



Nez Percé Tribe Fish and Wildlife Commission

Brucellosis Informed Consent

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION APPLIES TO HARVESTED BUFFALO AND ELK FROM YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (YNP) and surrounding areas, also known as Buffalo Country. This material also covers anthrax that can be found in wild game. Everyone in your hunting party (i.e., assistant hunters, transporters, cooks, volunteers, and processors) that handles raw buffalo/elk meat from buffalo country needs to understand the risk of Brucellosis. All animals harvested from Buffalo Country should be treated as though they are infected with Brucellosis. There are no outward signs an animal is infected; the bacteria can neither be seen nor smelled.

What is Brucellosis?

Brucellosis is a serious infectious bacterial disease, *Brucella* species are small, Gram-negative, nonmotile, nonspore-forming, rod-shaped (coccobacilli) bacteria. The causal relationship between the organism and disease was first established in 1887 by Sir David Bruce (1855-1931). There are different strains of Brucella bacteria; in cattle, this disease is called B. abortus. Brucellosis, also known as Bang's disease, Crimean fever or undulant fever, is a bacterium that concentrates in the reproductive organs of a live animal. The most common clinical signs of cattle infected with *B. abortus* are high incidences of abortions, arthritic joints, and retained placenta.

Brucellosis was first transmitted to buffalo and elk by cattle, and no records exist of brucellosis in ungulates native to America until the early 19th century. Cattle can be vaccinated against Brucellosis, but not people. In the United States, veterinarians are required to vaccinate all young stock, thereby further reducing the chance of transmission. The first state-federal cooperative efforts towards eradication of brucellosis caused by *Brucella abortus* in the U.S. began in 1934.

Transmittal to Humans

Transmittal to humans can occur through open wounds, by directly inhaling the bacteria while handling game, or by consuming undercooked game of animal product infected with the Brucella bacteria.

This risk is generally greater for people in slaughterhouse, such as meat-packing employees.

Symptoms

Brucellosis can cause a range of symptoms that can include fevers, chills, sweats, weakness, loss of appetite, headache, pain in muscles, joint or back, arthritis, chronic fatigue, depression, neurologic symptoms (in up to 5% of all cases), and swelling of internal organs (i.e. liver, heart). Some symptoms may persist for long periods, others may never go away or they may reoccur.

Treatment

Before treatment begins, a diagnosis of brucellosis infection must be made by a medical doctor. Tests will be performed to look for bacteria in samples of blood, bone marrow, or body fluids. Once a diagnosis is made, a doctor can prescribe antibiotics. Similar to tuberculosis, the brucellosis bacteria can require that you take two antibiotics at the same time for long periods (months) to get rid of the bacteria because the infection resides in areas where there is little blood flow (the blood carries the antibiotic to the infection site to kill the bacteria). Depending on the timing of treatment and severity of illness, recovery may take a few weeks to several months. Death from brucellosis is rare, occurring in no more than 2% of all cases.

Prevention

Anybody that handles or eats wild game from Buffalo Country must handle the meat, carcasses and the hide as though it is contaminated with the Brucellosis bacteria. Remember, Brucellosis bacteria can neither be seen nor smelled.

- All buffalo and elk from Buffalo Country should be cooked until well done, do not consume undercooked game from Buffalo Country. Thorough cooking kills the Brucellosis bacteria. The bacteria lies dormant when frozen, so meat still needs to be treated carefully after thawing.
- Ensure that bacteria from potentially infected animals does not get into eyes or inside a cut or abrasion on the skin of people who handle animal tissues (entrails and hide). Anybody handling the raw meat, entrails, or hide should protect themselves by using rubber gloves, goggles/work glasses, and aprons.
- Do not cross contaminate Buffalo Country game with other game or fish. Wrap well in two or more layers and label well. Surface areas exposed to the raw meat should be cleaned, rinsed, and then disinfected with a bleach solution (1:10 bleach/water dilution, using unscented bleach), and it is suggested that you clean your freezer with a bleach solution when emptied.
- Because brucellosis bacteria live in wet environments outside of an animal or person, be careful about your boots and clothing that is exposed to animals directly after handling Buffalo Country animals. We suggest that you place them in garbage bags and wash them immediately using hot water in a laundry mat.

Applicant has read and understands the information regarding the prevention and risks of brucellosis. Applicant understands the risk of brucellosis, and will inform all individuals handling animals harvested under his/her permit (assistant hunters, transporters & processors) of the risk of brucellosis.

Applicant understands that the Nez Perce Tribe accepts no liability for illnesses, accidents, injuries, death, monetary assistance or other incidents that occur during the course of the hunting trip to Buffalo Country or the processing or preparing of wild game from Buffalo Country.

Signature of Hunter/Applicant: _____ Date: _____
WC rep initials: _____

<p>If youth applicant between 15 & 18 years of age:</p> <p>Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____</p>
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