



5-Year Strategic Plan

2027-2031

Submitted 7/08/2025

Mission Statement

The Mississippi 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.

Agency Philosophy

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

Economic Development

Statewide Goal #1: To promote and protect a robust economy that provides the opportunity for productive agriculture employment in Mississippi.

Statewide Benchmarks:

- Savings and growth from maintaining a negative brucellosis and tuberculosis (TB) status;
- Percentage of livestock monitored for disease;
- Percentage of commercial and backyard poultry monitored for disease;
- Percentage of compliance with the UMBRELLA Program;
- Percentage of compliance with the Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Program;
- Compliance with federal reporting and response requirements.

Public Safety and Health

Statewide Goal #2: To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and provide health-related information, as well as to promote and protect the health and well-being of the public.

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% of the state's workforce either directly or indirectly. Agriculture in Mississippi is a 9.04 billion-dollar industry. Animal production industries that are prominent in MS include poultry, catfish, beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep and goats, and swine. Poultry, cattle, catfish, and hogs are in the top 10 agriculture industries in MS. Poultry is Mississippi's largest agricultural industry with a total impact of \$23.5 billion on the State's economy. The

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

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 MBAH would be ineffectual in accomplishing its mission. The agency is small but has a large footprint. There are approximately 27 employees that address animal health for the entire state.

MBAH has targeted three primary goals as priorities for the next five years that will promote and protect the animal-agriculture economy in MS.

1. Eradicate, Eliminate, and Control Infectious Animal Diseases

This goal focuses on limiting animal diseases that either affect public health or are economically devastating.

The MBAH plan to address disease eradication, elimination 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 livestock sale barns and shows.

MBAH has established and will maintain efforts to collaborate with sister agencies that have roles that overlap with MBAH or have capabilities that enhance and strengthen the capabilities of MBAH. For example, zoonotic diseases affect both animal 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 MBAH and the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, so MBAH will maintain communication and collaboration with them to ensure that disease issues are addressed by both agencies.

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 recent highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks cost the Mississippi poultry industry \$3 million per week in lost exports of chicken paws to China alone. 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.

2. Promote and Enhance Individual Animal Identification Programs;

This goal seeks to enhance animal traceability programs to identify diseased animals involved in interstate movement to limit the spread of infectious disease and subsequent economic loss to MS producers.

Animal identification is crucial to rapidly respond to detected or suspected disease. 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. MBAH is committed to strengthening the animal identification program in order to maintain, protect, and grow the animal production industries in MS.

3. Provide a Rapid and Effective Emergency Response to Mitigate Effects on Animals;

This goal is to address the wide range of effects that disasters have on all animals in the State.

The MBAH plan to respond to emergency situations is to continue programs that have been established to perform related activities effectively and efficiently. MBAH has established relationships with its sister agencies that have roles that overlap with MBAH or have capabilities that enhance and strengthen the capabilities of MBAH. For example, although hurricane responses are largely under the purview of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), MBAH will work with MEMA to address shelter and other needs for displaced animals.

External/Internal Assessment

- Increase in the number of animal diseases the Board of Animal Health is required to eradicate and/or monitor;
- Decrease in the degree of collaboration and support outlined in federal cooperative agreements;
- Growth of certain segments of the livestock industry which will require increased personnel and support services;
- Large scale disasters and disease outbreaks.

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 bulls for trichomoniasis;
 - ✓ Monitor test results for Equine Infectious Diseases;
 - ✓ Register livestock premises.
 - **Outcomes:**
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased livestock;
 - ✓ Limit bulls with trichomoniasis from entering the State;
 - ✓ Identify, track positive Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA), West Nile horses and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) horses;

- ✓ Rapid notification of disease outbreaks to registered livestock owners.
- Efficiency:
 - ✓ Cost of livestock inspections per head.
- *Strategy 2: 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 facilities;
 - ✓ Monitor commercial poultry for infectious diseases;
 - ✓ Conduct poultry depopulation training;
 - ✓ Issue poultry emergency disposal permits;
 - Outcomes:
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased commercial poultry;
 - ✓ Growers utilizing proper depopulation methods.
 - Efficiency:
 - ✓ Cost of commercial poultry inspections per visit.
 - *Strategy 2: Identify and track diseased backyard poultry*
 - Outputs:
 - ✓ Monitor backyard poultry facilities;
 - ✓ Test backyard poultry for infectious diseases.
 - Outcome:
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased backyard poultry.
 - Efficiency:
 - ✓ 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*
 - **Outputs:**
 - ✓ Monitor and inspect exotic livestock facilities for disease;
 - ✓ Register premises.
 - **Outcomes:**
 - ✓ Identify and track diseased exotic livestock;
 - ✓ Rapid notification of disease outbreaks to registered exotic livestock owners.

Emergency Management Program:

- *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.*
 - **Output:**
 - ✓ Conduct emergency and disaster preparedness and response activities.
 - **Outcome:**
 - ✓ Appropriate disaster and disease outbreak plans and personnel trained to execute plans.

“I Care for Animals” Program:

- *Objective: Administer funds received from the Mississippi Department of Revenue for the issuance of “I Care for Animals” license tags as mandated in Section 69-15-9, Mississippi Code of 1972 and in conjunction with the criteria set by the Board.*
 - *Strategy: Identify qualified applicants for the “I Care for Animals” program.*
 - **Output:**
 - ✓ Review applications for the “I Care for Animals” program.
 - **Outcome:**
 - ✓ Award qualified counties, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations monies to provide food, shelter and care, and/or spaying and neutering of lost, abandoned or unwanted pets.