



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.

Inside this issue:

Click title to go directly to article

Animal Health Branch Newsletter

Volume 28

July 2015

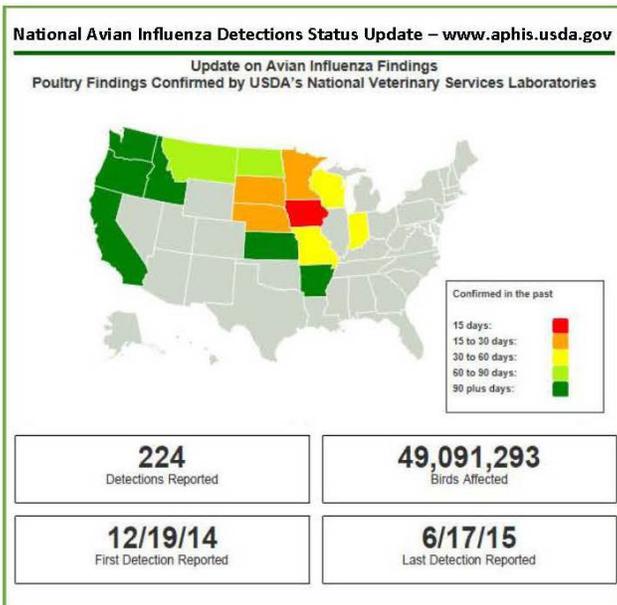
Poultry Industry Preparedness for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

By Lisa Quiroz, Senior Emergency Services Coordinator

In response to what is the largest avian influenza outbreak in our Nation's history, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services (VS) and state animal health officials have been mobilizing resources to control, contain, and eradicate highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) since December 2014. To date, 21 states have had positive HPAI cases in commercial poultry premises, backyard flocks, captive wild birds or wild birds. Over 200 commercial and backyard poultry flocks in 15 states have been affected with over 49 million birds already depopulated. The losses represent almost 7.5% of

the US average turkey inventory, just over 10% of the US average layer inventory and over 6% of the US average pullet inventory. International trade and other losses are still being calculated.

In January 2015, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and USDA VS entered into a Unified Command to respond to the State's first positive case of HPAI (H5N8) in a Stanislaus County commercial poultry flock. Another positive HPAI (H5N8) commercial flock in Kings County was discovered in February, prompting CDFA and USDA to redirect resources to respond to the second incident. In March, a Merced County commercial premises tested positive for low pathogenic avian influenza (H7N3) resulting in California's third incident response for the year. In each California case, the disease introduction resulted from wild birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway; no lateral disease spread was detected. California officials credit early disease detection, through proactive producer and private practitioner surveillance, and good on-farm biosecurity practices among the key factors that prevented disease spread that could have triggered a much larger outbreak.



(Continued on page 2)

Poultry Industry Preparedness for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
(continued)

The CDFA knows California poultry is vulnerable to future avian influenza outbreaks again this fall. To mitigate disease introduction into domestic flocks and to prepare for response when introductions are detected, CDFA has launched a HPAI preparedness initiative with a major focus on poultry producer on-farm readiness. CDFA will rely on cooperation from producers and their private veterinarians as they together are most familiar with their facilities, birds, and environment. The on-farm readiness initiative will focus on the following producer preparedness activities:

- Biosecurity – Implementing good biosecurity practices to include keeping birds housed away from open water sources. A comprehensive biosecurity program includes plans, controls, **and actions** focused on movements of animals, personnel, and conveyances, onto and off of the farm, to avoid potential disease introductions and spread
- Surveillance – Knowing the warning signs of infectious bird diseases, monitoring flock health and mortality rates, and reporting increased mortality and egg production abnormalities immediately
- Depopulation/Disposal – Planning for depopulation and disposal challenges that are unique to each farm to include pre-identification of depopulation and disposal methods, disposal sites, and farm personnel who are familiar with the farm’s depopulation and disposal plan
- Data Validation – Providing CDFA a primary and secondary emergency point of management contact for all poultry premises and updating basic data that will facilitate CDFA’s preparedness for and response to emergency animal disease outbreaks

Over the next several months, CDFA officials will visit poultry producers throughout California to provide outreach materials, to educate about risks, mitigation strategies and on-farm readiness, and to answer producer questions about what can be expected when a disease response is necessary. Private practitioners can join the preparedness initiative by reinforcing these messages and encouraging clients to implement farm readiness.

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

If morbidity or mortality is observed in wild waterfowl, please contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at (916) 358-2790

For more information visit:

CDFA Avian Influenza Website http://www.cdfa.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/>

Avian Influenza Update for Backyard Owners, and Commercial Poultry Farmers

New Requirements for Bringing Poultry, Eggs, and Related Products into California
By CDFA Public Affairs



Parts of the Midwest are dealing with a serious and ongoing outbreak of HPAI, so California is taking extra steps to protect birds here. Poultry farmers, veterinarians and the larger commercial community in general are aware of the additional requirements, which focus on inspecting and testing farms and flocks in the outbreak regions before they can send poultry and poultry products to California. The enhanced requirements will also evaluate the measures in place at the receiving farms and facilities here in our state. Details are available [here](#).

Backyard Poultry

California's rural communities – and many of its urban and suburban ones as well – are also home to backyard poultry kept by enthusiasts or for small-scale farming. For our backyard bird owners, here's how you can help protect your flock and our communities:

- Know your bird's history – always buy from a certified breeder/hatchery or ask where the source flock came from.
- Be an Avian Influenza detective – when obtaining birds, ask if they have been tested for avian influenza and if you are having them delivered, make sure that they meet all import/export requirements. For interstate movement within the US, check the [CDFA Avian Entry](#) page; for out of country, see the [USDA import/export](#) page.
- Monitor your bird/flock health – isolate and observe new flock additions and returning show birds off-site for 30 days for signs of disease; If you observe [signs of avian influenza](#) in your birds, please call the Sick Bird Hotline at 866-922-2473.

To protect California poultry, CDFA personnel will actively enforce the enhanced entry requirements by monitoring border crossing reports, USDA-issued permits, and shipments of poultry and poultry products into California. CDFA personnel will follow up on any shipments of concern. Non-compliant shipments may be subject to fines and/or have poultry and poultry products quarantined, tested or destroyed.

For more information, please visit: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Avian_Influenza.html

Wild Waterfowl Projected HPAI Surveillance In the Fall and Winter of 2015-16

By Dr. Kent Fowler, D.V.M., Chief Animal Health Branch

Wildlife Services has identified “dabbling” ducks as being very efficient reservoirs for the current Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8, H5N1, and H5N2 viruses. “Dabbling” ducks includes mallards, wigeons, teals, pintails and shovelers and there is an estimated population of 50 million of these ducks in the U.S. These “dabbling” ducks are most often asymptomatic to the HPAI viruses. Snow geese and Canadian geese most often show morbidity or mortality when infected with these HPAI viruses. Wildlife Services has a projected U.S. active surveillance plan of testing approximately 38,000 hunter kill ducks in the Fall and Winter of 2015-16. In addition, passive surveillance will test sick or dead wild waterfowl and some environmental sampling of wild waterfowl feces will also occur.

EHV-1 Incident Associated with Bishop Mule Days

By Dr. Kent Fowler, D.V.M., Chief Animal Health Branch

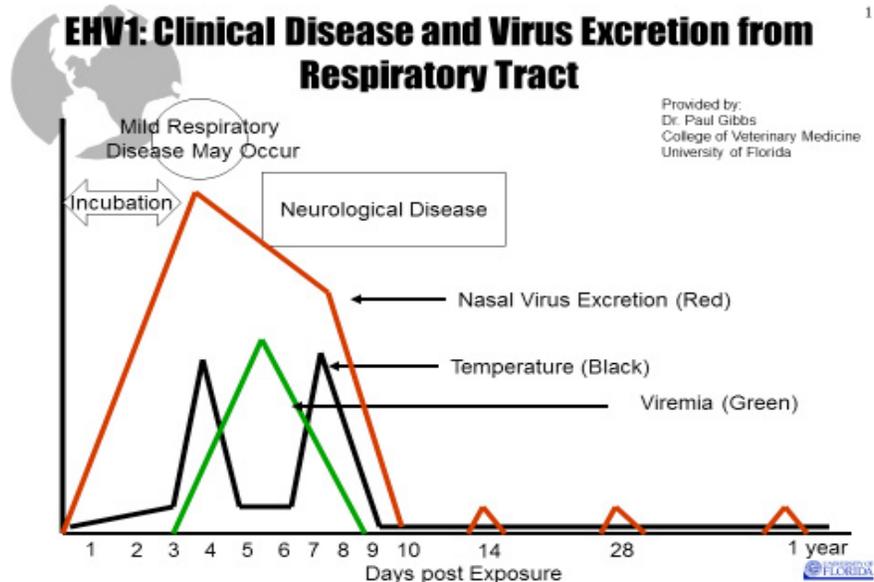
A 12 year old Quarter Horse (QH) gelding and a 12 year old mule residing in Riverside County, attended Mule Days in Bishop, CA on May 17-26, 2015. After returning to the home premises, the QH gelding displayed a fever of 106F on May 30, 2015 and exhibited neurologic signs on June 4, 2015. The horse was confirmed positive for the non-neuropathogenic strain of Equine Herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1). The 12 year old mule remained afebrile but began coughing on June 2, 2015 and tested a weak positive for the neuropathogenic EHV-1 virus. On June 4th an eight (8) year old QH gelding on the premises who did not attend Mule Days but was a cohort of the index 12 year old QH gelding, exhibited a high fever and severe hind limb incoordination. This gelding was confirmed positive for the neuropathogenic strain of EHV-1 (NEHV). Due to the severity of signs the cohort 12 year old QH gelding was euthanized on June 10th. The owner of the 19 horses and mules on the premises took temperatures twice daily and monitored exposed animals for clinical signs. On subsequent testing, four additional equids tested as weak positives for NEHV but asymptomatic and all were negative a week later on nasal swabs.

On June 18, 2015, a 13 year old QH mare residing in San Joaquin County was confirmed positive for the neuropathogenic strain of NEHV. The mare did not attend Bishop Mule Days but was exposed to two cohort mules after they arrived home from Mule Days. The mules remained asymptomatic for EHV-1. On June 5, 2015, the QH mare displayed lethargy, fever, hind limb edema and severe hind limb incoordination. Due to the severity of clinical signs the mare was euthanized on June 14th. The owner monitored temperatures and health of the ten (10) exposed horses and mules on the premises. No additional cases have been identified on this premises at this time.

Mules as Silent Shedders of Equine Herpesvirus -1

by Dr. Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

Recent scientific studies have investigated the role of mules as silent shedders during an Equine Herpesvirus-1 Myeloencephalopathy incident (EHM). Cases of EHM in mules have never been published nor documented. During a 2011 EHV-1 disease investigation involving mules and horses in California, a high viral nasal shedding was detected in some of the asymptomatic mules. It is important to note, that the detection of EHV-1 in asymptomatic mule samples indicates their susceptibility to infection and their potential role in disease spread. Therefore, on a premises where mules and horses are commingled, isolation of the silent shedding mules is the key to EHV-1 disease control.



2015 Vesicular Stomatitis Update

by Dr. Katie Flynn, BVMS, MRCVS

On April 29, 2015, Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) was confirmed in one (1) horse in Grant County, New Mexico. On May 1, 2015, VS was confirmed in three (3) horses on two (2) premises in Arizona and in one (1) mule on a premises in Utah. On May 19, 2015, a horse in Pecos County, Texas was confirmed positive for VS. These are the 2015 VS index cases for their respective states. Since the initial detection, there have been a total 21 confirmed positive VS premises and 23 suspect VS premises.

In January 2015, the Office of International Epizootics (OIE), also known as the World Animal Health Organization, delisted Vesicular Stomatitis. VS is still reportable to State and Federal animal health officials in the United States but detections are no longer required to be reported to the OIE. Based on this change, the response to VS in the United States has changed. Several key changes to the national program include:

- The quarantine period for a premises with suspect or confirmed VS cases is 14 days from the onset of lesions in the last affected animal on the premises (instead of 21 days after lesions healed.) This time period more closely correlates with the known period of viral shedding from a lesioned animal.
- After confirmation of the first VS case in a state, equids with suspected lesions on subsequent premises are not required to be tested, but the premises will be classified as suspect and remain under quarantine for the 14 day period. However, in California, all equines with vesicular lesions will be sampled by a State or Federal animal health official.
- All cattle, sheep, goat and swine with vesicular lesions will be sampled by a Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician in the state.
- Total number of exposed and confirmed animals are not being recorded. Confirmed and suspect premises level data is being captured and reported.

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 VS and the current status visit http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/VS.html

Friendly Reminders: Veterinary Accreditation Renewal

Many veterinarians have already faced their first renewal of USDA Veterinary accreditation status but others may still have that date on the horizon. The local USDA Veterinary Service office can assist with checking your status if you are in doubt: VSCA@aphis.usda.gov. The renewal process requires that Category I veterinarians take three (3) APHIS Approved Supplemental Training Modules and Category II veterinarians take six (6) modules. The modules are offered at various meetings and conventions but they are available for free on-line. The easiest way to get to their website is to use your favorite search engine and type in the following Key terms: USDA Veterinary Accreditation.

[USDA Veterinary Accreditation](#)

Comprehensive and Integrated Surveillance in Swine

Pilot Project to Evaluate African Swine Fever (ASF) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

by Dr. Hector Webster, DMV, MS

The United States swine industry and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)/United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) needs your help.

The American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV), National Pork Board and National Pork Producers Council support the USDA's pilot project to evaluate a foreign animal disease (FAD) surveillance system. As part of the national swine FAD surveillance program pilot project, also known as comprehensive and integrated surveillance (CIS), the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory (CAHFS) now has the ability to test case-qualifying samples for african swine fever (ASF) and foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the same way they have been testing for classical swine fever (CSF) since 2006.

This testing supports the swine industry by assuring trading partners and other stakeholders that the US is free of foreign animal diseases. It also supports stakeholder participation in a system to rapidly detect foreign animal diseases should they occur in swine in the United States.

AASV practitioners and accredited veterinarians are a first line of defense in detecting and reporting foreign animal diseases. You can assist this program by submitting currently validated biologic samples (2 ml whole blood [ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid or purple top tubes]) for ASF, oral swabs in 3 ml tris buffered tryptose broth viral transport media (available in our Davis, Tulare and San Bernardino laboratories) for FMD, and tonsils for CSF testing. Samples should be kept at 4 °C and submitted with a completed [surveillance diagnostic submission form](#) to the CAHFS Laboratory:

California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System
West Health Sciences Drive
University of California-Davis
Davis, CA 95616

Friendly Reminders: Using RFID Tags for Brucellosis Vaccination

Several veterinary clinics and veterinarians are using existing RFID tags as official ID at the time of brucellosis vaccination in lieu of applying the metal National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tag. Orange Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, purchased by the veterinarian, may be applied at the time of vaccination in lieu of the metal NUES tag. If you are interested in either of these options, please contact your local district office or Rachele Kennedy rachele.kennedy@cdfa.ca.gov.

Friendly Reminders: Record All Official ID

Veterinarians should record all official ID when performing herd tests or filling out Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (CVIs). If no official ID exist, one should be applied. Application of an additional official ID is not allowed when one already exists (Example: applying a silver brite to an animal with an existing brucellosis vaccination tag)

California Reportable Disease

Timely Reporting of Suspicious Cases

by Dr. Dennis Wilson D.V.M., MPVM, PhD., Outreach and Education Liaison

We appreciate everyone's cooperation and working with us to quickly resolve suspicions of diseases identified on our Reportable Disease List. The list does identify timelines for reporting. Being aware of the timelines and adhering to them helps to assure that we can rule in or out diseases of concern before they become an issue.

A difference in reporting of even just a day, and even less for FMD, can turn a simple event to a massive disease response activity costing millions of dollars. Under the current production systems, the extensive movement of animals, people, and equipment between premises on a daily basis makes animal agriculture vulnerable to the rapid spread of disease which can be exacerbated by delayed detection. Keeping vigilant and reporting concerns in a timely fashion protects the State's livestock and poultry industries. Veterinarians, producers and diagnostic laboratories are the key to early detection and response.

You are not alone in this; do not forget that CDFA Animal Health Branch and California's USDA Veterinary Service resources are ready and available to assist. There are 18 trained FADD located throughout the State with the expertise and experience to assist in disease investigations. All it takes is a call to one of the Animal Health District offices to get assistance. We are happy to assist anytime a FAD is on your differential. It is much better to look and confirm it is not a FAD than to not look and miss one! Do not forget that the services of the FADD and the case work-up is free.

It's also important to remember, that State and Federal animal health officials not only respond to FADs but to all suspicious reportable diseases. Regulatory officials rely on timely reporting of suspicious cases to protect California's livestock and poultry industry. Once reported, regulatory officials act swiftly to reports of reportable diseases to ensure prompt control measures are implemented to control disease spread. For example, any practitioner who suspects the reportable condition, Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy (EHM) based on compatible clinical signs such as hind limb ataxia with bladder atony should report that suspicion to an Animal Health Branch Official immediately. Delay in reporting a laboratory confirmed case of EHM may result in spread of disease.

One might wonder why we ask laboratories to provide us monthly reports on some endemic conditions. The U.S. is a partner in the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and has the responsibility to monitor endemic OIE listed diseases as a member nation. Disease appearance in new geographic locations, species affected, and virulence are what we are asked to report to USDA who then reports to OIE.

As a reminder, the California Reportable Disease list is updated annually (in January).

It can be found on our webpage: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Index.html There are several links within our pages but for the page above, look in the right hand column under Resources.

Friendly Reminders: Using Mobile Information Management Systems

Several veterinary clinics use the USDA Mobile Information Management (MIM) system to produce electronic TB and brucellosis test charts. This is particularly useful for veterinarians in clinics that are using RFID tags. If you are interested in using this system, please contact your local district office or Rachele Kennedy rachele.kennedy@cdfa.ca.gov.



Staff Biographies

Prior to obtaining her degree, Shauna Parsons worked at a multi-species veterinary hospital for seven (7) years. She assisted with surgical procedures, treatment protocols, radiographs, and ultrasound procedures of animals ranging from parakeets to horses. She currently works with the Equine Medication Monitoring Program (EMMP) as a Research Scientist. There, she coordinates the never static tester schedule, monitors and maintains the EMMP database, tracks and traces EMMP tested horses that roam from show to show, acts as a liaison between University California Davis lab staff, EMMP testers, and equine staff veterinarian, as well as maintaining the Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) when a livestock disease outbreak occurs.



She has worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a Rangeland Management Specialist (RMS) in Alturas, CA. During her time with BLM, she conducted range monitoring projects, compliance investigations of 49 different grazing allotments, issued trespass letters and grazing permits to range cattle and sheep producers who leased a total of 1.5 million acres in the northern California area, along with maintaining compliance records, case files and allotment folders of those permittees. In years past, she worked with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Veterinary Services (VS) as an Animal Identification Coordinator (AIC) in the state of Nevada. During her time with USDA, she conducted trace work of various premises throughout the state, provided oversight of the approved livestock markets to ensure that all federal and state requirements were met, collected brucellosis milk samples for testing, as well as assisting with the 2008 tuberculosis (TB) and 2009 Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) outbreak. While deployed to the 2008 TB outbreak, she earned the title of "Documentation Nazi" due to her stern belief in the importance of maintaining the integrity of various documents and data entered into EMRS.

Shauna enjoys spending time with her family, camping with her horses, hiking at Yosemite, traveling to locations near and far, and relaxing at the beach while listening to the ocean waves crash on the shore. Her wish is to obtain her degree in veterinary medicine focusing on food animal science.

Dr. Alyssa Louie recently joined the AHB team in Sacramento as a Research Scientist under the bovine health programs. She grew up in Southern California, obtained a B.S. in Biological Sciences at USC, and decided to apply for veterinary school as a way to combine interest in health care and an appreciation for nature. Her career interests developed in livestock health (particularly dairy cattle), public and environmental health, and food safety.

After graduating from veterinary school at UC Davis in 2013, she completed the Master of Preventive Veterinary Medicine Program in 2014 for additional training in population health, disease management, epidemiology, and research. This also resulted in an unusual affinity for Excel and large data sets. Her past research has focused on respiratory health in dairy calves, and current interests include climate change adaptation related to agriculture and food security. She is excited about the many learning opportunities within CDFA. In her spare time, Dr. Louie enjoys the company of her cat, Pippin, and boyfriend, Dan, while reading, cooking, or playing video games. She also loves being outdoors hiking and kayaking, and has greatly enjoyed experiences scuba diving off Catalina Island, the Florida Keys, Hawaii, and in the Philippines, Taiwan, and Mexico.



Contact Information



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Animal Health and Food Safety Services
Animal Health Branch
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Physical Address:
2800 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Website: www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Index.html
Email: ahbfeedback@cdfa.ca.gov

Animal Health Branch

Dr. Kent Fowler, Chief
Headquarters: (916) 900-5002
Fax: (916) 900-5333
Permit Line: (916) 900-5052

State Veterinarian and Director, Animal Health and Food Safety Services

Dr. Annette Jones
(916) 900-5000

District Offices Veterinarian In Charge (VIC)

Redding: Dr. Charles Palmer
2135 Civic Center Drive, Room 8
Redding, CA 96001
(530) 225-2140

Modesto: Dr. Randy Anderson
3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite F
Modesto, CA 95358
(209) 491-9350

Tulare: Dr. Gregory Ledbetter
18830 Road 112
Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 685-3500

Ontario: Dr. Predrag Pecic
1910 South Archibald Avenue, Suite Y
Ontario, CA 91761
(909) 947-4462

Other AHFSS Branches

Bureau of Livestock Identification
John Suther, Chief
(916) 900-5006

Milk and Dairy Food Safety
Dr. Stephen Beam, Chief
(916) 900-5008

Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety
Dr. Douglas Hepper, Chief
(916) 900-5004

United States Department of Agriculture

Dr. Gary Brickler
Director, District 6

Dr. Larry Rawson
Assistant District Director, District 6 (CA/HI)

USDA, APHIS, VS, SPRS
(916) 854-3950/Toll Free: (877) 741-3690