

Washington State 4-H Fair

WSU Puyallup ❖ 7612 Pioneer Way East ❖ Puyallup, WA 98371

Off Season (Oct 1 – Aug 15): 253-445-4630; Fax 253-445-4587
Fair Time (Aug 16-Sept 30): 253-770-5410; Fax: 253-770-5412

Email: st4hfair@wsu.edu

Website: <http://4h.wsu.edu/statefair/index.htm>



December 3, 2008

Dear State 4-H Fair Beef and Dairy Cattle Exhibitors:

The Washington Department of Agriculture's office of the state veterinarian is in the middle of an investigation of Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) in cattle in the state. They have identified at least 19 head of cattle ranging in age from 4 months to 6 years that have died as a result of this viral disease. The cattle are from a number of different locations in the state. The most likely source, which the department is still investigating, is from close contact with young lambs during the last five days of the Western Washington (Puyallup) Fair, September 17-21, 2008. Confirmatory tests have been done by the diagnostic laboratory, WADDL.

The incubation period for this disease is (on average) about 50 days, which is why there has been some lag period between the date of the fair and the investigation. The number of head of cattle affected is unusual, so more information is being gathered to understand the circumstances of exposure and transmission. Private veterinary practitioners, WADDL, Veterinary Medicine Extension, and others have been working with the state veterinarian on the investigation and providing information to producers.

For your information and use, Veterinary Medicine Extension has put together a fact sheet on the disease, testing and prevention strategies that is intended for producers and veterinarians. A copy of the fact sheet is enclosed.

At this point, there have been no reports of 4-H beef and dairy animals from the fair having been infected with this virus. Should you find any of your animals exhibiting symptoms of MCF, please contact the State Veterinarian's Office immediately at 360-902-1878.

The possibility of this disease having been contracted at the fair will result in major changes in our animal show schedules in 2009. The Western Washington Fair, with the support of the WA State 4-H Fair and the WA State FFA Exhibition, are taking precautions to prevent the passing of diseases and viruses from one species to another. I will be meeting with WWF personnel over the next few weeks to work out the 2009 fair schedules. Those schedules will be released to you as soon as they are finalized.

We ask for your patience and cooperation throughout the continuing investigation, and your support as we work together for the benefit of all fair exhibitors.

Best Regards,

Tom Gwin, Manager
WA State 4-H Fair

Enclosure

Cc: WA State 4-H Fair Board of Trustees
WA State 4-H Fair Staff and Beef/Dairy Cattle Superintendents
WSU County Extension Offices