



5-Year Strategic Plan

2025-2029

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Agency Mission Statement

The Board of Animal Health (MBAH) was created by the Mississippi Legislature, Section 69-15-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, and given plenary power to deal with all contagious and infectious diseases of animals as in the opinion of the Board may be prevented, controlled or eradicated, and with full power to make, promulgate, and enforce such rules and regulations as may be necessary to control, eradicate and prevent those diseases.

The MBAH was also given responsibilities through §69-15-19 to administer the Animal Care Fund as follows:

- (1) As used in this section, the term "qualified nonprofit organization" means an IRS tax-exempt 501(c)(3) or similar nonprofit organization that has been approved by the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.
- (2) There is created in the State Treasury a special fund to be known and designated as the "Animal Care Fund." There shall be deposited in the fund:
 - a) The additional fees collected from the issuance of distinctive license tags under Section 27-19-56.18;
 - b) Any gifts, grants, donations or matching money from federal, state or local governmental bodies and private persons, associations, groups or corporations making contributions to the fund; and
 - c) Any other monies as the Legislature may appropriate or authorize to be deposited therein.
- (3) The special fund created under subsection (1) of this section shall be administered by the Mississippi Board of Animal Health. Monies in the special fund shall be allocated and distributed by the Mississippi Board of Animal Health to and among the boards of supervisors of each of the counties, the governing authorities of municipalities in the state and qualified nonprofit organizations. Monies allocated, distributed and received by the boards of supervisors, governing authorities and qualified nonprofit organizations may:
 - a) Be expended for the operation and support of county or municipal agencies, boards or departments that provide food, shelter and care, and/or spaying and neutering of lost, abandoned or unwanted pets;
 - b) Be expended for the creation, development or expansion of such agencies, boards or departments; or
 - c) Be donated by the boards of supervisors and governing authorities to nonprofit groups, organizations and associations that operate similar programs. However, priority for expenditure of such monies shall be given to spaying and neutering programs. None of such monies may be expended for euthanasia. The Mississippi Board of Animal Health is authorized to use a portion of the fund, in an amount not to exceed Two Thousand Dollars (\$ 2,000.00) a year, to fund administrative expenses.
- (4) The Mississippi Board of Animal Health shall adopt rules and regulations governing the proper administration of the Animal Care Fund, and establishing guidelines and criteria for the distribution

and allocation of monies in the fund, including qualifications for those groups, organizations and associations qualified to accept monies or to which boards of supervisors and governing authorities may make donations.

Statement of Agency Philosophy

The MBAH is committed to providing services for the protection of animals, particularly, livestock, catfish, and poultry, from disease and disaster with integrity and professionalism. The MBAH philosophy is to consider at all times the health and well-being of animals, public health and safety, and the importance of establishing and maintaining a robust Mississippi economy.

Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Key Priority: Economic Development

Key Priority: Public Health

Statewide Goal #1: To promote and protect a robust economy that provides the opportunity for productive agriculture employment in Mississippi, as well as to promote and protect the health and well-being of the public.

Statewide Benchmarks:

- Compliance with federal reporting and response requirements;
- Savings and growth from maintaining a negative brucellosis and tuberculosis (TB) status;
- Percentage of sales monitored for disease;
- Response time to reports;
- Percent compliance with testing;
- Percent compliance with Animal Disease Traceability (ADT).

Statewide Goal #2: To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and provide health-related information.

Statewide Benchmarks:

- Response time to zoonotic disease reports;
- Collaboration with public health and emergency management;
- Compliance with federal reporting and response requirements.

Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan

Agriculture is Mississippi's number one industry, employing approximately 17.4% of the state's workforce either directly or indirectly. Agriculture in Mississippi is a 9.72 billion-dollar industry. Animal production industries that are prominent in MS include poultry, catfish, beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep and goats, and swine. Poultry/eggs, cattle/calves, catfish, and hogs are in the top 10 agriculture industries in MS. The poultry industry alone accounts for \$3.84 billion in annual value to the state. The mission of the MS Board

of Animal Health (MBAH) is to protect these industries by addressing infectious and contagious diseases of animals and thereby protect animal health, human health and the economy.

The MBAH's strategy for accomplishing its mission is to, first and foremost, maintain a well-trained and experienced staff. It is the staff that carries out the actions of the agency and without this staff the MBAH would be ineffectual in accomplishing its mission. The agency is small but has a large footprint. There are approximately 25 employees that address animal health for the entire state.

The MBAH has targeted three primary goals as priorities for the next five years that will promote and protect the animal-agriculture economy in MS. The first is disease eradication, elimination, and control. This goal focuses on decreasing the presence of maintaining the absence of animal diseases that are either affect public health or are economically devastating. The second goal is focusing on individual animal identification for the purpose of tracing animals quickly and improving the opportunities for MS producers to export products. This goal seeks to establish a program to rapidly and effectively identify diseased animals involved in interstate movement that may negatively impact MS producers. The third goal is to address those programs mandated to the agency by the Governor or the Legislature. These programs include emergency response to animal issues (disease and natural disaster; large animal and small animal) and the administration of the "I Care for Animals" car tag grant fund.

The MBAH plan to address disease elimination, eradication and control is to continue programs that have been established to quickly identify the presence of disease in animal herds, particularly where animals from many premises congregate, such as salebarns and shows. Disease prevention programs in animal agriculture should not be underestimated. The cost savings of a prevention program by far outweighs the costs of a control program. For instance, in 1997 the cost of the brucellosis program for one year was \$786,000. It is estimated that brucellosis in dairy cattle cost the industry millions nationwide. The current prevention program costs taxpayers a mere \$18,000. In 2001, the bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE or mad cow disease) case in Washington state cost the industry millions overnight due to loss in exports. The MBAH programs for disease management and control are therefore intended to save taxpayer and industry from undue expense while maintaining an environment conducive to economic growth.

Programs will also be maintained to rapidly respond to detected or suspected disease for the purpose of elimination, eradication, or control. The MBAH has established and will maintain efforts to collaborate with sister agencies that have roles that overlap with the MBAH or have capabilities that enhance and strengthen the capabilities of the MBAH. For example, zoonotic diseases affect both animal health and human health so the MBAH will continue to work with the State Department of Health to ensure an effective response. Wildlife issues are in the purview of the MBAH and the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks so the MBAH will maintain communication and collaboration with them to ensure that disease issues are addressed by both agencies.

Animal identification is a complex and involved process as it deals with all animal production species. Each industry is unique in how they handle and move animals. Yet, disease occurrence, its detection, rapid response, and control are extremely important for each species. Animal identification is a key effort for determining diseased animals and their cohorts. To provide a scientific and economically sound response while considering the welfare of the animals and public interest, state regulatory officials must be able to identify with assurance that the affected animals are identified correctly. Other states and international trading partners are increasingly demanding that animal identification is clear, accurate, and timely. The

MBAH is committed to strengthening the animal identification program in order to maintain, protect, and grow the animal production industries in MS.

As all Mississippians know, emergencies play a prominent part in our considerations for a happy and safe livelihood. Animal emergencies are human emergencies. Disasters affect the economic well-being of many Mississippians which can then affect businesses and individual mental health. Mental health and well-being is also affected by the relationship with small animals. Public interest has grown over the years for small animals as companions and family members. Therefore, the MBAH has positioned itself to address the wide range of effects that disasters have on all animals in the state. The concern for small animals can be evidenced by the establishment of the “I Care for Animals” car tag grant fund. These funds will continue to be administered by the MBAH through a grant application process whereby an outside advisory committee with ties to the establishment of the fund reviews the applications and makes recommendations to the State Veterinarian for distribution of monies from the fund. In support of the intent of the fund, no administrative fees are taken out of the fund by the MBAH.

External/Internal Assessment

- Significant change in the number and amount of animal diseases the Board of Animal Health is required to eradicate or monitor;
- Change in the degree of collaboration and support outlined in federal agreements;
- Growth of certain segments of the livestock industry which will require increased personnel and support services;
- Large scale disasters and disease outbreaks;
- Response to small/companion animal disease issues.

Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Measures by Program

Livestock (Cattle, Horses, Sheep and Goats and Swine) Program:

- *Objective: Maintain disease free livestock in Mississippi*
 - *Strategy 1: Identify and track diseased livestock*
 - **Outputs:**
 - ✓ Complete market reports for each sale;
 - ✓ Inspect livestock (cattle, horses, sheep, goats and swine) at sales, exhibits and shows for overt presence of disease;
 - ✓ Monitor out-of-state bulls for trichomoniasis;
 - ✓ Investigate swine operations for garbage feeding;
 - ✓ Monitor test results for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA);
 - ✓ Monitor test results for West Nile disease;
 - ✓ Monitor test results for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE);
 - ✓ Monitor sheep and goats for Scrapie;
 - ✓ Register livestock premises.
 - **Outcomes:**
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased livestock;
 - ✓ Limit out-of-state bulls with trichomoniasis from entering the State;

- ✓ Identify, track and ensure positive Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) horses are appropriately quarantined;
 - ✓ Identify and track positive West Nile horses;
 - ✓ Identify and track positive Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) horses;
 - ✓ Identify and track positive Scrapie sheep and goats;
 - ✓ Rapid notification of disease outbreaks to registered livestock owners.
 - Efficiency:
 - ✓ Cost of livestock inspections per head.
- *Strategy 2: Registered Livestock Dealers*
 - Output:
 - ✓ Require dealers to register annually to renew their licenses.
 - Outcome:
 - ✓ Registered livestock dealers.
- *Strategy 3: Regulate the disposal of dead animals for compliance.*
 - Output:
 - ✓ Investigate dead animal disposals.
 - Outcomes:
 - ✓ Appropriate disposals for dead animals.
 - ✓ Assess fines for non-compliant disposals.
- *Strategy 4: Review incoming health certificates for completeness and compliance with entry requirements.*
 - Output:
 - ✓ Small and large animal health certificates reviewed for completeness and compliance.
 - Outcomes:
 - ✓ Complete and compliant small and large animal health certificates;
 - ✓ Return non-compliant health certificates to originating veterinarians directly or through the origin state.

Poultry Program:

- *Objective: Maintain disease free poultry in Mississippi*
 - *Strategy 1: Identify and track diseased commercial poultry*
 - Outputs:
 - ✓ Inspect commercial poultry farms;
 - ✓ Test commercial poultry for avian influenza;
 - ✓ Conduct poultry depopulation training;
 - ✓ Distribute poultry educational materials to growers;
 - ✓ Issue poultry emergency disposal permits;

- ✓ Perform poultry necropsies;
 - ✓ Respond to poultry complaints.
- ✓ Identify and track diseased commercial poultry;
 - ✓ Educated and informed growers;
 - ✓ Growers utilizing proper depopulation methods.
 - ✓ Cost of commercial poultry inspections per visit.
- *Strategy 2: Identify and track diseased backyard poultry*
 - ✓ Monitor backyard poultry facilities;
 - ✓ Test backyard poultry for avian influenza.
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased backyard poultry.
 - ✓ Cost of backyard poultry inspections per visit.

Exotic Livestock Disease Program:

- *Objective: Maintain disease free exotic livestock in Mississippi*
 - *Strategy: Identify and track diseased exotic livestock*
 - ✓ Monitor and inspect exotic livestock facilities for disease;
 - ✓ Collect *Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)* samples from exotic facilities;
 - ✓ Register premises.
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased exotic livestock;
 - ✓ Prevent introduction of CWD into MS exotic livestock herds;
 - ✓ Rapid notification of disease outbreaks to registered exotic livestock owners.

Emergency Management:

- *Objective: Maintain emergency response personnel to address all hazards where animals are involved per direction by MEMA and the Office of the Governor*
 - *Strategy: Prepare and update plans and provide training for disasters and disease outbreaks.*
 - ✓ Conduct emergency and disaster preparedness and response activities;
 - ✓ Recruit and train MS Animal Response Team personnel;
 - ✓ Award “I Care for Animals” funds and maintain shelter contact list.

- Outcomes:
 - ✓ Appropriate disaster and disease outbreak plans and personnel trained to execute plans;
 - ✓ Financial assistance through “I Care for Animal” funds to community animal shelters throughout Mississippi, and maintenance of contact list.