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s.22

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 17, 2018 4:26 PM
To: McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: FW: Request Approval - AHM October Issue

I can IN it if you like, or keep as handy BG, whichever you prefer

KM

- African Swine Fever (ASF) does not spread to people, and so is not a public health concern.
- To date there have been no cases of it being found in B.C. or North America.
- The Ministry of Agriculture is working with the federal government and B.C.'s pork producers to take preventative action to reduce the risk of African Swine Fever from entering BC farms.
- The B.C. government has invested in and worked with industry to have biosecurity infrastructure disinfectant equipment on farm and at abattoirs so they are prepared for contagious diseases.
- B.C.'s commercial hog producers have disinfectant equipment on site to prevent the virus spreading, with training in place for their workforce
- BC pork producers take great care in providing for their animals, and I expect they will take the precautions to protect their animals here.

Background

- The virus can be carried in pork products, or on the clothing or objects of people who visit infected farms.
- It has recently been found and is continuing to spread in China and Eastern Europe in increasing numbers.
- ASF is a deadly disease of pigs that is contagious and causes high mortality. There is no vaccine or treatment available, so preventative actions are key.

From: Pede, Rosemary AGRI:EX
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2018 12:45 PM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Cc: Pritchard, Jane AGRI:EX
Subject: Request Approval - AHM October Issue

Hey Rob. Request approval on the October issue of the Animal Health Monitor Newsletter. FYI, there are no CAP-related articles in this edition.

Thank you.
Rosemary

From: Pritchard, Jane AGRI:EX
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2018 11:55 AM
To: Pede, Rosemary AGRI:EX
Subject: RE: Request Review and EA Approval - AHM October Issue

Super looking edition, please go ahead and send to communications.
Thank you.

Jane Pritchard
Executive Director Plant and Animal Health Branch
Director Animal Health Centre
Chief Veterinary Officer
(604)556-3013
1767 Angus Campbell Rd,
Abbotsford, BC. V3G2M3



Where ideas work



From: Pede, Rosemary AGRI:EX
Sent: Tuesday, October 16, 2018 11:14 AM
To: Pritchard, Jane AGRI:EX
Subject: Request Review and EA Approval - AHM October Issue

I've managed to seek out some great articles for the October AHM newsletter.

Please review and let me know when I can send it to communications for approval.

Thanks.
Rosemary

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 3, 2018 3:08 PM
To: McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: FW: wildfire NR
Attachments: Q and A 2018 \$5 Million AgriRecovery Draft Oct 2018.docx

Clean copy of the q and a attached, wes and arif may have comments, but am not expecting any

From: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC) [mailto:sarah.godin@canada.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, October 3, 2018 11:04 AM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Hi Rob,

Good news, the NR has been approved by our MINO! See attached, and please confirm AGRI is ok with this version.
(Looks like no further changes were made since yesterday.)

It can go out tomorrow, we're just waiting on the translation. What would be a good time for AGRI?

Sarah Godin

Regional Communications Officer, Public Affairs Branch
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada / Government of Canada
sarah.godin@canada.ca / Tel: 604-292-5862 / TTY: 613-773-2600

Agente régionale des communications, Direction générale des affaires publiques
Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
sarah.godin@canada.ca / Tél. : 604-292-5862 / ATS : 613-773-2600

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: Wednesday, October 3, 2018 8:54 AM
To: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC)
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Good morning, do you have any guesses if this will be issued tomorrow – we have an unrelated event on Friday that MLP will be at, so would prefer before / after then if possible

From: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC) [mailto:sarah.godin@canada.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, October 2, 2018 3:31 PM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Super, thx!

Sarah Godin

Regional Communications Officer, Public Affairs Branch
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sarah.godin@canada.ca / Tél. : 604-292-5862 / ATS : 613-773-2600

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX <Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 2, 2018 2:01 PM
To: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC) <sarah.godin@canada.ca>
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC) <jackie.stewart@canada.ca>
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Here we are, a quote from Minister Popham below and no further edits, likewise no objections to just issuing a news release, please let me know the day and time once confirmed, and we can coordinate web posting on bc gov site too,.

“B.C. ranchers and farmers suffered losses in this summer’s wildfires that could threaten their operations’ viability, but we’re not going to let that happen. The support we’re providing will help them recover and recuperate from those expenses and help them get back into production so that they can do what they love and that’s producing food for British Columbians.”

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: Tuesday, October 2, 2018 9:38 AM
To: 'Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC)'
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Here’s where we are at, at the moment some edits to the quick facts section, quote and additional changes still to come.

Governments announce new initiative to support BC’s agriculture sector impacted by wildfires

October XX, 2018 – Vancouver, British Columbia – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Governments remain dedicated to helping the ranchers, farmers and apiarists of British Columbia who have been impacted by the devastating effects of the wildfires throughout the province. Agriculture Minister, Lawrence MacAulay and British Columbia’s Minister of Agriculture, Lana Popham today announced the 2018 Canada-British Columbia Wildfires Recovery Initiative to help British Columbia’s agriculture sector recover from the impact of wildfires. This initiative will provide up to \$5 million to assist British Columbia’s farmers and ranchers with the extraordinary costs incurred as a result of the 2018 wildfires. Assistance will include:

- Costs related to ensuring animal health and safety.

- Feed, shelter and transportation costs for livestock.
- Costs to re-establish perennial crop and pasture production damaged by fire.

QUOTES

"Federal quote."

- *Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food*

Provincial Quote

QUICK FACTS

- AgriRecovery is a disaster relief framework that is part of a suite of federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) Business Risk Management (BRM) programs under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. It is intended to work together with the core BRM programs to help agricultural producers recover from natural disasters.
- In addition to AgriRecovery, under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, producers have access to assistance through existing Business Risk Management (BRM) programs, which include AgriInsurance, AgriStability and AgriInvest.
- The 2018 Initiative will provide the same coverage as the governments' 2017 AgriRecovery initiative
- This year's fires consumed 13,000 hectares of land, surpassing last year's record. However fewer producers were impacted due to the locations of the fires in the province

ASSOCIATED LINKS

- Provincial Wildfires AgriRecovery Initiative
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/bc-wildfires-agrirecovery-initiative>
- Business Risk Management programs for BC farmers
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/agriculture-income-protection>

CONTACTS

Dave Townsend
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250-356-7098
250-889-5945 (cell)
Katie Hawkins, Director of Communications
Office of the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
613-773-1059

Media Relations
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
613-773-7972
1-866-345-7972
Follow us on Twitter: [@AAFC_Canada](https://twitter.com/AAFC_Canada)
Like us on Facebook: [CanadianAgriculture](https://www.facebook.com/CanadianAgriculture)

From: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC) [<mailto:sarah.godin@canada.ca>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 2, 2018 9:29 AM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Thanks for the update, Rob! Would be perfect if you could get it to us today. NR will be going to our MINO very soon.

Sarah Godin

Regional Communications Officer, Public Affairs Branch
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada / Government of Canada
sarah.godin@canada.ca / Tel: 604-292-5862 / TTY: 613-773-2600

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Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
sarah.godin@canada.ca / Tél. : 604-292-5862 / ATS : 613-773-2600

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX <Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Monday, October 1, 2018 4:27 PM
To: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC) <sarah.godin@canada.ca>
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC) <jackie.stewart@canada.ca>
Subject: RE: wildfire NR

Still working on this and hope to have it all back to you tomorrow,

From: Godin, Sarah (AAFC/AAC) [<mailto:sarah.godin@canada.ca>]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 11:40 AM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Cc: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: wildfire NR

Hi Rob,

As promised, here's the draft NR for AGRI's input/review. We'll need your Min's quote, and feel free to add any links, etc. to point people towards the program info you'll be posting. Also, please flag if any of the content needs editing.

I'm told current preference at our HQ is leaning towards a paper release, since getting the info out as soon as possible to affected producers is top priority.

Please let us know if AGRI is ok with this approach. If you did want an event, AAFC will do what we can to accommodate.

Thanks,

Sarah Godin

Regional Communications Officer, Public Affairs Branch
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Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 30, 2018 10:39 AM
To: Stewart, Jackie (AAFC/AAC)
Subject: protocol
Attachments: AAFAAC-#104038429-v1-Comms_Protocol_-_Cdn_Ag_Partnership.pdf

found it!

Robert Boelens
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674
Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 24, 2018 2:55 PM
To: 'Theodore, Terri'
Subject: RE: Anthrax

that's the case, there are a dozen or so of them in the Peace, but only one linked to FSJ. It's your choice if you'd like to update the story or not.

From: Theodore, Terri [mailto:Terri.Theodore@TheCanadianPress.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2018 2:51 PM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: RE: Anthrax

Thanks. We've moved a story saying the ministry wouldn't say what type of animals were involved. If you're OK with that, I'll leave it. It's probably the only bison farm in the area?

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October-24-18 2:48 PM
To: Theodore, Terri
Subject: Anthrax

Hi Terri,

The livestock involved were bison, though given the potential impacts of the producer being identified through the livestock type, we're leaving it to each media outlet's discretion how they use this information.

Robert Boelens
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674
Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 25, 2018 1:01 PM
To: 'Darrian Matassa-Fung'
Subject: RE: BCIT News - Darrian Anthrax interview

Sorry we missed the deadline Darrian, but the info, should you like to use it next week (I expect it will still be current), is below.

Why now? Why is this the first time BC livestock have died due to anthrax?

- Anthrax occurs naturally in livestock on the Canadian Prairies and in Northern Alberta, and is established in Alberta's Wood Buffalo National Park.
- The soil types in the Peace Region, where the livestock were infected, has similar soil types as (neighboring) Northern Alberta, and it is not surprising the soil has anthrax bacteria too.
- The bacteria can remain dormant in soil under certain conditions for many years.
- The spores are present in the soil. As a result of feeding and rooting around the animals ingest the spores.
- Once ingested the spores germinate into bacteria within the digestive tract and enter the blood stream, resulting in dissemination throughout the body and widespread infection.

Are other BC livestock in danger? Why or Why not? How could we help prevent these animals from being poisoned?

- Anthrax is only found in some soil types that are common to the Peace area, and is not found frequently in soil types common to other regions such as the Okanagan, Lower Mainland or Cariboo.
- An effective vaccine for anthrax for livestock is available and animals that have been exposed to anthrax spores in soil are often successfully treated if diagnosed early.
- Livestock producers seeking advice on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of anthrax cases in their herd are encouraged to contact their veterinarian.

Are other animals in the region such as deer in danger of being exposed to Anthrax as well?

- Wildlife in the Peace area are at the same risk level as previous years, in that they live in an environment with anthrax bacteria in the soils.
- Based on only the one confirmed location with affected animals in our province, the risk remains very low.

From: Darrian Matassa-Fung [mailto:s.22]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 12:26 PM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: Re: BCIT News - Darrian Anthrax interview

no problem Robert, most likely I will call you back next week as I am past today's deadline.

On Thu, Oct 25, 2018 at 11:40 AM Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX <Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Sorry Darrian, looks like the best I can do is this afternoon.

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 11:23 AM
To: 'Darrian Matassa-Fung'
Subject: RE: BCIT News - Darrian Anthrax interview

Thanks for the phone message Darrian, having trouble arranging an interview in time for your deadline, but still trying for either an interview, or some information to help with your questions.

From: Darrian Matassa-Fung [mailto:s.22]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 10:21 AM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: Re: BCIT News - Darrian Anthrax interview

s.22 I have a deadline of 11:15 Am so talking to someone as soon as possible would be great. Thank you!

On Thu, Oct 25, 2018 at 10:19 AM Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX <Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Thanks for the call and questions Darrian, will do my best to see if there is someone who can chat to you today. What is the best number we can reach you at?

From: Darrian Matassa-Fung [mailto:s.22]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2018 10:02 AM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: BCIT News - Darrian Anthrax interview

Why now? Why is this the first time BC livestock have died due to anthrax?

Are other BC livestock in danger? Why or Why not?

Are other animals in the region such as deer in danger of being exposed to Anthrax as well?

How could we help prevent these animals from being poisoned?

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 18, 2018 12:06 PM
To: Mack, James AGRI:EX; Shoemaker, Wes AGRI:EX; McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: Swine Fever IN
Attachments: IN_African Swine Fever OCt_18 DRAFT.docx

Jane and I put together the attached in the event media call – there is a summary in the upcoming Animal Health Monitor of the disease and the importance of precautions. Comments welcome if you have them

Robert Boelens
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674
Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

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Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 24, 2018 2:42 PM
To: 'JS.22
Subject: Anthrax

Thanks for the call Peter, I hope the information below proves helpful. Let me know if there's more for me to do.

Type of livestock (given the sensitivity to the potential impacts of the producer being identified through the livestock type, we're leaving it to each media outlet's discretion how they use this information)

- The livestock involved were bison.

The process of livestock contracting disease

- The spores are present in the soil. As a result of feeding and rooting around the animals ingest the spores.
- Once ingested the spores germinate into bacteria within the digestive tract and enter the blood stream, resulting in dissemination throughout the body and widespread infection.

Environmental conditions - temperature, moisture levels

- Spores remain infective (able to infect animals) in the environment for years and do not require "activation"
- The spores are resistant to normal environmental conditions (such as normal temperatures).
- Infection is the result of exposure (ingestion) to the spores in the environment.

Which labs conducted the tests on the animals?

- The BC Ministry of Agriculture's Animal Health Centre Laboratory and the Public Health Laboratory at the BC Centre for Disease Control.

Robert Boelens
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674
Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 26, 2018 1:06 PM
To: McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: Anthrax In
Attachments: IN_Anthrax October Draft.doc

The Bg is the info in the news release, pls let me know if any changes are required.

Robert Boelens
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674
Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 18, 2018 3:08 PM
To: 'Robert.barron@cowichanvalleycitizen.com'
Subject: BC corn stats

There is some good news Robert, but not as much as I had hoped for though.

Page 12 (forage) 15 and 33 (sweet) of our "Fast Stats 2016" document have some provincial stats of corn and how they compare to other vegetables that will likely be helpful: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/statistics/industry-and-sector-profiles/fast-stats/faststats_2016.pdf

Unfortunately the regional profiles I spoke of aren't that detailed, and don't include the breakdown of crops.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/statistics/census/census-2016/aginbrief_2016_cowichan_valley.pdf

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/statistics/census/census-2016/aginbrief_2016_vancouver_island-coast_region.pdf

There is a chance however, that colleagues of mine may have some regional info, let me check in with them, I should have an update for you tomorrow.

Robert Boelens
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674
Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 3, 2018 3:03 PM
To: 'publisher@starnorth.ca'
Subject: Cannabis in ALR sales

Sorry this took so long Andrew, but I've confirmed with my colleagues at the Ministry of Public Safety that farm stand sales are not permitted under the retail licensing regime at this time.

If you're looking at quoting the respective legislation or other details please follow up with the contacts below.

Public Safety and Solicitor General

Honourable Mike Farnworth

Colin Hynes

Direct: 250-387-1693

Colin.Hynes@gov.bc.ca

Caroline McAndrews

Direct: 250-356-1196 Cell: 250-208-3254

Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca

Weekends/Holidays: 250-213-3602

Robert Boelens

Government Communications and Public Engagement

Ministry of Agriculture

250 356-1674

Robert.Boelens@gov.bc.ca

Smith, Justin GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 1, 2018 10:55 AM
To: McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: FW: AGRI IN - flood impacts Grand Forks

Formatted and on the drive

From: Robins, Shawn GCPE:EX
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 5:25 PM
To: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: Re: AGRI IN - flood impacts Grand Forks

Robert. The messaging in IN Is approved by our program folks.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 28, 2018, at 5:23 PM, Bates, Stan EMBC:EX <Stan.Bates@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

You sent it back to me!

Stan Bates | A/Executive Director, Operations

Emergency Management BC
Block A – Suite 200, 2261 Keating Cross Rd
Saanichton, BC CANADA V8M 2A5

Ph: 250-952-4895 Cell: 778-676-2063 Fax: 250-952-4872
24 Hour Emergency: 1-800-663-3456

Follow us on Twitter [@EmergencyInfoBC](#) and [@PreparedBC](#)
<image003.jpg>

From: Robins, Shawn GCPE:EX
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 5:23 PM
To: Bates, Stan EMBC:EX
Subject: Re: AGRI IN - flood impacts Grand Forks

Robert our program folk are fine with the IN. Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 28, 2018, at 5:19 PM, Bates, Stan EMBC:EX <Stan.Bates@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

I have checked with the DFA program and we have no concerns.

Stan

Stan Bates | A/Executive Director, Operations

Emergency Management BC
Block A – Suite 200, 2261 Keating Cross Rd
Saanichton, BC CANADA V8M 2A5

Ph: 250-952-4895 Cell: 778-676-2063 Fax: 250-952-4872
24 Hour Emergency: 1-800-663-3456

Follow us on Twitter [@EmergencyInfoBC](#) and [@PreparedBC](#)
<image003.jpg>

From: Robins, Shawn GCPE:EX
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 4:00 PM
To: Bates, Stan EMBC:EX
Subject: FW: AGRI IN - flood impacts Grand Forks

Do you have any concerns with this messaging?

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 3:54 PM
To: Robins, Shawn GCPE:EX
Cc: McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: AGRI IN - flood impacts Grand Forks

Hi Shawn, any comments on the below are welcome pls, with a formatted IN the final product

Key Messages

- These farms have been impacted by the flooding, and the BC government is looking at available options to see what help can be provided.
- We want to act quickly, so these farms can continue their recovery efforts, and prepare for next year and season, but to find the right solution takes time.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Emergency Management BC staff continue to work together to ensure all available opportunities to support the farmers are being carefully considered.

- We recognize the current measures do not provide coverage for farmers in these specific situations, and in addition to looking for ways in which we can support these farms, we are also reviewing program criteria for future years to consider how we can prevent these types of situations from happening again.

Background

- A nursery and a few farms in the Grand Forks area and an organic vegetable farm in the Similkameen valley experienced significant damages following flooding in the spring of 2018.
- The flooding resulted in the fields being covered in debris, which requires clean up, as well as repairs to dykes
- The federal and provincial AgriRecovery Initiative can lead to coverage of extraordinary expenses experienced by farmers in extreme weather events with regional impacts (wildfires, widespread rains and floods), but not for events that cause isolated and localized damages such as these farms experienced.
- The farms do not qualify for Emergency Management B.C.'s Disaster Financial Assistance programs meant to help in these situations because they fall outside of programs criteria:
 - They are excluded from support provided to individuals (and farmers) because their farms are incorporated as businesses
 - They don't qualify for support from the small business program, because their annual revenues exceed the criteria limit of \$1 million
- Provincial government staff continue to work together to develop options under which support could be provided.

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Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX

From: Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Sent: October 24, 2018 12:13 PM
To: McRae, Meghan GCPE:EX
Subject: FW: Final copy - FW: Anthrax confirmed in Peace-area livestock
Attachments: 2018AGRI0081-002065.pdf

if MLP needs KM

My heart goes out to this producer, who has suffered these losses. There's always challenges to ranching, and keeping animals healthy is one of them.

I was pleased to hear that no cases have been found since the feeding site changed.

The best thing for livestock producers is to be prepared. We know anthrax is present in Northern Alberta and BC and that livestock vaccinations are available and effective.

The general public is not at risk, and the provinces health agencies are in contact with any people who may have come into contact with the infected animals.

For Immediate Release
2018AGRI0081-002065
Oct. 24, 2018

Ministry of Agriculture

INFORMATION BULLETIN
Anthrax confirmed in Peace-area livestock

FORT ST. JOHN - A diagnosis of naturally acquired anthrax has been confirmed in the death of 13 livestock on a farm near Fort St. John.

The animals are thought to have contracted the disease from exposure to dormant anthrax spores in the soil of a feeding site, which is no longer being used. No further losses on the farm, which has a herd of more than 150 animals, have been reported.

Anthrax occurs naturally in livestock on the Canadian Prairies and in Northern Alberta, and is established in Alberta's Wood Buffalo National Park. The bacteria can remain dormant in soil under certain conditions for many years,

An effective vaccine for anthrax for livestock is available and the rest of the herd on the infected farm will be vaccinated. Animals that have been exposed to anthrax spores in soil are often successfully treated if diagnosed early. Livestock producers seeking advice on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of anthrax cases in their herd are encouraged to contact their veterinarian.

Though anthrax can affect humans, infection is very rare and there have been no indications of anyone in contact with the animals being infected. Public health officials have identified individuals who might have been in contact with the source of infection, and are following up with those individuals directly to assess their health and provide health advice. There is no health risk to the general public.

People handling infected animals or contaminated products may contact anthrax spores through cuts or scrapes on their skin, resulting in sores and infection that can be treated with antibiotics.

Quick Facts:

* The anthrax found in soil poses a greatly reduced risk compared to anthrax spores treated to disperse in air where they can be inhaled. These so-called weaponized versions of anthrax can lead to severe lung infections.

* The most recent cases of human anthrax were in Saskatchewan in 2006 and involved people with skin infections, all of whom recovered fully.

Learn More:

Anthrax information from the BC Centre of Disease Control is at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/anthrax>

Contacts:

Ministry of Agriculture
250 356-1674

BC Centre for Disease Control
778 867-7472

Northern Health
1 877 961-7724

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: <http://news.gov.bc.ca/connect>