Rules and Regulations

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 78

[Docket No. 94-134-1]

Brucellosis in Cattle; State and Area Classifications; Colorado

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA. **ACTION:** Interim rule and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are amending the brucellosis regulations concerning the interstate movement of cattle by changing the classification of Colorado from Class A to Class Free. We have determined that Colorado meets the standards for Class Free status. This action relieves certain restrictions on the interstate movement of cattle from Colorado.

DATES: Interim rule effective January 23, 1995. Consideration will be given only to comments received on or before March 24, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Please send an original and three copies of your comments to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, P.O. Drawer 810, Riverdale, MD 20738. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 94-134–1. Comments received may be inspected at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect comments are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Michael J. Gilsdorf, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Cattle Diseases and Surveillance Staff, Veterinary Services, APHIS, USDA, P.O. Drawer 810, Riverdale, MD 20738. The telephone number for the agency contact will change when agency offices in Hyattsville, MD, move to Riverdale, MD, during January. Telephone: (301) 436– 4918 (Hyattsville); (301) 734–4918 (Riverdale).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Brucellosis is a contagious disease affecting animals and humans, caused by bacteria of the genus *Brucella*.

The brucellosis regulations, contained in 9 CFR part 78 (referred to below as the regulations), provide a system for classifying States or portions of States according to the rate of *Brucella* infection present, and the general effectiveness of a brucellosis control and eradication program. The classifications are Class Free, Class A, Class B, and Class C. States or areas that do not meet the minimum standards for Class C are required to be placed under Federal quarantine.

The brucellosis Class Free classification is based on a finding of no known brucellosis in cattle for the 12 months preceding classification as Class Free. The Class C classification is for States or areas with the highest rate of brucellosis. Class B and Class A fall between these two extremes. Restrictions on moving cattle interstate become less stringent as a State approaches or achieves Class Free status.

The standards for the different classifications of States or areas entail (1) maintaining a cattle herd infection rate not to exceed a stated level during 12 consecutive months; (2) tracing back to the farm of origin and successfully closing a stated percent of all brucellosis reactors found in the course of Market Cattle Identification (MCI) testing; (3) maintaining a surveillance system that includes testing of dairy herds, participation of all recognized slaughtering establishments in the MCI program, identification and monitoring of herds at high risk of infection (including herds adjacent to infected herds and herds from which infected animals have been sold or received), and having an individual herd plan in effect within a stated number of days after the herd owner is notified of the finding of brucellosis in a herd he or she owns; and (4) maintaining minimum

procedural standards for administering the program.

Before the effective date of this interim rule, Colorado was classified as a Class A State.

To attain and maintain Class Free status, a State or area must (1) remain free from field strain Brucella abortus infection for 12 consecutive months or longer; (2) trace back at least 90 percent of all brucellosis reactors found in the course of MCI testing to the farm of origin; (3) successfully close at least 95 percent of the MCI reactor cases traced to the farm of origin during the 12 consecutive month period immediately prior to the most recent anniversary of the date the State or area was classified Class Free; and (4) have a specified surveillance system, as described above, including an approved individual herd plan in effect within 15 days of locating the source herd or recipient herd.

After reviewing the brucellosis program records for Colorado, we have concluded that the State meets the standards for Class Free status. Therefore, we are removing Colorado from the list of Class A States in § 78.41(b) and adding it to the list of Class Free States in § 78.41(a). This action relieves certain restrictions on moving cattle interstate from Colorado.

Immediate Action

The Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that there is good cause for publishing this interim rule without prior opportunity for public comment. Immediate action is warranted to remove unnecessary restrictions on the interstate movement of cattle from Colorado.

Because prior notice and other public procedures with respect to this action are impracticable and contrary to the public interest under these conditions, we find good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553 to make it effective upon publication in the Federal Register. We will consider comments that are received within 60 days of publication of this rule in the Federal Register. After the comment period closes, we will publish another document in the **Federal Register**. It will include a discussion of any comments we receive and any amendments we are making to the rule as a result of the comments.