



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 67 / July 2025



## Message From the Chief

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



Greetings!

Summer is once again in full swing. This is often the time when we at the Animal Health Branch can regroup, get back to “business as usual”. However, the ongoing detections of HPAI (aka bird flu, H5N1), the approaching fall 2025 bird migration, the looming threat of New World Screwworm, and the ongoing disease surveillance and mitigation efforts are keeping the Animal Health Branch staff very busy. I was reminded today of our Branch vision statement:

*The Animal Health Branch is a unified workforce that has the capacity, capability, and flexibility to adapt and stay one step ahead in our efforts to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to diseases facing California Animal Agriculture and disasters impacting animals in California.*

This past year has tested our ability to be flexible and adaptive! We strive towards this vision by collaboratively engaging with our national and state partners to gather as much information as possible to inform and adapt our planning and response efforts. We were also fortunate to be able to convene for an in-person meeting earlier this summer to further unify our team and to have a series of technical presentations and break-out discussions aimed at improving our collective capability to perform our jobs for the State of California. Without a doubt, the AHB is a team of individuals who are passionate about California’s animal agriculture and committed to doing what is needed to protect those communities and industries. Thank you to the staff in the AHB and our partners in other state and federal agencies, industry, and academia for working together to protect California’s animal agriculture.

Come join our team  
– information about  
vacancies on page 10.

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# H5N1 Bird Flu Update in California

By: Felicia Pohl, Research Scientist II, Laura Bradley, DVM, and Nicki Humphrey, DVM

## Avian

On July 20, 2025, the state of California declared freedom of disease from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry, after completing extensive surveillance across the state. The last detection of H5N1 in California domestic poultry was on February 13, 2025. To date, HPAI has affected 105 commercial flocks, 39 backyard flocks, and over 23 million domestic poultry cumulatively across California.

Other states continue to have new detections, but the rate of infection has decreased over the summer. Since February 8, 2022, when the first H5N1 HPAI detection was discovered in domestic poultry in the United States, there have been 787 commercial flocks and 921 backyard flocks affecting 174.8 million birds across 50 states and one U.S. territory (Puerto Rico).

Avian influenza viruses continue to circulate normally among migratory and wild birds; as such, we strongly recommend that all poultry owners implement enhanced biosecurity practices regardless of California's HPAI status. Recommended biosecurity practices can be found on the [CDFA](#) and [USDA](#) websites. The California State Veterinarian has extended the [recommendation](#) to keep all poultry indoors through December 2025.

Clinical signs of HPAI in poultry include sudden death, trouble breathing, clear runny discharge (from nose, mouth, and eyes), lethargy, decreased food and water intake, swelling (eyes, head, wattles, or combs), discolored or bruised comb, wattles, or legs, stumbling/falling or twisted neck.

## Bovine

As of July 13, 2025, there have been a total of 1,075 affected dairies across 17 states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Kansas, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming), one alpaca herd in Idaho, and one case in swine in Oregon. National detections of Bird Flu in livestock can



be found on [USDA's website](#).

The number of herds under quarantine in California currently is 82 herds, with the total number of positive herds throughout this incident reaching 773 dairy herds.

California is currently experiencing a rise in herds that are "re-detected." These redetected herds were HPAI positive, cleared the virus, were released from quarantine, and then were detected as positive again through our surveillance program. Some of these herds are experiencing a resurgence of clinical signs similar to the first round of viral infection, some are exhibiting a milder disease response, and some have not had any noticeable clinical signs.

When a dairy is infected, it is placed under quarantine (this includes movement restrictions) and enhanced biosecurity measures are implemented to prevent the spread of the virus. Sick cows are isolated and treated at the dairies. Herds are only released from quarantine after demonstrating an absence of clinical signs and three consecutive negative bulk tank samples separated by a minimum of seven days. Milk sampling surveillance through California creameries continues on a regular basis to support early detection and response. Most infected livestock and dairy cattle can fully recover from H5N1 infection within a few weeks. As of June 18, 2025, 687 out of 767 affected dairies have been released from quarantine, but will continue to be monitored through milk testing for early virus detection. In addition, in June, CDFA has had six dairies that were previously infected early on in the outbreak released from quarantine and now have results that suggest the virus is recirculating. Click [here](#) to review the current requirements for H5N1 dairy cow quarantine release requirements.

California's supply of milk and dairy foods is safe and has not been impacted by these events. Healthy cows have been cleared to continue shipping milk for pasteurization. Pasteurization of milk is fully effective at inactivating the virus so there is no cause for concern for consumers from pasteurized milk or dairy products. Pasteurized milk and dairy items, as well as properly handled meat and eggs, continue to be safe to consume.

Clinical signs of H5N1 in livestock include decreased feed consumption with a simultaneous decrease in rumination and rumen motility, respiratory signs including clear/bloody nasal discharge, acute drop in milk production (severely affected cattle may have thicker, concentrated, colostrum-like milk or produce no milk at all), abnormal tacky or loose feces, lethargy, dehydration, and fever. Infected cattle may be subclinical (asymptomatic) or clinical (symptomatic) with the virus predominantly found in milk and mammary tissue regardless of clinical signs.

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>> *Livestock and poultry owners that have experienced any unusual/suspicious illness or deaths should call our H5N1 Bird Flu hotline at: 1-866-922-2473*

## Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program (BCAP)

By: Felicia Pohl, Research Scientist II

### Humans

The last detection of H5N1 in a human in California was on January 14, 2025. For the most up to date data on bird flu cases in California, please visit [CDPH's Current Bird Flu Situation dashboard](#). While the risk to the general public remains low, additional human cases of bird flu are expected to be identified and confirmed in California. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends that personal protective equipment (PPE), such as eye protection (face shields or safety goggles), respirators (N95 masks), and gloves be worn by anyone working with animals or materials that are infected or potentially infected with the bird flu virus. Wearing PPE helps prevent infection. Please see CDPH's [Worker Protection from Bird Flu](#) for full PPE guidance. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, you can [submit an inquiry directly to CDPH](#).

If anyone suspects that they are infected with the Bird Flu virus, please contact your local public health department for further direction and testing. Not all medical care facilities are equipped or have testing available.

### Other Animals

Since the beginning of the outbreak there have been cases of bird flu found in other mammals such as foxes, seals, racoons, cats, dogs, etc. Bird flu cases in mammals since the beginning of the outbreak in 2022 are listed here: [HPAI Detections in Mammals](#).

>> *Please report any unusual or suspicious dead wild birds to the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife Mortality Report website](#). If you have questions about wildlife rehabilitation, please contact the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Health Lab](#) directly.*

### Stay Informed

- For the latest updates of HPAI in California domestic poultry, visit our website at: [bit.ly/CalAvianflu](https://bit.ly/CalAvianflu).
- For the latest updates of H5N1 in California domestic livestock, visit our website at: [bit.ly/cdfaLivestockHPAI](https://bit.ly/cdfaLivestockHPAI).
- For public inquiries regarding H5N1 Bird Flu in California, please send an e-mail to [cdfa.HPAIinfo@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:cdfa.HPAIinfo@cdfa.ca.gov) or call 916-217-7517. For media inquiries, please call 916-654-0462 or send an e-mail to [OfficeOfPublicAffairs@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:OfficeOfPublicAffairs@cdfa.ca.gov).

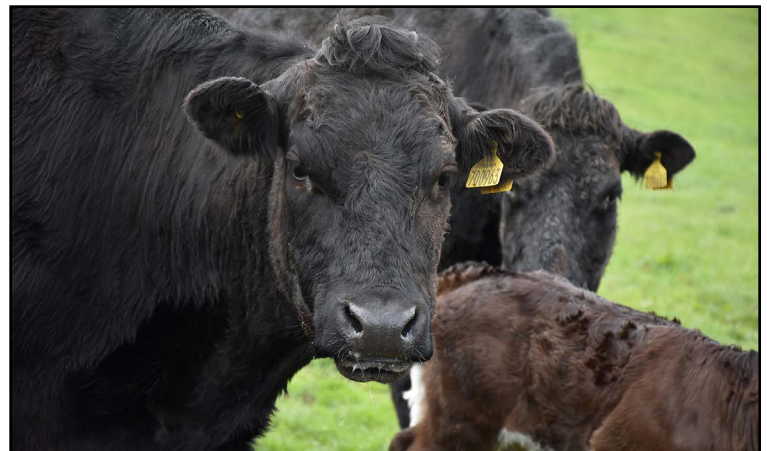
The current outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) began in 2022 and has devastated poultry farms throughout California and the nation. As of December 31, 2024, USDA APHIS implemented a new indemnity rule to incentivize eligible poultry producers to enhance their biosecurity measures. This rule requires eligible poultry producers to undergo a Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program (BCAP) audit to receive indemnity payments if their flock(s) become infected with HPAI. As a major component of this program, producers must be in good standing as part of the [National Poultry Improvement Plan \(NPIP\)](#) and have passed an NPIP audit within the preceding two years to qualify for indemnity. The goals of this program are to significantly reduce the risk of HPAI infections and reinfections, limit disease spread and reduce government indemnity costs. For more information, please see the [Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program \(BCAP\) Factsheet for California Poultry Producers](#). **If you would like to schedule an audit, please e-mail [SFSPermits@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:SFSPermits@cdfa.ca.gov). For further questions, please contact your local district Animal Health Branch Office.**

## Tritrichomonas foetus Case Study

By: Dr. Steven Gallego, Redding District Supervising Veterinarian

"I'm not dead yet" is a line from Monty Python's The Holy Grail and is apropos when describing a new Tritrichomonas ("trich") case this winter. Having not detected trich for several years in the Redding District, recently a practitioner and the CAHFS lab found a 4-year-old Angus beef bull positive on PCR for Tritrichomonas foetus during the herd's annual breeding soundness exam. This same bull was negative on PCR after

*Continued on page 4*





last year's breeding exam. When I first joined CDFA over 10 years ago, several detections were made each year sometimes affecting numerous bulls in a single herd. Many infections occurred predominantly in bulls running on communal ground in the northeast corner of California, east into Nevada and north into Oregon. This recent detection was no different - the positive bull was on summer ground in OR and had been retrieved from a neighboring Lakeview herd of unknown trich status.

In hindsight, the owner should have isolated the bull for two weeks then retested before release to the herd. Contact with potential fence exposures at the California home ranch were unremarkable – the owner reported 95% of cows calved. Complicating detection was an excessively long turnout; the positive bull had a 5-month breeding period. Any reproductive inefficiency would be difficult to discern because cows experiencing early embryo losses had plenty of time to rebreed. In addition to culling the bull and advising that the rancher work closely with his vet to avoid a repeat infection, shortening his breeding period to 90 days was strongly recommended - uniformly sized calves no more than 90 days apart will bring better money than a rag-tag group with a 5-month age difference. No less damning, but difficult to prove, was the owner's habit of purchasing good-looking, inexpensive, open cows at the yard. More valuable weaned calves and a more cautionary view of open cows may have been the money attention getter this rancher needed to improve his herd's metrics and protect his neighbors from exposure to an insidious infection.

## Unofficial Identification Tag Use in Cattle

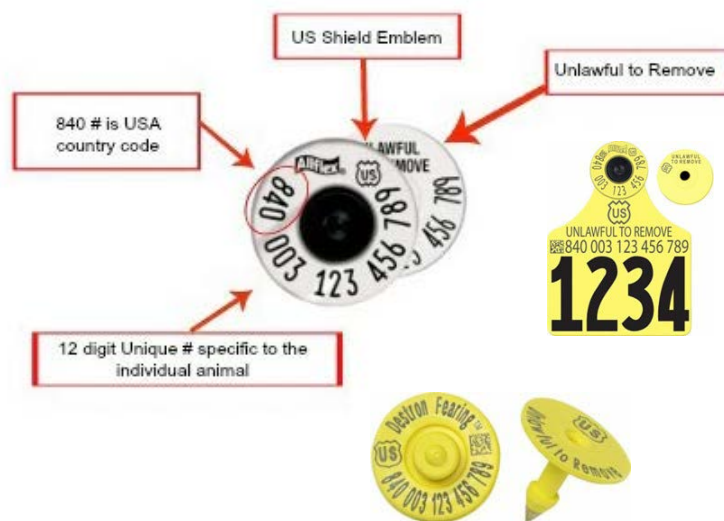
By: Kristen Cox, Environmental Scientist

With the mandatory transition to official identification in cattle and bison that be both visually and electronically (Electronic Identification, EID) readable beginning on November 5, 2024 due to the [USDA's 2024 Final ADT Rule](#), there has been a greater demand across the country for EID tags, also known as "840s".

"840" tags are not new technology; they have been available for use as official ID in cattle, bison, and a number of other species (sheep, goats, swine, and cervids) for years. However, many people are new to the idea of these types of tags, which has created confusion while transitioning from visual-only tags, such as silverbrites or bangs metal tags, to EIDs.

### What Exactly Qualifies a Tag as Official ID?

Per [USDA regulations](#), an official ID must have a unique number, bear a U.S. shield, be tamper evident, and have a high



retention rate. These tags are intended to last for the lifetime of the animal once applied and aid in disease traceability and livestock movement domestically and internationally.

Recently, CDFA was made aware of companies and parties attempting to sell knockoff or counterfeit "840" tags at cheaper rates. Additionally, official "840" tags have been stolen and found for sale on various retail websites.

### What do Unofficial or Counterfeit EID tags look like?

Some unofficial tags that you may see begin with "USA" or a number within the "900" series. These can be used strictly for management purposes but are not official and cannot be utilized for interstate movement or disease testing.



Counterfeit or knockoff "840" tags will look very similar to official "840" tags but will not have a U.S. shield, "unlawful to remove" statement, and/or will not begin with "840003", which is the current range of numbers found on all USDA-approved tags.



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Who is Authorized to Produce and/or Sell Official “840” EIDs?

For cattle and bison, [USDA-approved tag manufacturers](#) include:

- Allflex
- Caisley International GmbH (Premier 1 Supplies)
- Datamars
- Destron Fearing
- Leader Products
- Shearwell Data Limited
- Wuxi FOIA Technology (All Data Tags)
- Y-Text Corporation

Where can you Acquire “840” Tags for your Cattle or Bison?

	Purchase from USDA-Approved Manufacturer	CDFA No-Cost EID Tag Program	Through Your Veterinarian
Producer	X	X	X ++
Veterinarian	X	X ++	
Approved Tagging Site	X	X	

++ *Orange brucellosis vaccination (aka “bangs”) tags must only be applied by veterinarians at the time of vaccination. These tags are provided to the veterinarian by CDFA and cannot be purchased.*

Regardless of whether you acquire your “840” tags directly through CDFA or a USDA-approved tag manufacturer or distributor, you must always provide your Premises Identification Number (PIN) to complete that transaction. Without a PIN assigned to the tags, the tags are not an effective tool to trace diseased, exposed, or at-risk animals. Producers ought to exercise caution if a website or company allows you to purchase “USDA-certified” tags without providing your PIN, as such tags are unlikely to qualify as official ID.

What Qualifies as Official ID in Cattle and Other Species of Livestock?

Please see CDFA’s factsheets discussing official ID options available to you.

- [Cattle and Bison Official Identification](#)
- [Sheep and Goat Official Identification](#)
- [Swine Official Identification](#)
- [Equine Official Identification](#)

Emergency Preparedness  
Response Section Delivers  
Strong HPAI After-Action  
Review

By: The Emergency Preparedness and  
Response Section Team

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Section team demonstrated exceptional coordination and follow through during the recent after-action process for the 2024-2025 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak emergency response. From participating in a comprehensive statewide meeting to analyzing survey data collected from responders and stakeholders, the team ensured a well-rounded review of the emergency response efforts while still engaging in response efforts.

The statewide after-action breakout sessions provided a platform to share valuable insights into field-level operations, highlighted what worked well, and identified areas for improvement. Breakout session feedback provided valuable insight into response activities, including but not limited to animal health operations, communication flow, logistics, and biosecurity practices.

Based on the feedback, we have initiated four focused work groups (administration, information management/IT, communication, and advance planning) to dive deeper into priority areas identified during the meeting. The findings will inform updates to response protocols and guide training priorities moving forward. Thank you to everyone who continues to contribute to the process and continues to strengthen our collective preparedness.

## Incident Permitting – More Than Just Permission to Move

By: John Bechard, Associate Government Program Analyst,  
California Avian Health Education Network (CAHEN)

Quarantine and movement control activities are fundamentally important to mitigate potential disease spread during a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) outbreak. The goal of Incident Permitting is to allow managed movement of non-infected animals, products, equipment, feed, supplies, etc. from within FAD Control Areas to safely facilitate continuity of business.

We endeavor to help infected ranches work to achieve virus elimination while at the same time assisting neighboring ranches strive to remain disease-free.

### How is 'Managed Movement' Determined?

The veterinarians, epidemiologists, and scientists of the CDFA and USDA assess and establish movement controls and the biosecurity protocols to be followed during the movements. These controls and biosecurity protocols are tailored to specific types of movement and the current risk of that movement at that time in both the origin and destination locations. Sometimes, requested movements are denied and need to be postponed until a safer time.

Important point: The closer the premises are to an infected premise, the stricter the biosecurity protocols. This is why at times, the same type of movement may have different biosecurity protocols for different locations.

An example:

- The Cleaning **then** Disinfecting (C&D) of conveyances/equipment that needs to be moved is a critical biosecurity protocol that varies depending on the level of viral load in the area and/or proximity to an infected premises
  - The equipment (e.g. a tractor or transport cages) needs to be cleaned (let dry) and then disinfected at the origin location.
    - ♦ C&D is a two-step process: first, cleaned with all organic material removed and let to dry and then disinfected with the appropriate disinfectant.
    - ♦ This part of C&D is standard and does not vary.
- After C&D, the equipment/conveyances need to be left fallow in a neutral location (preferably in direct sunlight) for a designated duration segregated from other equipment/conveyances before final movement to the destination location.

- The fallow period is designed to catch what the C&D at the origin location may have missed and varies depending on viral load on the area and proximity to an infected premises.

- ♦ When the origin location is very close to the infected premises (e.g. in the Infected Zone of a Control Area), this fallow period is a minimum of 48 hours.
- ♦ When the origin location is not as close to the infected premises but still within the Control Area, the fallow period is a minimum of 24 hours.

### So, an Incident Permit Makes it Safe to Move?

No, unfortunately, the permit by itself does not prevent spread of disease.

However, following the pre-movement testing and biosecurity protocols and following the provided route will mitigate the potential for disease spread and make it safer to move without spreading disease.

The Incident Permitting Team is here to help and make a difference. In order to safely facilitate continuity of business while mitigating disease spread, we need to constantly earn the stakeholders' trust and partnership.

By working together, we make it safer to move during an incident.



## California Animal Response Emergency Support (CARES) Prepares for the 2025 Fire Season

By: Sonia Brown, Program Manager II, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section

The CARES Unit in the Animal Health Branch of CDFA is dedicated to working with local government emergency management agencies, animal rescue volunteer organizations, supporting the California Emergency Support Function 11 (CA-ESF 11) Food and Agriculture, and collaborating with state agencies with a similar mission. The mission is to build capabilities and coordination that protect the safety of animals during the four phases of emergency management for animals

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in natural disasters. Emergency events and response typically begin and end at the local level. Preparedness materials can be found on the [CARES website](#) for animal owners to prepare ahead of an emergency or disaster and in doing so, are helping local government and the wider community.

Fires are burning faster and hotter than ever before and experts attribute this to climate change. Wildfires in California have raised the awareness of the needs of animals in disasters. Planning for the evacuation, and care and sheltering of animals is essential to mitigating excessive and unnecessary suffering and loss of animals, which contributes to the trauma of disaster victims.

Peak fire season typically occurs August through October, but daily fires rose during May in Northern California. According to [Cal FIRE Ready for Wildfire](#), fire potential is forecast to increase statewide for above normal large fire activity by July and August. Experts say there could be more large wildfires than usual this year, with elevated risk continuing into September.

CARES is dedicated to actively monitoring the state of California for daily fires and preparing for fires that can elevate to a disaster requiring an animal response. The Palisades and Eaton Fires are the most destructive to date in 2025. These fires emphasize the need to prepare for natural disasters. Ensure you are prepared in the case of an approaching wildfire.



*Eaton Fire (Altadena, CA; January 8, 2025 (photo Josh Edelson/AFP via Getty Images)*



*Palisades Fire (Pacific Palisades, CA) January 7, 2025 (Robyn Beck/AFP)*

## VFDs & Free-Choice Feeds

By: Katie Murray, MPH, DVM & Marissa Silva, MVB, DACVPM, Antimicrobial Use & Stewardship Program

Veterinary Feed Directives (VFDs), which are written orders necessary to dispense medically important antimicrobials in feed for livestock, can be a source of confusion for veterinarians and livestock producers alike. One area that can cause mix-ups is the ordering of Type-C Medicated Feeds as free-choice feeds. Below is a quick summary of considerations to keep in mind when working with VFD orders for free-choice feeds.

### What are Free-Choice Feeds?

Free-choice feeds are a Type-C Medicated Feed that is offered as a supplement in conjunction with the animals' regular feed, which ultimately allows an animal to balance its own diet based on its nutritional drives or provides a specific dose based on limit feeding controlled by levels of salt or phosphorus in the supplement. (21 CFR 558.3(b)(4)). Examples include medicated blocks, mineral mixes, or liquid feed tank ("lick tank") supplements

(21 CFR 510.455) that the animals consume as desired.

### What is the Free-Choice Feed use Approval for Chlortetracycline?

Chlortetracycline is approved as a free-choice feed for beef cattle and non-lactating dairy cattle at 0.5-2 mg/lb. of body weight daily "as an aid in the control of active infection of anaplasmosis caused by *Anaplasma marginale* susceptible to chlortetracycline" (21 CFR 558.128(e)(4)(xv)).

### Why do I need to use an FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)-Approved Concentration?

The efficacy of this medicated feed has been tested when the drug label was approved; and, extralabel use of a medicated feed where there is an approved concentration is illegal ([FDA Free-Choice Q&A](#), [FDA VFD Requirements for Vets](#)).

The intake of the drug (the dose) is determined by the feed ingredients, the formulation, and concentration ([Apley](#),

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2017). This is to ensure that cattle will receive the approved dose based on specific feed intake rate.

What Kinds of Establishments can Manufacture or Distribute Free-Choice Feeds?

There are five FDA approvals for chlortetracycline: two published formulations and three proprietary formulations (FDA Free-Choice Q&A). All five formulations are approved for 0.5-2 mg/lb. bodyweight/day.

With a valid VFD order, any feed mill may manufacture and distribute the two published (publicly available) free-choice loose mineral feeds, as outlined in 21 CFR 558.128(e)(6), meaning an FDA Medicated Feed Mill License is not required. Feed mills should note that the free-choice medicated feed composition must follow the formulation as specified in the CFR (Code of Federal Regulations)—it is not sufficient to only create a medicated feed that is 6,000 g/ton.

It's crucial to ensure that the cattle are consuming the medicated mineral free-choice feed at the appropriate rate to achieve the target dosage. In the case of the 6,000 g/ton supplement, this is equivalent to 3,000 mg/lb. To achieve the target dose a 600-lb. calf needs to consume 0.1 to 0.4 lb. per head per day to provide 0.5 to 2.0 mg per pound of bodyweight per day of chlortetracycline. If it is observed that the cattle are not

Proprietary Formulas	
Drug Level (g/ton)	Sponsor
700	Ridley USA
5,000	Purina
8,000	ADM

Types of VFD Free-Choice Feed Establishments

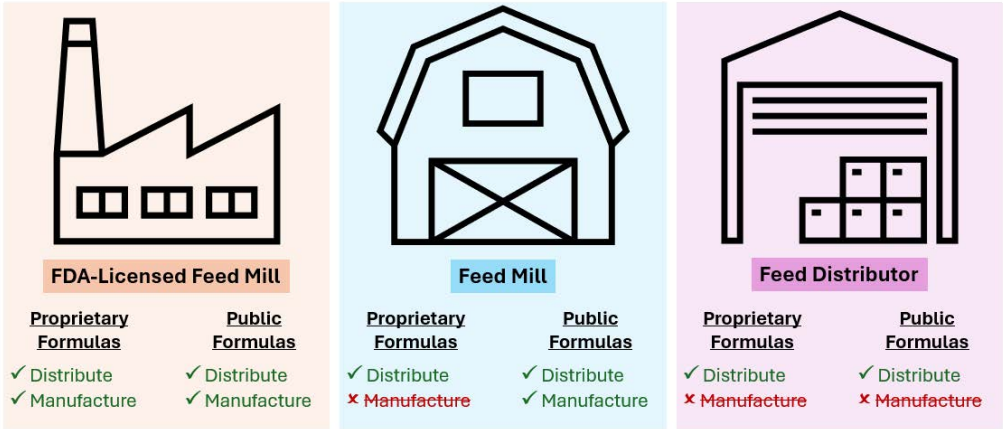


Figure 1: Difference between which VFD feed mills and distributors can manufacture or distribute

Public Formulas			
Drug Level (g/ton)	Brand Name	Sponsor	New Animal Drug Applications
6,000	Aureomycin	Zoetis	NADA 048-761
6,000	Deracin	Pharmgate	ANADA 200-150

consuming the appropriate amount of medicated supplement, veterinary intervention may be required.

The manufacture of the (unpublished) proprietary formulations will require an FDA medicated feed mill license, as described in 21 CFR 510.455, in addition to access to the proprietary formulations.

Once manufactured, any VFD feed distributor may carry and distribute the free-choice medicated feeds in the proprietary formulas.

Where can I Find a List of VFD Feed Distributor Types in California?

Veterinarians and livestock producers can search the Veterinary Feed Directive Distributor Notification List

by State (colloquially called the “Intent List”) on the FDA’s website: Animal Drugs @ FDA. This will ensure that valid VFD orders for all VFD feeds, including free-choice medicated feeds, are submitted to an appropriate VFD feed distributor. This list includes feed mills, both FDA-licensed and unlicensed, and distributor-only facilities.

Are there Additional Chlortetracycline Approvals to Control Anaplasmosis in Cattle with VFD Feed?

Depending on the weight of the cattle, there are currently two additional FDA approvals for chlortetracycline in 21 CFR 558.128(e)(4) for the control of anaplasmosis in beef cattle.

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CFR	Production Class	Dosage
21 CFR 558.128(e)(4)(v)	Beef Cattle (Over 700 lb.)	0.5 mg/lb. body weight/day
21 CFR 558.128(e)(4) (xxxviii)	Beef Cattle (Under 700 lb.)	350 mg/head/day



To simplify the procurement process and reduce the need to confirm a feed mill license, a veterinarian may choose to order a VFD concentrated supplement (not as a free-choice feed). As chlortetracycline is a [Category I](#), Type A Medicated Article, traditional (non-proprietary free-choice) medicated feed formulations could be manufactured without an FDA approved medicated feed mill license. This medicated feed could then be fed as part of the animals' total daily ration.

The veterinarian should use his or her clinical expertise to determine the most judicious and effective method to medicate the group of animals in question.

### **I have a question about medicated feed. How do I get in touch with someone?**

CDFA's Antimicrobial Use & Stewardship program is working to update many of its outreach documents related to VFDs to include the nuances of free-choice feeds and other commonly encountered VFD scenarios.

Feel free to check out the currently available VFD resources at [CDFA AUS' dedicated webpage](#). Check back periodically to see updates to the webpage.

Have any suggestions for outreach? CDFA AUS would love to hear from you! Send us an email at [cdfa\\_aus@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:cdfa_aus@cdfa.ca.gov) with any ideas of resources, for veterinarians or livestock producers, related to VFDs, Antimicrobial Use & Stewardship, or access to veterinary care.

## **CDC Backyard Flock Survey**

By: CAHEN Program

Since March 2024, [70 cases of avian influenza A\(H5\) \(H5 bird flu\)](#) have occurred in humans in the United States, mostly among workers exposed to infected dairy cows and commercial poultry farms. However, cases have also occurred among people exposed to birds kept in non-commercial, backyard flocks.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is interested in learning more about backyard flock owners and their flocks. The anonymous survey asks about:

- Characteristics of backyard flock owners, their families, and their flocks.
- Knowledge of H5 bird flu and signs and symptoms of H5 bird flu in birds and humans.
- Perceived risk of and concern about H5 bird flu to their backyard flock and themselves/families.
- Attitudes towards reporting sick or dead birds and protective measures like vaccination of their flock.

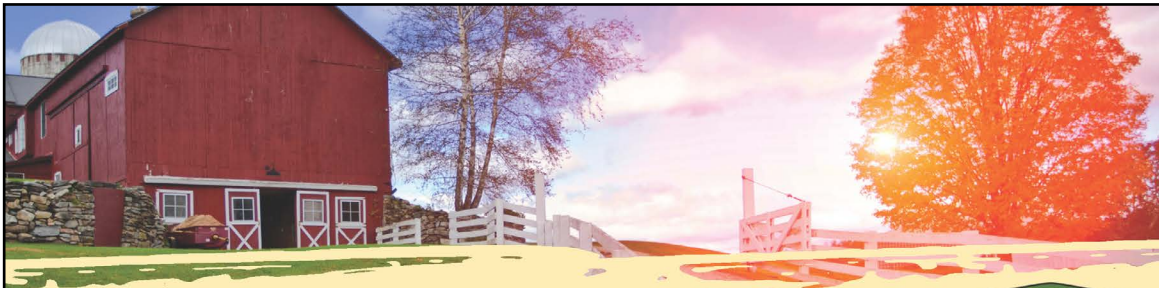


- Practices they use to protect their flock and themselves from H5 bird flu.

CDC will use the survey results to improve H5 bird flu prevention activities.

Questions can be sent to [h5flustudy@cdc.gov](mailto:h5flustudy@cdc.gov).

[Link to the survey](#)



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN CALIFORNIA'S ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

Come work for CDFA's Animal Health Branch!



### WHO WE ARE

The Animal Health Branch is the State's Veterinary Medical Unit. *The primary mission of the Branch is to respond to emergency animal diseases that cannot be controlled on an individual animal or herd basis* and thus we protect public health, animal health, and the economy from catastrophic animal diseases and disasters that impact animals. We consist of veterinarians, research and environmental scientists, livestock inspectors, analysts, and support staff. We have offices throughout the state including Redding, Sacramento, Modesto, Tulare, and Ontario.



### VET POSITION VACANCIES

#### VETERINARIAN SPECIALISTS

(MODESTO, TULARE, REDDING AND ONTARIO DISTRICTS)

<https://calcareers.ca.gov/CalHRPublic/Search/JobSearchResults.aspx#classid=27&depid=23>

#### VETERINARIAN

(MODESTO, TULARE, AND SONOMA)

<https://calcareers.ca.gov/CalHRPublic/Search/JobSearchResults.aspx#classid=28&depid=23>



### SCIENTIST VACANCIES - COMING SOON

#### RESEARCH SCIENTIST II (EPIDEMIOLOGY/BIOSTATISTICS)

Located in Sacramento, this position will support livestock programs.

#### SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST

Located in Sacramento, this position will be part of the biosecurity team and will lead the State poultry Biosecurity Compliance Audit Program.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST

These positions will be located in Modesto and Tulare districts and will have primary poultry biosecurity auditing responsibilities.



### BENEFITS

- A competitive starting salary
- More than two weeks of paid vacation time, sick leave, and paid holidays
- A benefits package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance, a CalPERS pension, opportunities to create retirement savings
- License and continuing education reimbursements, on-the-job training, and paid professional development days

**JOIN US!**

Questions? Please feel free to contact **Dr. Steven Gallego** at (530) 351-3299 or [steven.gallego@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:steven.gallego@cdfa.ca.gov).



## Animal Health Branch Staff Biographies

### Aranelly Huizar

#### Livestock Inspector, Ontario District

My name is Aranelly Huizar. I was born in Chicago, Illinois, but my roots trace back to the small town of Huejúcar, Jalisco, Mexico, where I was raised. Growing up surrounded by animals and a strong agricultural community inspired my passion for animal health and veterinary care.

I pursued a degree in Veterinary Medicine at the Autonomous University of Zacatecas and graduated in 2020. After completing my studies, I knew I wanted to take my knowledge and passion further, which led me to California in 2022. Not long after relocating, I was fortunate to apply for and be selected as a Livestock Inspector with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

Since joining CDFA, my experience has been nothing short of rewarding. I've had the opportunity to grow professionally while working on the front lines of animal health. One of the most impactful experiences so far has been contributing directly to the response and management of the HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) incident. Being part of this effort has deepened my understanding of disease control and biosecurity protocols and given me a firsthand look at the complexities of animal health on a larger scale.

What I value most about this journey is the chance to collaborate with an incredible team of professionals from diverse backgrounds and expertise. Every day brings new opportunities to learn, contribute, and make a difference in the field I'm passionate about.

I look forward to continuing to grow in my role and supporting California's agricultural and animal health industries with dedication and pride.



### Luz Chavez

#### Livestock Inspector, Ontario District

Luz Chavez (Mitchell) joined CDFA's Animal Health Branch (AHB) for Virulent Newcastle Disease (vND) as an Agricultural Technician in 2018 and fell in love with working for animal health and protecting the food supply. After vND, Luz was hired on to the Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety (MPES) branch but found her way back to the AHB with the California Avian Health Education Network (CAHEN) in 2021 as an Agricultural Technician III until October of 2024 when she was hired on as a Livestock Inspector with the AHB.

Luz was born and raised in Southern California, growing up and attending private catholic schools initially in West Covina, then for Walnut during high school, and later studied at Mt. San Antonio College. She is married and has three kids: Arlette, Damian and Adrian. She divorced in 2011 and remarried in 2017 to her now husband Christopher Mitchell.

In her free time Luz loves traveling - it doesn't matter if it's city life, the beach, or mountains. She enjoys being a foodie during her travels; walking for miles enjoying the locals, breweries, local coffee roasters, and visiting professional baseball and football stadiums. She loves adventures, being spontaneous, hiking, walks on the beach, the outdoors, concerts, spending time with friends and family, baseball (diehard Dodger fan), and loves cooking daily for her family. She dislikes washing dishes afterwards.





# Contact Information

## ■ Animal Health Branch

Dr. Amanda Murray, Branch Chief

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Fax: (916) 900-5333  
Permit Line: (916) 900-5052

Email: [ahbfeedback@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:ahbfeedback@cdfa.ca.gov)

Website: [www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/Index.html](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/Index.html)

## ■ District Offices

### Veterinarian In Charge (VIC)

#### Redding

Dr. Steven Gallego  
1819 Keystone Court  
Redding, CA 96003  
(530) 225-2140

#### Modesto

3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite F  
Modesto, CA 95358  
(209) 491-9350

#### Tulare

Dr. Natalie Ward  
18760 Road 112  
Tulare, CA 93274  
(559) 685-3500

#### Ontario

Dr. Alisha Olmstead  
3800 Concours Street, Suite 150  
Ontario, CA 91764  
(909) 947-5932

## ■ Animal Health and Food Safety Services

Dr. Annette Jones, State Veterinarian and Director  
(916) 900-5000

## ■ 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  
Paula Batarseh, Chief  
(916) 900-5004

Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship  
Dr. Edie Marshall, Chief  
(916) 576-0300

Animal Care  
Dr. Elizabeth Cox, Chief  
(916) 900-5000

## ■ United States Department of Agriculture

Dr. Donald Herriott  
District Director, District 3

Dr. Paul Sciglibaglio  
Area Veterinarian in Charge, NM/CA/HI/PT  
Field Operations – District 3

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

## Animal Health Branch Programs

- [Animal Disease Traceability \(ADT\)](#)
- [Avian Program](#)
- [California Animal Response Emergency Support \(CARES\)](#)
- [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.