



Advisor Notes to the Aquatic Livestock Industry

January 4, 2008

Volume 1, Issue 1 – Dr. Starling

Common Market. Aquatic Livestock Alliance (Alliance) will promote interstate commerce in the Region. Does some interstate body need to be put in place that can develop common marketing conditions (Common Market) for the various species of aquatic livestock? Can the Alliance fill the bill on behalf of the Producers?

Commercial Grade Aquatic Livestock Regulations. The Alliance can develop the criteria and goals for developing uniform Regional regulations. Our current menageries of regulations that change from State to State are more of the home-grown variety of regulations. There have been a lot of good ideas put into the various laws and regulations but they are not consistent - there has been no common code for the do-it-yourselfers amongst us. We really do need a commercial grade of regulations to permit our livestock industry to move out and grow as it has potential for.

State Veterinary Authority for aquatic livestock commerce. The Alliance has taken a direct interest in commerce of aquatic livestock. There are simplified systems in place for other livestock industries to broaden their markets effectively. Disease in livestock is traditionally and legislatively directed to the State Veterinarian. Do State Veterinarians in the Alliance Region need to move towards establishing and providing communications, regulations, registrations, premises id, and the many other common grounds with the livestock industry in general?

Producer Association. There are Cattlemen's Association, Pork Producer's Association, and Sheep Producer's Associations at various levels around the country to increase the efficiency of the industry. There is a Beef Improvement Program. There are many efforts by other livestock producers to unite in speaking with a single voice. Can Alliance or a part of it specifically put its efforts into making aquatic livestock producers apparent to public and regulators and politicians?

Federal oversight. We could cry over the "spilled milk" of APHIS dragging it's feet now at something over 430 days since the Federal Emergency Order came down around our industry in this Region. This is a repugnant message to the aquatic livestock industry. It could be seen as strikingly similar to the fat Sheriff that made his own decision at his own pace in each locum of the Kingdoms of Europe almost 1000 years ago. Those characters were known to stop an ox-cart of goods for whatever time it took to make arrangements. Nothing illegal in our aquatic livestock cart, the Sheriff just hasn't had enough time to document all the dead fish that haven't died yet, or can't let our fish move until he can prove they come down with the "plague" nobody has seen on a fish farm yet. The Sheriff says that if wild fish can move it around than farmed fish must also - They are both fish. There weren't any sick fish moving around the first season without the Federal Order, but we must stop our ox carts now and wait until we can prove this plague in fish does move. If we can load our carts with other species from other parts of the country we wouldn't have to wait - even though this is a newly isolated virus and all fresh water species could be susceptible according to scientific reasoning.

As a Region the Alliance must set out to determine how the Aquatic Livestock Industry can lower the Medieval City gates across the moats of our boundaries to allow commerce to begin so we can step out of the Dark Ages. The Alliance can help Aquatic Livestock Producers find ways of meeting the various State requirements that have walled themselves into their own regulations and have no real Emissaries to their neighbors to discuss how livestock commerce could grow and thrive under common conditions. Before the Renaissance there was no need for developing cooperation because all traffic was simply prohibited by actual highway robbers or oppressively taxed by every Sheriff that noticed the movement along his road. There were no standards and uniform methods of testing. There was no need for surveillance if there was nothing new arriving. Our calendars say we are in day 4 of 2008 AD but our aquatic livestock laws and actions are more reminiscence of 1208 AD. Do we really need 800 years to catch up with our commerce cousins in other livestock industries?

Foot note: When we collectively consider the notes above, there seems to be a tremendous need for aquatic livestock (private or public) to come out of the wildlife image that has been hung around the industry's neck by the history and association with wildlife. It seems to be the time and place to put effort into becoming a recognized participant in Agriculture by requiring the same of our regulators and regulations that benefit the commerce of all livestock industries.

There are many facets to successful livestock commerce. It might be helpful to keep a focus on the Commerce issue of our discussions. Documentation of animal movement is arguably more important than required testing if documentation is inadequate for traceback. Even without testing requirements, uniform documentation of animal description/identification, the origination facility, destination, transportation, testing, examination, etc can provide paramount information in tracking and tracing animals that become clinically ill. The language of regulation is documentation; the currency of epidemiology that saves valuable time is traceback information.

Quarantine authority to control animal movement is universal in livestock agencies but is relatively rare in wildlife agencies to control disease. Disease will not be nearly so distracting if there are effective commercial grade livestock requirements to grow into.