

QUICK REFERENCE - ANIMAL HEALTH ACT

The *Animal Health Act* puts in place both the necessary infrastructure and traceability systems that are designed to increase the capability of a rapid response in relation to threats of disease outbreaks affecting animal health, public health, food safety and market access.

Response mechanisms are designed to control the spread of disease through the use of a variety of strategies, including conducting inspections and surveillance, ordering treatments, implementing biosecurity measures, as well as establishing quarantines, surveillance zones and control areas. If necessary, Alberta's Chief Provincial Veterinarian may order the destruction of diseased animals, or animals, animal products or by-products or property that has been contaminated as a result of coming into contact with a diseased animal or a disease-causing agent.

The Act also facilitates the licensing of lay outlets that sell production animal medicines and livestock markets and livestock assembling stations.

June 2014 amendments included:

- clarifying definitions under the Act;
- broadening the definition of "animal" to include any animal other than a human and include definitions of "animal by-product" and "animal product" to ensure the Act is appropriately broad;
- enabling "authorized persons" (designated as such for the purposes of information collection, use, and disclosure) to be prescribed in regulation in addition to being listed in a Schedule in the Act;
- revising licence names to clarify their scope and align with terminology in the regulations,
- improving the department's ability to share traceability information;
- providing for delegated authorities, which improves the department's ability to work with industries on industry-specific initiatives (such as with Alberta Pork for the Swine Traceability Regulation);

- improving the effectiveness of disease-control actions (e.g. quarantines) on animals that are carrying disease-causing agents. This is important in order to prevent animal-to-human and animal-to-animal transmission of diseases that do not affect the host animal;
- broadening the current inspection powers to enable:
 - inspection of records related to traceability, (presently, inspectors can only inspect animals and compliance-related licensing issues) and
 - inspection of computer hardware and software to obtain readings which is an important part of inspecting for traceability compliance; and
- making minor administrative changes to facilitate the required regulations under the Act.