



Salmonella infections linked to dairy bull calves prompt warning from animal health officials

Release Date: November 29, 2016

Media Contacts: [Raechelle Belli](mailto:raechelle@datcp.wisconsin.gov), 608-224-5005
[Bill Cosh](mailto:bill.cosh@datcp.wisconsin.gov), Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON, Wisconsin – Animal health officials are urging cattle farmers to take preventive measures against a multi-drug resistant strain of *Salmonella* Heidelberg linked to infected dairy bull calves purchased in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin State Veterinarian, Dr. Paul McGraw, recommends the use of biosecurity techniques to minimize the potential for infection and spread.

“Working with our state and federal partners we have found that the most likely source of the infections is among those that have direct or indirect contact with dairy bull calves,” McGraw says.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has been collaborating with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene and the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to investigate 12 different human cases of the infection in eight counties throughout Wisconsin.

People can become infected by *Salmonella* bacteria through contact with animal manure, but it can also be passed from person to person. Signs and symptoms of the disease usually develop 12-72 hours after exposure and may include diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps. Certain groups of people are more likely to get sick from salmonellosis, including children, pregnant women, the elderly and any person who has a weakened immune system.

“It’s in a dairy owner’s best interest to take precautions now to minimize the effect that this bacteria could have on those that work closely with the animals,” McGraw says.

McGraw recommends the following steps for protecting yourself and your workers from *Salmonella*:

- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after you are done touching or working with livestock, handling equipment used on animals, or coming into contact with anything in the area where animals are present.
- Use separate shoes, work gloves, and clothing when working with livestock.
- Do not eat or drink in the areas where livestock are present.
- Supervise small children during any animal encounter and discourage behaviors that can increase their risk of illness.
- Young children and immune-compromised persons should avoid direct contact with calves, especially those with diarrhea.
- Do not allow toys, pacifiers, spill-proof cups, baby bottles, strollers, or similar items in livestock areas.
- Work with your veterinarian to keep your livestock healthy.
- Do not drink unpasteurized (raw) milk.

More information about *Salmonella* Heidelberg is available from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services at dhs.wi.gov.