



Mission Statement

The Animal Health Branch is California's organized, professional veterinary medical unit that protects livestock populations, consumers, and the State's economy from catastrophic animal diseases and other health or agricultural problems.

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Animal Health Branch Newsletter

Volume 29

October 2015

Monensin Toxicity at a Horse Facility in Fresno County by Dr. Kent Fowler, DVM, Animal Health Branch Chief

CDFA Animal Health Branch (AHB) received a call from a private equine practitioner in Fresno County on Saturday, September 19, 2015 concerning four (4) horses exhibiting neurologic signs, primarily ataxia, at a local stable. One (1) of the affected horses was unable to stand due to marked paresis of the hind limbs and less so in the forelimbs with a temperature of 100.8F. A second horse was ridden the previous day and appeared fine at that time but on September 19th displayed mild ataxia with a temperature of 100.8F. Two (2) additional horses also exhibited mild neurologic signs. The affected horses showed normal tail and anal tone. It was also mentioned that the stable had received a new shipment of a pelletized horse feed on September 18th.

The two (2) most severely affected horses died on September 19th and were necropsied at the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory in Tulare, CA on Sept. 20th. No significant lesions were identified grossly on either horse on necropsy.

Initially, the private practitioner and AHB veterinarians had primary concerns of Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy and West Nile Virus as leading differentials involving the affected horses. As the investigation continued, it seemed unlikely that an infectious agent was involved and feed toxicity became the primary concern. On September 21, 2015 the CDFA Feed and Livestock Drugs Inspection Program (FLDIP) was notified of this investigation and became the lead CDFA Branch.

A FLDIP investigator made contact with the owner of the horse facility in Fresno County and obtained a sample of the feed that the affected horses had consumed. In addition to the feed samples, stomach contents from the necropsied horses were submitted to CAHFS Analytical Chemistry Lab in Davis, CA. On an ionophores screen, monensin was detected in the sample of pelleted feed and in the stomach contents of both horses. It was detected at a concentration of 134 grams per ton (feed) and 1.7 ppm (stomach contents). Feed samples were also submitted to CDFA Center for Analytical Chemistry Laboratory in Sacramento, CA to verify the toxic levels of monensin. Monensin is commonly used in cattle to improve feed efficiency or for the prevention and control of coccidiosis. According with the manufacturer guidelines, the recommended dose for

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Monensin Toxicity at a Horse Facility in Fresno County (continued)

cattle ranges between 5 to 40 grams per ton (or ppm). Horses are more sensitive than cattle to the toxic effects of monensin. Monensin detection in the stomach contents proves ingestion of the product.

On September 22, 2015 Western Milling LLC indicated they had a positive monensin test result from a quick test done on the horse feed in question. The feed company subsequently notified the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and an investigation was initiated reviewing records and additional samples. Due to three (3) horse deaths at this point in time, on September 23, 2015 the horse feed involved was part of a Class I Recall. All of the recalled Western Blend Horse 50# lot 5251 was placed under CDFA quarantine, including the recalled bulk feed from the same lot. The majority of the feed had already been recalled by Western Milling LLC.

To date, six (6) horses that consumed this adulterated product have died or been euthanized. CDFA continues to work closely with FDA on this investigation.

2014 and 2015 Active Years for Vesicular Stomatitis Virus

by Dr. Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV) has been active in 2015. Since April 29, 2015, five hundred fifty-seven (557) VSV-affected premises (New Jersey serotype) have been identified and quarantined in eight (8) states (Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming).

This outbreak comes on the heels of a significant 2014 VSV outbreak in which a total of four hundred and thirty-five (435) premises in Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, and Texas were confirmed infected with four hundred and eight (408) of those premises involving affected equines. The 2014 outbreak was the worst VSV outbreak in the U.S. since 2005 and the economic impacts of the disease were felt within the equine industry at multiple levels. While exact dollar amounts for the economic losses are difficult to quantify, Colorado was certainly the hardest hit by having a total of three hundred and seventy (370) VSV-affected premises in seventeen (17) counties. Cost to the horse owner includes veterinary bills for confirmation of disease, supportive care, and cost of extensive fly control. Costs were felt at the local, regional, and state level with the cancellation of events or reduced event attendance in VSV-affected states. While most events were not cancelled, unless the event facility itself had been quarantined for cases, there was reduced attendance at events in affected states due to movement restrictions and difficulty in getting out-of-state and Canadian horses back home after entering a VSV-affected state. Finally, international movement of horses from the U.S. was impeded by destination countries imposing strict VSV testing requirements or not allowing the movement from some affected states.

California has remained free of VSV cases. To protect California's equine industry, private practitioners in California are reminded to be vigilant and report any signs of vesicular lesions to the local Animal Health Branch of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. For more information on VSV and the current status visit http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/VS.html

Emergence of West Nile Virus

by Dr. Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

West Nile Virus (WNV) hit the equine industry hard the end of August 2015. Since August 24, 2015, seventeen (17) cases of Equine WNV have been confirmed in California. The positive horses were located in the following counties; Contra Costa, El Dorado, Humboldt, Modoc, Riverside (6), San Joaquin, Santa Cruz, Shasta (2), Solano, Tehama and Ventura. All positive horses were unvaccinated. **Horse owners should consult with their veterinary practitioner to ensure current WNV vaccination status of their horses.** Four (4) of the seventeen (17) positive horses (ages 3, 7, 9 and 20) were euthanized or died. The age range in cases is 1.5 years old to 20 years. Interestingly, there is an increase in the average age; the average of confirmed cases reported is 7.4 years. Historically, the average of confirmed cases in CA has been 3-5 years.

CDFA continually monitors and investigates equine neurologic cases for the presence of WNV in California. As a reminder, timely and accurate reporting of equine WNV cases by veterinarians is a valuable component of arbovirus disease surveillance and helps to direct mosquito control efforts designed to prevent WNV infection in both horses and humans. For the latest WNV confirmed case count and additional disease information visit http://cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/WNV_Info.html or <http://westnile.ca.gov>

EIA Positive Racing Quarter Horse

by Dr. Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

On September 3, 2015, a three (3) year old racing Mexico-born Quarter Horse filly, imported from Mexico in June of 2015, was confirmed positive for equine infectious anemia (EIA). Based on poor traceability and documentation, the disease status of the filly at time of entry from Mexico could not be verified. The positive filly has been euthanized. The seventeen (17) quarantined exposed horses on the premises of origin in Merced County, tested negative and will be retested in October to confirm negative disease status. The epidemiologic investigation has revealed no additional exposed horses and there is no link to previous investigations.

Your assistance is requested to provide outreach to the racing Quarter Horse industry regarding the potential of transmitting EIA or Equine Piroplasmiasis (EP) through risky practices such as sharing contaminated needles or blood products. Additionally, EIA or EP should be on your differential list for any high risk horse presenting with compatible clinical signs (fever, depression, weight loss, anemia). If you suspect a case of EIA or EP please contact your local Animal Health Branch Office or the Equine Staff Veterinarian.

CDFA Animal Health Branch HPAI Preparedness

By Lisa Quiroz, Senior Emergency Services Coordinator

Earlier this year, federal, state, and industry representatives responded to a catastrophic outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in commercial and backyard poultry affecting 21 states, depopulating over 48.8 million birds, and resulting in response costs of almost \$1 billion. While California responded to two incidents of HPAI early in 2015, the Midwest continues to recover from over two hundred (200) commercial poultry HPAI disease detections. Experts predict the U.S. could see similar HPAI outbreaks again this fall and winter with California to experience the highest risk for disease introduction during wild bird migration in the Pacific Flyway. In an effort to prepare for the imminent disease threat to domestic poultry, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Animal Health Branch (AHB) continues to dedicate staff to advance HPAI emergency preparedness initiatives which incorporate lessons learned from the responses earlier in the year. To ensure California preparedness efforts remain consistent with national-level planning, CDFA is collaborating on these preparedness activities with animal disease response partners from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services, the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, UC Davis and poultry industry representatives. This multi-agency cooperation will better prepare our agencies to enter into a Unified Command response organization to manage disease outbreaks when the time comes.

The CDFA HPAI preparedness initiatives focus on enhancing the State's response capabilities on three fronts: 1. preparing producers and other susceptible industries, 2. preparing regulatory responders, and 3. monitoring disease detections.

The first initiative concentrates on preparing producers through farm readiness: actions poultry producers can implement to prevent and mitigate disease introductions on farms and to prepare for response when disease is detected. Farm readiness concentrates efforts on enhancing biosecurity on commercial poultry facilities to prevent disease occurrences and preparing to implement disease control strategies when response is necessary. The CDFA HPAI biosecurity preparedness team has recently developed and distributed a biosecurity self-assessment tool <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/PoultryBiosecurity> that allows each producer to evaluate strengths and weaknesses related to biosecurity and identify areas of highest risk. Some examples of good biosecurity practices include fencing property, to ensure visitors enter and exit only through pre-determined biosecure pathways, and eliminating standing water in proximity to where birds are housed. To assist producers with the farm readiness effort, AHB personnel are in the process of visiting commercial poultry producers throughout the state to validate premises data, to observe biosecurity practices, to provide outreach materials, educate about risks and mitigation strategies, and to answer producer questions about what can be expected when disease response is necessary. Another important element of this preparedness effort includes working with California's network of zoos to ensure that when HPAI is detected in or around a zoo facility, both zoo staff and regulatory officials are prepared to react quickly and efficiently. AHB staff have been engaged in a national workgroup tasked with developing a HPAI response plan for zoos. In coordination with this planning, AHB officials have visited several California zoos to perform site inspections and assist the zoos in developing site-specific biosecurity plans.

The second preparedness priority focuses on preparing the State's regulatory responders to rapidly activate and implement response plans with a goal of mitigating widespread disease events that can result in larger response. To accomplish this objective, CDFA has joined with California USDA Veterinary Services personnel to pre-identify staff to form a blended Incident Management Team, dedicated to training and

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CDFA Animal Health Branch HPAI Preparedness
(Continued)

exercising together (the way we intend to respond to an emergency animal disease outbreak). One critical component of this preparedness includes training responders on the electronic permit system to establish capability to issue permits during disease response when producers experience movement restrictions. This will allow commerce to continue when the pre-determined criteria is met, facilitating producer business continuity throughout the disease eradication process. The AHB business continuity preparedness team is currently developing standards to facilitate these controlled movements during an outbreak response. Part of this business continuity planning includes the development of pre-certification standards for product movements on and off the farm, for the hauler, and for the processor. Checklists of these requirements will be made available in advance so that producers, haulers and processors can begin working on their biosecurity and other practices to ensure they are capable of safely moving products during disease response events.

The third critical preparedness front is monitoring the disease detection system through the State's wild bird surveillance, conducted by USDA Wildlife Services in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Under this surveillance program, biologists have collected over one hundred and sixty (160) live bird samples in Northern California during 2015 summer HPAI surveillance. No HPAI, nor H5/H7 avian influenza detections have been found in these samples. More extensive hunter harvest sampling is planned for the 2015/16 waterfowl hunt season to include approximately 2,100 samples from watersheds throughout the state. CDFA monitors this wildlife surveillance for early warning signs. Positive HPAI or LPAI disease findings in wild bird populations may create increased risk to domestic poultry in surrounding areas and enhanced appropriate targeted communications would begin with commercial & backyard producers.

As fall and winter approach, CDFA encourages poultry producers to implement increased biosecurity on their farms, to continue monitoring flocks, and to immediately report any increases in morbidity, mortality or production abnormalities. Timely reporting is critical to detecting damaging animal diseases, rapid implementation of disease control strategies, and to mitigate larger wide-spread outbreaks. Practitioners can work with client producers to assist in evaluating disease risks and recommending mitigation strategies.

Poultry producers should report signs of illness or increased mortality by calling their private veterinarian, the Sick Bird Hotline at 866-922-2473, or the CDFA/USDA District Office in their area.

Contact Information			
CDFA Redding District	(530) 225-2140	CDFA Ontario District	(909) 947-4462
CDFA Modesto District	(209) 491-9350	CDFA Sacramento (HQ)	(916) 900-5002
CDFA Tulare District	(559) 685-3500	USDA-VS Toll Free	(877) 741-3690

For more information visit:

CDFA Avian Influenza Website http://www.cdca.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Avian_Influenza.html

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services Avian Influenza Website <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/home/>

USDA Biosecurity for the Birds Website <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/>

Antimicrobial Use and Resistance: Upcoming Changes

by Dr. Dennis Wilson DVM, MPVM, PhD., Outreach and Education Liaison

The impact of using antimicrobials in animals on the resistance of human pathogens has been questioned for a number of years. It is challenging to determine if the effect is significant because there are numerous contributing factors and complex pathways. However, use, whether in human or animal medicine, is accepted as one of the drivers of resistance.

Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) developed several guidance documents asking animal drug manufacturers to remove production uses - *increased feed efficiency or growth promotion* - from the labels of medically-important antimicrobials administered through feed or water to food-producing animals. Additionally, animal health therapeutic uses of these products - *prevention, control and treatment of disease* - would be brought under veterinary supervision.

While approved antimicrobials administered through *water* will become prescription only, the veterinary oversight of medically-important antimicrobials in *feed* comes in the form of the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). The VFD is a form authorizing use of an antimicrobial under FDA-approved label conditions and specifying details of the order, including the duration of use, expiration of authorization, and approximate number of animals to be treated. While the VFD is not a new concept, it will now cover a larger range of antimicrobials.

The drugs affected, those considered important for therapeutic use in humans, were determined using a risk-assessment. They do not include, for example, ionophores like monensin. It is also important to note these FDA changes only apply to administration of these antimicrobials in feed or water.

Manufacturers have agreed to make changes to their labels by December 2016, and use of medically-important antimicrobials in or on feed is targeted to require a VFD by the start of 2017. Guidance and assistance in understanding these changes continues to be developed and more information can be found on the FDA website (<http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/default.htm>).

In California, concern from the public, public health and other groups has increased. This year, Senate Bill 27 passed the legislature and is currently in queue for a decision from the Governor. If it is approved, all medically-important antimicrobials used for therapeutic purpose in livestock and poultry as defined by the bill, regardless of route of administration, will require veterinary supervision - *a valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship and a VFD for medicated feed or a prescription* - by January 1, 2018. Additionally, it will require CDFA to develop guidance on antimicrobial stewardship and Best Management Practices. Monitoring antimicrobial use and resistance from farm to retail is also included. There will be much more to come with SB 27 if it is approved, so stay tuned.

"If you think you understand antimicrobial resistance, then it hasn't been properly explained to you."

Unknown source but possibly Yogi Berra

Livestock Entering/Leaving California

By Dr. Anita Edmondson, BVMS, MPVM, MRCVS

Entry permits are required for most livestock entering California, including California returnees. Call (916) 900-5052 to get an entry permit number over the phone for: Dairy Breed Cattle; Beef Breed Heifers/Cows; Beef Breed Bulls 18 mo & older; Rodeo, Show or Exhibition Cattle; Slaughter Cattle; Sheep; Goats; Swine; Yaks; and Bison.

Pasture-to-Pasture Permits: It's that time of the year when beef breeding herds are moving cattle between California and Oregon, Nevada or Idaho for pasture. Please plan these moves with enough time to make sure all animals have mandatory identification and have completed the required tests before applying for the pasture-to-pasture permit. Be prepared to include copies of the test results. The application process can take up to 30 days.

Interstate Testing Requirements: Always check with the state of destination for their entry requirements because they can change quickly! Please allow adequate time to complete the testing prior to movement; pending results are not acceptable for movement. Tuberculosis testing especially requires adequate time because cattle with any response to the TB-skin test will prevent the entire load from moving until the cause of the TB-response is resolved. This secondary TB-testing takes several days, and may include taking animals to slaughter/necropsy to make a final diagnosis.

Border Protection Station personnel have increased their surveillance on livestock entering the state at the Border Protection Stations and other highways entering California. CDFA personnel will be looking for Certificates of Veterinary Inspection, Entry Permits, Brand Certificates and other certificates, as appropriate. Violations will be issued for loads that are not compliant. As the Avian Influenza season approaches, CDFA personnel are keeping close tabs on all birds passing through our Border Protection Stations; it's a short journey for flu from wild birds to infect commercial flocks in one state and then spread infection to another state, so it's critical to monitor the disease very closely.

Application/Distribution of Official Ear Tags

It's time for accredited veterinarians to return their Report of Application/Distribution of Official Ear Tags forms to CDFA. Please email the form to: evet@cdfa.ca.gov. If you need a new copy of the form, please email to request a copy.

Trichomonosis Approved Veterinarians

Letters will soon be distributed to currently approved veterinarians to renew their status for another two years; the current list will expire December 2015.

Bovine Tuberculosis

By Dr. Anita Edmondson, BVMS, MPVM, MRCVS

California released our last TB-affected herd from quarantine in July 2014, and has remained TB-free since then. The state remains classified by the USDA as Modified Accredited Advanced (MAA), and is eligible to apply for TB-Free status in July 2016.

Texas and Michigan currently have TB-affected herds. Texas has two separate ongoing disease outbreaks, each involving two TB-affected dairies and their associated grower yard. Each outbreak involves a different TB-strain type, and neither strain has been detected in other cattle herds in the U.S. Michigan has a TB-affected dairy and an affected small mixed cattle herd.

Swine Enteric Coronavirus Disease (SECD)

The USDA examined potential ways these viruses entered the US. Although not definitive, the most likely scenario was through the reuse of virus-contaminated Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBC). These FIBCs are commonly used for many types of bulk material, and could be contaminated in their origin country and reused after arrival in the US. If a contaminated FIBC was used to transport ingredients to a swine feed mill, the virus could have been mixed into feed and spread to many farms.

APHIS Proposed Rule to Update Scrapie Regulations in Sheep and Goats Available for Review and Comments

by Dr. Hector Webster, DMV, MS

On September 10, 2015 the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published a document proposing changes to its existing scrapie regulations (9 CFR Parts 54 and 79) that will help the U.S. achieve scrapie freedom. Scrapie is a degenerative and eventually fatal prion disease of sheep and goats. APHIS is seeking comments on the proposed rule and also comments on the draft National Scrapie Program Standards, Vol. 1 through November 9, 2015. The draft includes a web content referenced in the proposed rule and has been revised to be consistent with the proposed rule. One item APHIS particularly seeks comments on is the effectiveness of 9 CFR 79.2 (a)(3), which allows certain livestock facilities to apply official identification (ID) on unidentified animals on behalf of the owner. Comments should consider if this practice should be continued, removed, or amended.

APHIS is also proposing to amend the Scrapie regulations to relieve certain restrictions associated with the interstate movement of sheep and goats, reduce the number of exposed sheep and goats that are destroyed, and improve overall program effectiveness. More specifically, genetic testing would be used to identify genetically resistant or less susceptible sheep for exemption from destruction and as qualifying for interstate movement. Designated Scrapie epidemiologists would be given more alternatives and greater flexibility when testing animals and determining the testing needs of flocks; the definition of high-risk animal would change and the indemnity regulations would be changed to apply only to those animals that are found

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APHIS Proposed Rule to Update Scrapie Regulations (Continued)

to be genetically susceptible to Scrapie; official identification of goats produced for meat or fiber would be required; submission of tagging records by individuals who tag sheep or goats that do not originate on their premises would be required; and certain record keeping requirements would be reduced, changed or removed.

The proposed rule adds a requirement that States must implement effective scrapie surveillance and meet surveillance minimums in order to qualify as a Consistent State. Surveillance minimums are based on the number of breeding sheep and goats in the state. Among these changes, APHIS proposes to move information from the regulation to an APHIS website in the form of program standards to allow quicker response to information.

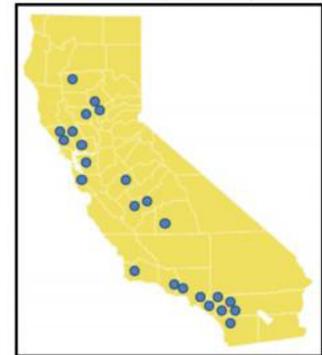
A synopsis of the proposed rule and an overview presentation of the more significant changes is available from [the National Scrapie Eradication APHIS website](#) but should not be considered definitive. The entire proposed rule is available from <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=APHIS-2007-0127>. Use this site to review and comment on all the proposed changes. Comments for the proposed changes will be accepted by APHIS through November 9, 2015.

California Backyard Poultry Census

by Dr. Maurice Pitesky, DVM, Extension Poultry Veterinarian, UC Davis

In California, backyard poultry ownership is increasing like never before. A recent National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) study predicted a 4.6% increase in chicken ownership in Los Angeles alone. At the same time, California resources available to this growing group are limited. Little is known about backyard poultry communities. To address these issues, the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and Cooperative Extension have made a short survey designed for backyard poultry enthusiasts. Results will help us get an idea of the number of backyard poultry farms in California, the trends among them, and more importantly help bridge the communication gap between poultry experts and backyard poultry enthusiasts. For this reason, we sincerely hope you consider participating in this survey.

The California Backyard Poultry Census:



Make Sure Your Poultry are Represented!

Survey is available in English and Spanish at: http://ucanr.edu/sites/poultry/California_Poultry_Census/

Note: As veterinarians at UC Davis, our interest is in working with backyard poultry and their owners to improve poultry health. The data in this survey is strictly for outreach purposes. We want to work with you. We are a university not a regulatory agency and therefore our focus is on outreach and education and not regulation and enforcement.



Staff Biographies

Agricultural Program Supervisor Linda Fong rejoined the Animal Health Branch team in January of 2015. She had been part of the team several years prior as the Associate Governmental Program Analyst responsible for the financial management of USDA Cooperative Agreements. Linda's state career began over 25 years ago as an Office Assistant with the California Highway Patrol, fitting since she worked in the trucking industry as the Fleet Manager for a large propane company responsible for over 1,500 trucks in 37 states. Being Class 1 licensed certainly came in handy! Prior to returning to AHB this year, Linda worked at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services as Chief of the Pre-Disaster and Flood Mitigation Division. Disasters, whether flooding or Avian Influenza, seem to follow her around.



Linda spends her spare time with family, both two-and four-legged. She has been married to her husband over 40 years, they have two beautiful children and one adorable granddaughter. Linda is owned by several top-winning Grand Champion English Springer Spaniels that she has bred. She's active in all aspects of their training including conformation, obedience, and therapy work for the Shriners Hospital for Children.



Dr. Ann Ikelman joined the CDFA as a Veterinarian General in April 2015 after enjoying a 25 year career as a dairy practitioner in Chino, CA. While working as an intern at Chino Valley Veterinary Associates she learned bovine emergency medicine, and then she honed her reproductive herd health skills at Chino Corona Veterinary services and as a solo practitioner. In 2014 she completed the Dairy Food Safety and Security Fellowship through the CAHFS lab including a project looking at residues in bob veal calves. Serving the pet pig, sheep and goat community of Southern California was also an area of special interest. She has been the livestock veterinarian for the LA County Fair for 13 years and once had a gig on MTV providing the expert testimony for the "Urban Myths" episode on cow-tipping!

Ann grew up in an air force family starting out in North Dakota and moving around the country before finally settling in California. She enjoyed showing horses and training dogs in 4-H and always loved visiting the family dairy in North Dakota. She and her husband John VanDonk enjoy spending time with friends and family in the US and the Netherlands. They love spending time with their new granddaughter Lily, serving at their church, watching movies and finding new culinary adventures to enjoy.

For Ann, working at the CDFA is a new challenge and learning experience as well as an opportunity to continue serving the livestock and poultry industries of California. She is very grateful to be working with such a great and dedicated team of people, and hopes her experience and skills will prove to be fruitful assets.

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