Mr. Jabbar Fahim presented orders related to Commission rule violations for consideration of the commission. The motion to ADOPT the orders was made by Commissioner Turner and seconded by Commissioner Oates. The motion was passed.

Item 19 – Presentation of Petitions for Rulemaking

Ms. Penny Maley presented the following:

a) Petition Related to Fairs, Shows, and Exhibitions

Purpose of request for change: make it financially feasible for Texas Exhibitors to travel to various jackpot shows. Interstate event rules require instate exhibitors to obtain a CVI for each show they attend, removal of this requirement would allow students to attend more shows.

Staff looked at the overall risk of disease transmission from Texas origin animals and at alternative ways a disease investigation could be conducted. Disease risk is not appreciably higher for interstate shows if out-of-state participants meet entry requirements and disease investigations could be accomplished by obtaining information about participants from the show sponsor. Staff recommend amendments to Chapter 51 Entry Requirements.

The motion to PROPOSE amendments to Chapter 51 Entry Requirements was made by Commissioner Turner and seconded by Commissioner Oates. The motion passed.

The notice of the proposed amendments will be published in the Texas Register with a 30-day comment period. Comments regarding the proposals may be submitted to Amanda Bernhard, Texas Animal Health Commission, 2105 Kramer Lane, Austin, Texas 78758, by fax at (512) 719-0719 or by email at "comments@tahc.state.tx.us".

b) Petition Related to Interstate Movement of Exhibition Poultry

Purpose of request for change: allow exhibition poultry to bypass CVI and entry permits when traveling interstate, empower Texas-authorized PT testers to perform the tests, and add a specific category that defines exhibition poultry.

Commission Rules require poultry entering Texas to be accompanied by a CVI and entry permit. Additionally, a negative flock or negative individual bird test for Avian Influenza within 30 days prior to entry and a negative PT test within 30 days prior to entry. Testing requirements are imposed for 72 hours prior to entry and are required for entry from an HPAI affected state.

Staff considered the petition and looked at the overall risk of disease transmission. Findings include: Poultry exhibitions are potential sources for disease spread due to gathering of birds from multiple jurisdictions, transport stress on the birds, and frequent lack of adequate biosecurity at events. Requiring Texas birds that leave the state to participate in an exhibition to have a permit and CVI prior to entering Texas ensures birds have been inspected prior to re-entry and have been found free of symptoms or evidence of disease. Birds from an AI clean flock provide little assurance that the birds

remain free from AI following competing in an out-of-state poultry exhibition where commingled with birds from other jurisdictions. Staff recommend denying the petition.

The motion to have staff study the issue further and bring additional recommendations to the next regularly scheduled commission meeting was made by Commissioner TJ Klein and seconded by Commissioner B. Klein. The motion passed.

Item 20 – Consideration and Possible Action on Adoption of Proposed Rules

Ms. Penny Maley presented the following:

- a) Chapter 41, Fever Ticks

The proposed amendments update the dose schedule from 25-28 days to 21-28 days and change the extended slaughter withholding period from 35 days to a period determined by TAHC and USDA-APHIS.

The motion to ADOPT the amendments to Chapter 41, Fever Ticks, was made by Commissioner Turner and seconded by Commissioner Oates. The motion passed.

Item 21 – Awards and Recognition

There were no presentations during the 423rd meeting.

Item 22- Public Comment

Public comment for regulation proposals was made at the time of the rule discussion and during the public comment agenda item.

Item 23 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:43PM.