



NEWSLETTER

Volume 64 / July 2024



Message From the Chief

By: Mandy Murray, DVM, MPVM, PhD, AHB Branch Chief

Happy Summer!

The past few months the Animal Health Branch (AHB) has seen lots of activity related to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Good news from this last quarter is that California met all the necessary actions and surveillance requirements to declare freedom from HPAI on June 28, 2024. Congratulations and a heartfelt thank you to everyone – the producers, private veterinarians, state and federal staff, and the diagnostic laboratory staff who made that possible! Other good news is that we remain free from HPAI in dairy cattle. However, staff have been diligently conducting outreach, providing updates, and developing response and surveillance plans in the event of a detection of H5N1 (HPAI) in cattle and/or poultry.

The Animal Health and Food Safety Services Division and the AHB hosted the Western States Livestock Health Association (WSLHA) annual meeting in Modesto June 2 – 8. This was a successful meeting attended by state veterinarians and staff from the western states. There were engaging presentations and discussions on a variety of regulatory topics including HPAI, Avian Metapneumovirus, African Swine Fever, depopulation strategies, Condor HPAI vaccination project, and antimicrobial use and stewardship updates. There was also a day of field trips and tours highlighting and showcasing

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Dr. Murray at a dairy as part of the WSLHA annual meeting.

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what makes California animal agriculture unique. Following the WSLHA meeting, many staff remained onsite for an additional 2-day meeting that launched the Western Alliance of States for Agricultural Resilience (WASAR).

Additionally, over the past few months, the AHB staff have continued responding to regulatory diseases and issues; assisting the Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship program with the National Animal Health Monitoring Survey in sheep; preparing for the upcoming implementation of the Animal Disease and Traceability rule change; monitoring heat events and fires; and growing our team with new staff.

The AHB is here to Prevent, Detect, and Respond. Thank you everyone for doing your part to protect California's animal agriculture.

HPAI in Livestock Surveillance and Monitored Herd Pilot Program

By: Nicki Humphrey, DVM, Swine and Small Ruminant Program

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (HPAI) H5N1 virus continues to be an emerging disease in cattle. As of June 14, 2024, there have been 95 dairies in 12 states and one alpaca herd confirmed to be affected with HPAI H5N1. To date, there have not been any detections in California dairy herds. Spread of the virus between dairies is likely multifactorial and includes direct and indirect modes of transmission including animal movement, shared personnel, visitors, shared equipment, other species on site, and wild birds. Surveillance for HPAI in dairy herds may provide for early detection and containment of the disease should it occur in California. To address public health concerns regarding the emerging HPAI H5N1 disease event in livestock, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has developed a Monitored Herd Program. Currently, the program is voluntary and requires enrolled dairy producers to collect samples from lactating cattle on a routine basis. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) also developed a voluntary monitored herd program that utilizes bulk milk tank sampling and producers can choose to enroll in the USDA program in lieu of the current pre-movement lactating dairy cow testing requirement for interstate movements. Producers also have the option to submit samples to the laboratory to assess herd health without enrolling in a voluntary monitored herd program.

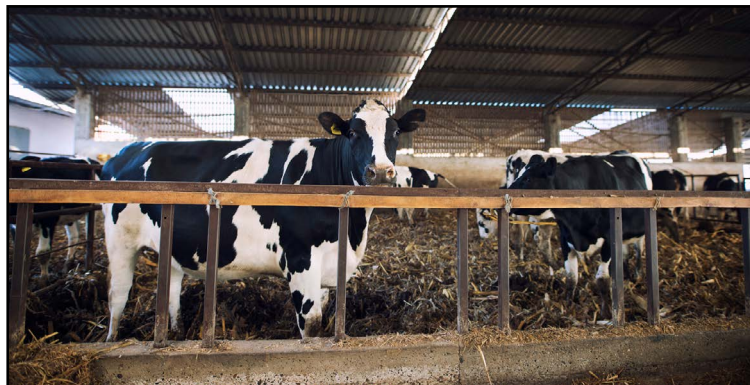
To participate in CDFA's [Monitored Herd Pilot Program](#) producers will need to collect bulk tank samples or a designated number of individual cow samples on a weekly basis for three weeks. After three weeks producers can reduce sample collection to every other week. Details of [sampling protocols](#) can be found on CDFA's website. Producers are required to have a National Premises Identification Number (NPIN) to submit samples to the laboratory. CAHFS Davis is the only laboratory currently approved in California to conduct HPAI testing for dairies.

All dairies are strongly encouraged to implement an enhanced biosecurity protocol. The USDA has announced [funding to support unaffected dairies](#) which includes:

1. Biosecurity planning and implementation (up to \$1,500 per premises)
2. Reimbursement for veterinary costs associated with sample collection for H5N1 testing (up to \$2,000 per premises)
3. Offset shipping costs for Influenza A testing at the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) (actual shipping costs up to \$50 per shipment for two shipments per month per premises)

For more information on HPAI H5N1 specific to California actions visit the [CDFA HPAI H5N1 Virus in Livestock website](#).

For an update on USDA response and activities visit the [USDA HPAI Detections in Livestock website](#).



Case Report: Highly Pathogenic Influenza (HPAI) Detected in a Live Bird Market (LBM) in San Francisco County, California

By: Sarah Mize DVM and Felicia Pohl

On May 7th, CDFA was notified of positive findings for HPAI by the California Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory in one sample from silkies and one sample from red hens that originated from a live bird market in San Francisco County. The positive samples were forwarded to National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa for confirmation.

NVSL confirmed the positive findings. The market was quarantined, depopulated then cleaned and disinfected (C&D). The positive samples were obtained during routine surveillance of five LBMs for avian influenza (AI) in the Bay Area by CDFA personnel on May 2nd. No sick birds were apparent during surveillance at any of the markets. The four other live bird markets surveilled in the Bay Area had no positive findings. Live bird markets are monitored by CDFA and tested for AI routinely. A live bird market is a retail poultry store that maintains an inventory of live poultry and freshly slaughtered poultry for customers.

All the current evaluations point to a high probability that this HPAI detection



was an introduction to this live bird market only.

A supplier showing birds to a consumer at a Live Bird Market.

1. All the other markets tested that day in the Bay Area were negative even though they shared suppliers.
2. The supplier's routes deliver to most of the markets in the Bay Area on the same days, yet all other stores on the routes were negative.
3. All traces to supplier premises that still had birds tested negative.
4. The market system was tested in northern and southern California and all tests were negative.
5. No reports of ill birds were observed in any market.
6. No reports of ill birds reported or observed on any of the supplier premises.
7. Pre-shipment AI tests on supplier premises were negative.
8. No previously unknown suppliers were detected or reported in the trace backs.
9. Possible routes for virus introduction include:
 - a. Customers
 - b. Employees
 - c. Local birds - A "Slough" located at

a local park is in the vicinity. The park has facilities for visitors and has been restored to be suitable for nesting for local and migratory birds.

HPAI is still being detected in wildlife in California and throughout the nation. In the Bay area, Contra Costa County had two detections in May in a raven and a crow. HPAI was detected in the last month in 11 commercial flocks and three backyard flocks affecting 6.04 million birds across the nation. HPAI was also detected in 26 wild birds in May.

The Avian Health Program conducts active surveillance sampling for AI in the live bird marketing system including live bird markets and their suppliers to quickly diagnose, control and prevent the spread of AI. The live bird markets in southern and northern California empty, clean and disinfect their markets once a quarter on a day chosen by industry. CDFA and USDA inspectors inspect the markets to ensure the premises are adequately cleaned. The suppliers are inspected annually to ensure that they are implementing biosecurity, submitting samples for AI surveillance, and maintaining records of deliveries.



Inside a Live Bird Market.

Case Report on Infectious Bronchitis Virus in a Chicken

By: Linda Flores, DVM, CAHEN

S: 11-month-old-rooster with a 4-day history of respiratory signs, loss of appetite, followed by death. The rooster was recently vaccinated against Newcastle disease as part of the UC Davis Gamefowl Wellness Program and against Marek's disease by the owner. No other birds in the flock of 200 were sick or dead at this time.

O: No gross abnormalities were noted

A: Wheezing, inappetence, and death. Differential diagnoses: infectious coryza, mycoplasma, avian influenza, virulent Newcastle disease, infectious bronchitis, infectious laryngotracheitis.

P: The rooster exhibited signs that are common in many poultry diseases, therefore, laboratory diagnosis is required to determine the causative agent. The rooster was submitted for a Backyard Flock Necropsy to the California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) laboratory.

Necropsy Findings and Diagnosis:

1. Infectious Bronchitis Virus
2. Renal failure with gout

Infectious Bronchitis:

Infectious Bronchitis Virus (IBV) is an avian coronavirus that only causes disease in chickens. Since the virus was first isolated in 1937 it has been found around the world. This common and highly contagious disease is a major source of economic loss for the poultry industry. IBV is currently part of the [list of reportable conditions](#) for animals under the monitored

conditions category and needs to be reported within 30 days of discovery. Clinical signs associated with IBV include coughing, sneezing, tracheal rales, conjunctivitis, dyspnea, and drop in egg production. The eggs are often misshapen with thin, soft, wrinkled pale shells. The virus is shed in respiratory discharges and feces. The incubation period is 24-48 hours and the virus can be excreted from the respiratory tract 3-5 days after infection which can lead to 100% morbidity.

On the necropsy report, the rooster had renal and respiratory lesions consistent with infectious bronchitis and secondary visceral gout including nephritis, sinusitis and rhinitis. Some IBV strains are nephropathogenic, causing swollen, pale kidneys distended with urates. In this case, the renal tubules were inflamed and were filled with variable amounts of urate crystals. There were also urates in the liver and pericardium. The laboratory was able to diagnose IBV by PCR on a tracheal swab and immunohistochemistry (IHC) in the kidney. The findings in this case read like the textbook diagnosis.

For prevention purposes, there are attenuated live, killed and recombinant DNA vaccines available to control the disease. There is little cross-reactivity between the different antigenic strains, so it is important to choose the right vaccines for the region. While there is no treatment for IBV infection, antimicrobial therapy may be used to reduce the mortalities of a flock caused by secondary bacterial infections. It is also recommended to practice good biosecurity practices and seek veterinary care. To help find avian veterinary services visit our online resource [SolCal Nestbox](#). We also recommend owners to utilize the [CAHFS laboratory](#) for affordable necropsies on chickens and using the [Backyard Flock Necropsy Submission Guidelines](#). We also encourage private practitioners to familiarize themselves with the list of reportable diseases in cases of high morbidity in backyard flocks.



Eggs from a chicken with IBV.

EIA Non-Negative Cases

By: Katie Hatch, Research Scientist

Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) is a viral disease of all equidae (horses, donkeys, mules and zebras). The virus belongs to the family that includes the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and other animal immunodeficiency viruses. It can be tested for by either the agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID), commonly known as the “Coggins”, test or the enzyme-link immunosorbent assay (ELISA). The ELISA tends to be slightly less expensive and can have a shorter turn-around time for results making it a popular choice for EIA testing. However, the ELISA can also produce false positive results. Any horse with a non-negative ELISA test, along with any horses that are exposed, must be quarantined until confirmatory AGID results are received from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL).



If a horse receives a negative AGID result at NVSL, then the quarantine is released, and the horse is free to travel. However, if there is a positive AGID result then the horse and the exposed cohort must remain under quarantine. A CDFA veterinarian will then go and collect a second set of regulatory samples on the AGID positive horse(s) to confirm their EIA status and also collect a set of samples on each exposed horse on the premises to determine their EIA status. Once regulatory results are received back, the positive horse must either be euthanized or must undergo a lifetime quarantine with permanent isolation at a minimum of 200 yards from all other horses. This is due to the fact that there is no treatment for EIA and infected horses become lifelong carriers and pose a risk of infection to other horses.

In 2024 so far, there have been seven non-negative EIA cases in California. Six of these cases (a 23-year-old Appaloosa mare in Santa Clara County, an 11-year-old Quarter Horse mare in San Joaquin County, a 10-year-old Arabian gelding in Placer County, an 11-year-old Quarter Horse mare in Fresno County, a 15-year-old Warmblood gelding in Placer County, and a 1-year-

old Quarter Horse stud colt in San Luis Obispo County) all had a non-negative ELISA result. The horses and their exposed cohorts were quarantined while the samples were sent to NVSL for confirmation. In these six cases, the samples came back negative on the AGID confirmatory test at NVSL, and the horses were subsequently released from quarantine. The seventh case was in Los Angeles County in two racing Quarter Horse geldings, one 8-year-old and one 4-year-old. These two horses had non-negative ELISA tests and were sent to NVSL for confirmation where the AGID came back positive for EIA. Ten exposed horses on the home premises had samples collected and were negative. These exposed horses remained under quarantine for an additional 60 days until they were retested and all ten were again negative for EIA. Horses are retested as the EIA virus incubation period can take up to 60 days after exposure for the horse to seroconvert and test positive.

Testing for EIA is an important determination in the health status of a horse. Always remember to plan ahead for EIA testing, so if there is a non-negative ELISA sample and a horse must be quarantined, that it doesn't delay any travel or show plans. EIA tests are valid for 12 months in most states, including California.

Case Study: Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)

By: Linda M. Harrison, DVM and Meghan V. Mott, DVM, Redding District

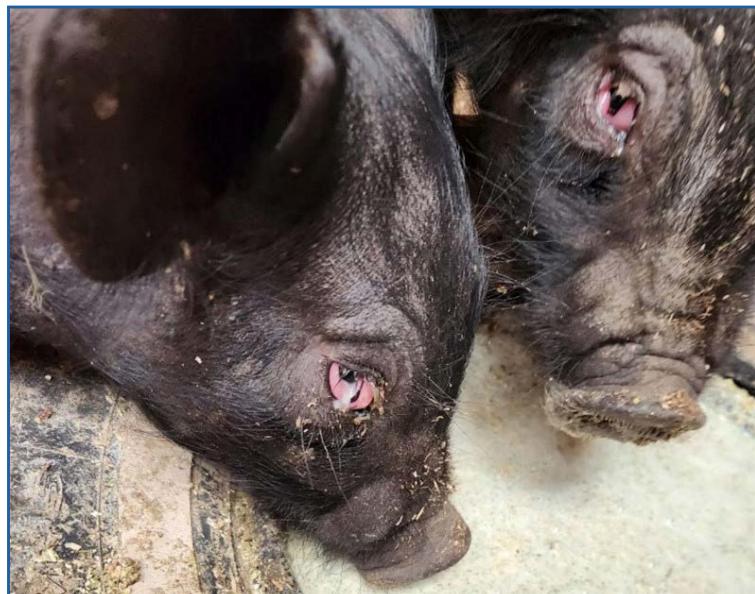
CASE PRESENTATION

Recently, a 4-H club in Northern California received 30 weaner pigs for the upcoming fair season from the same source operation. Within a few days of arrival, multiple pigs began to show signs of respiratory illness. Some developed mild respiratory symptoms (sneezing and coughing) while others developed more severe labored breathing, fever, coughing, and diarrhea. In addition, the majority of affected pigs also developed bilateral mucopurulent conjunctivitis with associated swelling of the upper and lower eyelids.

Minimal response to antibiotic therapy (LA200, lincomycin, Baytril, Draxxin) was noted, and many pigs relapsed following completion of the course of antibiotics. In two cases, the disease progressed to severely labored breathing, loss of appetite, lethargy, recumbency, and death. Overall morbidity reached 75%.

The laboratory request for the testing of multiple pigs included fecal samples for culture/float, testing for Salmonella,

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Affected pigs with conjunctivitis.

Porcine Endemic Diarrhea Virus, Swine Delta Coronavirus, and Transmissible Gastroenteritis Virus. Nasal swabs and blood were submitted for Swine Influenza and PRRS testing. Ophthalmic swabs were analyzed by PCR for *Mycoplasma* and *Chlamydia*. One carcass was submitted for necropsy. Biosecurity measures (quarantine/handwashing/foot baths) were initiated pending laboratory testing and necropsy findings.

Differential diagnoses for the respiratory condition included Swine Influenza, Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), and/or bacterial pneumonia. The rapid spread and progression of clinical signs suggested a primary viral pathogen. Laboratory results were negative for *Salmonella*, Influenza, PEDV/PDCoV/TGEV, and fecal parasite eggs. Multiple ELISA tests (5/5) were positive for PRRS. *Mycoplasma* was detected via PCR testing on a conjunctival swab. The necropsy revealed bilateral, multifocal to extensive bronchopneumonia with PRRS as the primary pathogen.

DISCUSSION

PRRS is an endemic and highly contagious disease that causes reproductive disorders in sows and respiratory disease in younger pigs. It was first recognized in the United States in 1987 and while PRRS is not an officially reportable disease except to local authorities, most producers use vaccination and control strategies to mitigate the devastating production losses and economic effects on their farm. PRRS virus does not pose a significant zoonotic risk to the general public.

PRRSV is an enveloped RNA virus and a member of the Arterivirus genus. In swine operations, infection causes widespread and comprehensive disruption in the breeding, production, and growth at all stages with an estimated loss of \$660

million dollars per year in the US. The virus is spread between and within farms via airborne transmission, the introduction of affected animals, contamination via fomites, and lapse of biosecurity protocols. Frequent viral mutations result in regular emergence of new strains that display increased pathogenesis and ease of transmission. In young animals (weaner/feeder), clinical signs typically include fever, dyspnea, labored abdominal breathing, barking cough, and recumbency similar to Swine Influenza.

PRRS virus also frequently occurs in association with conjunctivitis. The relationship remains speculative at this time whether the virus causes specific damage to the conjunctival structures and/or if the subsequent inflammation increases susceptibility to secondary pathogens. The positive PCR for *Mycoplasma* in these cases suggests secondary invasion.

This case study emphasizes the need for dedicated biosecurity measures when new animals are acquired in order to limit exposure to the susceptible resident population. Furthermore, it stresses that when a group of animals is acquired specifically for the purpose of growing and finishing for fairs/exhibits, these animals should be quarantined together for at least two weeks before being dispersed to the exhibitors. Lastly, source herds should be selected with strong vaccination protocols against Swine Influenza, *Mycoplasma*, and PRRS among other diseases.

USDA Publishes Final Animal Disease Traceability Rule

By: Kavishti Kokaram, DVM, DACVPM, Supervising Veterinarian and Kristen Cox, Environmental Scientist

On April 26, 2024, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) released the final wording of the new Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) rule. This rule was published into the [Federal Register](#) and will come into effect on **November 5, 2024** (180 days after publication). APHIS believes that these changes will enhance the ability of regulatory officials, private veterinarians, and livestock producers to quickly respond to diseases of high consequence and foreign animal diseases that may pose a threat to the U.S. cattle and bison industries.

The biggest change that this rule brings is the requirement that ear tags applied to cattle and bison must be both electronically and visually readable in order to qualify for use as official identification (ID) for interstate movement. At this time, 840 electronic ID (EID) tags will meet this requirement,

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but new forms of identification may be developed to meet these criteria.

Under this final rule, National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tags (also known as “silverbrites”) will no longer qualify as official ID for cattle and bison tagged after November 5, 2024. All NUES tags applied to cattle and bison prior to the November 5, 2024 will be recognized as official ID for the life of these animals.

Additional changes associated with this final ADT rule include amending definitions and clarification of record retention and records access. The most pertinent changes to definitions include:

- **Official Identification (ID) for Cattle and Bison:** *“(i) For an official eartag, beginning November 5, 2024, all official eartags sold for or applied to cattle and bison must be readable both visually and electronically (EID).”*
- **Dairy Cattle:** *“All cattle, regardless of age or sex or current use, that are of a breed(s) or offspring of a breed used to produce milk or other dairy products for human consumption, including, but not limited to, Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, Milking Shorthorn, and Red and Whites.”*
- **Approved Tagging Site:** *“A premises, authorized by APHIS, State, or Tribal animal health officials, where livestock without official identification may be transferred to have official identification applied on behalf of their owner or the person*



in possession, care, or control of the animals when they are brought to the premises.”

Related to questions we have received through this period, APHIS removed a section of federal Brucellosis regulations [CFR: §86.4(c)(4)], which states that *“a brucellosis vaccination visual eartag with a NUES number may be applied to an animal that is already officially identified with one or more official eartags.”* As a result, visual only/non-EID brucellosis NUES tags (orange metal Bangs tags) will no longer be recognized as official ID after the effective date of the rule.

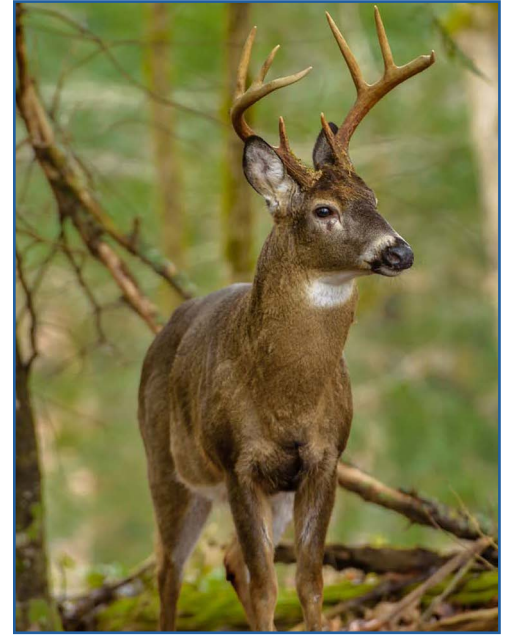
We do recognize the challenges associated with management changes that will be needed for implementation of the final federal ADT rule and encourage discussions with industry and veterinarians regarding the potential impact these changes will create.

To learn more about ADT and the final rule, APHIS has compiled some frequently asked questions. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Dr. Kavishti Kokaram at (916) 900-5002 or your local district office.

California's New Condition: Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

By: Danny Dickason, DVM, MCM, Wildlife Interface Program

May of 2024 brought detection of a new animal disease to California: Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). On May 6, the first two detections of CWD in California were confirmed by the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, IA following preliminary testing done by the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) in Pullman, WA. The testing was done on routine CWD surveillance samples sent in by the California Department of Fish



and Wildlife's Wildlife Health Laboratory (CDFW WHL). The detections were from two adult male deer, one found dead of unknown causes near Yosemite Lakes in Madera County and the other from a roadkill deer from the vicinity of Bishop, CA. Currently, we do not know how and when CWD arrived in California, the current prevalence and geographic distribution of the disease, and the zoonotic risk to humans (the current consensus is that zoonotic risk to humans is low).

CWD, a prion disease, is caused by an abnormal, infectious, and pathogenic form of a normal protein. The term “prion” is a combination of protein and infection. It has a very long incubation period of typically a year or more. Infected animals shed infectious prions before clinical signs occur. This, coupled with the long incubation period, makes managing the disease very difficult since the environment can be contaminated with infectious prions well before the first sick animals are detected. Transmission occurs through direct contact with infectious individuals or materials like saliva, urine, feces, or carcasses from infected individuals that may “seed” the environment. Symptoms of clinical disease include significant weight loss

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over time (i.e. “wasting” disease) despite continuing to eat, abnormal behavior, lethargy, lowered head, droopy ears, wide based stance (ataxia), and excessive salivation or drooling. All native North American cervids are susceptible to CWD and the disease has been detected in all species of free-ranging and captive deer, elk, and moose in [at least four Canadian provinces and 34 States](#) as well as in free-ranging reindeer and moose in Scandinavia, and captive elk and Sika deer in South Korea. The disease is 100% fatal in susceptible animals. Unfortunately, there is a lot we don’t know about the species susceptibility range. For example, experimentally sheep, pigs, and other species have been given CWD, usually through intracerebral inoculations (not a natural exposure route). Additionally, since the 2016 detections in Norway we’ve discovered that there may be different strains of CWD. Research since that discovery suggests that different strains may have different host susceptibility and disease progression. Luckily, the fallow deer that are farmed in California do not appear to be susceptible to CWD.

In response to these detections, CDFW has increased surveillance to determine the geographic extent and prevalence of CWD as well as increased harvest/take levels (to decrease population size) and implemented carcass disposal and movement requirements in an effort to minimize transmission rates and environmental contamination. CDFW recommends that people do not consume meat from any animal that has tested positive for CWD. The arrival of this novel disease also serves as a reminder that wild cervids can carry other diseases of agricultural and human concern, including brucellosis and tuberculosis.

Sick or dead deer can be reported on the CDFW [Wildlife Mortality Reporting website](#) and information on CWD and carcass testing can be found the CDFW [Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance website](#).

California has Joined the Western Alliance of States for Agricultural Resilience (WASAR)

By: John Montalbano, Program Manager II, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has joined the Western Alliance of States for Agricultural Resilience (WASAR or Western Alliance). Earlier this month the group met to discuss and further develop the priorities of WASAR. The alliance follows the model of similar state partnerships around the country.

What started as a Washington State Department of Agriculture grant proposal aimed at forming a partnership amongst a few interested western states has become an alliance between twelve states who share a common vision for preparedness in responding to agricultural emergencies. WASAR was established with funding from the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program (NADPRP) and conducted its inaugural in-person workshop in Modesto, California June 5 & 6, 2024. The mission of the Western Alliance is to facilitate regional collaboration in planning, mitigation,

prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery for animal and agriculture emergencies through an all-hazards approach. The newly elected WASAR Chair, Ms. Erin Coyle of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, with the assistance of SES, Inc., conducted state-by-state interviews reviewing the potential interest in an alliance, understanding the gaps in emergency preparedness, and identifying the unique needs and authorities of each state. From December 2023 to June 2024, states worked together to establish a Charter outlining the organization, focus, operation, and scope of the Western Alliance.

The 12 alliance states are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

California had its first opportunity to work hand-in-hand with the alliance states following the June 2024 Western States Livestock Health Association Meeting, during which members voted-in chaired positions and worked to develop the initial Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP), a comprehensive plan that outlines priorities for ensuring and enhancing emergency capabilities, e.g., identifying needs for training and exercise. The Western Alliance implemented a two-



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step process for identifying both preparedness priorities and preparedness activities that would be included in the IPP. Participants were divided into three groups and following discussion on priorities and activities, presented the group findings, which were recorded in a draft three-year IPP. A follow up action item will be for states to prioritize the activities and establish timelines for the alliance to address each project. A few of the major Western Alliance goals are to create neighbor friendly communications, share best practices, training, and exercise material and to coordinate closely during emergency response activities.

State responses to agricultural emergencies are complex, resource-intensive, and transcend geographic and political boundaries, regardless of whether the emergency was intentionally introduced or occurred naturally. To support addressing all scales and types of emergencies, including natural disasters, agroterrorism, invasive species or foreign/emerging pest and disease threats, member states of the WASAR have created a voluntary partnership to address these issues in a unified manner. The objectives of this partnership are to protect public health and safety, secure food supply systems, and ensure the vitality and viability of agricultural infrastructure, economy, and animal health in individual states and throughout the region.

CDFA is excited to participate in and contribute to the alliance's success. For more information, please contact Jean Cheng, DVM, at Jean.Cheng@cdfa.ca.gov.

California Animal Agriculture Mortality Management Compost Subject Matter Expert Training Invitation

By: John Montalbano, Program Manager II, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section

As part of CDFA's 2023 NADPRP-funded project, the Animal Health Branch has joined the Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch in planning an animal mortality Compost Subject Matter Expert (SME) training scheduled for September 17-20, 2024 at the UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Teaching and Research Center in Tulare, CA. Participation in this training and passing the exam are two of the three steps in becoming a USDA APHIS-recognized compost SME. The training is targeted toward personnel who will be charged with building compost piles for livestock and poultry mortality management when traditional disposal methods are unavailable. For more information about the training, please contact Dr. Ricardo Gaitan at ricardo.gaitan@cdfa.ca.gov.

CDFA Collaborating with USDA NAHMS on 2024 Sheep Study

By: CDFA Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship

The USDA National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), in collaboration with the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), is currently conducting a nation-wide, voluntary study focusing on U.S. sheep operations and will provide the industry with new and valuable information regarding priority health and management issues facing the U.S. sheep industry.

In general, NAHMS studies provide findings applicable on a national or regional level. The CDFA is collaborating with NAHMS to expand the study in California to allow the state's sheep industry the opportunity to be represented in a way that will yield state-level findings.

From April 2024 through August 2024, CDFA's Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Branch (AUS) and Animal Health Branch (AHB) staff, alongside USDA staff, are contacting producers, administering surveys, and gathering samples on producers' farms across California. AUS would like to thank all AHB staff that have made this collaboration with USDA NAHMS possible. A special shout-out to the Ontario AHB staff that were the first ones to submit full surveys and sampling specimens in California! CDFA hopes to see the California-specific results in the future.

For more information, please visit [NAHMS Sheep Studies](#).



Foreign Animal Disease Investigations March 16, 2024 – June 15, 2024

By: Alireza Javidmehr, DVM, MPVM, PhD,
Emergency Preparedness and Response Section

It is essential to be aware of foreign animal diseases (FADs) and their potential impact on the food supply chain and international trade. Even though these diseases have either been eradicated or never occurred in the United States, a widespread outbreak could have severe consequences. This includes posing a public health risk if they can be transmitted to humans. Therefore, detecting them early and taking immediate action to control and eradicate FADs is crucial. California is investing significant resources to protect the livestock industry against FAD outbreaks. You can learn about the critical activities when a FAD is detected in the state by viewing 13 infographics and three short video clips on the [CDFA Preparedness and Response webpage](#).

Between March 16 and June 15, 2024, California FAD diagnosticians investigated 84 FAD suspicious cases (Table 1). Out of the 84 investigations conducted, almost 84 percent were to rule out Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in pigs being shipped to slaughterhouses. The lesions observed in these cases were found to be caused by Senecavirus A (SVA). Although SVA is an endemic disease in the US, it triggers an investigation for FAD due to the similarity of lesions to FMD. It is essential to treat any animal diseases presenting similar signs to FADs as an FAD until the condition can be ruled out.

All Emergency conditions listed in the [California reportable animal disease list](#) must be reported to the local animal health authorities within 24 hours. Contact information for the AHB district offices is listed on the last page of this newsletter and on the reportable disease list.

Table 1. Summary of FAD investigations from March 16, 2024 to June 15, 2024

AHB Districts	Disease	Species	Sample Type	Number of Investigations	Destination Lab*
Modesto	Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Senecavirus A (SVA)	Porcine	Swab	60	CAHFS-Davis
	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)	Avian	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
	Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV)	Equine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
Ontario	VSV	Equine	Swab, Serum	4	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
	VSV	White Rhinoceros	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
Redding	VSV	Bovine	Swab	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
	VSV	Equine	Swab, Serum	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
Tulare	FMD, SVA	Porcine	Swab	11	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
	Tuberculosis (TB)	Bovine	Whole Cow	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
	Schmallenberg	Caprine	Tissue	1	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis
	VSV	Equine	Swab, Serum	2	NVSL, CAHFS-Davis

*NVSL: National Veterinary Services Laboratory
CAHFS: California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory

Help Identify Veterinary Shortage Areas in California for Federal Designation

By: CDFA Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship

It's that time of year again!

Veterinarians and producers can help guide CDFA's efforts to nominate veterinary shortage areas for [USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's \(NIFA\) Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program \(VMLRP\)](#). Shortage nominations provide two opportunities to support qualified veterinarians and their practices. Through VMLRP, a significant portion of the educational debt incurred in pursuit of veterinary medicine degrees can be offset in return for attracting or retaining veterinary services in [designated veterinary shortage areas](#) for a minimum of three years. Veterinary shortage areas identified are also eligible for funding to establish or expand veterinary practices in rural areas through USDA NIFA's Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP) [Rural Practice Enhancement](#)

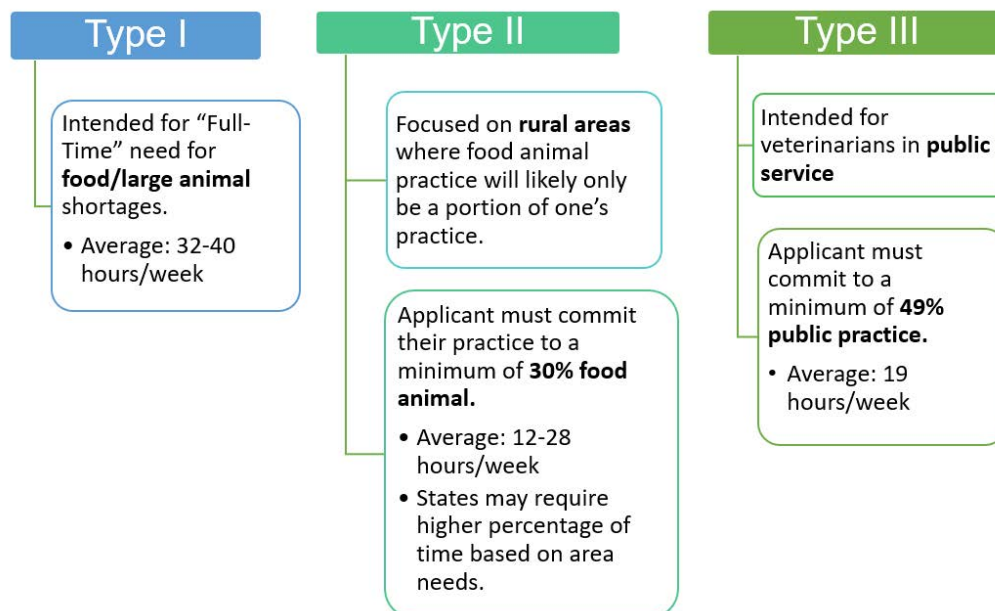
[grants](#), which can be used for activities such as developing mobile veterinary facilities to address education or extension needs in the area.

CDFA is currently seeking input on regions experiencing a veterinary shortage for consideration in the 2024-2025 nomination cycle.

Once an area has been officially designated, veterinarians can then apply to the national program for funding in spring 2025 if they work or intend to work in a designated shortage area and meet the requirements for the area's position, as designated by one of the three categories, described in the image below.

CDFA AUS requests that nomination suggestions be emailed to cdfa_aus@cdfa.ca.gov, or be submitted as a [survey entry](#), by September 1,

2024 for consideration as a potential nomination. Please note, providing as much information and additional references as possible, such as from livestock producers, UC Cooperative Extensionists, and local 4-H or FFA leaders, will help bolster your county's proposal.



Animal Health Branch Staff Biographies

Kelsi Williams, Ed.D,
Environmental Scientist, Animal Disease Traceability



Dr. Kelsi Williams joined the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Animal Health Branch Animal Disease Traceability unit as an Environmental Scientist in June 2024. She has spent over 20 years in community education including working with government special districts and non-profit organizations in the fields of agriculture and organizational leadership to support and sustain producers and the environment. Through this work she has guided the development of policy, budgets, organizational transparency, staffing, staff development, outreach, and education. She has spent many years working with a variety of audiences including helping to orchestrate the learning for students in the areas of biology, zoology, chemistry, environmental and earth sciences. She has developed and implemented several curriculums over the years that span subjects of water quality, green chemistry, livestock care, and biosecurity. Kelsi has also been a 4-H volunteer for 15 years working with hundreds of young people to encourage their interests, develop life skills, and guide them into being responsible citizens through projects including dairy and market goats, poultry, teen pollinator ambassadors, veterinary science, sewing and creative writing. Kelsi received her B.S. degree in Biological Sciences from UC Davis in 2003, M.S. in Cross-Cultural Education from National University in 2005, and Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership from City University of Seattle in 2019 and managed to work in her love of science

into her doctoral dissertation, *Coupling Conservation Efforts with Water Rate Structure: Evidence to Inform Leadership and Support Policy*. She considers clear communication to be fundamental to the success of any organization and its stakeholder groups and looks forward to making close connections to colleagues and all those involved in livestock throughout the state. Kelsi and her family live and work on their small family farm raising a variety of animals including poultry, rabbits, dairy goats, dairy cows, and more. She and her family strive to always be learning and improving what they do.

Matt Vahabi, DVM,
Veterinarian (General), Ontario District

Dr. Matt Vahabi joined the Animal Health Branch's Ontario District Office in June 2024 as a Veterinarian (General). Originally from the east coast (New Jersey), Dr. Vahabi pursued his desire to explore new lands and attended veterinary school at Midwestern University in Arizona, where he graduated with his DVM in 2019. Upon graduating veterinary school, Dr. Vahabi worked as a Public Health Veterinarian and then as a Frontline Supervisor with the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety & Inspection Service, during which he oversaw food safety and antemortem/postmortem inspections in livestock destined for slaughter. Dr. Vahabi's professional interests include most aspects of veterinary public health, especially infectious diseases and food safety, and he is also finishing up his Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program with the University of Missouri. In his free time, Matt enjoys traveling, going to the beach, working out, spending time with his Lab mix (Horace) and friends, collecting vinyl records, and obtaining free samples at the Costco right next to his apartment.



Contact Information

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Animal Health Branch Programs

- [Animal Disease Traceability \(ADT\)](#)
- [Avian Program](#)
- [California Animal Response Emergency System \(CARES\)](#)
- [California Avian Health Education Network \(CAHEN\)](#)
- [Cattle Program](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness Response Section \(EPRS\)](#)
- [Equine Medication Monitoring Program \(EMMP\)](#)
- [Equine Program](#)
- [Foreign Animal Disease \(FAD\) Program](#)
- [Secure Food Supply \(SFS\) Program](#)
- [Small Ruminant Program](#)
- [Swine Program](#)
- [Wildlife Interface Program](#)

Mission Statement

The Animal Health Branch is the State's organized, professional veterinary medical unit that protects livestock populations, consumers, and California's economy from catastrophic animal diseases, disasters that impact animals, and other health or agricultural problems. The Branch addresses diseases and other problems that cannot be successfully controlled on an individual animal or herd basis but require state-wide coordinated resources. Implementing programs that protect California's livestock industries and consumers, ensures the availability, affordability, and wholesomeness of food.