

National Exotic and Invasive Vector Species Stakeholder Call

February 23, 2026 (Zoom)

Trout Fryxell RT, KV Smith, and JC Chandler. Minutes of the National Exotic and Invasive Vector Species Stakeholder Call. 23 February 2026. Knoxville, TN/Online.

Meeting notes were initially reported with Zoom AI and edited by the team at the University of Tennessee. 107 participants of 386 invited (27.7%)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on updates and discussions regarding exotic and invasive pest species, particularly the Asian longhorned tick and *Theileria orientalis*. The team at the University of Tennessee provided an overview of ongoing efforts to track and manage these pests, including the development of a new website and catch-up forms to gather data on their distribution. Research scientists at USDA-ARS Pullman (WA), Bastos and Poh, presented research findings on vector competence, highlighting the ability of ticks to transmit pathogens like *Theileria orientalis*. Participants discussed treatment options for infected animals, the challenges of regulating animal movement due to lack of approved treatments, and the need for further research on tick-borne diseases. The conversation ended with a reminder of the upcoming March 16th meeting and an open invitation for further discussions and presentations.

Summary

Data Entry for Automating Distribution Maps

The team at the University of Tennessee discussed their upcoming meeting and the status of various tasks related to data entry and form updates. The team is working on three forms and two visual maps for the website to make data entry and display efficient.

Tick Surveillance and Data Updates

The meeting focused on updates and discussions regarding tick surveillance and reports. The University of Tennessee provided an overview of the status, noting no new reports since January and highlighting an increase in human attachments. Participants shared updates from their respective regions, with the verbal/chat report of an additional positive county in New York (Albany county, summer of 2025). The group discussed the need for more comprehensive data on animal hosts and agreed to create a table listing all counties and animals affected. The conversation ended with plans to continue refining surveillance methods and data collection.

Vector Competence of *Haemaphysalis longicornis* Ticks

Dr Poh, USDA ARS, presented a comprehensive summary of vector competence studies for *Haemaphysalis longicornis* and its potential to transmit various pathogens in the US. She highlighted that while *H. longicornis* can transmit several pathogens in laboratory settings, only three have been detected in field-collected ticks. Dr Poh also presented a list of pathogens and tick species, in her opinion, to prioritize future vector competence studies. The group discussed the need for more research on *Anaplasma marginale* and other livestock pathogens.

Theileria Resistance and Testing Challenges

The group discussed concerns about allowing cattle herds to develop natural resistance to *Theileria*, noting that while this approach might be tempting due to the lack of approved treatments, it could lead to complications with imported animals and undetected infections. The challenges of implementing regulatory testing requirements were explained and discussed by attendees, highlighting the complexity of standardizing tests and the resistance from the industry to additional regulations. The discussion also touched on the importance of genotype-specific testing and the presence and distribution of different *Theileria* strains in the U.S.

Notes reported in the chat

- Many in attendance indicated no surveillance due to snow/weather.

- There was a significant discussion in the chat regarding the common name of *Haemaphysalis longicornis*. The Entomological Society of America has a committee that approves and review common names.
- Links to papers shared:
 - Telionis A, Lahmers K, Todd M, Carbonello A, Broaddus CC, Bissett CJ, Hungerford LL. Distribution of *Theileria orientalis* in Virginia Market Cattle, 2018-2020. Pathogens. 2022 Nov 15;11(11):1353. doi: 10.3390/pathogens11111353. PMID: 36422604; PMCID: PMC9695988.
 - Raquel Cossio-Bayugar, Roxanne Pillars, Jack Schlater, Patricia J Holman, Theileria buffeli infection of a Michigan cow confirmed by small subunit ribosomal RNA gene analysis. Veterinary Parasitology, Volume 105, Issue 2, 2002, Pages 105-110. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-4017\(02\)00003-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0304-4017(02)00003-1).