

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA CHANGES MONTANA'S CLASS "A" BRUCELLOSIS STATUS

WASHINGTON, July 9, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is amending its brucellosis regulations concerning interstate movement of cattle by changing Montana's classification from Class A to Class Free.

In order for a state to attain and keep its Class Free status, all cattle herds within that state must remain free of *Brucella abortus* for a period of 12 consecutive months. The last brucellosis-affected cattle herd in Montana was detected in May 2008. Since then, no brucellosis-affected cattle herds have been detected in the state. After reviewing Montana's brucellosis program records, APHIS has concluded that the state meets the standards for Class Free status. Therefore, we are removing Montana from the list of Class A states and adding it to the list of Class Free states. This action relieves certain restrictions on moving cattle interstate from Montana.

Brucellosis is a contagious disease caused by the *Brucella* bacteria, and affects animals and, rarely, humans. The classifications for brucellosis are as follows: Class Free, Class A, Class B and Class C. When brucellosis is found in more than one herd of cattle in a brucellosis-free state within a two-year period, the state is downgraded to Class A status. Restrictions on moving cattle interstate become less stringent as a state approaches or achieves Class Free status. The Class C designation is for states or areas with the highest rate of brucellosis. States or areas that do not meet the minimum standards for Class C are required to be placed under a federal quarantine.

Notice of this interim rule is scheduled for publication in the July 10 *Federal Register* and becomes effective upon publication.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Sept. 8. Send two copies of postal or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0040, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0040. If you wish to submit a comment using the Internet go to the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0040>.

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Comments received are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be viewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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